

SkillsUSA History

1965

The Vocational Industrial Clubs of America, Inc. (VICA) was founded by students and teachers who were serious about their professions and saw the need for more training in the areas of leadership to complement their chosen vocation. In Nashville, Tennessee, 14 states were represented, as VICA chose its name, colors, motto, purposes and goals.

1966

VICA membership was 29,534 in 1,074 clubs in 26 chartered states and territories.

The first issue of the VICA magazine was produced.

1967

VICA added five more states, began holding competitive events and introduced uniform. Membership was well over 40,000.

1968

Plans were announced for the national VICA center to be located near Washington, D.C.

VICA members were received by President Lyndon B. Johnson in the Cabinet Room of the White House. The students give the President a handmade gavel and sounding block inscribed, "To Lyndon B. Johnson - America's Great Educational President."

1969

VICA membership hit 82,000 with new chapters, college/technical membership and VICA's yearly themes. The first theme was "Speak Up for America."

1970

The VICA Leadership Handbook was published for the first time and a student campaign to raise funds for the National Leadership Center got underway. The theme was "Skills Build America."

1971

At the seventh annual National Leadership Conference, there were 25 competitive activities.

1972

VICA membership up to 125,000.

1973

VICA membership over 150,000.

1974

VICA purchased land for the new National Leadership Center in Leesburg, VA.

VICA members met with President Ford.

1975

VICA celebrated its 10th anniversary with the induction of the one millionth member.

1976

5,000 VICA members attended the U.S. Skill Olympics in Miami Beach.

Membership reached a quarter of a million with 10,000 active chapters.

1977

Contributions from VICA alumni, friends and members to purchase the land where the National Leadership Center now sits topped \$56,000.

1978

Ground breaking began for the National Leadership Center in Leesburg, VA.

1979

The national leadership center was dedicated after 15 years of planning and fund raising.

1980

VICA started the Youth Development Foundation Committee to make sure that our programs were relevant to both students' and industry's needs and make sure that financing was available to support them.

1981

VICA played host to the International Youth Skill Olympics where VICA members joined 274 international contestants from 14 countries in 33 contests.

Nearly 7,000 VICA members attended the National Leadership Conference and U.S. Skill Olympics.

1982

The first year VICA incorporated industry update seminars as part of the National Leadership Conference.

1983

President Ronald Reagan spoke at the National Leadership Conference and said, "American industry as well as American educational institutions should take note of the VICA experience."

1984

Membership attained its three and a half-millionth member.

1985

VICA's 20th anniversary; membership had grown to 12,632 chapters; the U.S. Skill Olympics had gone from 5 competitive events to 38.

The first International Skill Olympics Gold Medal was awarded to the United States. Dennis Falls of Arizona brought home the graphic design gold medal.

1986

The board of directors opened its membership to representatives of technical and health occupations education.

An ex-officio board position was created for the chairman of the Youth Development Foundation Committee.

1987

The VICA Professional Development Program was created, and in testing Level 1, 6,500 students and teachers took part.

1988

VICA's Board of Directors appointed Stephen Denby as executive director; efforts began to organize VICA chapters in Ontario, Canada.

VICA released the Professional Development Program nationwide.

1989

An ex-officio position on the Board of Directors was created for the State VICA Directors' Association.

1990

VICA celebrates its 25th anniversary!

1991

Robert Pope won the gold medal for welding in the Amsterdam International Youth Skill Olympics. He made olympic history by receiving the first gold medal in welding for the United States, and by obtaining the most points in any IYSO contest since it's beginning.

1992

VICA won the Vocational Instructional Materials (VIM) Outstanding Mediated Instructional award for it's parliamentary procedure video entitled "Rules of the Game."

1993

Nicholas Peterson won the bronze medal in welding at the International Youth Skills Olympics in Taiwan.

1994

The new name of the United States Skill Olympics was announced. The competition's name would be the Skills USA Championships - to become effective during the National Leadership and Skills Conference in 1995.

1995

Branden Muehlbrandt won the silver medal in welding at the International Youth Skill Competitions (IYSC) (officially renamed from the International Youth Skill Olympics).

The Skills USA Championships became the new official name of the national competition.

VICA received it's official designation as a CEU sponsor.

The new Professional Development Program, and the Total Quality Curriculum were introduced to the public.

1996

VICA received the Oracle Award by the International Association of Continuing Education and Training (IACET) for the new Professional Development Program.

VICA received the Vocational Instructional Materials (VIM) Award of Excellence for the PDP.

Secretary of Education Riley, Secretary of Labor Reich, and J.D. Hoyer, Executive Director of the Department of Education's School to Work Office spoke at VICA's Washington Leadership Training Institute's Congressional Breakfast.

1997

VICA held its first School-to-Work Conference at the NLSC.

VICA's web site was given an award for its web site by the Awards for Publication Excellence (APEX).

1998

The Board of Directors voted to change the name of the organization to SkillsUSA-VICA.

Robert Flint of Caterpillar Inc. was the first business representative elected to chair the Board of Directors.

1999

VICA officially changed to SkillsUSA-VICA on July 4, 1999 at the National Leadership and Skills Conference.

Students competing in the World Skills Competition in Montreal placed higher than ever before.

Nationwide, chapter members began an image campaign in which they spoke to community leaders about the value of skilled employees, their training and SkillsUSA-VICA membership.

2001

Timothy W. Lawrence, a former student member, became national executive director. Formerly national director of business and industry partnerships, Lawrence had also been a classroom instructor, industry employee, state association director and member of the Board of Directors.

An ex-officio position was created for National Association of State Directors of Career and Technical Education Consortium.

2002

The Board of Directors approved shortening the name of the national organization from SkillsUSA-VICA to SkillsUSA, effective Sept. 1, 2004.

2003

An ex-officio position on the Board of Directors was created for a college/postsecondary representative.

2004

On Sept. 1, the organization's name officially changed to SkillsUSA.

2005

Paid off the mortgage on the SkillsUSA National Leadership Center.

Keynote Speakers

Over the years, SkillsUSA has been fortunate to have many excellent keynote speakers at the National Leadership and Skills Conference. Some of them include:

President Ronald Reagan
Lou Holtz
General Chuck Yaeger
Janet Evans
Mary Lou Retton
Dick Vitale
Terry Bradshaw
Dan Jansen
Captain James Lovell
Colonel Joe Engle
Terry Bowden

Youth Development Foundation

SkillsUSA's Youth Development Foundation's purpose is to provide support to the goals and purposes of SkillsUSA, including student awards, preparation of special publications or funds for the SkillsUSA Championships. Over the years, we have been fortunate to have many fine companies support SkillsUSA's efforts, and the current YDF Committee has members from many large corporations, including among others... DeWalt, Caterpillar, Snap-on, Inc. and The Stanley Works.

SkillsUSA's Alumni Association

The SkillsUSA Alumni Association's mission is to help promote SkillsUSA in terms of time, talent, and financial resources at all levels (local, district, state and national). SkillsUSA currently has about 4,950 alumni members.

Key Facts

SkillsUSA is a partnership of students, teachers and industry working together to ensure America has a skilled work force. SkillsUSA helps each student excel.

SkillsUSA is a national nonprofit organization serving teachers and high school and college students who are preparing for careers in trade, technical and skilled service occupations, including health occupations. It was formerly known as VICA (Vocational Industrial Clubs of America).

SkillsUSA Theme

The SkillsUSA competition theme for the 2009-10 year is

SkillsUSA: Champions at Work Connecting the Opportunities

This is the theme for the Chapter Display, Prepared Speech and Promotional Bulletin Board contests.

The topic to be addressed by contestants in these events is how our slogan, SkillsUSA: Champions at Work, relates to our national program of work in the area of the Professional Development.

Within this topic, contestants might illustrate or discuss any of the following:

- How SkillsUSA's professional development opportunities motivate students to be the best they can be in their technical skill development and in their personal and professional development
- How members grow professionally by connecting with educators, community leaders, and business and industry representatives. SkillsUSA connects students to education and employment opportunities
- How students attending SkillsUSA leadership conferences and competitions develop professionally as they make connections with other students having similar interests. Through SkillsUSA, they network across their state, region and the nation
- How SkillsUSA provides opportunities for students to participate in a balanced program of work in which they can practice and demonstrate leadership, technical skills, teamwork, team building, creativity and management
- How SkillsUSA increases productivity by cultivating a highly skilled and knowledgeable work force to meet 21st century needs
- How SkillsUSA is the national organization for public high school and college/postsecondary technical students enrolled in trade, technical and skilled service profession instructional programs including allied health occupations
- How SkillsUSA participation prepares each member for entry into the work force
- How each SkillsUSA member can demonstrate excellence in career and technical education
- How SkillsUSA represents 130 different occupational areas in its affiliated instructional programs and more than 300,000 high school and college/postsecondary members nationwide

SkillsUSA Motto

- Preparing for leadership in the world of work.

SkillsUSA Pledge

Upon my honor, I pledge:

- To prepare myself by diligent study and ardent practice to become a worker whose services will be recognized as honorable by my employer and fellow workers.
- To base my expectations of reward upon the solid foundation of service.
- To honor and respect my vocation in such a way as to bring repute to myself.
- And further, to spare no effort in upholding the ideals of SkillsUSA.

Meaning of the Pledge

- **Upon my honor, I pledge:** This is a very strong statement. It means you are committed to follow through on your promise.
- **To prepare myself:** Preparation requires self-control. It means effort without immediate reward but with the knowledge that the effort will pay off when the preparation is completed.
- **By diligent study:** Diligence implies something far beyond a quick review of assignments. Diligence means perseverance, concentration and not always taking the easy route.
- **And ardent practice:** A person of character makes every effort in spite of setbacks or personal loss.
- **To become a worker:** SkillsUSA members take pride in making things happen, in being good workers and in their employers.
- **Whose services:** Doing things for others is the basis of many occupations. SkillsUSA members strive to be active in their schools and communities.
- **Will be recognized as honorable:** The result of preparation, study, practice, work and service is the respect and honor given SkillsUSA members.
- **To base my expectations of reward upon the solid foundation of service:** This statement reinforces the attitude that we must first serve in order to gain. This attitude is important to success.
- **To respect my vocation:** SkillsUSA members recognize the need to find their vocation and strive to understand its traditions, skills, leaders and potential.
- **To bring repute to myself:** SkillsUSA members strive to have a good reputation among their peers, fellow workers, teachers, parents and employers.
- **To spare no effort in upholding these ideals:** This means service to the community, school and SkillsUSA chapter - getting things done and becoming a leader, all with the ideals of SkillsUSA in mind.

SkillsUSA Creed

I believe in the dignity of work

I hold that society has advanced to its present culture through the use of the worker's hands and mind. I will maintain a feeling of humbleness for the knowledge and skills that I receive from professionals, and I will conduct myself with dignity in the work I do.

I believe in the American way of life

I know our culture is the result of freedom of action and opportunities won by the founders of our American republic, and I will uphold their ideals.

I believe in education

I will endeavor to make the best use of knowledge, skills and experience that I will learn in order that I may be a better worker in my chosen occupation and a better citizen in my community. To this end, I will continue my learning now and in the future.

I believe in fair play

I will, through honesty and fair play, respect the rights of others. I will always conduct myself in the manner of the best professionals in my occupation and treat those with whom I work as I would like to be treated.

I believe satisfaction is achieved by good work

I feel that compensation and personal satisfaction received for my work and services will be in proportion to my creative and productive ability.

I believe in high moral and spiritual standards

I will endeavor to conduct myself in such a manner as to set an example for others by living a wholesome life and by fulfilling my responsibilities as a citizen of my community.

Symbolism of the SkillsUSA Emblem

The shield represents patriotism

The shield denotes our belief in democracy, liberty and the American way of life.

The gear represents the industrial society

The gear, symbolic of the industrial society, denotes the interdependence and cooperation of the individual working with labor and management for the betterment of mankind.



The torch represents knowledge

The flaming torch reflects the light of knowledge, which dispels the darkness of ignorance. In the light of the torch, progress will be made toward the vocational goals of the individual.

The orbital circles represent technology

The circles represent the challenge of modern technology and the training needed to accept and master the challenge of new technical frontiers and the need for continuous education.

The hands represent the individual

The hands portray a search for knowledge and our desire to acquire a skill. In the process of attaining knowledge and skill, we will develop a respect for the dignity of work and become productive and responsible citizens.

Note: The emblem should not be used to represent the organization. [Please use official SkillsUSA logos.](#)

SkillsUSA Colors

The colors red, white, blue and gold represent the national SkillsUSA organization.

Red and white represent the individual states and chapters.

Blue represents the common union of the states and of the chapters.

Gold represents the individual, the most important element of the organization.

SkillsUSA Attire

Wearing the official SkillsUSA attire adds a sense of unity and identification to meetings and activities. Members are encouraged to strictly follow the guidelines for official attire during ceremonies, visits with dignitaries, officer campaigns and similar occasions. For a diagram and detailed information, see the *SkillsUSA Leadership Handbook* or *ASK: Advisor's Success Kit*.

Official Attire for women:

- Red SkillsUSA blazer, windbreaker or sweater
- White collarless or small-collared blouse or white turtleneck (collar must not extend over the blazer lapel or the sweater or windbreaker)
- Black dress skirt (knee-length) or black dress slacks
- Black shoes

Official attire for men:

- Red SkillsUSA blazer, windbreaker or sweater
- White dress shirt
- Plain solid black tie
- Black dress slacks
- Black dress shoes

To order official clothing and work uniforms for competition, go to the [SkillsUSA Supply Service](#).

SkillsUSA Logos

The names SkillsUSA, SkillsUSA Championships and SkillsUSA Champions; the SkillsUSA: Champions at Work slogan; and the SkillsUSA logo, emblem and slogan art are all registered trademarks of SkillsUSA Inc. All rights are reserved, and permission must be granted by the national headquarters of SkillsUSA prior to any use.

Before downloading any of the logos, please familiarize yourself with the following policies, which have been adopted by the Board of Directors of SkillsUSA Inc. To access the logos page, click on the link at the bottom of this page. However, please be aware that clicking on the "logos" link below confirms that you have read and agree to abide by these policies.

SkillsUSA supplies and materials

Purchase of SkillsUSA Supplies

All emblematic materials are legally protected and will be purchased only from the authorized dealer. E-Group, operating as the SkillsUSA Store, is the authorized dealer for SkillsUSA emblematic supplies and materials. E-Group protects emblematic materials by selling only to affiliated SkillsUSA chapters and state associations.

Manufacture of SkillsUSA Supplies

All arrangements for the manufacture and sale of articles bearing the name SkillsUSA shall be made by the national SkillsUSA headquarters. Any company interested in making arrangements to manufacture articles using the SkillsUSA name, motto, emblem, logo or slogan must submit to the national SkillsUSA headquarters for consideration the following: sample price lists, plans for royalties and a plan for distribution. Before purchasing any customized SkillsUSA products, consult the SkillsUSA Store; telephone 800-401-1560.

Use of Emblematic Materials by Chapters and State Associations

A trademark protects the SkillsUSA name, emblem, logo, creed, slogan and slogan brand mark. In addition, state associations, local chapters and members have a responsibility for protecting the use of emblematic materials. When the emblem or logo is reproduced, it must be an exact replica. Digital art is offered for download on this Web site.

SkillsUSA members and advisors may use the name, motto, emblem, logo, creed, slogan and slogan brand mark as such :

1. When made by the SkillsUSA Store.
2. When made by themselves for personal or organizational use and according to correct specifications. Local chapters and state associations may use the logo and slogan brand mark on materials having public relations value, such as:
 - Stationery, programs, special certificates not offered by the SkillsUSA Store
 - Banquet programs, favors
 - Educational exhibits, television programs, parade floats, displays at fairs
 - Newspapers, newsletters, yearbooks, chapter Web sites

Local chapters and state associations may give permission for reproducing and using SkillsUSA art to civic groups and associations who are helping to interpret SkillsUSA through noncommercial activities. The SkillsUSA name and art may be used for fund-raising projects that are sponsored by local chapters and state associations. The name of the local or state organization should be spelled out on the materials used to avoid giving the impression that the materials or the projects are sponsored by the national SkillsUSA organization.

SkillsUSA Fact Sheet

Overview: SkillsUSA is a partnership of students, teachers and industry working together to ensure America has a skilled work force. SkillsUSA helps each student excel. SkillsUSA is a national organization serving teachers and high school and college students who are preparing for careers in technical, skilled and service occupations, including health occupations. SkillsUSA was formerly known as VICA (the Vocational Industrial Clubs of America).

Membership: More than 300,000 students and instructors join SkillsUSA annually, organized into more than 17,000 sections and 54 state and territorial associations. SkillsUSA has served more than 9.9 million members since its founding.

Mission: SkillsUSA's mission is to help its members become world-class workers, leaders and responsible American citizens.

SkillsUSA is an applied method of instruction for preparing America's high performance workers enrolled in public career and technical programs. It provides quality education experiences for students in leadership, teamwork, citizenship and character development. It builds and reinforces self-confidence, work attitudes and communications skills. It emphasizes total quality at work—high ethical standards, superior work skills, life-long education, and pride in the dignity of work. SkillsUSA also promotes understanding of the free-enterprise system and involvement in community service.

Partners: Currently, 16,693 teachers and school administrators serve as professional SkillsUSA members and instructors. More than 1,100 business, industry and labor sponsors actively support SkillsUSA at the national level through financial aid, in-kind contributions, and involvement of their people in SkillsUSA activities. Many more work directly with state associations and local chapters.

Programs: SkillsUSA programs include local, state and national competitions in which students demonstrate occupational and leadership skills. At the annual national-level SkillsUSA Championships, more than 5,400 students compete in 91 occupational and leadership skill areas.

SkillsUSA programs also help to establish industry standards for job skill training in the lab and classroom, and promote community service. SkillsUSA is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education and is cited as a "successful model of employer-driven youth development training program" by the U.S. Department of Labor and is an OSHA Alliance partner.

The [SkillsUSA Work Force Ready System](#) is a comprehensive tool to help students document entry-level skills as defined by industry and accepted by state education policy. Being developed under a W.K. Kellogg Foundation grant, the Work Force Ready System will feature 46 industry-driven assessments.

The [Professional Development Program \(PDP\)](#) teaches 76 workplace skill competencies in a series of hands-on self-paced lessons.

The [Career Skills Education Program \(CSEP\)](#) contains 49 online lessons teaching basic employment and life skills to college/postsecondary students.

[Student2Student Mentoring](#) gives high school students a chance to mentor younger students in the area of career development.

[CareerSafe](#) is a credentialed 10-hour online training program developed in cooperation with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to provide students with basic knowledge of safety and a credential desired in the job market.