

Planning Timeline for LifeSmarts State Coordinators

Eight months out from your competition date (July – August):

- _____ Return licensing agreement to NCL
- _____ Identify potential sponsors/supporters; determine who can provide support
- _____ Form a coalition/partnership (e.g. recruitment, funding, logistics)
- _____ Determine location and dates of competition(s), inform NCL by July 31
- _____ Write LifeSmarts questions
- _____ Volunteer to review questions
- _____ Continue recruiting teams and coaches
- _____ Continue to send out brochures about the program

Six months out from your competition date (September – October):

- _____ Continue recruiting teams and coaches
- _____ Continue to send out brochures about the program
- _____ Start raising funds
- _____ Assign tasks to Coalition members

Four months out from your competition date (October – November):

- _____ Confirm location and any equipment (electric, projectors, tables, etc.)
- _____ Order equipment needed (i.e. buzzer systems)
- _____ Contact volunteers by phone, mail or email
- _____ Continue recruiting teams
- _____ Continue to send out brochures about the program

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Two months out from your competition date (December – January):

- _____ Confirm location again
- _____ Develop full schedule of competition day, including how lunch will be handled
- _____ Confirm volunteers by phone, mail or email
- _____ Remind coaches of upcoming online deadline
- _____ Determine public relations efforts
- _____ Approach businesses or organizations for prizes, or order any prizes you need
- _____ Confirm buzzer system order and delivery date
- _____ Optional: turn off ranking system on competition Web page (helpful if you are limiting number of teams per school, or other issues that may arise)

One month (four weeks) out from your competition date:

- _____ When online competition has closed, notify qualifying coaches of location, date, rules and procedures (provide day's schedule if possible)
- _____ Send press release/publicize the participating teams with appropriate media
- _____ Contact location to confirm arrangements and any equipment needed
- _____ Send confirmation/instruction letters to all officials
- _____ Review questions and scripts, tailor as needed
- _____ Collect prizes
- _____ Order trophies (if distributing trophies)
- _____ Print team signs/banners (if using signs/banners)

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Two weeks out from your competition date:

- _____ Create team packets, including: map of the building/location, name badges, name tags for competition tables, a brief overview of the rules for the captains and coaches
- _____ Sign all certificates and arrange them by team (sending your electronic signature to NCL can save you lots of time)
- _____ Confirm all arrangements with participants and teams
- _____ Print programs
- _____ Place food order (if providing lunch/snacks)

One week out from your competition date:

- _____ Send out media advisory
- _____ Create media packets
- _____ Confirm all officials
- _____ Test equipment (buzzers, computer equipment)
- _____ Organize prizes
- _____ Print programs, student name cards and team name cards, if using
- _____ Finalize competition roster and create posters (if possible)

Day before your competition:

- _____ Make follow-up media calls
- _____ Set up room(s), if possible—check lighting, audio, computers, buzzers, tables (make sure everyone, including officials, can see everything)
- _____ Get the phone number of who to call if you have any facility or electronic problems

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Day of the competition

- _____ Check all electronics (microphones, buzzers, computers) as soon as you arrive (get the phone number of who to call if you have any facility/electronic problems)
- _____ If using a caterer or food delivery, call early to make sure they have the date, time and location correct
- _____ Take team pictures (make sure someone writes down who is where in each photo, on front row—left to right, back row....) If possible, make “photographer” a full-day volunteer position—great to get action shots of teams/officials
- _____ Greet volunteers personally
- _____ Prepare a welcome that includes information about rest rooms and event rules (send these out to coaches ahead of time and just emphasize main points)
- _____ Do separate orientations: one for volunteers and officials, one for coaches, students and guests. Keep it brief, but let them know how the day will proceed and share any last minute information.

After the competition:

- _____ Send press release to local papers and other media outlets (don't forget to send a release and photos to NCL and the winning school's local media)
- _____ Send thank you letters to all volunteer officials
- _____ Send the championship and runner-up team forms to NCL
- _____ Work with your winning coach to make travel plans (if you are assisting or paying for the team's travel); keep in touch with your winning coach regarding fundraising activities if your team funds its own trip
- _____ Destroy all competition questions immediately
- _____ Share evaluations with NCL, if using evaluations
- _____ Order savings bonds in the names of the recipients
- _____ Talk with the winning coach about travel to national competition, need to raise funds, and other important information. Give the winning coach the memo from NCL containing details about the national competition.
- _____ Send copies of all programs, invitations, news articles, TV shows, etc. to NCL. These are very helpful in national publicity and fundraising efforts.