Joining a Career Technical Student Organization

Career technical student organizations (CTSOs) are groups of students who are enrolled in a career and technical education program that engages in career and technical activities as part of the curriculum. There are different CTSOs for different career and technical programs; students join the organization related to the CTE program in which they are enrolled.

CTSOs provide members with a range of individual and group programs and activities. They promote career education and training and provide opportunities for leadership, teamwork, competition, and citizenship. CTSOs offer a unique program of career and leadership development, motivation, and recognition for students in grades 6 through 12. Members benefit from:

- Belonging to a positive and supportive group of their peers
- Examining firsthand the relationship between academics and the world of work
- Identifying career opportunities
- Building confidence and knowledge through competition
- Exercising leadership and teamwork skills
- Practicing personal skills for success
- Developing employability skills
- Recognizing and developing interests and abilities that align with career goals
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Common Career Technical Student Organizations

There are CTSOs to support every career cluster and pathway. The National CTSOs supported by educators in most states include the following:

- Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) for students in Family and Consumer Sciences programs (www.fcclainc.org)
- Future Business Leaders of America-Phi Beta Lambda (FBLA-PBL) for students in business, government, and public service programs (www.fbla-pbl.org)
- Business Professional of America (BPA) for students in business and marketing programs (www.bpanet.org)
- DECA for students in marketing programs (www.deca.org)
- Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA) for students in health services programs (www.hosa.org)
- National FFA Organization for students in agriculture programs (www.ffa.org)
- National Young Farmer Educational Association (NYFAE) for students in agriculture programs (www.nyfae.org)
- SkillsUSA for students in technical, skills, and service programs (www.skillsusa.org)
- Technology Student Association (TSA) for students in technology, innovation, design and engineering programs (www.tsaweb.org)

For more information on CTSOs at the national level, contact:

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Vocational and Adult Education
Washington, DC 20202
(202) 205-5440
National Website Address: http://www.ed.gov/offices/OVAE

What Is FCCLA?

Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) is a nonprofit national career and technical student organization for students in Family and Consumer Sciences education in public and private school through grade 12. FCCLA is the only CTSO with the family as its central focus. It functions as an integral part of the Family and Consumer Sciences education curriculum and operates within the school system. FCCLA provides opportunities for active student participation at local, state, and national levels.

Since 1945, FCCLA members have been making a difference in their families, careers, and communities by addressing important personal, work, and societal issues through family and consumer sciences education. Today, FCCLA has over 219,000 members in nearly 6,500 chapters active in a network of associations in 50 states as well as in the District of Columbia, the Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. Chapter projects focus on a variety of
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youth concerns, including teen pregnancy, parenting, family relationships, substance abuse, peer pressure, environment, nutrition and fitness, teen violence, and career exploration. Involvement in FCCLA offers members the opportunity to expand their leadership potential and develop life skills necessary in the home and workplace such as planning, goal setting, problem solving, decision making, and interpersonal communication.

As an FCCLA member, you can:

■ Explore career opportunities
■ Attend conferences
■ Participate in competitions
■ Access information about jobs, internships, and scholarships

What Is FCCLA’s Mission and Purpose?
FCCLA states that its mission is to promote personal growth and leadership development through Family and Consumer Sciences education. Focusing on the multiple roles of family member, wage earner, and community leader, members develop skills for life through character development, creative and critical thinking, interpersonal communication, practical knowledge, and career preparation.

FCCLA lists its purposes as the following:

■ To provide opportunities for personal development and preparation for adult life
■ To strengthen the function of the family as a basic unit of society
■ To encourage democracy through cooperative action in the home and community
■ To encourage individual and group involvement in helping achieve global cooperation and harmony
■ To promote greater understanding between youth and adults
■ To provide opportunities for making decisions and for assuming responsibilities
■ To prepare for the multiple roles of men and women in today’s society
■ To promote family and consumer sciences and related occupations

Who Can Join?
Any student who has taken a course in Family and Consumer Sciences or courses as determined by the state department of education at the middle or high school level is eligible for active membership in an organized chapter within his or her school. Once the state and national dues are paid, the student will be an official affiliated member. Teachers who are certified to teach Family and Consumer Sciences education as determined by their state department of education can serve as the FCCLA chapter adviser.
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What Do FCCLA Members Do?
FCCLA encourages members to participate in a wide range of programs in school, at home, and in the community. Activities may be individual or team oriented, and some are competitive events.

Career Connection  A national program that guides youth to link their options and skills for success in families, careers, and communities. Through individual, cooperative, and competitive activities, members discover their strengths, target career goals, and initiate a plan for achieving the lifestyle they desire.

Community Service  A program designed to help students to develop, plan, carry out, and evaluate projects that improve the quality of life in their communities. Community Service helps young people build skills for family, career, and community roles; provides youth-centered learning experiences related to Family and Consumer Sciences education; and encourages young people to develop the positive character traits of trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship.

Dynamic Leadership  A program designed to help young people learn about leadership; recognize the lifelong benefits of leadership skills; and practice leadership skills through FCCLA involvement.

FACTS—Families Acting for Community Traffic Safety is a national peer education program through which students strive to save lives educating adults and youth about traffic safety and supporting enforcement of local rules and regulations regarding community traffic safety.

Families First  A national peer education program through which youth gain a better understanding of how families work and learn skills to become strong family members. Its goals are to: help youth become strong family members and leaders for today and tomorrow and strengthen the family as the basic unit of society. Members can also experience other cultures and family relationships through Japanese Exchange, sponsored by Kikkoman Corporation. Members who are sophomores or juniors can apply for a Japanese Exchange Scholarship to spend four- to six-weeks as an exchange student with a Japanese host family.
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Financial Fitness  A national peer education program that involves youth teaching one another how to make, save, and spend money wisely. Through FCCLA’s Financial Fitness program, youth plan and carry out projects that help them and their peers learn to become wise financial managers and smart consumers.

Leaders at Work  A program that recognizes members who create projects to strengthen leadership skills on the job. These skills contribute to success across a broad range of career fields. In conjunction with the Career Connection national program, Leaders at Work motivates students to prepare for career success.

Power of One  A program designed to help students find and use their personal power. Members set their own goals, work to achieve them, and enjoy the results. The skills members learn in Power of One help them now and in the future in school, with friends and family, in their future at college, and on the job.

STAR Events  STAR stands for Students Taking Action with Recognition. STAR Events are competitive events in which members are recognized for proficiency and achievement in chapter and individual projects, leadership skills, and career preparation. STAR Events offer individual skill development and application of learning.

STOP the Violence  STOP stands for Students’ Taking On Prevention. It is a national program that empowers youth with attitudes, skills, and resources in order to recognize, report, and reduce youth violence.

Student Body  A national peer education program that helps young people learn to eat right, be fit, and make healthy choices. Its goals are to help young people make informed, responsible decisions about their health, provide youth opportunities to teach others, and develop healthy lifestyles as well as communication and leadership skills.