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To download these and other conference press release templates in Word, go to:  
[https://skillsusa.egnyte.com/fl/eGIGOpZFAi](https://skillsusa.egnyte.com/fl/eGIGOpZFAi)
SkillsUSA Public Relations Overview

Resources for Promoting SkillsUSA State or National Conference Competitors, Delegates and Participants

SkillsUSA state conferences are showcases of career and technical education that provide a wonderful opportunity for publicity and recognition for your SkillsUSA members. Public relations efforts surrounding both your state conference and your students attending national conference help gain positive public attention for SkillsUSA as a whole in your state as well as for individual students, training programs, schools and state associations. This can yield ongoing benefits including more financial, personnel or in-kind support from industry partners, increased enrollments or SkillsUSA and CTE program support from the school system.

Create a Public Relations Committee

While you may not have a Media Room on site at state conference this year since events are virtual, it still helps to form a state Public Relations Committee. Invite several people who work in school communications or public information. They can help you create media lists, invite the media to cover the event, distribute press releases, conduct interviews, gather video footage, answer questions or coordinate with the media on stories. It also helps to make a list of friendly program graduates, contest coordinators or passionate industry partners or board members who are willing to answer questions, conduct video interviews or be quoted in a news story.

State Press Release Before SLSC

Your upcoming SkillsUSA State Leadership and Skills Conference (SLSC) will interest members, partners, parents and the public. A press release is an easy way to “get the facts out there” and keep everyone informed. Once written, the press release can be emailed to schools, posted on your state SkillsUSA website and shared with local or state media outlets.

The sample SkillsUSA press releases in this guide are designed to be personalized and shared both before and after conference. Give yourself a week to write the press release and gain needed approvals, then send the press releases you create to local newspapers and TV/radio stations two weeks before your event — especially if you are still raising funds to support the event or need additional volunteers. Don’t be shy — talk about contest volunteers or materials you still need.
**Media Alert Before (or During) SLSC**

A few days before your conference and during the event, a SkillsUSA Media Alert is a quick way to inform the media about specific events as they are happening. Your Media Alert lets the assignment staff or news editors at local newspapers or TV stations know exactly what is happening, when and where. Keep the Media Alert to one page and provide contact information (cell phone or office phone). If the media is interested, offer to provide more details or answer questions but DON’T try to control stories. DO share the most exciting events, B-roll, photos or other visuals, and introduce reporters to people who will be good interviewees. Pair local media with an alumni member or instructor who can answer questions about the contests, appear on Zoom or on video to talk about the benefits of SkillsUSA or be quoted in a news story. In these virtual times, offer as much help as you can with content. If you need assistance with creating a media list, the SkillsUSA Office of Communications can help!

**State Press Release After SLSC**

Create a state press release following the SLSC for all schools/students in your state who participated. The sample SkillsUSA post-conference press release should be personalized before distribution. Be sure to include all students who won a medal, served as voting delegates or received a scholarship or individual honor. Also list all schools that were recognized in the Chapters of Excellence program or students who were elected as state officers. List all major industry support for the state conference, too.

**State Press Release After NLSC**

Create a state press release following the National Leadership and Skills Conference for all schools/students in your state who participated in NLSC and won national titles or were recognized. The sample SkillsUSA post-national conference press release should be personalized before distribution. Be sure to include the total number of teachers and students from your state who participated, along with all students who medaled or were in the top ten for the nation, served as voting delegates, received a scholarship or an individual honor. Also list schools that were recognized in the Models of Excellence program, along with any students elected as national officers. Share this out as quickly as possible after NLSC with a contact for questions.

**SkillsUSA National Public Relations Efforts During NLSC**

This year, we will be working remotely from the SkillsUSA national headquarters to promote SkillsUSA — before, during and after the national conference — as we always do! SkillsUSA’s Office of Communications conducts major public-relations efforts for NLSC. We invite consumer and business journalists or trade and education publications to cover the SkillsUSA Championships. We also assist journalists with interviews and highlight stories of interest. While this year is different, these public relations efforts will still take place!
National Conference Updates to Share

- Details for all NLSC-related national virtual contests and events will be shared across all SkillsUSA news and information channels and by direct communication to directors.
- You have permission to pick up or share links to any national press releases or announcements on your state website or in newsletters.
- **Watch for announcements from SkillsUSA’s Office of Education about specific programs and events.**

National Winners List and National Winners Photos

- In June, immediately following the Awards Ceremony, SkillsUSA will post a list of all national SkillsUSA Championships winners on the SkillsUSA website.
- Because of the virtual nature of the 2021 event, SkillsUSA will post overall NLSC photos of contests or events or winners IF they are available, but conference coverage as provided in the past may not be possible.

NLSC Media Kit

The SkillsUSA NLSC Media Kit is a great resource for you. It will be posted before NLSC and will include overviews of all national conference major programs along with conference statistics: [www.skillsusa.org/publications-news/press-room/](http://www.skillsusa.org/publications-news/press-room/).

How to Build an Effective Media List

Building an effective media list for your SkillsUSA program takes time and effort, but it can really pay off as you build relationships with reporters. Over time, they will trust what you provide to them and contact you proactively to look for stories.

You can build media lists using the [SkillsUSA Advocacy page](http://www.skillsusa.org/publications-news/press-room/) by searching for media outlets by state or zip code. You can also build lists by setting google alerts for CTE news, then note the reporter and obtain their contact info on the newspaper or TV station website — or simply "google" their name and email address. Once you find a reporter who writes about education you can follow them on social media, send them press releases and media alerts or invite them to cover your events.

SkillsUSA's Advocacy page helps you contact elected officials to issue invitations to speak or attend your state conference events. Go to the following link and use the “Directory” tab to email elected officials. Using the “Media” tab, you can locate and build a state media list for press release distribution. Go to: [www.congressweb.com/susa#](http://www.congressweb.com/susa#).

When you build media lists, it helps to create several versions:

- Statewide media list of education and workforce development reporters.
- Lists by region for your state that are built around your largest cities or populations.
• A list of hometown reporters from community weeklies.

Your goal is to make the journalist’s job as easy as possible. They receive many email pitches a day and may not take the time to consider yours if information is not easily accessible.

When sending your press release, paste it into the body of the email and then link to it from a Dropbox or file sharing site where you host photos, the press release or other relevant information. Requiring reporters to search for more info on their own increases the chances of misinformation being printed if they stumble onto the wrong website. Attachments from unknown senders frequently get blocked by spam filters.

While you want to make it easy for reporters, it is important to remember that they and their editors will run the stories they select to run, at the length they prefer with the photos they choose. If you provide short, well-written stories and compelling photos they are likely to run your material close to how you submit it. If what you provide is confusing or in a jumble, they may or may not take time to search for the story!

Here is a link to an article about building media lists. prowly.com/magazine/media-list-building/.

**Pitching Your Story to the Media**

As a nonprofit organization, it can be very difficult for organizations like SkillsUSA to show up in the media. It is good news and it is a school program. Sometimes reporters overlook these stories in favor of more sensational news. Your job is to share your story regularly, to learn to "think like a reporter" and share useful information they can print.

Newspapers have lean staffs and some have shifted from printed publications to less frequency or all-digital editions. You may be trying to get the attention of journalists who are stretched thin or who have a lot of information coming at them.

As you build relationships with the media and they consistently see your name on press releases, they will trust what you provide to them and even contact you proactively as a source for stories. Review your SkillsUSA year and think of the key events you can leverage for news:

• **State officer elections** — share a story with each elected student's hometown media.
• **Fall leadership conferences** are a good story for the schools that participate and for the city where the event is held.
• **Community service projects** are always good for a story — invite the media and also assign your own photographers/videographers to capture the day and then edit for the best, including captions with the best photos.
• **SkillsUSA Week** is a great time to interact with elected officials, make presentations, hold open house events on campus or industry panels. These are all media opportunities.
• **State conference** is a natural time for public relations when you can share lists of schools, participants, contests and industry support.
• **National conference** means some students from your state will receive recognition at one of the nation's largest workforce development events.
• **National events** like SkillsUSA National Signing Day or national recognition like the Chapter Excellence Program, PVSA, national scholarships, etc.

**Public Relations Support**

We encourage you to use this guide and the Word templates we provide as a starting point for public relations and press releases.

If you enjoy working with the media you can handle SkillsUSA public relations yourself but this is a great project to delegate to another staff member or key volunteer in your state if they have a background or strong interest in communications. If you have questions about your state conference media efforts, need help with your press releases or need a media list for your state, please contact Jane Short: jshort@skillsusa.org.

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**For press release templates in Word to personalize, go to:**

[https://skillsusa.egnyte.com/fl/eGIGOpZFAi](https://skillsusa.egnyte.com/fl/eGIGOpZFAi)
## Suggested State Conference Public Relations Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Additional Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>3 months before SLSC</strong></td>
<td>Assign a public relations person or build a PR team to manage your state public relations for your SLSC.</td>
<td>Local school system or state department of education public relations or communications staff is ideal. Also add a photographer or videographer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2 months before SLSC</strong></td>
<td>Hold a virtual state PR team meeting to discuss plans and assignments.</td>
<td>Set deadlines for drafting releases, building media lists, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6 weeks before SLSC</strong></td>
<td>Create a state media contact list and check to be sure you have education reporters along with their phone number and email address. Find out how they prefer to receive your updates.</td>
<td>If you need assistance building your media list, go to: <a href="http://www.congressweb.com/susa#">www.congressweb.com/susa#</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1 month before SLSC</strong></td>
<td>Draft an advance press release and distribute it to your media contacts. (Be sure to edit carefully and seek any needed approvals before they go out.)</td>
<td><em>See sample release</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1 week after SLSC</strong></td>
<td>Send out a press release about all state winners that lists contests, winners and schools.</td>
<td><em>See sample release</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1 week before NLSC</strong></td>
<td>Send out a media alert about your state's national competitors who will compete at NLSC.</td>
<td><em>See sample Media Alert</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1 week after NLSC</strong></td>
<td>Send out a press release about national winners from your state.</td>
<td><em>See sample release</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2 weeks after NLSC</strong></td>
<td>Follow up to see if reporters need photos or more information about winners, etc.</td>
<td>Save all news clips for use in future PR efforts. If you obtain TV coverage or video clips, have them assembled into one video to share as part of your PR efforts.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dear _____,

Career and technical education is a proven model of learning and SkillsUSA is a national partnership of students, instructors and industry working to build a skilled workforce. Together, CTE and SkillsUSA are making a difference in [NAME OF STATE].

You are invited to participate in our upcoming virtual State Leadership and Skills Conference as follows: [insert details for motivational speaker, contest organizer, industry supporter, judge, contest proctor, etc. You can also use this section to ask for specific industry support.]

This is an opportunity to support hundreds of CTE students from our state. At the 2021 SkillsUSA competitions, students will work against the clock, demonstrating their SkillsUSA Framework skills and proving their expertise in occupations such as electronics, computer-aided drafting, precision machining, automotive service, medical assisting and culinary arts. Contests are run with the help of industry experts to test competencies against standards for entry-level workers. State first-place winners receive scholarships or industry prizes and advance to compete in the SkillsUSA Championships in June. While our 2021 events will be virtual due to the ongoing pandemic, please know we plan to be back to holding in-person events for the 2021-22 school year or as soon as health and safety guidelines allow.

I hope you can join us at this state talent pipeline event. We are so proud of our SkillsUSA students for their excellence and your support will help individual students who are preparing to lead America’s future skilled workforce. To participate, email me and I will follow up with your specific contacts and additional details.

Sincerely,

State Association Director
[phone, email and mailing address]
[State Website]

Attached is a list of our 2021 SkillsUSA state career competitions.

For more about SkillsUSA, go to: www.skillsusa.org/about.
Students to Compete at 2021 State Workforce Development Event

[CITY, DATE] – Hundreds of career and technical education students from high schools and colleges across the state will compete in contests demonstrating their skills in career areas including manufacturing, transportation, construction, hospitality and human services. The future workforce of [STATE] will be on display at the SkillsUSA [STATE] championship competitions to be held in [VENUE, CITY] on [DATE]. [IF EVENTS ARE VIRTUAL, NOTE THIS AND ADD DETAILS].

“These students are demonstrating their skill while proving that our workforce is prepared to lead the way in every technical area our country needs to maintain a strong global economic presence,” said SkillsUSA Executive Director, Chelle Travis. “CTE is learning that works for America, and we are very proud of this talented group of students who are champions dedicated to excellence in their trades.”

[MAKE THIS QUOTE FROM YOURSELF IF YOU PREFER.]

SkillsUSA improves the quality of the nation’s future skilled workforce through the development of SkillsUSA Framework skills that include personal, workplace and technical skills grounded in academics. Our vision is to produce the most highly skilled workforce in the world, providing every member with the opportunity to achieve career success. During the competition, students will work against the clock, proving their expertise in occupations such as electronics, computer-aided drafting, precision machining, automotive service, medical assisting and culinary arts. All contests are run with
PRESS RELEASE TEMPLATE FOR STATE CONFERENCE (BEFORE)

the help of industry experts, trade associations and labor organizations, and will test competencies are set by professional industry standards.

The winners will go on to compete in the national SkillsUSA Championships this June.

A list of the [NUMBER] competition categories and the schools participating this year is listed on our state SkillsUSA website: [INSERT URL].

About SkillsUSA
SkillsUSA is a nonprofit partnership of education and industry founded in 1965 to strengthen our nation’s skilled workforce. Driven by employer demand, SkillsUSA helps students develop necessary personal and workplace skills along with technical skills grounded in academics. This SkillsUSA Framework empowers every student to succeed at work and in life, while helping to close the skills gap in which millions of positions go unfilled. Through SkillsUSA’s championships program and curricula, employers have ensured schools are teaching relevant technical skills, and with SkillsUSA’s new credentialing process, they can now assess how ready potential employees are for the job. SkillsUSA has more than 372,000 annual members nationwide in high schools, middle schools and colleges, covering over 130 trade, technical and skilled service occupations, and is recognized by the U.S. Departments of Education and Labor as integral to career and technical education. With the addition of our alumni, membership last year was 434,141. SkillsUSA receives in-kind and financial support from more than 650 national partners. We have served more than 13.6 million members since 1965. For more information: www.skillsusa.org.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Contact: State Director or State PR Person
Title
Telephone number
Email address

MEDIA ALERT
SkillsUSA Students to Compete at State Workforce Development Event, Demonstrate Career-Ready Skills

WHO: The future workforce of [STATE] including career and technical education (CTE) students from high schools and postsecondary programs across the state will compete in skill competitions for medals, scholarships and industry prizes. SkillsUSA is a nonprofit partnership of education and industry founded to strengthen our nation’s skilled workforce. SkillsUSA serves more than 372,000 members in high schools, middle schools and colleges and is recognized by the U.S. Departments of Education and Labor as integral to CTE.

WHAT: The SkillsUSA students will compete in skill contests including welding, construction trades, manufacturing, transportation, health care, hospitality and human services as well as in leadership events like public speaking. See our website for a list of contests and schools: [INSERT URL].

WHEN: The SkillsUSA [STATE] championships will be held virtually on [INSERT DATES].

• At these competitions, students will work against the clock, proving their expertise and entry-level skills in occupations such as electronics, computer-aided drafting, precision machining, automotive service, medical assisting and culinary arts.
• All contests are run with the support of industry experts, trade associations and labor organizations. Each event tests competencies set by industry standards and may include a written knowledge assessment, hands-on skill demonstration, a résumé review or personal interview.
• First-place winners will be eligible to compete at the national SkillsUSA Championships in June.

SPONSORS: Driven by employer demand, SkillsUSA helps students develop necessary personal and workplace skills along with technical skills grounded in academics. SkillsUSA receives support from 650 national partners. Through SkillsUSA’s championships program and curricula, employers help ensure schools are teaching relevant technical skills, and with SkillsUSA’s new credentialing process, they can assess if potential employees to be hired. For more information: www.skillsusa.org.
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Contact:
State Director or State PR Person
Title
Telephone number
Email address

SkillsUSA Students Win Medals at 2021 State Workforce Development Event

[Date] — [STATE NAME] career and technical education students from across the state brought home medals from the 2021 State Leadership and Skills Conference.

The 2021 state championships was held in [CITY, STATE] on [DATE]. The annual SkillsUSA conference was a showcase of career and technical education (CTE) students in our state where [NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS] outstanding students competed in [NUMBER OF CONTESTS] different trade, technical and leadership events. [IF EVENTS WERE VIRTUAL, NOTE THIS AND ADD DETAILS.]

During the state SkillsUSA competition, the CTE students worked against the clock and each other, proving their expertise in occupations such as electronics, computer-aided drafting, precision machining, medical assisting and culinary arts. All contests are run by SkillsUSA with the help of industry, trade associations and labor organizations, testing competencies set by industry. In addition, leadership contestants demonstrated their skills, which included extemporaneous speaking and conducting meetings using parliamentary procedure. Top student winners received gold, silver and bronze medallions. Many also received prizes such as tools of their trade and scholarships to
further their careers and education. The annual championships event is for middle school, high school and college-level students who are members of SkillsUSA.

SkillsUSA [NAME OF STATE] has a statewide membership of [NUMBER OF MEMBERS] students, representing [NUMBER OF SCHOOLS IN NUMBER OF COUNTIES]. Members have consistently demonstrated their expertise and professionalism while participating throughout the year in a variety of leadership and competitive conferences. SkillsUSA’s mission is to SkillsUSA empowers its members to become world-class workers, leaders and responsible American citizens. SkillsUSA improves the quality of the nation’s future skilled workforce through the development of SkillsUSA Framework skills that include personal, workplace and technical skills grounded in academics. Our vision is to produce the most highly skilled workforce in the world, providing every member the opportunity for career success.

State first-place (gold medal) winners are eligible to compete at the national SkillsUSA Championships, which will be held virtually in June. The following students finished the 2021 state conference with outstanding accomplishments [ADD LIST OF WINNERS]:

**Gold Medals:**
Contest, Student, School, City or County

**Silver Medals:**
Contest, Student, School, City or County

**Bronze Medals:**
Contest, Student, School, City or County

**Models of Excellence, Scholarships, Elected Positions or National Awards:**
Event or Program, Student, School, City or County

For more information about this year’s events and the winners, contact: [STATE DIRECTOR OR PR PERSON’s EMAIL, PHONE AND WEBSITE]

**About SkillsUSA**
SkillsUSA is a nonprofit partnership of education and industry founded in 1965 to strengthen our nation’s skilled workforce. Driven by employer demand, SkillsUSA helps students develop necessary personal and workplace skills along with technical skills grounded in academics. This SkillsUSA Framework empowers every student to succeed at work and in life, while helping to
close the skills gap in which millions of positions go unfilled. Through SkillsUSA’s championships program and curricula, employers have ensured schools are teaching relevant technical skills, and with SkillsUSA’s new credentialing process, they can now assess how ready potential employees are for the job. SkillsUSA has more than 372,000 annual members nationwide in high schools, middle schools and colleges, covering over 130 trade, technical and skilled service occupations, and is recognized by the U.S. Departments of Education and Labor as integral to career and technical education. With the addition of our alumni, membership last year was 434,141. SkillsUSA receives in-kind and financial support from more than 650 national partners. We have served more than 13.6 million members since 1965. For more information: www.skillsusa.org.

###
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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State Director or State PR Person  
Title  
Telephone number  
Email address  

SkillsUSA Students Excel at  
National Workforce Development Event  

[Date] — Career and technical education students from [STATE NAME] demonstrated excellence and brought home medals and honors at the 2021 SkillsUSA National Leadership and Skills Conference.

The annual SkillsUSA conference was a showcase of the best career and technical education (CTE) students in the nation where outstanding students competed in 106 different trade, technical and leadership events. The 2021 SkillsUSA Championships was held virtually in June, due to the ongoing pandemic and related travel restrictions that made in-person conference impossible.

During the national event, SkillsUSA CTE students from [NAME OF STATE] worked against the clock, proving their expertise in occupations such as electronics, computer-aided drafting, precision machining, medical assisting and culinary arts. All contests are run by SkillsUSA with the help of industry, trade associations and labor organizations, testing competencies set by industry. In addition, leadership contestants demonstrated their skills, which included extemporaneous speaking and conducting meetings using parliamentary procedure. The annual championships event is for middle school, high school and college-level students who are members of SkillsUSA.
SkillsUSA [NAME OF STATE] sent [NUMBER OF MEMBERS] students to participate at the national workforce event, representing [NUMBER OF SCHOOLS] schools. Students consistently demonstrated expertise and professionalism while participating in a variety of leadership and competitive experiences. SkillsUSA improves the quality of the nation’s future skilled workforce through the development of SkillsUSA Framework skills that include personal, workplace and technical skills grounded in academics. The organization’s vision is to produce the most highly skilled workforce in the world, providing every member the opportunity for career success.

Top student winners received gold, silver and bronze medallions. Many also received prizes such as tools of their trade and scholarships to further their careers and education. The following students finished the 2021 national conference with outstanding accomplishments [INSERT LIST OF YOUR STATE’S NATIONAL WINNERS]:

**Gold Medals:**
Contest, Student, School, City or County

**Silver Medals:**
Contest, Student, School, City or County

**Bronze Medals:**
Contest, Student, School, City or County

**Models of Excellence, Elected Positions, Scholarships, PVSA or Other Awards:**
Event or Program, Student, School, City or County

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###
What is SkillsUSA?

SkillsUSA is a partnership of students, teachers and industry working together to ensure America has a skilled workforce. We help each student excel.

SkillsUSA’s mission is to empower its members to become world-class workers, leaders and responsible American citizens. We improve the quality of our nation’s future skilled workforce through the development of SkillsUSA Framework skills that include personal, workplace and technical skills grounded in academics. Our vision is to produce the most highly skilled workforce in the world, providing every member the opportunity for career success.

A nonprofit national education association, SkillsUSA serves middle-school, high-school and college/postsecondary students preparing for careers in trade, technical and skilled service (including health) occupations.

Membership for 2019-20

- Current annual membership: 434,141.
- All 50 states plus Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands and District of Columbia.
- Total student and teacher membership: 372,655.
- Student members: 352,047.
- Teacher members (SkillsUSA Professionals): 20,598.
- SkillsUSA schools: 4,658.
- SkillsUSA classrooms: 19,260.
- Alumni members: 61,279.
- High school members: 305,444.
- College/postsecondary members: 43,139.
- Middle school members: 3,474.
- Total cumulative members served since 1965: 13.6 million.

Partners:

SkillsUSA receives in-kind and financial support from more than 650 national partners.

National Leadership and Skills Conference (NLSC)

- Held at the Georgia World Congress Center in Atlanta through 2026.
- Estimated NLSC economic impact to Atlanta in 2021: $28 million.
- Estimated attendance: 16,500.
- Competitions: 107.
- Competitors: 6,500.
- Medals: 1,150 gold, silver and bronze medals plus 550 recognition awards.
- Competition and meeting space: 1.79 million sq. ft. (31 football fields or 41 acres).
- Total national conference volunteer hours: 58,840.
- In-kind contributions: $36 million in time, equipment and materials to support events.
About SkillsUSA
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