



# LifeSmarts

*Learn it. Live it.*

## Varsity National LifeSmarts Championship Coach Memo

2/14/2025

Dear LifeSmarts Coach:

Congratulations! You and your team are invited to participate in the Varsity National LifeSmarts Championship, April 24-27, 2025, in Chicago, IL. This is our 31st year of educating teens to be smart, confident consumers. We expect to have strong competition combined with a lot of fun!

The LifeSmarts National Championship is an educational event through which everyone learns, expands their experiences and opportunities, meets new friends, and has fun while exploring a new area of the country. As a coach, you play an important role to ensure that your team members enjoy and benefit from the experience. This packet of information will help you prepare for the National Championship. Please read everything carefully, and if you have questions, please let us know.

### Coach Zoom Meetings:

Prior to the LifeSmarts National Championship, we will host two Zoom meetings to answer questions for coaches. The same information will be covered in both Zoom meetings, so plan to join us for the one that best fits your schedule. While they will be recorded, it is best that you join us in person for one of the Zooms. **Note:** Zooms are for Coaches and Assistant Coaches only, not students.

- Wednesday, March 12, 2025 at 5:00 PM Eastern Time  
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82114450560?pwd=X0wAYtSC2zauzvl40zkybjpUNA9whP.1>
  - Meeting ID: 821 1445 0560
  - Passcode: 101366
- OR Tuesday, March 18, 2025 at 3:00 PM Eastern Time  
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88460097010?pwd=BxX3VMdb1rlozdVka7b90bUI6sbiEb.1>
  - Meeting ID: 884 6009 7010
  - Passcode: 659866

**Items included in this packet:**

Action Items	Page(s)	Deadline
Review national information and draft agenda	ALL	Now
Complete online for the National LifeSmarts Championship 1. <a href="#">Team registration form</a> - ALL TEAMS 2. <a href="#">Online release forms</a> - ALL TEAMS (unless previously submitted for your state championship)	2	March 15
Complete 2025 <a href="#">State Champion Team Attendance Confirmation Form and Room Reservation Numbers</a>	2	DUE NO LATER THAN TWO WEEKS following State LifeSmarts Championship & National LifeSmarts Championship Invitation
Team photo for social media due (email to Cherylv@nclnet.org)	11	March 5
Join Coach Zoom meeting (1 meeting required)	1	March 12 or March 18
Make hotel reservation	4	Before March 25 - Do this ASAP for room type
Review student scholarship and team travel stipend opportunities for 2025		Various (Stipend request form due April 7)
Nominate a graduating Senior for the Sarah Weinberg Memorial Scholarship	<a href="#">Website</a>	March 15
Submit Team roll call video	11	April 1
Competition 1: Create an educational Instagram Reel or TikTok video about OTC medicine safety	20-22	March 1- April 4
Optional Online individual topic assessments	23	April 3, April 7
Other Deadlines included throughout this memo as well as provided in weekly Championship newsletter (beginning in late February) for optional individual and team awards and contests		Now

Good luck as you prepare for the National LifeSmarts Championship. We look forward to welcoming you to Chicago!

*Cheryl R. Varnadoe*

Cheryl Varnadoe  
LifeSmarts Program Director  
706-255-9342; [cheryl@nclnet.org](mailto:cheryl@nclnet.org)

## Team Registration:

You must complete the [online registration](#) and [submit your release forms](#) for the 2025 National LifeSmarts Championship to ensure your team's place at the competition. **The deadline is March 15, 2025!**

### Release Forms:

- If you have already submitted the following forms for your state competition, we have them. No need for you to complete them again, unless you have a different student competing at the National LifeSmarts Championship.
- If you have not completed these forms, please complete online prior to the March 15<sup>th</sup> deadline:
  - [LifeSmarts Organization/School Release Form 2025](#)
  - [Coach Permission and Release Form 2025](#)
  - [Student Permission and Release Form 2025](#)

### Registration:

- Your complete contact information, including cell phone number and email address
- Complete contact information for the team's assistant coach, if applicable, including cell phone number and email address
  - Assistant coach must be registered at LifeSmarts.org
  - Assistant coach may not be a student
- Complete contact information for the school or organization your team represents
- Correctly spelled names or preferred names of all competitors
- If student wishes to take an OPTIONAL LifeSmarts topic assessment for prizes, you will need to indicate which topic assessment they would like to take. NOTE: If a student has competed in the National LifeSmarts Championship previously, they must test on a different topic.
  - All topic quizzes will be monitored online on specific dates.
  - Details on dates and times provided later in this packet.
- Flight information or other transportation information.
- Hotel reservation numbers: If you don't have these when registering, please email them to Ryan at [Ryanb@ncinet.org](mailto:Ryanb@ncinet.org) within two days of registration and also provide them on the [2025 State Confirmation Form and Reservation Numbers](#) which is due within two weeks of your National LifeSmarts Championship invitation as a State Champion or Wild Card Champion.
- Special accommodations, including any accessibility issues and any special dietary needs

Please collect all this information and have it ready prior to registration. Contact Cheryl Varnadoe ([Cherylv@ncinet.org](mailto:Cherylv@ncinet.org)) if you have questions about registration.

**Registration must be completed by March 15, 2025**

**Dates of the National LifeSmarts Competition:**

Thursday, April 24- Sunday, April 27, 2025 (Chicago is in the **Central** Time Zone)

**When to Arrive: Registration opens at Noon CDT, April 24**

Plan to arrive in plenty of time to reach the hotel, check- in, pick up event materials at the LifeSmarts registration desk, have your team photos taken according to photo schedule (required of all teams), and be on time for the opening event which begins promptly at 4:00 PM CDT.



**This year, we plan to schedule team photos using your arrival time. The schedule will be shared once registration closes on March 15<sup>th</sup>.**

**When to Depart:**

**All coaches and team members** are required to attend breakfast, the Semifinal and Final matches, and the awards luncheon on Sunday. All teams will receive special awards and prizes at the luncheon. The awards luncheon will end by 12:30 PM. Plan your travel accordingly.

**Travel Arrangements:**

Each team is responsible for making its own travel arrangements. Your state coordinator may be able to assist you with this.

**Hotel Reservations:**

All teams should stay at the host hotel. All competitions and LifeSmarts activities will take place at the hotel.

**Host Hotel:**

Chicago Marriott Downtown Magnificent Mile

540 Michigan Ave, Chicago, IL 60611

Phone: [\(312\) 836-0100](tel:3128360100)

**To Book a Reservation:****[Information to book rooms](#)**

- Rollaways are available for \$40.00 + tax per night
  - Depending on the room type selected in the booking link, guests will be able to add rollways during the booking process.
- Cutoff date is March 25<sup>th</sup>
- Room Rates apply April 22 – 28<sup>th</sup>
- Check-in time is 4:00 PM
- Luggage storage will be provided during Thursday and Sunday events.

## Air Travel

### Flight Discounts:

- [United Airlines](#)
  - Booking Fees waived
  - To make flight reservations online please click on discount code [ZQ92792628](#)
- Delta
  - Please [click here](#) to book your flights.
  - You may also call Conferences and Events® at 1.800.328.1111\* Monday–Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 6:30 PM (EST) and refer to Meeting Event Code **NM46B**

## Ground Transportation

This hotel does not provide shuttle service for either airport.

### O'Hare International Airport

- Distance From Marriott: 15.0 Miles
- Rideshare Average Cost: \$46-\$60
- Cab Average Cost: \$55-\$70

### **Hotel Recommended Airport Transportation:**

- [GO Airport Express](#)
- Per Person: \$32.00 One way, \$62.00 Round Trip
- 800-654-7871

### Public Transportation from O'Hare International Airport

- Train Fare \$2.50, Includes two free transfers within two hours
- The normal travel time on the Blue Line from O'Hare to downtown, is 40-45 minutes.
- Directions:
  - If you are coming from domestic and international flights arriving at Terminals 1, 2 or 3, follow signs in the airport to "CTA Trains" or "Trains to City." These will lead you to the train station. You can walk from the baggage claim to the train in under ten minutes from any of these three terminals.
  - Stay on the Blue Line train for 19 stops and get off at the Jackson stop.
  - Transfer to the Red Line at the same Jackson stop.
  - Stay on the train for five stops and get off at Grand stop. Exit via N. State Street exit.
  - Head north on N State St toward W Ohio Street.
  - Turn right onto E Ohio St- Entrance to the hotel is on this street.

### Chicago Midway International Airport

- Distance From Marriott: 12.1 Miles
- Rideshare Average Cost: \$32-\$47
- Cab Average Cost: \$45-\$61

**Hotel Recommended Airport Transportation:**

- [GO Airport Express](#)
- \$27.00 One way, \$52.00 Round Trip
- 800-654-7871

**Public Transportation from Chicago Midway International Airport**

- Train Fare \$2.50, Includes two free transfers within two hours.
- The normal travel time on the Orange Line to downtown from Midway Airport is 20-25 minutes.
- Directions:
  - The accessible Midway station is situated just east of the airport terminal building and is connected to the airport via an enclosed walkway. Follow the signs to “CTA Trains” or “Trains to City” from the airport. An orange line painted on the ground also helps to guide you there.
  - Take the Orange Line and go 7 stops to get off at Roosevelt.
  - Walk one block West to Roosevelt/State Street and transfer to the Red Line.
  - Go three stops and get off at Grand stop. Exit via N. State Street exit.
  - Head north on N State St toward W Ohio Street.
  - Turn right onto E Ohio St- Entrance to the hotel is on this street.

**Other public transportation stops for the Marriott:**

- CTA (Bus): Michigan & Grand
- Train Station: Union Station (Both Amtrak & Metra)

**Behavior:**

LifeSmarts is a great program because each person does his or her part to make it fun, safe, and educational. Each participant is expected to always be on his or her best behavior. The National Consumers League reserves the right to remove a participant at any point in the program for inappropriate behavior. Should this occur, the participant and their coach will be responsible for making immediate arrangements to travel home at the participant’s expense and will forfeit prizes and awards.

**Coach’s Responsibilities:**

**Each team member under the age of 18 must always be under the supervision of an adult coach.** The coach is the official chaperone of the team and is responsible for overseeing the behavior and activities of all students. Coaches are role models for the team. Coaches, we will have many sponsors with us for the event. Students should be prepared to introduce themselves to, and speak with, these adult volunteers.

Require **all adults** that will travel with your group to **obtain proper child abuse and criminal background clearances** as required in your state. Keep their clearances on file with your school or organization.

**Any damage to the hotel and/or surrounding environment by any participant or guest will be the responsibility of that individual.**

Coaches are responsible for checking the status of student sleeping rooms. Please review proper behavior and safety procedures for traveling with your team. We have compiled a list of [\*Traveling with Teens\*](#) tips here. You may also wish to cover such things as guarding your luggage, hotel safety, elevator etiquette, emergency exits, personal safety in a new environment, curfews, and other important tips.

Please cover this **Code of Conduct** with your entire team:

### **LifeSmarts Varsity National Championship Code of Conduct**

The conduct of LifeSmarts participants, coaches, and assistant coaches (*“coaches and assistant coaches” refers to: teachers, advisers, county extension agents, 4-H program assistants, approved volunteer parent coaches and volunteer coaches*) should reflect positively on the LifeSmarts program and themselves, and uphold the reputation of the organization they represent. Listed below are rules of conduct for LifeSmarts students, coaches, and assistant coaches.

#### **At all times, LifeSmarts students, coaches, and assistant coaches must:**

1. Behave in a courteous and respectful manner, avoiding language or actions that might bring discredit upon themselves, their school, club or organization, other attendees, coaches and assistant coaches, program volunteers and sponsors, and the LifeSmarts program, including unsportsmanlike conduct, speech, or intimidation.
2. Promote LifeSmarts as a positive experience and act as a positive role model for others in dress, voice, attitude, actions, and demeanor. LifeSmarts is fun. Let’s keep it that way!
3. Attend and participate in all parts of the LifeSmarts National Championship. You are expected to be at all provided meals and Championship events.

#### **While participating in LifeSmarts, attendees are expected to:**

1. Abide by all school, club, or organization rules. Students must keep their coaches or assistant coaches informed of their activities and whereabouts. Accidents, injuries, and illnesses must be reported to the team coach or assistant coach immediately.
2. Honor the LifeSmarts academic integrity values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility.
3. Refrain from any actions that could be perceived as cheating, such as seeking help from another student or adult, using technology for unauthorized assistance, plagiarism, fabricating information, or gaining an unfair advantage through dishonest methods.

4. Avoid conduct not conducive to an educational championship. Such conduct includes, but is not limited to: actions disrupting the Championship competitions, association with nonconference individuals, and activities that endanger oneself or others.
5. Comply with the rules of all event facilities. Remember that other guests have rights as well. Noise should be kept at a respectful volume. Individuals or teams will be responsible for repairing or replacing any damaged property.
6. Stay in the lodging room to which they are assigned. Coaches and assistant coaches are expected to conduct room checks, enforce curfew, and to be present during any gathering in a lodging room, whether mixed gender or same gender.
7. Dress appropriately for all National LifeSmarts Championship events.
8. Coaches and assistant coaches are responsible for the supervision of attendee conduct. By competing in LifeSmarts, participants acknowledge their understanding of the Code of Conduct and the consequences.

#### Event Information:

→ Additional team information will be available in [the National LifeSmarts Championship 2025 Team Information Center](#) which will be updated regularly leading up to the event. (School excuse letter, Student of the year nomination links, and much more)

→ Choose Chicago has also set up a [microsite for the National LifeSmarts Championship](#) that includes information about Chicago, videos, recommendations, discounted attraction passes, special offers, and more!

Choose Chicago also has this excellent page that you can use to plan your free time in the city: <https://www.choosechicago.com/things-to-do/>.

#### Teams:

The teams are comprised of the four or five registered students who participated in their state competitions, or won Wild Card bids, and one or two coaches. *Substitutions of students are only permitted by contacting the LifeSmarts program staff.* Four team members must be available to compete at all times.



The LifeSmarts National Championship is an earned invitation. **Additional students from your school or organization are *not* allowed to attend or participate in the National LifeSmarts Championship.**



#### **IMPORTANT: NO GUESTS POLICY**

No parents are allowed as guests unless:

1. Serving as team coach or assistant team coach *or*
2. Parent must attend with child due to medical reasons. (This may require a note from student's doctor.)



**Team Captain:**

The captain of each team is the team leader and spokesperson. The captain will be assigned special leadership duties and is responsible for getting the team to all events on time.

**Competition Format:**

Each team has an equal opportunity to advance to the semifinals and finals on Sunday morning. All teams will compete six times (three head-to-head matches, pre-competition, sister team activity and SpeedSmarts) and team scores will be cumulative through competition mid-morning Saturday. The top 16 teams will advance to the round of 16; once teams reach the round of 16, they must win to advance. The competition format will also be explained in further detail during the coach Zoom meetings (see Page 1), and during the coach and captain orientation. See page 15 for more information.

**Review of Rules:**

During the coach Zoom meetings you will have the opportunity to ask for clarification about rules or procedures. LifeSmarts reserves the right to change the rules at the national event.

**Rulings of Officials:**

Students will have a limited opportunity to challenge open-ended challenge questions using challenge procedures at nationals. Our officials are experts in consumer-related fields and volunteer their time to serve as officials at the national event. The ruling of the head official is final.

**LifeSmarts Mastery Rule:**

Student competitors who are members of a team that wins the National LifeSmarts Championship are ineligible to compete again in Varsity LifeSmarts on the state or national level. These outstanding students are encouraged to stay involved in LifeSmarts as mentors or student / assistant coaches and are invited to become active LifeSmarts alumni.

**Required Attendance:**

All competitors and coaches are expected to attend all competitions and scheduled events including meals. Failure to attend any competition or event will result in disqualification of the entire team and forfeiture of all prizes, awards, and recognition.

**Timing:**

Please see the draft agenda attached to this memo. A final agenda will be published online and distributed at registration and through the Championship app. All events and competitions will begin as scheduled.

**Meals:**

All meals listed on the agenda are included and free of charge for you and your team. These include: dinner Thursday evening, breakfast and lunch on Friday, breakfast and snack on Saturday, and breakfast and lunch on Sunday. All teams and coaches are expected to attend

meals. Official LifeSmarts National Championship nametags are required for admission to meals.

**Saturday Activities:**

On Saturday afternoon, LifeSmarts participants will have the chance to visit the Chicago area. There are great things to see and do, and you will have this time to explore Chicago on your own. Choose Chicago features discount attraction passes, information about Chicago, dining ideas and more. Additional ideas, available discounts, and information will be shared with teams in the weekly *Chicago Chitchat* which will be sent to coaches each week beginning eight weeks prior to the 2025 National LifeSmarts Championship.

**Official Team Photos:**

As mentioned earlier, team photos will be taken on Thursday. Teams must have team photos taken when they register on-site with LifeSmarts. You may dress in school, organization, team or state attire. We will have LifeSmarts related signs as well as organization signs available for photos. Once everyone has registered, we will share the photo schedule with you and your team.

**Sister Teams:**

Each team will be assigned a “sister” team to encourage teens to form new friendships as well as foster cooperation and comradery among the teams. Please bring simple gift items for the members of your sister team. The gifts should be a reminder of your team, your school, club or organization and your state, and should be inexpensive (or free) items. Spend time on creativity rather than spending a lot of money. The gifts will be presented to your sister team at dinner on Thursday night. More information on this will be included in the weekly newsletter. Your sister team will be share with you as soon as possible.

**Door Prize:** We are asking each team to bring one small door prize for the event. This can be something you have had donated. We recommend limiting the value of the door prize to \$10-\$15. Door prizes can be turned in during team registration in Chicago.

**Other Teams:**

After all state competitions are complete, a list of all teams and their members will be available in our conference app. This may help if you wish to contact another coach regarding sharing rooms. We will also post room sharing requests in the [LifeSmarts Coaches Group on Facebook](#).

**Fun Activities to enhance the National LifeSmarts Championship:****Pin Swap:**

Immediately following dinner on Thursday evening, the Pin Swap will provide time for exchanging pins, buttons, stickers, or anything representative of your state with other LifeSmarts competitors. This is optional but it is a fun way to meet and get to know friends from all over the country. Look for free items that represent your state, city or town, or your school or club. Local clubs, banks, businesses, Chambers of Commerce, and state welcome centers

may be able to provide items.

The LifeSmarts Engagement Advisory Panel (LEAP) has planned fun, get-to-know-you activities and contests (with door prizes) to accompany the meal and the pin swap and throughout the Championship. Their goal is to help everyone to relax, meet new friends, and have a great time!

### **Team Photo for Social Media:**

Coaches, please provide us with a photo of your team no later than **March 5**. (*earlier is also appreciated*). This photo will be used on social media prior to the National LifeSmarts Championship. Email the photo to: [Cheryl@nclnet.org](mailto:Cheryl@nclnet.org).

### **Team Roll Call Video:**

Introduce your team to everyone in attendance!

- It should only take your team a few minutes to film and submit this video.
- The team video should be 10 seconds long, with each team member stating their name, and the captain sharing the state, school, or organization you represent.
- We encourage you to wear items that show your team spirit.
- When submitting, use team name and/or state as the “name” of the person submitting.

### **Important Guidelines for your Roll Call Video:**

#### **VIDEO REQUIREMENTS**

- Please keep your video to a length of 10 seconds MAX.
- Have each team member introduce themselves. Please speak slowly, project your voice and enunciate.
- Make sure you say your team name and location.
- Leave 3 seconds before you start speaking and 3 seconds after the last word is said on the video for editing purposes.
- Examples from last year are available at our [Team Information Center](#).

#### **FILMING TIPS**

- Ensure there's minimal background noise. Turning off anything that might interfere with the audio.
- If possible, use an external microphone or the best mic you have to ensure clear sound.
- Do not film this outdoors as the sound does not translate well when played in a ballroom setting.
- Please do not add or use any background music.
- We encourage you to wear items that show your team spirit.
- A little laughter can make your video more engaging and memorable. Keep the energy high and playful; your excitement will be contagious!
- Don't be afraid to get creative!

The Team Roll Call video montage will be played during the Opening Session on Thursday, April 24. Submit your video [here](#) by **April 1**. No late submissions will be accepted.

### Team T-shirt Contest:

This competition is optional. Teams that wish to enter the contest should create T-shirts that include the LifeSmarts name and logo and whatever else they wish to include that is related to the competition. Corporate logos from sponsors *are* allowed on the shirts but the judging focus will be on the t-shirt design. Teams who wish to be included will submit photos of the front and back of their shirt via the entry form by noon on Friday, April 25.

### Team Shirt Competition Criteria

- The team shirts should:
  - Show artistic talent
  - Say “LifeSmarts” and demonstrate LifeSmarts in some way
  - Use non-copyrighted and/or original artwork
- All participants in the LifeSmarts National Championship will be asked to vote for their favorite T-shirt for the “People’s Choice” award
- See the [Team information Center](#) for additional information and the upload form

### Pin Design Contest

Do you like to draw and design? Would you like for your design to be selected as the LifeSmarts National Championship 2026 pin which would be given to participants at the 2026 National LifeSmarts Championship? How about winning a gift card? If you answered YES, then follow the easy instructions and enter your design in the NEW LifeSmarts Pin Design Contest! Deadline is April 1, 2025. Additional details available [here](#).

### Instagram Contest:

Share the Instagram Contest with your team members. **How to participate:** Follow [@LifeSmarts\\_org](#) and include #lifesmarts2025 and #lifesmartsnationals in every post. Share pictures with us of your LifeSmarts in action. Show us funny stories about studying, traveling to Nationals, just hanging out with your team and of course, your best selfies! Posts from April 23 at 9 AM – April 26 at midnight CST will be considered. Winners will receive prizes and will be announced at the awards luncheon.

### Meme Contest:

This is a huge hit every year! Share the meme contest with your students. **How to participate:** Follow [@LifeSmarts\\_org](#) on Instagram and make a Meme about how much you love LifeSmarts. DM your submission to [@LifeSmarts\\_org](#) and tag your entry on your socials with #LifeSmarts2025. Submissions will be posted on the [LifeSmarts\\_org](#) Instagram, and the meme with the most likes by the finals will receive a prize for the meme-maker!

### Student of the Year nominations

Coaches are invited to nominate one senior on their team for special recognition as the LifeSmarts Student of the Year. Nominations are due **April 15**. [Complete the form here](#).

**LifeSmarts Merch**

Again, this year, we will have limited LifeSmarts merch available for pre-order. This year, you will need to allow 7-10 days for the items you order to be shipped to you **before** you and your team travel to the National Championship. Details and web address coming soon!

**LEAP Mentoring Sessions**

Our fantastic LEAP (LifeSmarts Engagement Advisory Panel) teens have many fun and exciting things planned for the National Championship. Prior to the event, they will be hosting Zoom Mentoring sessions with interested teams to allow teams to get to know each other, ask questions and help them feel ready for the National LifeSmarts Championship! Dates and sign-up details coming in the next few days.



## National LifeSmarts Championship 2025 Draft Agenda

*April 24-27, 2025; Chicago, IL*

### Thursday, April 24, 2025

TIME	EVENT	LOCATION
Noon – 4:00 PM	Registration Open	
Noon – 4:00 PM	Team Photos (Team photo schedule based on arrival time)	
4:00 PM– 4:45 PM	Opening Ceremonies <i>Photo taken during Opening Ceremonies: Full Group</i>	
<b>4:45 PM – 5:45 PM</b>	<b>Competition 3: Sister Team Activity</b>	
6:00 PM – 7:00 PM	Opening Dinner with table activities from LEAP	
7:00 PM – 7:45 PM	LEAP activities and Pin Swap	
7:45 PM– 8:15 PM	Group photos: <i>Coach, Captain, LEAP, 4-H, BPA, SkillsUSA, FBLA, FCCLA, SkillsUSA, TSA, Student Government, any states who were not taken earlier</i>	
8:15 PM– 9:00 PM	Internet team orientation (optional for teams who have never used hands-on buzzers)	
8:15 PM– 9:00 PM	Optional games, LEAP Scavenger Hunt	
10:30 PM	Suggested Curfew	

### Friday, April 25, 2025

TIME	EVENT	LOCATION
7:00 AM – 8:30 AM	Breakfast	
7:45 AM – 8:30 AM	Officials Check-in and SpeedSmarts Orientation	
<b>8:30 AM – 9:45 AM</b>	<b>Competition 4: SpeedSmarts</b>	
10:00 AM – 10:30 AM	Officials Check-in and Buzzer Match Orientation	
<b>10:45 AM – 12:45 PM</b>	<b>Competitions 5&amp;6: First &amp; Second Buzzer Matches - Teal Group</b>	
10:45 AM – 11:45 AM	Meta Project Participants Debrief – Silver Group Teams	
1:00 PM – 2:30 PM	Lunch with awards program <i>Photos taken during Lunch include: Seniors, State Coordinators, Volunteer Officials, LifeSmarts Alumni</i>	
<b>2:45 PM – 4:45 PM</b>	<b>Competitions 5&amp;6: First &amp; Second Buzzer Matches – Silver Group</b>	
2:45 PM – 3:45 PM	Meta Project Participants Debrief – Teal Group Teams	
5:30 PM – 6:30 PM	VIP Reception for all sponsors, volunteer officials, and state coordinators	
Evening	Teams On Own	

## Saturday, April 26, 2025

<b>TIME</b>	<b>EVENT</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>
7:00 AM – 8:30 AM	Breakfast	
7:45 AM – 8:15 AM	Officials Check-in and Buzzer Match Orientation	
<b>8:30 AM – 9:30 AM</b>	<b>Competition 7: Third Buzzer Matches</b>	
<b>9:45 AM – 10:45 AM</b>	<b>Competition 7: Third Buzzer Matches</b>	
10:45 AM – 11:20 AM	Snack Break	
	LEAP activities, Trivia, Group photos not taken earlier	
11:20 AM	Announcement of Sweet 16!	
<b>11:30 AM – 1:00 PM</b>	<b>Sweet 16 and Quarterfinal Matches</b>	
1:15 PM – 1:30 PM	Orientation for Semi-Finalists	
Afternoon	Teams on own to explore Chicago	
7:30 PM-10:00 PM	Masquerade Party and Door Prizes: Dance, photo booth and dessert	

## Sunday, April 27, 2025

<b>TIME</b>	<b>EVENT</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>
7:00 AM – 8:30 AM	Breakfast	
7:30 AM – 8:15 AM	Officials Briefing	
8:00 AM – 1:00 PM	Luggage Storage	
<b>8:30 AM – 10:00 AM</b>	<b>Semifinal Matches</b>	
10:00 AM – 10:15 AM	LEAP activities - Kahoot	
<b>10:15 AM – 11:00 AM</b>	<b>National LifeSmarts Championship</b>	
11:00 AM – 11:30 AM	Awards Ceremony	
11:45am – 12:45pm	Celebration Luncheon	

## The National LifeSmarts Championship Format - 2025

### **Goals:**

- All teams compete at least six times
- LifeSmarts conducts an engaging competition that is academically rigorous
- Individual students and teams are recognized for high achievement

### **National Championship Format:**

- *Competition 1:* Before nationals, each team will create and submit an educational TikTok video to share their knowledge of OTC medicine safety. The rubric and rules are included on pages 17-19.
- *Competition 2: Sister Team Competition*
  - Sister teams collaborate on a team activity
- *Competition 3: Team Activity Speed Smarts*
  - Teams meet 10 experts, completing 10 short activities in 75 minutes
- *Competitions 4, 5 and 6: Live buzzer competitions*
  - All teams compete twice Friday and once Saturday
  - All matches are head-to-head
  - Friday matches consist of team-plus and challenge questions
  - Saturday matches consist of team-plus, lightning, and challenge questions
- *Round of 16, Semifinals, Finals*
  - Point totals are cumulative through seven competitions
  - Top 16 teams advance
  - Teams will be seeded
  - After reaching the Round of 16 teams must win to advance
  - Round of 16 and later matches introduce team-link questions
  - Team activities may be added to the semifinal and final matches

### **Other Enhancements:**

- Teams may challenge answers
  - Once during each match, a team may challenge a challenge question and have it replaced with another question
  - New questions are open to the person(s) or team(s) that the original question was available to
- Multiple-choice questions will not be used in live competition
- Scholarships will be awarded to members of top teams
- Gift cards will be awarded to the 5 students who have the top score on the *optional* Topic Assessments in each topic area
- Coaches may be nominated by their students for the LifeSmarts Coach of the Year award
- Coaches may nominate a student for the Student of the Year award
- Teams may apply for and be recognized as LifeSparks Teams
- Other scholarships and awards that must be applied for will be announced at the Varsity National LifeSparks Championship
- Coaches may nominate a student for the Student of the Year award
- Teams may apply for and be recognized as LifeSparks Teams
- Other special contests are conducted as part of the National LifeSmarts Championship. Winners and awards will be announced at Nationals
- Coaches may nominate a student to serve on our LifeSmarts Engagement Advisory Panel (LEAP).



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## 2025 Opportunities for LifeSmarts Teams and Students

### Team Travel Stipends

#### 1. Anti-counterfeiting Digital Poster Contest

What: Using your creativity and knowledge of counterfeit products, your team creates an anti-counterfeiting message in the form of a digital poster that can be shared to peers and the community.

When: Posters Due March 24, 2025

Ten finalist teams who will receive travel stipends will be notified on or by March 28, 2025

URL for more information: [LINK](#)

URL to submit poster: [LINK](#)

URL to apply for travel stipend: [LINK](#)

Travel stipends: 10 \$500 stipends

Sponsor: Amazon

#### 2. OTC Medicine Safety Mentoring team stipend award

What: Using LifeSmarts resources, your team delivers community-based OTC medicine safety presentations to peers, middle school students, or community members

When: Due April 17, 2025 or when all stipend money has been awarded to teams

URL for more information: [Link](#)

Team travel stipend form: [Link](#)

Presentations report form: [Link](#)

Travel stipends: 30 \$500 stipends; teams may request multiple stipends by submitting multiple presentations

Sponsor: Kenvue

#### 3. Pilot /Present New Online Safety Lessons

What: Pilot/present new LifeSmarts lessons on Online Safety; teams present to middle school age students at least once

Coach must attend a 3-hour training.

When: Notify [LifeSmarts team](#) of interest via email; Include Meta Project Interest in subject line  
**Opens March 1**

Travel stipends available: 10 \$1,250 travel stipends plus \$250 stipend for Coach

Stipends for Wild Card Teams; 10 \$1250 travel stipends for the 10 selected teams plus a \$250 stipend for coach

Link to materials will be shared with all twenty teams.

Team travel stipend form: [Link](#)

Presentations report form: [Link](#)

Sponsor: Meta

## Other Individual and Team Scholarships / Awards:

### ▪ **OTC Medicine Safety Mentor individual scholarships**

*What:* design a social media message, presentation, video, game, podcast, infomercial, news broadcast, or any educational product that will communicate the importance of OTC safety to others. The focus should be one or more of the following topics: safe use, storage, or disposal of medicines, not sharing OTC medications, proper dosage, and understanding the Drug Facts label. Your project can review general safety information or have a detailed focus on one aspect. Be creative!

- Use social media platforms such as Instagram, Snapchat or TikTok to broadcast the importance of OTC medicine safety to peers.
- Develop a game, podcast, infomercial, news broadcast, video, etc.
- Mentor younger students with in-person or virtual presentations.
- Design visual displays including posters, infographics, trivia cards, table tents, games, and newsletters for a broad community audience. The type of educational material you create will depend on your audience and where it will be used or displayed.
- Implement and evaluate your project as much as possible prior to the scholarship deadline and/or list what you might do differently next time and other audiences you plan to share the presentation with in the future.
- *When:* Due April 7, 2025
- *URL for more information:* [Link](#)
- *OTC Mentoring Resources:* [Link](#)
- *Scholarship application:* [Link](#)
- *What:* Five \$1,000 post-secondary scholarships;
- *Sponsor:* Kenvue

### ▪ [Sarah Weinberg LifeSmarts Memorial Scholarship](#)

### ▪ [Lisa Hertzberg LifeSmarts Legacy of Leadership Scholarship](#)

### ▪ LifeSmarts Impact Scholarship – Details coming!

### ▪ [LifeSmarts Spirit of Sportsmanship Team Award](#)

### ▪ [LifeSmarts LifeSparks Team Achievement Award](#)

### ▪ Optional Individual Topic Assessments (see page 22)

### ▪ Other contests held at the National LifeSmarts Championship (t-shirt design, Meme, Instagram, and more!)



**Competition 1 – March 1 - April 4, 2025**  
**LifeSmarts OTC Medicine Safety Educational TikTok Video**  
**or Instagram Reel Competition**

Teams attending the National LifeSmarts Championship will participate in Competition 1 before arriving in Chicago. Using the “TikTok for Good” or “Instagram Reel” platform to inspire and encourage a new generation to have a positive impact on the planet and those around them, LifeSmarts teams will produce a 30-45 second TikTok video or Instagram Reel to educate others on over-the-counter (OTC) medicine safety. This activity is worth up to **125** points. Good luck!

**Rules and Instructions**

Contest Overview: Teams will create a TikTok video or Instagram Reel educating teen consumers on some facet of OTC medicine safety and will submit the link through the entry form on the LifeSmarts website. They will also post the video on TikTok or Instagram using the hashtags: **#LifeSmartsOTCMedicineSafety** and **#LifeSmartsNationals2025**.

- Videos must be educational, consumer related and educate teen consumers on OTC medicine safety.
- Videos must feature one of the following themes:
  - Safe use of OTC medicines
  - Don't share your OTC medicines
  - Drug Facts Label
  - Medicine Cabinet Storage / Safety for OTC Medicine
  - Correct Ways vs Incorrect Ways to Take Your OTC Medicine
  - Correct dosage of OTC medicines
  - OTC medicine interactions
  - Wise use of OTC products for sun safety
- Use your imagination and creativity to create a memorable video with a valuable message for others. The video can be anything from humorous to instructional/factual to dramatic.
- You can use current TikTok / Instagram trends such as: Costumes; Costumes with voice-overs, on-screen words or music; Dance challenges and dance challenges with on-screen words; Retro/older music for dancing and dance challenges with voice-overs or on-screen words; Costumes and dance challenges with education added; Skits; I learned this yesterday or when I was # years old (or # of days ago); Yes or No/ True or False; Fact or Fiction; Silent product info or review; Green Screen; Day in the life; (insert subculture here) Tok; Current musicals /movies; We are \_\_\_\_\_. Of course we \_\_\_\_\_;

You forgot something; Checking the status of \_\_\_\_\_ (anything); We all fam; Oops, flipped the camera

NOTE: Remember that the objective is to showcase OTC Medicine education in a fun, creative way.

- Resources [on this page](#) may be used to help your team develop its entry.
- Review educational / informative TikTok accounts such as these for ideas on positive TikTok messaging:
  - [TikTok for Good](#)
  - [America's Favorite Librarian](#)
  - [humphreytalks](#)
  - [theblackfoodscientist](#)
  - [Physicsdude](#)
  - [iteachalgebra](#)
- Review educational / informative Instagram accounts such as these for ideas on positive Instagram messaging:
  - [Edutopia](#)
  - [National Geographic](#)
  - [Tech by Guff](#)
  - [Bright Vibes Media](#)
  - [American Museum of Natural History](#)
- Video length: Limited to no more than 30-45 seconds.
- Video **may not be** altered or sped up to allow more film or speaking content. Ramping or speed ramping is **not** allowed. Videos using this method will be penalized.
- Appropriate sound: As a team you are responsible for using content appropriate for all viewing ages. Inappropriate content such as profanity, questionable gestures, or unsuitable music / lyrics will result in disqualification. Follow [TikTok's Intellectual Property Policy](#) or [Instagram's Intellectual Property](#) so that your TikTok or Instagram Reel will not be removed from either platform.
- Appropriate skit/dance/appearance: If used in your TikTok or Instagram Reel, be certain that appropriate clothing is worn, dances and skits add to your educational content, and all parts are school appropriate.
- Appropriate actions: Remember that this is an educational video. OTC can cover safe storage, best practices for safe use, as well as the effects of potential misuse. We encourage you to portray your ideas in ways that are educational and not overly graphic, if possible.
- These guides may help you in planning, filming and uploading your video:
  - [Influencermarketinghub](#)
  - <https://www.veed.io/learn/tiktok-video-dimensions>
  - <https://www.mediaalacarte.com/post/5-tips-for-making-educational-instagram-reels>

- <https://www.planoly.com/blog/educational-ig-reels-tips>
- To enter the competition, all teams attending the National LifeSmarts Championship must post their videos on TikTok or their reels on Instagram by the deadline of **April 4 at 12:00 midnight EST**.
- Videos submitted after the deadline will have a time penalty subtracted from their score.
- The video or reel must have the hashtags **#LifeSmartsOTCMedicineSafety** and **#LifeSmartsNationals2025** and include team name / organization name in caption. If team is a Wild Card, include official team name and number.
- Teams will complete [the competition entry form at LifeSmarts.org](https://www.lifesmarts.org/competition-entry-form) and include a link to their video or reel and the TikTok or Instagram account name where the video is posted.
- **Important:** The team, school, group, or organization is not required to establish their own TikTok or Instagram account. The team entry may be posted on a student/teen account. We do not expect or require the TikTok or Instagram to be posted on an account created by or owned by a school, organization, club, government agency, or university-system computer.
- Videos or reels will be scored by a panel of judges using the attached rubric.

### **Project Background**

LifeSmarts is partnering with Kenvue to offer the LifeSmarts OTC Medicine Safety Mentoring Project. The project provides study materials for competition and lesson plans and activities for students to share with others, as well as offers community service and leadership opportunities, while reinforcing important safety messages.

## Competition 1: LifeSmarts OTC Medicine Safety

### Educational Instagram Reel or TikTok Video Competition Rubric

Team Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Team Score: \_\_\_\_\_

Theme Team Chose: \_\_\_\_\_ (from themes in contest rules)

Category	Excellent 18-25	Satisfactory 9-17	Needs Improvement 0-9
<b>Creativity and Inventiveness of the Video Presentation</b>	Creative and inventive concepts are evident along with impressive video artistry; the presentation embraces the content and objectives. Embraces TikTok or Instagram Reel format.	Some creative and inventive concepts were included; Video was executed well. Video includes some content and objectives. Somewhat embraces TikTok or Instagram Reel format.	Concepts and artistry of video presentation needs editing or could have been executed better. Lacks creativity and originality and does not enhance the content and objectives. Does not work with TikTok or Instagram Reel format.
<b>Presentation Content Organization</b>	Presentation well-organized. Video used educational references on OTC medicine safety. Content appropriate for all audiences and includes appropriate actions.	Presentation mostly organized. Video partially based on educational references on OTC medicine safety. Content appropriate for most audiences. Actions somewhat appropriate.	Presentation is not very well organized and does not utilize educational references on OTC medicine safety. Content is inappropriate for many audiences. Actions inappropriate for many audiences.
<b>Required Elements and Contest Rules Observed</b>	Both the proper hashtags are used. Video is posted on TikTok or Instagram and labeled correctly. Video is not altered, sped up or speed ramped.	At least one hashtag is used properly. Video was partially labeled correctly and was posted on TikTok or Instagram. Video was slightly altered, sped up or speed ramped.	Hashtags were not used as required. Video was labeled incorrectly and was not shared on TikTok or Instagram. Video was altered, sped up, or speed ramped.
<b>Clarity of Video's message</b>	Video's educational message is clearly heard and understood.	Video's message is somewhat clear, mostly understood, and is educational.	Video's message is unclear and is hard to understand. Video is not as educational as others.
<b>Time Limit / On time</b>	Time limit of 30-45 seconds was adhered to. Video was submitted by contest deadline.	Video was less than 20 seconds in length and/or exceeded the time limit by more than 5 seconds. Video submitted by deadline.	Video was less than 15 seconds in length and/or exceeded the time limit by more than 7 seconds. Video was not submitted by contest deadline.



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## **OPTIONAL** **Online Individual Topic Assessments**

This year, competitors in the National LifeSmarts Championship have an opportunity to test their knowledge and earn prizes by taking an Online Individual Topic Assessment.

Coaches will indicate whether each team member elects to participate or not on the National LifeSmarts Team Registration Form (due March 15). If the student plans to participate, the coach will also indicate the topic assessment the student will take the assessment on.

Important: **If a student is returning to the National LifeSmarts Championship, they may not take an assessment on a topic or topics they tested on previously at Nationals.**

Students will answer 50 questions in 33 minutes.

The Online Individual Topic Assessments provide an opportunity to recognize the top five students in each topic quiz during the National LifeSmarts Championship, and the top student in each topic area will win a gift card.

Students will quiz online on two set dates using Zoom (link will be provided to registered students and their coaches) which will be moderated by the LifeSmarts Program team. Students must have their camera on and will have a special link to access their chosen assessment.

Students may choose one of the following quizzing sessions: Thursday, April 3 at 7:00 PM Eastern; or Monday April 7 at 7:00 PM Eastern

Questions? Contact [the LifeSmarts team](#).