



LifeSmarts

Learn it. Live it.

Varsity National LifeSmarts Championship Coach Memo

2/10/2026

Dear LifeSmarts Coach:

Congratulations! You and your team are invited to participate in the 2026 Varsity National LifeSmarts Championship, April 15-18, 2026, in Orlando, FL. This is our 32nd year of educating teens to be smart, confident consumers. We look forward to a strong and engaging competition paired with plenty of fun!

The Varsity National LifeSmarts Championship is an educational experience where participants learn, broaden their perspectives, build new connections, and have fun while exploring a new part of the country. As a coach, you play a vital role in ensuring your team members gain the most from this experience. This information packet is designed to help you prepare for the National Championship. Please review it carefully, and reach out to us if you have any questions.

Coach Zoom Meetings:

Prior to the National LifeSmarts 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 11, 2026 at 5:00 PM Eastern**
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88083655046?pwd=5FRu4q6kwuklrEz4lprhZUQS1OWEs.1>
 - Meeting ID: 880 8365 5046
 - Passcode: 541299
- **OR Monday, March 16, 2026 at 3:00 PM Eastern**
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89348911125?pwd=bNFNUtTmU1RRsmOnal3wUDciCioDxd.1>
 - Meeting ID: 893 4891 1125
 - Passcode: 881853

Items included in this packet:

- Event Information for all teams
 - General Information Pages 2-4
 - Event Tentative Agenda Pages 15-16
 - Behavior and Coach Responsibilities Page 11
 - Code of Conduct Page 12-13
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- Required registration, hotel, travel, pre-competitions, events, activities
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- Calendar of due dates - This is available in the [Team Information Center](#) online **which opens officially on Thursday, February 12th**.

Good luck as you prepare for the National LifeSmarts Championship. We look forward to welcoming you to Orlando! Please reach out to our team with any questions.

On behalf of our entire LifeSmarts team,

Cheryl R. Varnadoe

Cheryl Varnadoe
LifeSmarts Program Director
706-255-9342; cherylv@nclnet.org

General Event Information:

Additional information for teams will be available in the [National LifeSmarts Championship 2026 Team Information Center](#), launching Thursday, February 12th which will be updated regularly leading up to the event. (School excuse letter, Student of the Year nomination links, and much more!)

Dates of the National LifeSmarts Competition:

Wednesday, April 15- Saturday, April 18, 2026 (Orlando is in the Eastern Time Zone)

When to Arrive: Registration opens at 10:00 AM on Wednesday, April 15th, 2026

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 coach and captain introductory meeting at 4:30 PM followed by the opening event which begins promptly at 5:00 PM Eastern.

Again, this year, we will schedule team photos using your arrival time. The schedule will be shared once all teams have registered and shared their travel plans.

Teams may share their travel information on the registration form if available. If not available at the time of registration, please fill out this [form to share your travel plans](#). Deadline to share travel plans is March 18, 2026, but let us know if

When to Depart: Following Awards Luncheon on Saturday, April 18th

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

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 guests are permitted at the event. This includes siblings, relatives, friends who may live in town, etc.

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 Saturday morning. All teams will compete seven times (three head-to-head matches, 2 pre-competitions, sister team activity, and SpeedSmarts) and team scores will be cumulative through competition mid-morning Friday. 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 video orientation. See page 17 for more information.

Review of Rules:

During the coach Zoom meetings we will go over the competition rules. 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. We encourage these students to stay involved in LifeSmarts as mentors and 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.

Agenda:

Please see the draft agenda attached to this memo. A final agenda will be published online and distributed through the Championship app which will be available soon. 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 Wednesday evening, lunch on Thursday, box lunch on Friday, and lunch on Saturday. All teams and coaches are expected to attend meals. Official LifeSmarts National Championship nametags are required for admission to meals.

To save on food waste, we will not be offering breakfast this year. There are several places in the hotel where breakfast can be purchased including Starbucks. Students can also choose to bring breakfast bars or similar items with them plus Instacart, Uber Eats, Door Dash and other food and grocery delivery services are available in Orlando.

We do plan to have a coffee room for Coaches, Assistant Coaches, Sponsors and Volunteer Officials.

Friday Afternoon Activities:

On Friday afternoon, LifeSmarts participants will have the chance to visit the Orlando area. There are great things to see and do, and you will have this time to explore Orlando on your own. Our National LifeSmarts Championship microsite from "[Visit Orlando](#)" includes information about Orlando, videos, recommendations for dining and things to do, discounted attraction passes, special offers, and more!

- Half day tickets for Disney Parks can be purchased at the hotel. Half day tickets are not available on the website listed below. Prices will be posted in the Team Information Center. We will share information on prices at our Team Information Center.
- Universal offers half day discount tickets on the LifeSmarts event page on the "[Visit Orlando](#)" website.

Additional ideas, available discounts, and information will be shared with teams in the weekly *Orlando Outlook* which will be sent via email to coaches and assistant coaches beginning six weeks prior to the 2026 National LifeSmarts Championship.

Official Team Photos:

As mentioned earlier, team photos will be taken on Wednesday. Teams must have team photos taken when they register on-site with LifeSmarts. You may choose to 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.

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 15 seconds MAX. this does not include the 3 seconds prior and after (See below)
- 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 **March 25th**. No late submissions will be accepted.

Team 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 Orlando.

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 or contact your sister team coach. We will also post room sharing requests in the [LifeSmarts Coaches Group on Facebook](#).

You must submit your **release forms** and complete the **online registration** for the 2026 National LifeSmarts Championship to ensure your team's place in the competition as well as receive the information to reserve your hotel rooms in our block . **The deadline to register is March 5, 2026!**

Release Forms:

If you have already submitted the following forms for your state competition, we have them. There is 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 5th deadline:
 - [LifeSmarts Organization/School Release Form 2026](#)
 - [Coach Permission and Release Form 2026](#)
 - [Student Permission and Release Form 2026](#)

Team Registration:

Team registration should be completed as soon as possible but no later than **March 5, 2026 at midnight Eastern. An email confirmation will be emailed to you with the hotel booking information as soon as you complete your registration.**

Please collect all this information and have it ready prior to 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 current student
- Complete contact information for the school or organization your team represents
- Correctly spelled names or preferred names of all competitors as well as their high school grade, cell phone, and email.
- 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, provide them via [this form](#) by *March 15th*.
- 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@nclnet.org) if you have questions about registration.

Registration must be completed by Midnight Eastern on March 5, 2026

Travel Arrangements – Hotel reservations, Travel Discounts, Ground Transportation:

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:

JW Marriott Orlando Grande Lakes
4040 Central Florida Parkway, Orlando,
Florida, 32837

Booking your room:

Each LifeSmarts team may book up to four rooms (One for the Coach, one for the Assistant Coach, and two rooms for students).



Information to book rooms will be emailed to the team coach once registration is completed for your team.

- If the email does not arrive after you have completed registration, please check your junk email.
- Cutoff date to book rooms is March 26th
- Room Rates apply April 13– 18th.
Check-in time is 3:00 PM. If you use the Marriott app you can select an earlier time and receive advance notification if the room is ready.
- Luggage storage will be provided during Wednesday and Saturday events.

Room Rate:

Double-Double: \$269.00 plus tax, plus a reduced resort fee of \$40 which currently includes the following amenities: daily enhanced in-room high speed internet access, Fitness Center access and Classes (2 guests, one class per day per room), Mountain Bike Rental (two bikes for one hour per day per room), Range balls at the Driving Range, two Lazy River Pool Tubes, one hour of Tennis Court access, access to Grande Lakes Waterpark (ON SITE), free transportation to SeaWorld, Universal Studios and Disney theme parks.

Double Queen: \$289.00 plus tax, plus a reduced resort fee of \$40

Air Travel Flight Discounts:

United Airlines

Code: ZRMT850574

MileagePlus[®] members earn miles for their travel when using the United MeetingsSM discount code.

You may call United Meetings Reservation Desk from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. CT, Monday–Friday (closed for major U.S. holidays) at (800) 426-1122 for booking assistance or visit united.com/meetingtravel and enter the code above.

Booking fees are waived for United Meetings reservations. International customers may contact their local United® Reservation Desk.

Delta Airlines

Delta Air Lines is pleased to offer special discounts for **National Consumers League**. 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. – 8:00 p.m. (EST) and refer to Meeting Event Code **NY482**

*Please note there is not a service fee for reservations booked and ticketed via our reservation 800 number.

Ground Transportation Travel Options

Address for GPS:

JW Marriott Orlando Grande Lakes
4040 Central Florida Parkway, Orlando, FL 32837

Travel from Orlando International Airport

The JW Marriott Orlando Grande Lakes is located about 11 miles (18 km) southwest of Orlando International Airport (MCO). Travel time typically ranges from 15 to 25 minutes depending on traffic.

Here are the main transportation options and estimated costs:

Taxis and Rideshares

- Taxi: Around \$30–40 one-way; 15-minute ride.
- Lyft or Uber: Typically \$28–45 depending on demand and time of day.
- Taxis are available directly outside all MCO terminals; rideshares pick up from designated areas at both Terminal A and Terminal C.

Shuttle Services

- Shared shuttles: Operated by companies like [Orlando Magical Rides](#) and [Jayride](#), costing \$25–45 per person with direct service to the JW Marriott.
- Good for families or groups; available 24/7 with pre-booking recommended.

Private Cars and Town cars

- Town car or private SUV service: Around \$70–90 for a standard sedan; premium options (Sprinters, luxury SUVs) can run higher.
- Services such as [Town Car Now](#) and [ACE Luxury Transportation](#) include airport meet-and-greet, luggage assistance, and flat rates that do not vary with traffic.

Public Transportation

- [Lynx Bus Routes](#): Cheapest option at \$4 total, but may take 2 hours with multiple transfers.
- Route 407 from MCO to Pleasant St & Neptune Rd, then transfer to Route 57 toward S John Young Pkwy & Lazlo Ln (near the JW Marriott).

Driving or Rental Car

- Self-drive: About 15 minutes via FL-528 W and South John Young Parkway, costing \$2–3 in gas each way.
- Parking at the JW Marriott is self-parking \$38/day or valet \$52/day (rates may vary seasonally).
- We have inquired about Van / Mini-bus parking and will provide information in our Championship e-newsletter and at our Team Information Center online

Travel from Amtrak Station

Rideshare or Taxi is recommended from this location.

Amtrak Orlando Station (1400 Sligh Blvd)

- Head south on Sligh Blvd toward Columbia St.
- Turn right onto Columbia St.
- Take the ramp on the left onto I-4 West.
- Use exit 72 for FL-528 East (Beachline Expressway, toll road).
- Take exit 3A for John Young Parkway South/423.
- Bear right onto John Young Parkway.
- Turn right at the second traffic light onto Central Florida Parkway.
- The JW Marriott Grande Lakes Orlando entrance will be on the left.

Driving Directions

From Interstate 4 (I-4) East or West

- Take exit 72 onto FL-528 East (Beachline Expressway, a toll road).
- Use exit 3A (John Young Parkway South/423) off FL-528.
- At the bottom of the exit ramp, bear right onto John Young Parkway.
- Turn right at the second traffic light onto Central Florida Parkway.
- The entrance to Grande Lakes Orlando will be on your left.

From Orlando International Airport (MCO)

- Follow signs for the “North Exit” out of the airport.
- Take FL-528 West (Beachline Expressway, a toll road).
- Exit at 3 (John Young Parkway South/423).
- At the bottom of the exit, turn left onto John Young Parkway.
- Turn right at the second traffic light onto Central Florida Parkway. Grande Lakes Orlando will be on your left.

From South Florida via Florida’s Turnpike

- Take Florida's Turnpike North to exit 254.
- Merge onto FL-528 West (Beachline Expressway, a toll road).
- Take exit 3 (John Young Parkway South/423).
- At the exit’s end, turn left onto John Young Parkway.
- Turn right onto Central Florida Parkway at the second traffic light.
- JW Marriott Grande Lakes will be on your left.

NOTE:

1. As soon as your hotel rooms are booked, please fill out this form, [“**Team Room Rosters and Reservation Numbers Form**”](#).
2. As soon as your travel plans are made fill out this form (unless you included this information on your team’s event registration), [“**Team Travel Plans and Arrival time**”](#)

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.** Coaches are the official chaperones for their team and are 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 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:*

National LifeSmarts Championship Code of Conduct

The conduct of all LifeSmarts participants—including students, coaches, and assistant coaches—must reflect positively on themselves and on the LifeSmarts program and uphold the reputation of the organization. For purposes of this Code of Conduct, **“coaches and assistant coaches”** includes teachers, advisers, county extension agents, 4-H program assistants, approved volunteer parent coaches, and volunteer coaches. Coaches and assistant coaches are responsible for supervising their team members at all times. By participating in LifeSmarts, all students, coaches, and assistant coaches acknowledge their understanding of this Code of Conduct and the consequences for violating it.

General Conduct Expectations

At all times during the National LifeSmarts Championship, students, coaches, and assistant coaches must:

- **Behave in a courteous and respectful manner**, avoiding language or actions that could bring discredit upon themselves, their school, club, or organization; other participants; coaches and assistant coaches; volunteers and sponsors; or the LifeSmarts program. This includes, but is not limited to, unsportsmanlike conduct, intimidation, or inappropriate speech.
- **Treat all participants with respect and professionalism.** Disparaging or critical comments about other teams, the sharing of biased or stereotype-based information, or attempts to influence others through hostility or personal bias are not appropriate.
 - If such behavior occurs, event staff may intervene. Individuals involved may be asked to leave the event and may face additional consequences, including possible restrictions on future participation.
- **Promote LifeSmarts as a positive experience** and serve as positive role models through dress, voice, attitude, actions, and demeanor. LifeSmarts is fun—let’s keep it that way!

Academic Integrity

All participants are expected to uphold LifeSmarts’ academic integrity values of **honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility.**

Participants must **not** engage in unacceptable standards of academic integrity, including but not limited to:

- Cheating or attempting to gain an unfair advantage
- Receiving help or helping others during quizzes or competitions
- Receiving assistance from another student or adult
- Receiving assistance via AI or other technology
- Plagiarism or fabrication of information

Violations of academic integrity may result in disqualification or additional consequences as determined by LifeSmarts staff.

Participation and Attendance

Participants are expected to **be on time and attend all required components** of the National LifeSmarts Championship, including provided meals and designated required events such as semi-finals, finals, and the awards luncheon.

Supervision, Safety, and Conduct

- While participating in LifeSmarts, all attendees and competitors are expected to:
- **Abide by all school, club, or organizational rules.** Students must keep their coach or assistant coach informed of their activities and whereabouts at all times.
- **Report accidents, injuries, or illnesses immediately** to a coach or assistant coach.
- **Avoid conduct not conducive to an educational championship experience.** This includes, but is not limited to, disrupting competitions, association with non-conference individuals, or activities that endanger oneself or others.

- **Comply with all event facility rules.** Please be respectful of other guests. Noise should be kept at an appropriate level, and individuals or teams are responsible for repairing or replacing any damaged property

Lodging Expectations

- Participants must **lodge in the room to which they are assigned.**
- Coaches and assistant coaches are responsible for conducting room checks, enforcing curfews, and being present during any gathering in a lodging room, whether same-gender or mixed-gender.

Dress Code

Participants must dress appropriately for all National LifeSmarts Championship events.

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!

Pin Design Contest

Do you like to draw and design? Would you like for your design to be selected as the LifeSmarts National Championship 2027 pin which would be given to participants at the 2027 National LifeSmarts Championship? How about winning a gift card? If you answered YES, then follow the easy instructions and enter your design in the LifeSmarts Pin Design Contest! Deadline is **April 1, 2026.**

Instagram Contest:

Share the Instagram Contest with your team members. **How to participate:** Follow [@LifeSmarts_org](https://www.instagram.com/LifeSmarts_org) and include #lifesmarts2026 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 13 at 9 AM – April 17 at midnight EST** 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 #LifeSmarts2026 and #LifeSmartsNationalChampionship2026. Submissions will be posted on the [LifeSmarts org](https://www.instagram.com/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 junior or senior on their team for special recognition as the LifeSmarts Student of the Year. Nominations are due **April 3**. [Complete the form here](#). Students must be competing in the National LifeSmarts Championship.

Coach of the Year nominations

Students are invited to nominate their coach for coach of the year. Previously honored coaches are ineligible.

LifeSmarts Merch

Again, this year, we will have limited LifeSmarts merch available for pre-order. This year, you will need to allow at least 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 2026 – Draft
April 15-18, 2026; Orlando, FL

Wednesday, April 15, 2026

| TIME | EVENT | LOCATION |
|------------------------|--|-----------------|
| 10:00am – Noon | Team Photos (Team photo schedule based on team arrival) | |
| 10:00am – Noon | Registration Open | |
| 12:45pm – 4:00pm | Team Photos (Team photo schedule based on team arrival) | |
| 12:45pm – 4:00pm | Registration Open | |
| 4:30pm Tentative | Coach and Captain Introductory meeting and photo | |
| 5:00pm – 5:45pm | Opening Ceremonies <i>Photo taken during Opening Ceremonies: Full Group</i> | |
| 5:45pm – 6:45pm | Competition 3: Sister Team Activity | |
| 6:45pm – 7:45pm | Opening Dinner | |
| 8:00pm – 8:45pm | LEAP activities and Pin Swap | |
| 8:45pm – 9:15PM | Internet team orientation (optional for any teams who have never used hands- | |
| 8:45pm– 10:00pm | LEAP Optional games, Photo Scavenger Hunt | |
| 10:30pm | Suggested Curfew – Get some rest! | |

Thursday, April 16, 2026

| TIME | EVENT | LOCATION |
|--------------------------|--|-----------------|
| 7:00am – 8:30am | Breakfast on your own | |
| TBA | Volunteer and Coach Coffee Room Open | |
| 7:45am – 8:30am | Officials Continental Breakfast, Check-in and SpeedSmarts Orientation | |
| 8:30am – 9:45am | Competition 4: SpeedSmarts | |
| 10:00am – 10:30am | Officials Check-in and Buzzer Match Orientation | |
| 10:45am – 12:45pm | Competitions 5 & 6: First & Second Buzzer Matches - Teal Group <i>See grid below</i> | |
| 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: Seniors, State Coordinators, and others</i> | |
| 2:45pm – 4:45 pm | Competitions 5 & 6: First & Second Buzzer Matches – Silver Group <i>See grid below</i> | |
| 2:45pm – 3:45pm | Meta Project Participants Debrief – Teal Group | |
| 4:45pm – 7:30pm | Dinner on your own | |
| 5:30pm – 6:30pm | VIP Reception for all Sponsors, Volunteer Officials, and State Coordinators | |
| 7:30 – 10 PM | Splish Splash Tropical Bash - Poolside dance, swimming, lazy river, games, photos, prizes, etc. | |

Friday, April 17, 2026

| TIME | EVENT | LOCATION |
|-------------------------|--|-----------------|
| 7:00am – 8:30am | Breakfast on your own | |
| TBA | Volunteer and Coach Coffee Room Open | |
| 7:45am – 8:30am | Officials Continental Breakfast, Check-in, and Buzzer Match Orientation | |
| 8:30am – 9:30am | Competition 7: Third Buzzer Matches - See grid below | |
| 9:45am – 10:45am | Competition 7: Third Buzzer Matches - See grid below | |
| 10:30am – 11:20am | Special guest <i>LEAP activities, Trivia, Group; Photos for Partner Organizations; 4-H, BPA, FBLA, FCCLA, SkillsUSA, Student Government</i> | |
| 11:20am | Announcement of Sweet 16! | |
| 11:30am | Box Lunch | |
| 11:45am – 1:15pm | Sweet 16 and Quarterfinal Matches - See grid below | |
| 1:30pm – 1:45pm | Orientation for Semi-Finalists | |
| Afternoon/ Evening | Teams on own to explore Orlando! | |

Saturday, April 18, 2026

| TIME | EVENT | LOCATION |
|--------------------------|--|-----------------|
| 7:00am – 8:30am | Breakfast on your own | |
| 7:30am – 8:15am | Officials Briefing and Continental Breakfast | |
| 8:00am – 1:00pm | Luggage Storage | |
| 8:30am – 10:00am | Semifinal Matches | |
| 10:00am – 10:15am | LEAP activities | |
| 10:15am – 11:00am | National LifeSmarts Championship | |
| 11:00am – 12:30pm | Awards Ceremony & Celebration Luncheon | |

The National LifeSmarts Championship Format - 2026

Goals:

- All teams compete at least seven 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 informative video to share their knowledge of OTC medicine safety. The rubric and rules are included on pages 20-23.
- *Competition 2:* Before nationals, each team will participate in Intuit's Hour of Personal Finance by March 31, 2026.
- *Competition 3: Sister Team Competition*
 - Sister teams collaborate on a team activity
- *Competition 4: Team Activity Speed Smarts*
 - Teams meet 10 experts, completing 10 short activities in 75 minutes
- *Competitions 5, 6 and 7: Live buzzer competitions*
 - All teams compete twice Thursday and once Friday
 - All matches are head-to-head
 - Thursday matches consist of team-plus and challenge questions
 - Friday matches consist of team-plus, lightning, and challenge questions
- *Round of 16, Semifinals, Finals*
 - Point totals are cumulative through the 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. Previously honored coaches are ineligible.
- Coaches may nominate a student for the Student of the Year award
- Teams may apply for and be recognized as LifeSparks Teams
- Winners of 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) following the event.

Team Travel Stipend Opportunities for LifeSmarts Teams and Students

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 16, 2026

Ten finalist teams who will receive travel stipends will be notified on or by March 23, 2026

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 or other recommended resources, your team delivers community-based OTC medicine safety presentations to peers, middle school students, or community members

When: Due prior to March 16, 2026 – please note that funding is limited and later entries may not be awarded a stipend if funds are depleted

URL for more information: [Link](#)

Team travel stipend form: [Link](#)

Presentations report form: [Link](#)

Travel stipends: Thirty (30) \$500 stipends; teams may request multiple stipends by submitting multiple presentations. Second presentation earns \$250. Third presentation earns \$250. Teams are limited to three OTC presentations.

Sponsor: Kenvue

3. Pilot /Present new online safety lessons for adult audience

What: Pilot/present new LifeSmarts lessons on Online Safety; Teams present to at least 50 adults or more. Teams may have do more than one presentation to reach the target number. Teams are also welcome to present this project multiple times to different audiences.

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; Reports Due by April 3rd

Travel stipends available:

- Ten \$1,250 travel stipends plus \$250 stipend for Coach Stipends for Wild Card Teams;
- A very limited number of \$1250 travel stipends for selected teams plus a \$250 stipend for coach
- Link to materials will be shared with all selected teams.
- *Earliest reporting teams will be able to do their debrief before Nationals (dates for debriefs – April 6-10).*

Team travel stipend form: [Link](#)

Presentations report form: [Link](#)

Sponsor: Meta

Contact [Elena Robertson](#) with questions.

Individual Scholarships and Team Awards:

OTC Medicine Safety Mentor Individual Scholarships

This is not a team project and should be very different from any OTC project or presentation that your team develops.

What: Design a social media message, presentation, informative video (must be different than team competition entry), game, podcast, infomercial, news broadcast, webpage, educational social media page, PSA, Table Tents, Placemats, table-top display, door hanger, poster, other educational product that will communicate the importance of OTC safety to others. Your project can review general safety information or have a detailed focus on one aspect of OTC medicine safety that others should know! Be creative!

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 3, 2026
- *OTC Mentoring Resources:* [Link](#)
- *More information and Scholarship application:* [Link](#)
- *What:* Five \$1,000 post-secondary scholarships;
- *Sponsor:* Kenvue

[Sarah Weinberg LifeSmarts Memorial Scholarship](#) – Due March 15, 2026

[The ConsumerMan LifeSmarts Scholarship](#) – Due March 23, 2026

[Lisa Hertzberg LifeSmarts Legacy of Leadership Scholarship](#) – April 3, 2026

[LifeSmarts Impact Scholarship](#) – Due April 3, 2026

[LifeSmarts Spirit of Sportsmanship Team Award](#) – Awarded at National LifeSmarts Championship

[LifeSmarts LifeSparks Team Achievement Award](#) – Due April 5, 2026

Optional Individual Topic Assessments – *See page 26*

Other contests held at the National LifeSmarts Championship (Meme, Instagram, and more!)

Competition 1 – Required for all teams
February 22 – March 25, 2026
LifeSmarts OTC Medicine Safety Informative Video Challenge

Challenge Overview: Teams competing in the 2026 National LifeSmarts Championship will participate in Competition 1 before arriving in Orlando. LifeSmarts teams will produce a 45 – 60 second informative video to educate others on over the counter (OTC) medicine safety. This activity is worth up to **125** points. Good luck!

Contest Overview: Teams will create a **45–60 second educational infomercial-style video** that teaches teen consumers about **over the counter (OTC) medicine safety**. Videos must be submitted by sharing the video link through the entry form on the LifeSmarts website. In addition, each video must be posted on **TikTok or Instagram** using the following hashtags: **#LifeSmartsOTCMedicineSafety, #LifeSmartsNationals2026, #NationalConsumersLeague**

Video Requirements

- Videos must be educational and designed to inform teen consumers about OTC medicine safety.
- Videos may use an infomercial-style approach, meaning the content educates viewers about a product, behavior, or action in an engaging and persuasive way and/or use
- Infomercial format examples:
 - *Talk Show, Interview, or Product Review/Information*– A panel or host interviews an expert or reviews a product or discusses their experience with products.
 - *Documercial* – A news-style or documentary format, such as a breaking news segment
 - *Storymercial or Reality-Style Video* – A fictional or realistic storyline that uses emotion and narrative to deliver educational content
 - *Demonstration* – A video showing safe or unsafe OTC medicine use in action
- Current trend examples
 - Costumes (with voiceovers, on-screen text, or music)
 - Lip-syncing or audio trends with safety facts
 - “How It Started vs. How It’s Going
 - Dance or run challenges with educational messaging
 - Skits, songs, or short role-plays
 - “Yes or No,” “True or False,” or “Fact or Fiction” formats
 - Green screen effects
 - “You Forgot Something” reminders

NOTE: Remember that the objective is to educate others on OTC Medicine safety in a fun, creative way.

- Informative video **must** feature one of the following themes:
 - Safe use of OTC medicines
 - Don't share your OTC medicines
 - Drug Facts Label
 - Safe storage of OTC medicines
 - Correct ways vs incorrect ways to take your OTC medicine
 - Correct dosage of OTC medicines
 - Dangers and effects of OTC medication overuse
 - OTC medicine ingredients and interactions
 - Proper disposal of outdated OTC medicines
 - Wise use of OTC products for sun safety

- Use your imagination and creativity to create a memorable video with an informative message for others. The video can be anything from humorous to instructional/factual to dramatic.
- Resources [on this page](#) may be used to help your team develop its entry.
- For examples of positive or educational student produced infomercials, you can search “infomercial-ideas-for-students” on Instagram or TikTok.
- Video length: Limited to no more than **60 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 video will not be removed from either platform.
- Appropriate skit/dance/appearance: If used in your video, 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 videos 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:
 - [Create your own infomercial](#) (lesson plan)
 - [How to create an educational TikTok](#)
 - [5 tips for making Educational Instagram Reels](#)
 - [Educational Instagram Tips](#)

All teams competing in the National LifeSmarts Championship must post their videos on TikTok or Instagram and submit their entry form with the link by the deadline of **March 25th 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**, **#LifeSmartsNationals2026** and **#NationalConsumersLeague** and include team name / organization name in caption. If a team is a Wild Card or Sweepstakes team, include the official team name and number.
- Teams will complete [the competition entry form at LifeSmarts.org](#) 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.

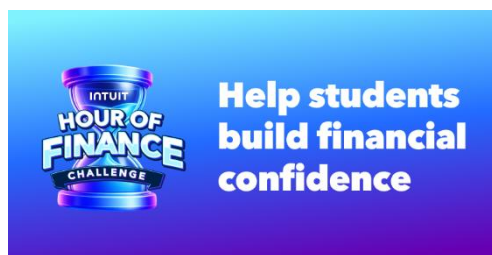
Project Background

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 Informative 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 |
|--|--|---|---|
| Creativity and Inventiveness of the Informative Video Presentation | Creative and inventive concepts are evident along with impressive video artistry; the presentation embraces the content and objectives. Embraces Informative video format. | Some creative and inventive concepts were included; Video was executed well. The video includes some content and objectives. Somewhat embraces Informative video format. | Concepts and artistry of video presentation need editing or could have been executed better. Lacks creativity and originality and does not enhance the content and objectives. Does not work with informative video format. |
| Presentation Content Organization | Presentation is well-organized. Video used educational references on OTC medicine safety. Content appropriate for all audiences and includes appropriate actions. | Presentation is mostly organized. Video partially based on educational references on OTC medicine safety. Content appropriate for most audiences. Actions are somewhat appropriate. | Presentation is not very well organized and does not utilize educational references on OTC medicine safety. Content and actions are inappropriate for many audiences. |
| Required Elements and Contest Rules Observed | 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. The 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. |
| Clarity of Video's message | The video's educational message is clearly heard and understood. | The video's message is somewhat clear, mostly understood, and is educational. | The video's message is unclear and is hard to understand. Video is not as educational as others. |
| Time Limit / On time | Time limit of 45-60 seconds was adhered to. Video was submitted by the contest deadline. Entry form filled out and submitted on time | Video was less than 45 seconds in length and/or exceeded the time limit by more than 5 seconds. Video and entry form submitted by deadline. | Video was less than 15 seconds in length and/or exceeded the time limit by more than 7 seconds. Video and/or entry form was not submitted by contest deadline. |



Competition 2: Intuit Hour of Personal Finance

Each team competing in the LifeSmarts National Championship will complete the Intuit Hour of Personal Finance by March 31 as a pre-competition for the 2026 Varsity National LifeSmarts Championship. Intuit will share the result with us so that points can be awarded to your team.

All teams must register through the LifeSmarts dedicated link and complete the activity. Completed teams will be entered in a drawing for thirty \$100 cash prizes from LifeSmarts.

Here are the details:

LifeSmarts is proud to partner with Intuit to bring a fun and engaging interactive classroom exercise that fits easily into one class period or club meeting with zero prep work required. Welcome to the Intuit Hour of Finance Challenge!

To complete the challenge for the National LifeSmarts Challenge, Coaches should register the team as a *Community Organization*, then choose *LifeSmarts (National Consumers League)* as the Parent Organization in the dropdown menu.

This fun online game that helps students build real-world skills by guiding them through daily financial choices that shape their credit score.

LifeSmarts Teams that complete the Hour of Finance Challenge will be entered into a raffle to win one of thirty \$100 cash awards from LifeSmarts.

To access: Use our [LifeSmarts-specific link](#) to register. You will receive an email with your link and “join code”. Simply share them with your team to get started.

Contact [Elena Robertson](#) should you have any questions.

Remember the deadline for completing the Intuit Hour of Personal Finance for teams competing in the National LifeSmarts Championship is March 31. [Register your club, team, or class today.](#)

“65% of students reported they felt more confident managing their personal finances after the Intuit Hour of Finance Challenge.”



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 5). 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, March 26, 7:00 PM EDT, 6 PM CDT, 5 PM MDT; 4 PM PDT; 2 PM HDT or Monday, March 30, 7:00 PM EDT, 6 PM CDT, 5 PM MDT; 4 PM PDT; 2 PM HDT

Details including the Zoom address will be shared with coaches prior to the first quizzing session.

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