

SkillsUSA

Advisor Guide



2026 - 2027



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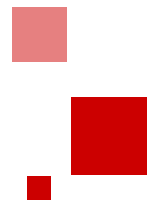
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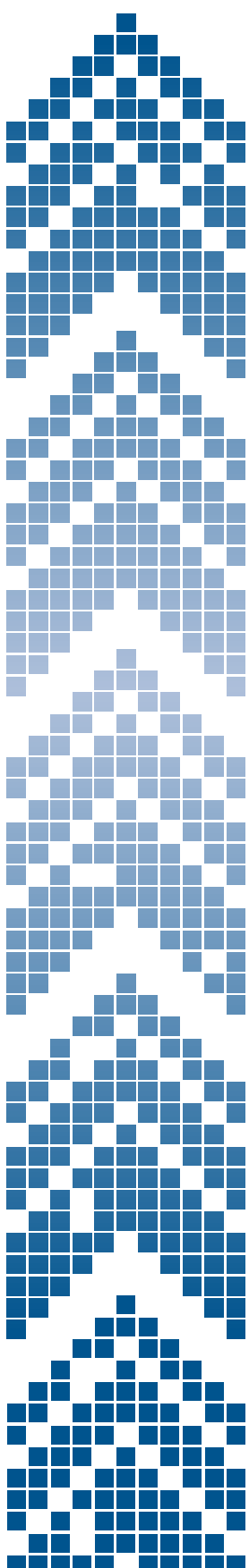
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Welcome, SkillsUSA Advisors!

Thank you for stepping into one of the most vital roles in workforce development. As the #1 workforce development organization for students, SkillsUSA is here to help you bridge the gap between the classroom and a career.

Together, we empower students to:

»» **PREPARE:**

We develop career-ready leaders through intentional leadership development and real-world technical skill building.

»» **BUILD:**

We build student-led chapters supported by industry and community partnerships that invest in students' success.

»» **CELEBRATE:**

We make workforce outcomes visible by recognizing student achievement in a way that truly matters.

By grounding education in the personal, workplace, and technical skills employers demand, you are shaping the innovators of tomorrow. Thank you for your dedication to your students.

Let's keep building champions together.

We are SkillsUSA!



Chelle Travis, Executive Director



> Purpose of This Guide and Your Role as the Advisor

Serving as an advisor to a SkillsUSA chapter is one of the most intentional steps you can take in your professional career with a life-changing impact on your students and their future. Many of the roles and responsibilities of serving as an advisor naturally support the work you are already doing in the classroom. Whether you are exploring SkillsUSA for the first time or preparing to start or expand a chapter, this advisor guide provides the information, programs, resources, and opportunities you and your students need to **PREPARE** for the year, **BUILD** a student-led chapter, and **CELEBRATE** success.

As an advisor, your role goes beyond managing a chapter. SkillsUSA advisors are workforce development leaders who connect education and industry, planning and action, and skill development to career outcomes. Advisors support students as they build employability skills, apply learning in real-world settings, and move

confidently into careers, apprenticeships, or continued education. By integrating the SkillsUSA Framework, leading intentional Program of Work planning, and facilitating meaningful work-based learning opportunities, advisors make workforce development real, visible, and impactful at the local level.

This guide is designed to be revisited throughout the year as a planning tool, reference, and trusted partner in your work. SkillsUSA also provides ongoing advisor support and coaching to help you organize, lead, and sustain a successful chapter. **SkillsUSA LEARN** is the home for professional development at SkillsUSA, connecting educators and advisors to timely, relevant learning experiences offered year-round, both online and in person at conferences, events and more.

[SkillsUSA LEARN: Advisor Professional Development Resources](#)

[Customer Care](#)



> SkillsUSA: A Workforce Development Solution

Since 1965, SkillsUSA has been an integral part of career and technical education with an unwavering commitment to improving the quality of our nation's skilled workforce. With more than 444,000 members across the country in all 50 states, two territories and Washington D.C., SkillsUSA is the #1 workforce development organization for students. We empower students to become skilled professionals, career-ready leaders and responsible community members.

The SkillsUSA Framework: Defining the Career-Ready Student

The SkillsUSA Framework is foundational to career-readiness. It enables you to develop programming and assessments that build skills in students that prepare them for life. It is also a common language for students to explain to their peers, employers, school administrators and parents what they gain from SkillsUSA.

The SkillsUSA Framework has three components: Personal Skills, Workplace Skills and Technical Skills. Within these components are 17 Essential Elements. These essential elements are the specific skills identified as crucial to success by the more than 1,000 industry partners who helped create the Framework. It is critical that the Framework be the basis for your SkillsUSA chapter work.

[Learn more about the SkillsUSA Framework](#)

Program of Work: The SkillsUSA Framework in Action

A well-planned Program of Work (PoW) provides intentional instruction of the SkillsUSA Framework Essential Elements. It is how SkillsUSA delivers the skill-building opportunities to students through active participation.

More than 15 million members have participated in SkillsUSA since its inception in 1965. Over time, the organization has learned that not only do students need to participate in skill building around the SkillsUSA Framework Essential Elements, but the chapter should provide rich meaningful experiences in six categories that reflect the situations they will encounter in the workplace.

Think of the PoW as your chapter's annual calendar of activities. It is a chapter management tool, an individual growth plan and a student engagement tool. It allows students to define, develop and demonstrate the Essential Elements.

[Learn more about the Program of Work](#)

Integration: SkillsUSA Belongs in the Classroom

It is essential that you integrate SkillsUSA chapter work into your classroom. The work of building career-ready students isn't a one-and-done activity or event. Students need to work on building skills over time through multiple experiences and receive coaching along the way. For instance, building decision-making skills in the classroom might focus on diagnostic work while in the chapter, and/or it might focus on committee decision-making for a community service project. Students must see the relationship and how these skills transfer from one situation to another. What they experience in the classroom should be reinforced in their SkillsUSA chapter and vice versa so that it becomes common practice in conducting themselves and their work. Students connect what they are learning and practicing today to the world of work.

Find the **Framework Integration Toolkit** on the SkillsUSA Pathful homepage for professional members.

[SkillsUSA Pathful](#)

WBL

WORK-BASED LEARNING

Work-Based Learning (WBL) connects classroom instruction to the workforce by giving students opportunities to practice skills, explore careers, and engage with industry professionals. Through WBL, students gain clarity, confidence, and experience that prepares them for life beyond the classroom.

Work-Based Learning Offers:

Career Discovery: Explore paths that match your passions and talents

Skills Development: Gain experience that builds confidence and career-readiness

Professional Connections: Network with industry partners and members

Real-World Learning: Apply your classroom skills in actual work environments

A Head Start on Success: Graduate with experience that gives you an advantage in your chosen field.



Work-Based
Learning Resources



Work-Based
Learning Video



Empower Career Readiness with SkillsUSA Pathful

SkillsUSA Pathful is your all-in-one career exploration and workforce readiness platform. It connects students with real professionals, virtual job shadows, and industry resources to build skills and prepare for future success.

Key Features

- Career Exploration Tools and Career Profiles
- Access to SkillsUSA Championships Technical Standards
- Financial Literacy and Job Readiness Tools
- Educator Dashboard with Reporting

SkillsUSA Exclusive Resources

- Framework Integration Toolkit
- Program of Work Toolkit

- Professional Development E-Courses
- Middle School Resources
- Framework Essential Element Modules
- CHARGE: Officer Training Series

Why it matters

- Builds career readiness
- Connects students with real industry leaders
- Supports CTE programs with

Perkins-aligned resources

- Accessible anytime, anywhere

How to Get Started

- If you are current SkillsUSA member:
 - Visit pathful.skillsusa.org
 - Log in
 - Explore resources, connect and learn
- Not a member? Submit your membership today at register.skillsusa.org to receive access.
- Need help or assistance, contact the SkillsUSA Customer Care Team

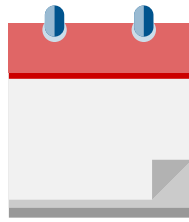
Quick Links

[SkillsUSA Pathful Overview for Advisors](#)

[Welcome to SkillsUSA Pathful](#)

[Maximizing Perkins Funding for Student Success](#)

> Year-at-a-Glance: National Events



- August 2026 Membership and Chapter Excellence Program (CEP) Applications Open
- September 9, 2026 Elevate – Chapter Officer Training
- September 26 - 30, 2026 Washington Leadership Training Institute (WLTi)
- January - March (varies by state) CEP Submission Deadlines
- February 1 - 5, 2027 SkillsUSA Week
- April 25 - May 1, 2027 National Apprenticeship Week
- May 5, 2027 SkillsUSA National Signing Day
- June 21 - 25, 2027 National Leadership & Skills Conference (NLSC)
- July 2027 Membership Kit and Back-to-School Resources





SkillsUSA

Championships

For advisors, the SkillsUSA Championships reinforce classroom instruction with a clear benchmark of industry-aligned standards. It provides meaningful feedback, strengthens program credibility, and motivates students to refine their craft.

Championships is not just a competition; it is an opportunity for students to showcase competence and career readiness. Students demonstrate their SkillsUSA Framework skills, including professionalism, communication, safety and health, and job-specific skills, as well as their ability to perform with accuracy under pressure.

The progression from local, to district and/or regional, then state, and ultimately national competition within SkillsUSA is intentionally designed to elevate rigor and readiness at each level. Students begin by demonstrating foundational skills in their local programs, advance to region or district events where performance expectations increase, and then compete at the state level against top qualifiers. Those who earn the opportunity to compete nationally are evaluated against industry-validated standards that align to current workforce expectations.

During the 2025-26 school year students gained direct access to the official competition Technical Standards through SkillsUSA Pathful. In the school year ahead, we strongly encourage advisors to direct students to access the standards through their SkillsUSA Pathful account. Preparing from the official Technical Standards is essential to maintaining consistency, fairness, and industry alignment across all levels of competition. In addition, advisors should teach students to regularly review the Competition Updates webpage for the latest clarifications, deadlines, and competition-specific requirements.



[Click to Learn More](#)



PREPARE

Career-Ready Day One

SkillsUSA prepares students for the workforce by developing essential skills such as leadership, professionalism, communication and responsibility. These skills are consistently identified by employers as critical to workplace success.



> Elect Officers Early

Strong chapters begin with prepared student leadership.

Advisors are encouraged to elect officers early and embed intentional officer training into your planning. **Consider electing officers in the spring and registering them for Elevate, giving student leaders more time to prepare and engage.** Early selection and training give student leaders the time, confidence, and clarity they need to plan effectively, engage members, and lead with purpose. By prioritizing preparation, chapters start the year positioned to deliver meaningful, high-impact experiences that support student success from day one.

Recommended Leadership Route:

- Spring: Elect officers
- Register for Elevate: Chapter Officer Development Conference
- Fall: Launch your Program of Work with trained leaders

[Officer Election Toolkit](#)

ELEVATE

SKILLSUSA CHAPTER OFFICER DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE

Elevate is an interactive virtual experience for local chapter officer teams that focuses on building successful chapters by equipping officers with the skills to lead and serve their chapter members.

Each chapter officer team should join Elevate as a group, using their classroom's projector and screen to interact with the virtual experience. In addition to live, facilitated sessions, Elevate will break out into intentional work time led by the local chapter advisor (equipped with a learning guide that we provide), with the goal of ensuring every chapter leaves Elevate with an actionable Program of Work.

Sept. 9, 2026 - Mark your calendars!

Registration is \$50 per chapter, regardless of the number of participants. Because the fee is per chapter, advisors do not need to know in advance which officers will attend or how many will participate. You can commit your chapter now and determine your attendee list later.

**Registration Opens:
April 13 (closes Sept 4)**



Elevate Registration



> Back to School Resources

Trained officers create the foundation for success, but preparing your chapter means equipping every student from day one.

Back-to-School resources help you embed SkillsUSA into classroom instruction and support the implementation of the Program of Work. From promotional posters, event materials, and classroom scripts to tools for engaging parents and school administrators, these resources provide everything needed to build early momentum and set a solid foundation for the year ahead.

Back-to-School resources support:

- Chapter preparation and organization
- Officer leadership and role clarity
- Intentional recruitment strategies
- Effective chapter meetings
- Early integration of the SkillsUSA Framework

Resources for the 2026–2027 school year will launch in July 2026.

Back to School Resources





BUILD

Expanding Student Membership and Community Support.

Building is about growing a chapter that students want to join and a network that wants to support it. It begins with early visibility and intentional outreach so students, families and industry recognize the value of involvement and feel connected to your chapter.

> Membership Recruitment

Plan Before School Starts

Before promoting SkillsUSA, align on your message and your plan. Identify the top reasons students should join, determine officer and advisor roles in recruitment, and select where and how students will encounter SkillsUSA during the first weeks of school.

Officer Role Guidance

Conversation Cards

Create Visibility Early (Week 1)

Visibility is the first step to recruitment. Students must see SkillsUSA before they can consider joining.

- Table during student organization fairs, high-traffic times like lunch or arrival/dismissal with student officers present
- Use clear visuals with a QR code and a short “Why SkillsUSA?” message
- Collect student interest (name and contact info), even if they are not ready to join yet

Host a SkillsUSA Informational Display Table

Sign Up Sheet

Promotional Poster





Connect SkillsUSA to the Classroom (Weeks 1–2)

Once students recognize SkillsUSA, connect it directly to instruction and career pathways.

- Include SkillsUSA in your classroom syllabus
- Deliver a consistent, short classroom overview or lesson plan
- Ensure the SkillsUSA Framework poster is visible in your classroom

[Sample Course Syllabus](#)

[Bringing SkillsUSA into the Classroom](#)

[Framework Essential Element Behaviors and Definitions](#)

Host a Chapter Kickoff (Weeks 2-3)

Recruitment becomes real when students experience what a chapter has to offer.

- Host a kickoff meeting led by officers and repeat members
- Explain what SkillsUSA is, what members do, and what comes next
- Include a brief, hands-on activity tied to the SkillsUSA Framework

[Meeting Invitation Flyer](#)

[Sign In Sheet](#)

[Chapter Meeting Quick Tips](#)

[Chapter Meeting Guide](#)

[What is SkillsUSA Student Leader Lesson Plan](#)



Convert Interest into Membership (Weeks 3–4)

Follow-up is critical. Students are most likely to join when the next step is clear and timely.

- Follow up within 48 hours of tabling or kickoff
- Provide a reason to join now (training, events, leadership opportunities, competitions)
- Encourage officers to personally connect with interested students

Join SkillsUSA in 4 easy steps

Engage New Members Immediately (Week 5 and beyond)

Retention is part of recruitment. Give new members a reason to return.

- Have students login to SkillsUSA Pathful
- Assign students to committees connected to the chapter's Program of Work (annual calendar of events/activities)
- Meet regularly with members
- Have students sign-up for competitions

Welcome to SkillsUSA Pathful

Program of Work resources

Chapter Meeting Guide

Competitions



> Advisory Committee

An active and purposeful advisory committee can elevate your chapter's success by helping evaluate student skills, providing connections for work-based learning, advocating for resources and ensuring alignment with the current needs of industry. Advisory committees are a cornerstone of successful career and technical education (CTE) programs and SkillsUSA chapters. These committees serve as a bridge between your program and the industries it supports, bringing valuable insights and expertise to the table.

Successful CTE programs with integrated SkillsUSA chapters establish advisory committees to lend structural integrity and support to program instruction and related activities. The advisory committee can assist the SkillsUSA chapter advisor in many activities related to career success, including industry visits, judging local career competitions, conducting mock employment interviews and hiring program graduates.

It is important to note that advisory committees are there to do just that, advise. The ultimate decision of the trajectory of your chapter lies with your advisor, chapter members, leadership team and administration. An advisory committee can help fill knowledge gaps, expand networks and provide professional skills to your chapter.

Advisory committees thrive when they include diverse members who bring valuable insights, expertise and support. Chapter members, including student officers, play a key role in selecting advisory committee members who align with chapter objectives and can offer industry knowledge or mentorship. Once members are selected, it's important to clearly define roles and responsibilities.

To be effective, committees need clear goals, productive meetings and ongoing engagement. When initiating development, start with a committee charter that outlines the group's purpose, goals, roles and operational guidelines, and plan meetings with thoughtful agendas that focus on key chapter initiatives and actionable outcomes.

[Chapter Advisory Committee Toolkit](#)



Advisor Tip: **Advisory Committees**

Establishing or revitalizing a **Chapter Advisory Committee** should begin before the school year starts. Industry and community partners help validate your chapter's message, support recruitment efforts, and strengthen credibility from day one.



CELEBRATE

Recognizing Excellence in the Skilled Trades

Celebration reinforces the value of the skilled trades, recognizes member achievement, and makes workforce development outcomes visible to schools, families, employers and communities.



> SkillsUSA National Signing Day Celebrating Students

Celebrate your students as they take the next step in their skilled trade journey — whether beginning a CTE program, advancing training, or transitioning into the workforce. All chapters are encouraged to host a SkillsUSA National Signing Day event to recognize students and expose business partners, school administrators, educators, elected officials, families, and community members to the value of SkillsUSA and career and technical education.

SkillsUSA National Signing Day helps chapters:

- Highlight student achievement and commitment to their chosen pathway or trade
- Showcase the impact of CTE programs on workforce development
- Build pride and belonging across the school and community

[SkillsUSA National Signing Day Resources](#)

> Chapter Excellence Program

Celebrating Chapters

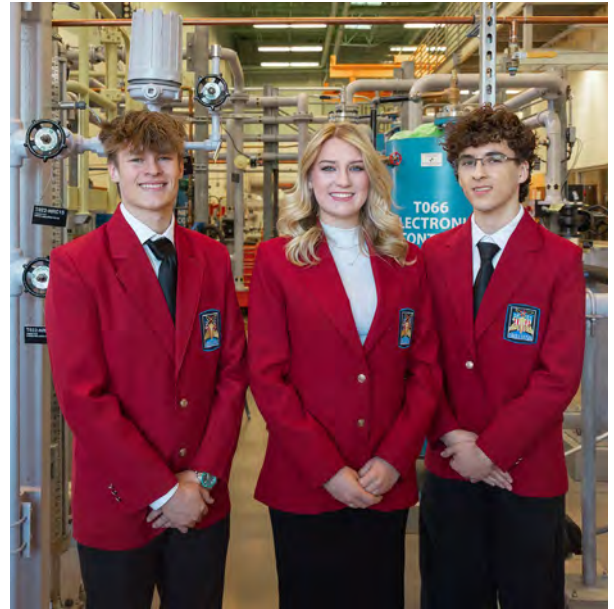
The Chapter Excellence Program (CEP) recognizes achievement as it relates to the integration of the SkillsUSA Framework in chapter Program of Work (PoW) experiences – activities that your chapter plans and actualizes throughout the school year.

CEP is focused on the learning and skills developed by students as a result of chapter involvement versus honoring chapters simply by the number of activities they employ throughout the year. The award application is written and presented in a manner that supports evidence of these findings.

CEP recognition levels include:

- Level 1 – Quality Chapter
- Level 2 – Chapter of Distinction: Bronze, Silver, and Gold
- Level 3 – Models of Excellence

CEP Resources



> Advisor of the Year

Celebrating Advisors

SkillsUSA celebrates advisors through Advisor of the Year recognition and other honors that acknowledge exceptional leadership, innovation, and commitment to student success. These recognitions spotlight advisors who exemplify the SkillsUSA Framework and elevate career and technical education within their schools and communities.

This award is open to advisors of chapters that achieved Level II - Chapter of Distinction in the Chapter Excellence Program.

Advisor of the Year Resources



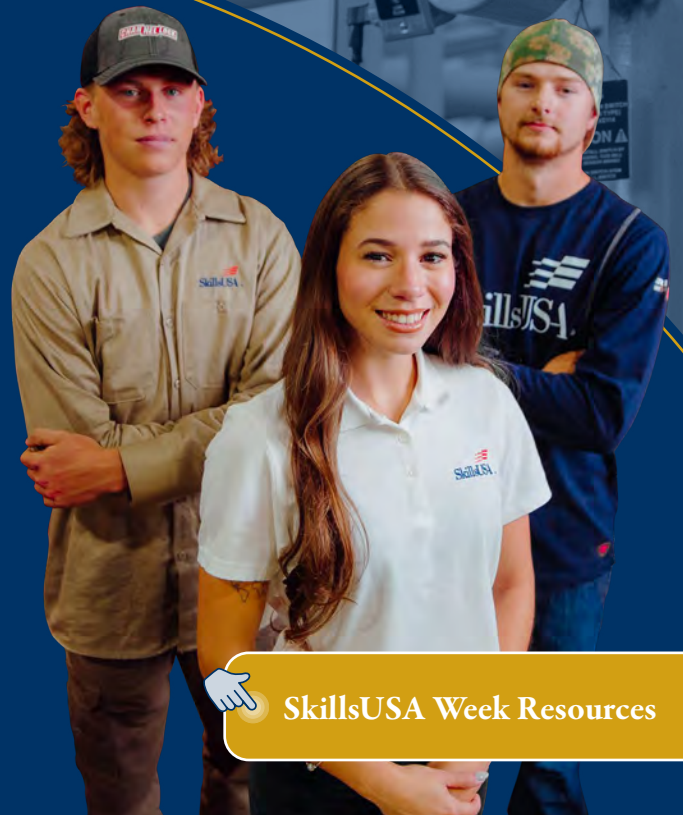
SkillsUSA WEEK

SkillsUSA Week gives chapters a focused moment to elevate career and technical education and skilled careers within their schools and communities.

During SkillsUSA Week, chapters:

- Promote CTE and the skilled trades as viable, high-demand career pathways
- Engage administrators, legislators, and business and industry partners
- Highlight workforce impact and student outcomes at the local and state levels

While SkillsUSA Week is celebrated in February, it represents the culmination of advocacy efforts that occur throughout the year—reinforcing the value of SkillsUSA and the impact of workforce-aligned education.



SkillsUSA Week Resources

Washington Leadership Training Institute

Washington Leadership Training Institute (WLTI) extends that advocacy to the national stage by equipping student leaders and advisors with the skills and confidence to advocate for career and technical education and the skilled trades at the federal level. Participants engage directly with policymakers while strengthening leadership, communication, and civic engagement skills — reinforcing the connection between student voice, workforce development, and national policy.

Click
to learn
more





NATIONAL LEADERSHIP & SKILLS CONFERENCE

SkillsUSA's annual National Leadership & Skills Conference (NLSC) is where the life-changing, future-shaping power of career and technical education shines brightest. Whether you attend to compete, lead, learn, support or all the above, NLSC is designed to help you shine, too. Come shine with us — all of us — at NLSC this June in Atlanta.

[Learn more!](#)



Additional Resources

SkillsUSA Resources Store

For educational materials



[Click Here](#)

SkillsUSA Store

For merchandise and clothing



[Click Here](#)

SkillsUSA Customer Care

Contact the SkillsUSA Customer Care Team!

Team members are ready to answer your questions — you name it, they are ready to tackle it! Agents are on call on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. (ET), and Tuesday and Thursday from 8 a.m. – 7 p.m. (ET).

Contact SkillsUSA Customer Care:



Phone: 844-875-4557



Email: customercare@skillsusa.org



Chat: Available via the membership registration page





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