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COVID-19 Crisis Forces Cancellation of All In-Person Events at SkillsUSA's 2020 National Leadership and Skills Conference

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Leesburg, Va. — SkillsUSA, a national student organization serving more than 365,000 students and teachers in career and technical education, has canceled all in-person events

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SkillsUSA was scheduled to hold its 56th annual national conference at the Kentucky Exposition Center in Louisville from June 22-26. The organization's decision aligns with current guidelines from the World Health Organization and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, along with state and federal government mandates discouraging unnecessary travel and large gatherings. Executive director Chelle Travis said in a statement, "The current health crisis we're facing has affected all walks of life and all aspects of SkillsUSA. That includes our National Leadership and Skills Conference. With so much yet unknown about this virus and how long it might affect us, we could not in good conscience move forward with an in-person event this June. There is nothing more important to SkillsUSA than the health and wellbeing of our members, partners and supporters." The national event is also heavily dependent on state participation. A total of 27 SkillsUSA state associations canceled their 2020 state conferences and would not be participating at the national event. When surveyed, other states said they will base their decisions on whether or not their school systems reconvene this year. Travis went on to say that without robust state participation, holding the national conference was not a viable option. The SkillsUSA Championships — the highlight of the NLSC — features more than 100 competitive events organized and operated by technical committees from various industries. Many of these industries are facing travel restrictions that could also limit their ability to participate, which was another factor in SkillsUSA's decision. Travis said she understands — and shares — the disappointment this decision will cause SkillsUSA's students and stakeholders. She insists, however, this is only a temporary setback for the organization. "Our goal is to rise above this disappointment and remember who we are. We will survive this crisis and come through

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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 long 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 366,000 annual paid members nationwide in high schools, colleges and middle schools, 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 427,432. We have served nearly 14 million members since 1965. For more information: www.skillsusa.org.

SkillsUSA Contacts

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 Nine WorldSkills USA team members in navy blazers and stars-and-stripes ties smile on stage at the WorldSkills Shanghai 2026 ceremony, waving small American flags and holding a large U.S. flag, with performers, bright video screens, and gold confetti around them.

September 27, 2026

WorldSkills USA Team Shines in Shanghai, Earns Honors at the 'Olympics of Skilled Trades'

The elite group of young skilled professionals that comprise the 2026 WorldSkills USA team made its mark on the global stage at the prestigious 48th WorldSkills Competition, widely recognized as the "Olympics of skilled trades."

 Image for Apply Now for the ACTE Trade and Industrial Awards

September 21, 2026

Apply Now for the ACTE Trade and Industrial Awards

The Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE), in partnership with SkillsUSA, is seeking nominations for the National Trade and Industrial Education Division Awards to be presented during the annual ACTE CareerTech VISION conference.

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