



LifeSmarts
Learn it. Live it.

Smart Start



January SmartStart

Youth and the Environment: Why Youth Voice Matters

Today's young people are at the center of the environmental future. Globally, there are more than 1.2 billion youth ages 15–24, and by 2030, that number will rise to nearly 1.3 billion. This generation will live longest with the outcomes of today's environmental decisions—whether those choices lead to a healthier planet or a more damaged one. While youth are often described as victims of climate change and environmental harm, global leaders increasingly recognize young people as powerful agents of change with the creativity, energy, and passion to help build a more sustainable world.

Youth are already deeply engaged in addressing the "triple planetary crisis" of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution. Many young people are advocating for conservation, raising awareness about climate impacts, participating in global environmental movements, promoting sustainable lifestyles, and speaking out in international policy spaces. At the same time, studies show that environmental concerns are affecting young people's mental and emotional well-being, with many

expressing worry, anxiety, and frustration about the future. Despite these challenges, youth continue to step forward with solutions, innovation, and leadership—demonstrating that empowering young people with education, skills, and opportunities is essential to protecting our planet.

At LifeSmarts, environmental responsibility is considered a critical part of preparing students for real-world consumer decisions. LifeSmarts teaches teens about sustainability, environmental impacts, and smart consumer choices—empowering them to speak up, make informed decisions, and become leaders in building a healthier, just, and greener future.



January Focus: Environment

- [LifeSmarts U – Protect the Planet](#)
- [Cold Water Clean](#)
- New StudySmart Guides:
 - [Closet Smarts](#)
 - [Pollution & Power](#)
 - [Reducing Food Waste](#)
 - [Invisible Toxins](#)

New LifeSmarts U collaborative lessons developed through partnership with Georgia 4-H Specialists and County Extension Agents, LifeSmarts coaches, and LifeSmarts State Coordinators! (*Information from these new lessons will not be included in upcoming State competitions.*)

- [Civic Smarts](#)
- [Foodborne Illness](#)
- [Smart Starts – Paying for College](#)
- [Code Your Future](#)
- [Career Quest](#)
- [Byte Size Farming](#)

- [LifeSmarts Question-of-the-Day Calendars](#)
- [Content Vocabulary of the Week](#)
- [LifeSmarts Interactive Games](#)

Also search the hundreds of resources shared by fellow LifeSmarts coaches on Quizlet, Kahoot, Flippity, Wayground, Cram, Flashcard Machine, etc.



State Deadlines – There is Still Time to Compete for Your State Title!

Many LifeSmarts State Championships qualifiers conclude this month. Be sure to check out the details for your state [here](#) as well as on our LifeSmarts events [calendar](#). Once again, we will be able to provide community service stipends available for the National LifeSmarts Championships to help defray travel expenses for many competing teams. Don't miss your chance to advance to the 2026 Varsity National LifeSmarts Championship, April 15-18, 2026, in Orlando! Contact your State LifeSmarts Coordinator with questions and get started on your path to the 32nd National LifeSmarts Championship. [Contact us](#) if you need assistance or have any questions.

Virtual Junior Varsity National Championship

We will host our third Virtual Junior Varsity National LifeSmarts Championship on May 6-7, 2026. We would love to have your team of students in grades 6-8 compete! Many states do not have an in-person Junior Varsity Championship. Until **March 4, 2026**, teams from those states can test online to qualify for the Junior Varsity Championship. Check your state dates [here](#).

To qualify, at least four students (limit of 5) on your Junior Varsity team should log in to [LifeSmarts](#). Click on the LifeSmarts Competition 2025-2026 folder, which they will see on the front of their dashboard when they log in. In that folder,

students should first take the pre-quiz to unlock the five topic quizzes, then proceed through the five twenty-question topic quizzes. Once those are completed, they take the capstone quiz, located in the same folder. If you have an FCCLA, FBLA, BPA, 4-H, or another team type with students in grades 6-8, you can add Junior Varsity as a team type to that existing team to allow them to compete. NOTE: We require 4-5 students per team. Students can be on only one. You can also create a new team, as students can be on both a Junior Varsity team and another organization team type. You can edit teams and delete or add team members. Be certain to assign a team captain to each team.

We have great prizes for the teams, so why not take advantage of our National Junior Varsity Championship? [Contact us](#) with any questions!

December TeamSmart Winners

Congratulations to the winners of the December Technology & Workforce Preparation TeamSmarts Challenge. Each of these teams has earned a \$100 award!

- Junior Varsity: Eagles - Toby Johnson Middle School – Elk Grove, CA
- Varsity: ML_YNNKD Varsity BPA - Mira Loma High School, CA
- 4-H: Madison County 4-H A – Tennessee
- BPA: Polaris Career Center BPOT Team 7 BPA
- FBLA: HSN Knights FBLA - New Jersey
- FCCLA: Bartlett FCCLA, Bartlett High, Bartlett, TX

SkillsUSA Health & Safety Challenge Winner

Congratulations to the winning team: WHS SkillsUSA Quizbowl, Texas, Wylie High School!

January Environment TeamSmarts Challenge – Last TeamSmarts for 2025-2026 Season

The February Capstone [TeamSmarts](#) Challenge quiz focusing on the environment topic is open until 11:55 PM on January 31. This quiz is open to all teams, so don't miss out on the opportunity for your team to win one of the cash prizes! If you are gearing up for your LifeSmarts State Championship, consider it an extra chance to study with the chance to win \$100 for your school or organization's LifeSmarts team. Prizes will be awarded to the top-scoring Varsity, JV, 4-H, BPA, FBLA, FCCLA, and SkillsUSA teams who have not previously won this season. Join us by competing in January.



Compete in the LifeSmarts BPA Technology & Workforce Preparation Challenge

Business Professionals of America (BPA) teams – Don't forget to complete the January LifeSmarts/BPA Technology & Workforce Preparation Challenge, which offers students an opportunity to demonstrate their skills and deepen their topic knowledge. The highest-scoring BPA Varsity (grades 9-12) and Junior Varsity (grades 7-8) teams will receive cash prizes. **IMPORTANT:** If teams are Middle School students, advisors should choose BPA and JV as the team type. The Challenge is open until January 31. Details for BPA coaches are available [here](#). Reach out to [LifeSmarts](#) if you have any questions.

February - Compete in the LifeSmarts BPA Personal Finance Challenge

BPA teams can compete Feb 1 – 28th in the LifeSmarts BPA Personal Finance Challenge. The highest-scoring BPA Varsity (grades 9-12) and Junior Varsity (grades 7-8) teams will receive cash prizes. Each BPA team has two members, with one serving as the team captain. Chapters may have as many teams as they like. **IMPORTANT:** If teams are Middle School students, advisors should choose BPA and JV as the team type. Advisers / coaches can learn more [here](#) and [here](#). For questions, contact [LifeSmarts](#). Good luck to all our BPA advisers / coaches, students, and teams!

LifeSmarts FBLA Spring Challenge Opens January 26th

FBLA teams – now is your chance to compete in the LifeSmarts FBLA Spring Challenge to earn one of the final 12 spots to advance to the Finals at the FBLA National Leadership Conference in San Antonio in June. The challenge opens on January 26th and closes at 11:55 PM EST on February 20th. To complete the LifeSmarts FBLA Challenge, teams of two high school or two middle school FBLA students (with one serving as the team captain) complete:

1. Two online quizzes together – one 50-question Personal Finance Quiz and one 50-question Consumer Rights Quiz. These are called "TeamSmarts" quizzes because

they are completed as a team. These are only available from the Team Captain's LifeSmarts Quizzes tab.

2. Each of the 2 team members also completes an individual 60-question Quiz that covers Personal Finance and all other LifeSmarts topic areas.

More information on how to register is available in the [FBLA Adviser/Coach Starter Guide](#). Learn more [here](#). [Contact us](#) if you need help. Good luck to all our FBLA teams!



COMMUNICATE

Use service-learning projects to share consumer knowledge in schools, clubs, and communities

Sarah Weinberg LifeSmarts Memorial Scholarship Due March 15

Coaches, please nominate a stand-out graduating LifeSmarts senior for the [Sarah Weinberg LifeSmarts Memorial Scholarship](#). This scholarship is awarded annually to a LifeSmarts participant who demonstrates a commitment to volunteer service work. Scholarship applications are due March 15. One \$500 scholarship will be awarded. Nominate a student [here](#). **NOTE:** Students do not have to be attending the National LifeSmarts Championship to apply.

New LifeSmarts Sizzle Video Contest – Due January 15

Bring the energy! Share the excitement! Show the world what makes LifeSmarts sizzle! The 2026 LifeSmarts Sizzle Video Contest invites teams and individuals to create a short, high-energy LifeSmarts Sizzle Video (also called a hype video) that promotes LifeSmarts in an exciting and memorable way. Videos should make viewers feel the energy, fun, teamwork, and learning that LifeSmarts brings to teens everywhere. Your mission: Make people want to be a part of LifeSmarts after watching your video! Videos should tell a story, capture the excitement, and highlight what makes LifeSmarts unique. Top videos receive cash prizes! Complete entry information and contest rules are available [here](#). Entries are due at 11:55 PM on January 15, 2026.

LifeSmarts LifeSparks Awards

The 2026 [LifeSmarts LifeSparks Awards](#) program is underway, and **all** LifeSmarts teams are invited to participate. Teams that earn thirty-five credits during the 2025-2026 program year will be recognized for their excellence in knowledge, participation, and community engagement. The highest-achieving teams will receive special cash awards and recognition. Credits may be earned through quizzes, lessons, community service, competitions, and additional LifeSmarts activities. Points must be earned by March 31, 2026. Completed applications are due April 5, 2026!

Conscious Consumer No-Essay Scholarship Sponsored by Bold

Today, it's vital to be a conscious consumer — to understand, handle, and make smart financial decisions. This is especially true for students who are building financial literacy skills as they start their careers. The Conscious Consumer Scholarship, hosted by Bold.org, awards \$1,000 to one student who shows strong financial awareness and responsible consumer habits. It is open to learners at any education level, regardless of major or field of study. The application process is simple, and no essay is required. Instead, applicants are introduced to a financial tool, and those who demonstrate "distinct financial consciousness" are more competitive. Deadline is February 1, 2026, and information is available [here](#).

The LifeSmarts Team

[Contact us with any questions!](#)



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CONSUMER RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES



HEALTH & SAFETY



TECHNOLOGY & WORKFORCE PREPARATION



THE ENVIRONMENT

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