



 | chapter excellence  
program

# Chapter Excellence Program

Advisor Guide

  
SkillsUSA®



**Chaper Excellence Program**  
Advisor Guide

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# CEP Advisor Guide

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SkillsUSA Chapter Excellence Program (CEP) offers a structured approach to building high-quality local chapters. The program focuses on intentional integration of the SkillsUSA Framework’s Essential Elements into chapter activities. The Framework includes personal skills, workplace skills, and technical skills grounded in academics.

CEP creates a pathway for students to develop and demonstrate these skills in a measurable, purposeful way. CEP is more than recognition. It is a tool to ensure that every student in a SkillsUSA chapter receives consistent opportunities to grow. Chapters that participate follow a set process and have the opportunity to be recognized at local, state, and national levels.

## How Does My Chapter or Section Get Involved?

Every chapter or section with paid student and professional membership is eligible to participate in CEP. To fully benefit, chapters in your state are encouraged to participate in CEP on an annual basis. **Participation is free!**

For active chapters, this is an opportunity to be recognized. For those who are not active, this is incentive to become active. The **CEP application** is housed on the membership registration site. It is an online application that is easy to complete and save within the registration system.

## How Are Chapters or Sections Recognized?

CEP focuses 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.

Active chapters can earn awards for what they are already doing, while newer or less active chapters can use CEP's clear requirements to get started.

### Recognition Levels:

#### LEVEL 1

**Quality Chapter:** Chapters that meet basic standards.

#### LEVEL 2

**Chapter of Distinction:** Bronze, Silver, Gold awards for chapters exceeding basic standards.

#### LEVEL 3

**Models of Excellence:** Top 24 national chapters demonstrating exemplary programs and outcomes. At the heart of CEP is the Program of Work (PoW). This is the chapter's annual action plan that aligns activities with the Framework's skills. When executed with intention, the PoW becomes more than a calendar of events, it becomes the bridge between classroom learning and industry expectations.

## What Recipients Receive:

### QUALITY CHAPTER AWARD

#### (LEVEL 1)

- Each chapter fulfilling the Quality Chapter Award (Level 1) will receive a certificate.
- Recognized at the state level.
- Digital Badging.

### CHAPTER OF DISTINCTION AWARD

#### (LEVEL 2)

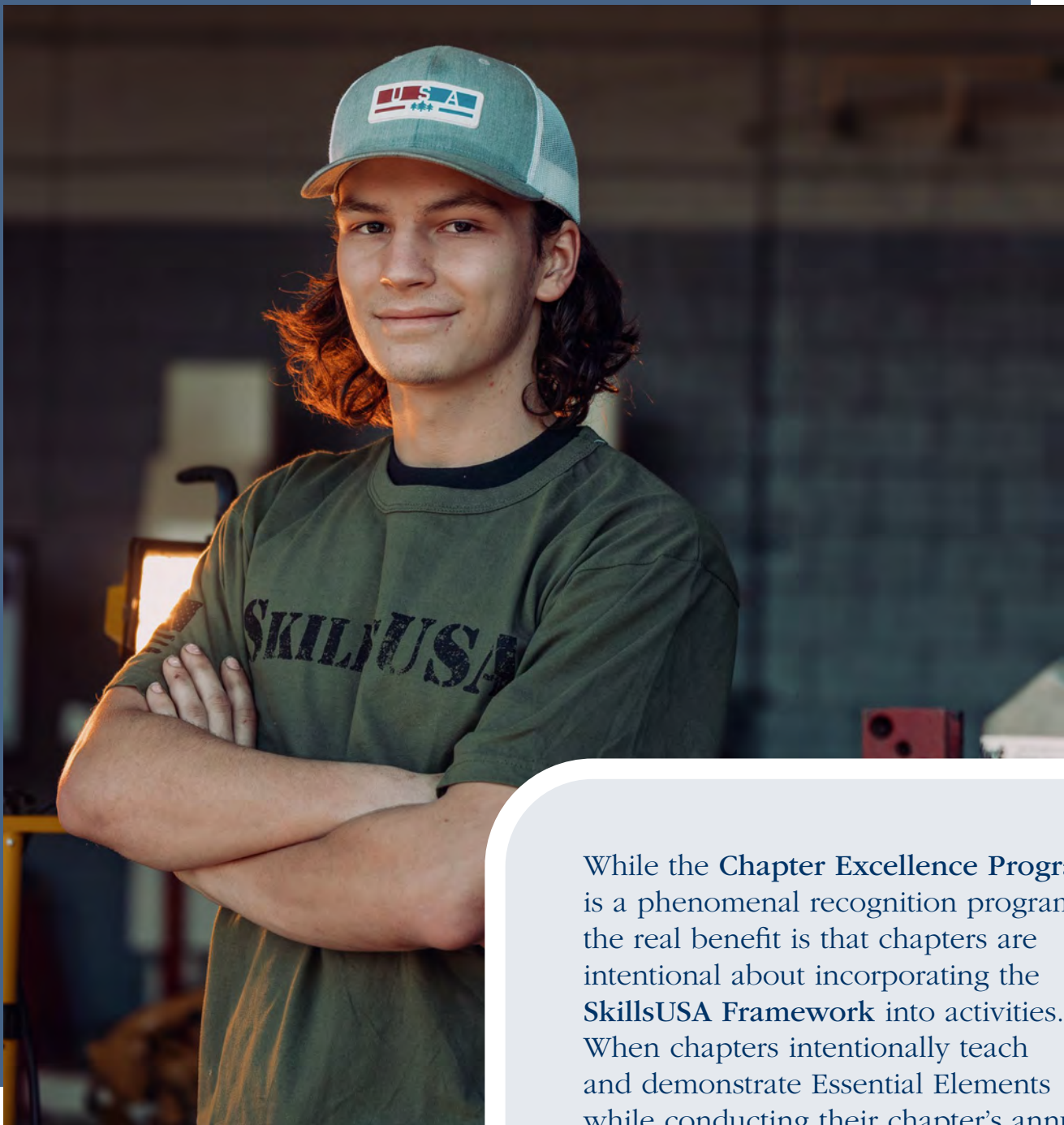
- Each chapter will receive the Quality Chapter Award plus an opportunity to compete for gold, silver and bronze status.
- Gold, silver and bronze winners will receive a certificate.
- Advisor lapel pin.
- Recognized at the state level.
- Digital badging.
- Gold winners will also receive:
  - A display banner.

### MODELS OF EXCELLENCE AWARD

#### (LEVEL 3)

- Each chapter will receive the Quality Chapter Award certificate.
- Gold Chapter of Distinction recognition items, plus:
  - Large award banner.
  - Award plaque.
  - Recognized during the NLSC Awards Ceremony.
  - \$2,000 chapter grant.
  - Digital Badging.





While the Chapter Excellence Program is a phenomenal recognition program, the real benefit is that chapters are intentional about incorporating the **SkillsUSA Framework** into activities. When chapters intentionally teach and demonstrate Essential Elements while conducting their chapter’s annual calendar of activities, known as the **Program of Work**, a lasting impact on the development and attainment of student success is made, and a powerful school-to-work connection is created. When students can articulate their growth in workplace readiness, the Program of Work becomes a game changer!



## Apply for CEP:

The phases below will assist you and your chapter in implementing the process.

- ✓ Phase 1 - The Challenge
- ✓ Phase 2 - Teaching the SkillsUSA Framework
- ✓ Phase 3 - Teaching and Assessing the Needs of the Members
- ✓ Phase 4 - Identifying the Targeted Essential Elements
- ✓ Phase 5 - Review Last Year's Program of Work
- ✓ Phase 6 - Develop a Program of Work for the Current Year
- ✓ Phase 7 - Write SMART Goals for Essential Element Growth and PoW Activities
- ✓ Phase 8 - Develop and Implement Plan of Action for Each PoW Activity with the Target Essential Elements
- ✓ Phase 9 - Evaluate Essential Element Growth and PoW Activities Goals
- ✓ Phase 10 - Celebrate Success

## PHASE 1 – THE CHALLENGE

The United States continues to face a shortage of skilled workers. Employers consistently report difficulty finding candidates with the right technical abilities combined with essential employability skills. Current national data highlights that a large majority of employers identify professionalism, communication, adaptability, and teamwork as high-demand skills. Check the SkillsUSA Framework; all of these skills are defined as Essential Elements within it.

The shortage of skilled workers presents a significant opportunity for career and technical education programs. By teaching the Framework, SkillsUSA chapters can address these needs and ensure members develop technical expertise while also mastering the personal and workplace skills employers require.

Today's challenge for CTE teachers and SkillsUSA advisors is to offer all students a complete menu of:

- Technical knowledge and skill.
- Reinforcement of academic knowledge and skills through technical instruction.
- Opportunities for development and demonstration of Framework skills.





### PHASE 3 – TEACHING AND ASSESSING THE NEEDS OF MEMBERS

After the chapter officers understand the Framework and Essential Elements, it is important that they share that information with the chapter members. Visit the [Chapter of Excellence Program page](#). Have the officers use the SkillsUSA [Framework Lesson Plan](#) to educate the members on the Framework and prepare them for the Framework assessment for chapter members. Have the members complete the [Essential Element Assessment](#). This will assist members in identifying the Essential Elements to target for the coming year and some potential activities to help members develop and demonstrate the targeted Essential Elements.

### PHASE 4 – IDENTIFYING THE TARGETED ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

Advisors compile results to identify strengths and areas for improvement. Targeted Elements should be chosen, one from each category: Personal, Workplace, Technical. The selected Essential Elements guide Program of Work (PoW) activities. The PoW serves as the delivery mechanism for activities. Every event or project should provide members with opportunities to practice and demonstrate these targeted Essential Elements. Use the [Essential Element Focus Worksheet](#) to guide your work and keep your attention on the Essential Elements you've chosen.

### PHASE 2 – TEACHING THE SKILLSUSA FRAMEWORK

Advisors first teach the SkillsUSA Framework to chapter officers. This ensures that student leaders understand each Essential Element. Officers then pass on this knowledge to chapter members. Officer Training can include lesson plans from the [SkillsUSA Framework Fundamentals activities](#), [Thumball tools](#), and the [Ignite resource](#). These materials help students connect activities to skill development.

When the chapter officers have a good understanding of the Essential Elements, have them complete the [Essential Element Assessment](#). Discuss the assessment results with the officers to ensure understanding.

## PHASE 5 – REVIEW LAST YEAR’S PROGRAM OF WORK

Chapters with an existing PoW should review last year’s activities. Consider which activities met expectations, were enjoyed by members, and helped develop targeted Essential Elements. Use a rubric to decide what to keep, modify, or remove. For new chapters, this phase is skipped.

## PHASE 6 – DEVELOP A PROGRAM OF WORK THE CURRENT YEAR

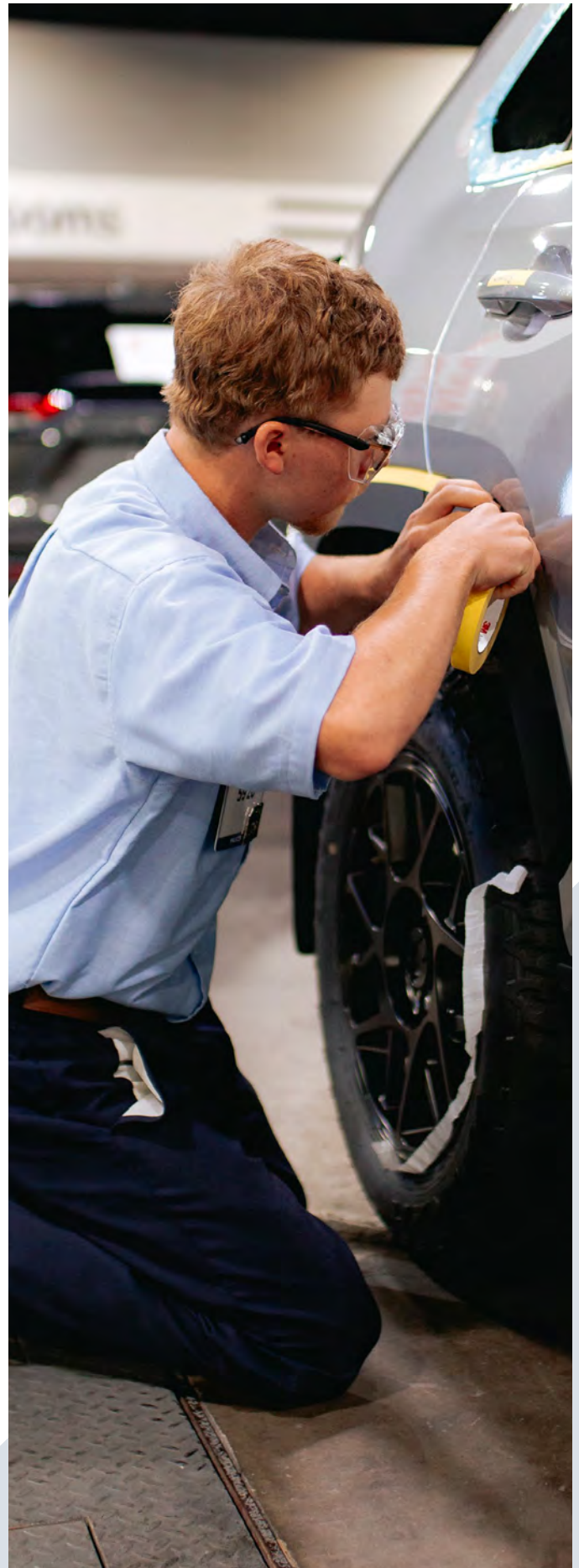
Brainstorm possible activities that will allow members to practice each targeted Essential Element. Involve all members in idea generation. Categorize activities into the six national PoW areas: Advocacy and Marketing, Community Engagement, Financial Management, Leadership Development, Partner and Alumni Engagement, and Workplace Experiences. Assign budgets and timelines. Use the [Chapter Program Management Tool](#) to keep the plan organized.

## PHASE 7 – WRITE SMART GOALS FOR ESSENTIAL ELEMENT GROWTH AND POW ACTIVITIES

Each PoW activity must have one SMART goal for Essential Element outcome (skill growth) and at least three SMART goals for activity outcomes. SMART goals are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound. Utilize this [SMART Goals Lesson Plan](#) and [need link [SMART Goal Form](#) to get started.

### Examples:

- Essential Element Outcome SMART Goal:
  - One hundred percent of the students who participate in the Christmas Tree sales fundraiser will demonstrate three customer service skills as outlined in the activity handbook and assessed by a peer review by the end of the sales period, Dec. 23, 2019.
- Activity Outcome SMART Goal:
  - One hundred community members will attend the Veterans Appreciation breakfast on Nov. 11, 2019.



## PHASE 8 – DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT PLAN OF ACTION FOR EACH POW ACTIVITY WITH THE TARGET ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

Once the committees have established activity goals, the next phase is to develop a plan of action for each activity of which they are responsible. Plans should answer/include:

Identify how/why you chose the FW/EE and activity of focus.

- What EE content will be taught and how will the EE content be taught?
- Who will perform the duties to meet the four goals (committee and individual assignments)?
- What will need to be accomplished to meet the four goals?
- The timeline for completing assignments which meet the goals. Identify where the activity will take place.
- The activity budget.

Activities must intentionally include opportunities for members to apply the targeted Essential Elements. Implementation of the plan of action is next! Chapter leaders will demonstrate the Essential Element skills as they implement the Program of Work.

## PHASE 9 – EVALUATE ESSENTIAL ELEMENT GROWTH AND POW ACTIVITIES GOALS

Each activity must be evaluated utilizing a detailed criteria applied in the CEP Rubric. A complete evaluation clearly states the purpose of the activity, what was accomplished, and the specific impact on members and community. Response clearly states and describes how students demonstrated or mastered the Essential Element of the Framework component. Determine if SMART goals were met. Identify what worked, what could improve, and how well members demonstrated targeted skills. Feedback methods may include peer review, self-assessment, community surveys, and advisor observation. Reflection is an important part of this phase. Members should be able to describe how they applied the Essential Elements and how they grew as individuals.

## PHASE 10 – CELEBRATING SUCCESS

Celebrating success reinforces achievement and motivates future involvement. Chapters can recognize members during meetings, school announcements, bulletin boards, and community events. Thank-you notes, appreciation circles, and social activities can also build morale. Celebrations should connect back to the Framework to remind members why their work matters.

### Advisor Action Steps

1. Review this CEP guide and linked resources.
2. Plan officer training to introduce the SkillsUSA Framework.
3. Facilitate member learning and assessments to identify targeted Essential Elements.
4. Guide members through PoW creation with SMART goals and action plans.
5. Ensure evaluation and celebration are built into every activity.

### Conclusion

SkillsUSA CEP gives advisors and students a clear path to creating a purposeful chapter. Through intentional planning, consistent skill application, and reflection, members become career-ready and gain recognition for their achievements. Chapters that fully embrace the process will see measurable growth in member abilities, chapter performance, and community impact.

The details for the CEP program can be found at: <https://www.skillsusa.org/programs/chapter-building/chapter-excellence-program-cep/>

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## RESOURCES

[Essential Element Focus Worksheet](#)

[SkillsUSA Framework Fundamentals activity guide](#)

[Thumball Essential Elements Activities](#)

[Ignite Essential Elements Activities](#)

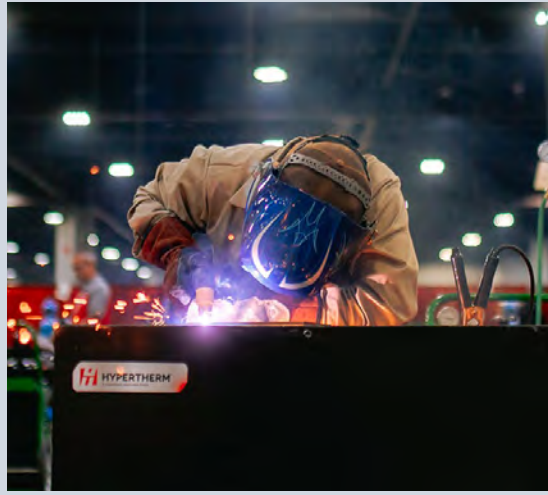
[Essential Element Assessment](#)

[Chapter Program Management Tool](#)

[SMART Goal Form](#)

[SMART Goals Lesson Plan](#)





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