

Dear SkillsUSA Advisor, (SkillsUSA 2025-2026 #11)

Item #1: **ACTION ITEM!** Membership Deadline Extension to February 20

We know that the extreme winter weather in Maryland continues to negatively impact school schedules and calendars across the state. To allow more time for chapters to register their members, the membership registration deadline will be extended to **Friday, February 20, 2026**.

Item #2: **ACTION ITEM!** State Officer Application Deadline Extension to February 20

The deadline to submit state officer applications will be extended to Friday, **February 20, 2026**. Please encourage your most involved and motivated chapter officers to run for state office!

The application is located here: <https://www.new.mdskillsusa.org/state-officers/>

Item #3: **ACTION ITEM!** 2026 State Championship Registration is Open!

The State Championship registration platform is open. Continue registering students participating in “straight-to-states” competitions that do not require a qualifying regional competition. Registration changes (add/drop) can still be made until the March 13 deadline, so don’t please don’t wait until the last minute to register all your students! See more information on the state association website: <https://www.new.mdskillsusa.org/state-conference/>

Item #4: State Championship Contest Locations Update

The current plan is to keep as many state contests in the same locations as last year. With that said, we won’t have a complete list of contests to be facilitated during the 2026 State Championship until after the **March 13** registration deadline. Here are a few contest location changes we can share now:

Automotive Refinishing Technology – moving to Carroll CTC, Saturday 4/18

Collision Repair Technology – moving to Carroll CTC, Saturday 4/18

Collision Damage Appraisal – moving to Carroll CTC, Saturday 4/18

Plumbing – moving to the Carroll Agriculture Center, Saturday 4/18

Welding – moving to Carroll CTC, Friday afternoon (start time tba) 4/17

Welding Fabrication – moving to Carroll CTC, Saturday 4/18

Item #5: Travel Grants Available for Immersive Experience: Construction During National Conference (NLSC)

SkillsUSA is offering travel grants for the Immersive Experience: Construction at the 2026 National Leadership & Skills Conference. This hands-on program allows students to earn credentials, visit active job sites and network with industry pros. To ensure all states have an equal opportunity to participate, grant applications are being released in two phases. Check the website today to see the timeline and secure funding for your students! [Learn more and apply here.](#)

Item #6: Outstanding Career and Technical Educator Award: Nominations Open

The Outstanding Career and Technical Educator Award honors educators who exemplify excellence in CTE and meaningful engagement with SkillsUSA. Nominees may be put forward by peers, colleagues, supervisors, or students, and are selected based on their impact in education and contributions to SkillsUSA across local, state, and national levels. Award recipients are recognized during the National Leadership & Skills Conference.

Nominations are due by March 1. More information and the nomination form can be found at www.skillsusa.org/recognition/awards-programs/. For questions or support with the nomination process, contact Chris Anderson at pd@skillsusa.org.

Item #7: Honorary Life Membership Award: Nominations Open

The SkillsUSA Honorary Life Membership Award recognizes individuals whose long-standing service has advanced the mission and impact of SkillsUSA at the local, state, and national levels. This honor is reserved for professional members who have demonstrated exceptional commitment to the organization and to career and technical education. Recipients are recognized during the Recognition Session at the National Leadership & Skills Conference.

Nominations are due by March 1. More information and the nomination form can be found at www.skillsusa.org/recognition/awards-programs/. For questions or support with the nomination process, contact Chris Anderson at pd@skillsusa.org.

Item #8: Advisor of the Year – Educator Update

The SkillsUSA Advisor of the Year (AOY) program is an opportunity to recognize educators who are making a lasting impact on students by bringing the SkillsUSA mission to life every day. Advisors play a critical role in empowering students to become skilled professionals, career-ready leaders, and responsible community members through intentional instruction, leadership development, and real-world skill application.

Each state association may recognize an Advisor of the Year. State-level recipients advance to regional consideration, with regional winners interviewed during NLSC and one national Advisor of the Year selected. The application deadline is set by each state association.

Eligibility for Regional and National Consideration

To be eligible beyond the state level, advisors must:

Be a paid, Professional SkillsUSA member in the current school year

Lead a chapter that has achieved at least Level 2 in the SkillsUSA Chapter Excellence Program during the current school year

Application Focus Areas

Advisor of the Year applications center on how educators:

Demonstrate their philosophy on career and technical education and SkillsUSA Framework skill development

Intentionally integrate the SkillsUSA Framework into classroom instruction and chapter activities

Communicate student skill development aligned to the SkillsUSA Framework

If you are interested in being considered or would like more information about your state's selection process, contact your State Director. For general questions, please reach out to Mary Kavan at pd@skillsusa.org.

Thank you for the work you do to support students and strengthen SkillsUSA programs across the nation.

Item #9: Hershey Heartwarming Young Heroes Grants Application Open Now Through March 15

In partnership with The Hershey Company, YSA will award [Hershey Heartwarming Young Heroes Grants](#) for Youth Service Month (April 10 - May 10, 2026) & Global Youth Service Day (April 24-26, 2026) projects and events.

Youth changemakers - ages 5 to 25 - in the U.S. and Canada are eligible to apply for these grants to lead and engage their peers in awareness, service, and philanthropy projects or youth voice, leadership, and advocacy events in their communities.

This year, youth may apply for grants of \$250, \$500, or \$1,000 depending on the number of youth who will be participating as project volunteers or event participants. A total of \$50,000 in grants will be awarded.

Grant options include:

\$250 – at least 25 youth project volunteers / event participants

\$500 – at least 50 youth project volunteers / event participants

\$1,000 – at least 100 youth project volunteers / event participants

We're looking for ideas straight from your heart that build meaningful connections and create more inclusive, empathetic, and kind communities. New for 2026, we're also looking to support events that provide opportunities for youth voice, leadership, or advocacy in your community.

[Learn More & Apply by March 15 at YSA.org/Hershey](https://www.youth.org/Hershey)

Item #10: SkillsUSA College/Postsecondary Scholarships Are Open!

Many students are thinking ahead to the cost of college and SkillsUSA offers exclusive scholarship opportunities for members pursuing postsecondary education. Registered SkillsUSA members with upcoming tuition expenses for the fall 2026 academic term can apply for scholarships provided by SkillsUSA and our industry partners.

Scholarships now open include:

Clifford "Ted" Rees Memorial Scholarship (\$2,500, closes April 17)

Fine Homebuilding #KeepCraftAlive Scholarship (\$2,500, closes April 17)

Larry Rash Memorial Scholarship (\$2,500, closes April 17)

Marsha Daves Memorial Scholarship (\$1,500, closes April 17)

NAPA/SkillsUSA Transportation Repair Pathway Scholarship (\$2,500, closes June 30)

National Technical Honor Society Scholarship (\$1,000, closes April 17)

Sharon Melton Myers Memorial (\$1,000, closes April 17)

SkillsUSA partners with Kaleidoscope to provide a streamlined application platform. Students are encouraged to explore the [SkillsUSA Scholarships webpage](#) now to view available opportunities and more will be posted soon. For scholarship questions or assistance in applying, reach out to [Customer Care](#).

Item #11: Share Your Community Service Stories with SkillsUSA!

The [SkillsUSA Champions digital hub](#) provides new content frequently, from inspiring features to stories about the great work chapters and partners are doing. We know your chapters are doing some amazing community service work this holiday season and we would love to write about it. To submit a story idea, send us the details through our [“Submit a Story”](#) link, and we’ll contact you.



Charles S. Wallace

Coordinator, CTE Student Organizations

Division of College and Career Pathways

O: [\(410\) 767-8872](tel:(410)767-8872)

C: [\(443\) 850-8686](tel:(443)850-8686)

charles.wallace@maryland.gov

200 W. Baltimore Street

Baltimore, Maryland 21201

marylandpublicschools.org

