



Future Business Leaders of America

# **PUBLIC POLICY TOOLKIT**



# WELCOME!

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Congratulations on taking your first steps towards creating change for the betterment of your community and the lives of your peers. As members of Future Business Leaders of America, it is important for us to voice the positive impact that Career-Technical Student Organizations have had on our college and career preparation to secure this valuable experience for many more students to come. This toolkit will serve as your guide to advocating for the future of community-minded business leaders as you begin organizing a plan for advocacy and take on FBLA's challenge, Advocate for Our Future!

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## KEY CONTACTS

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# **SECTION 1**

## **Making the Case for Funding**

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# THE CASE FOR FBLA & CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION FUNDING

As we look at the needs of the future, the demands of businesses, consumers, and governments are changing. Right now the United States is at a critical moment when large new technologies are evolving and starting to be implemented. This also comes at a time when millions of people across the US are out of work and are not satisfied with the entry level positions available. More accessible and flexible education is required to help support the needs of the 21st century. Career and technical education can help to supplement required education and move the next generation of young Americans forward.

## WHY FBLA?

Future Business Leaders of America inspires and prepares students to become community-minded business leaders in a global society through relevant career preparation and leadership experiences. FBLA can help give students access to financial literacy and business education, as well as exposure to various sectors of business and principles of business. FBLA is primarily funded through Perkins and membership dues as well as conference revenue. By increasing funds for Perkins, it will enable more resources and educational programs for our nearly 200,000 members across the country. Funding FBLA is a direct way to impact students' education nationally; our overhead is low and our organization exists to serve the needs of students. We are the Future Business Leaders of America. Our members are the next generation of employees, employers, investors, and innovators of tomorrow. An investment in FBLA is an investment in the future of America.



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# **SECTION 2**

## **State & Local Activities**

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# ADVOCACY IN FBLA

Becoming an advocate is one of the most important actions you can take to secure the **future** of FBLA. It...

Ensures we have ample funding

Increases education opportunities to support FBLA members

A large portion of this funding comes from our **state and federal governments**. It is up to all of us to advocate for our future!

## ADVOCATE FOR OUR FUTURE CHALLENGE

### WHAT

States who schedule and attend meetings with state/national policymakers, and/or have an official proclamation signed will be **recognized** at the National Leadership Conference, after submitting a form signed by their state adviser and providing proof of participation by emailing it to Lisa Smothers.

### WHY

This challenge provides members, particularly state and local officers, with an opportunity to learn about and promote legislative advocacy. When meeting with policymakers FBLA members should advocate for three outcomes: **increasing Career and Technical Education funding during the budget/appropriations process, for their representative and senators to join the CTE caucus if they are not already a member, and to promote FBLA by recognizing or declaring FBLA-PBL Week**

### HOW

To receive recognition each individual state must have state and/or local officers meet with their State Department of Education, their senators, House representative, and/or governor to discuss increased FBLA and Career Technical Student Organization funding, FBLA recognition statewide, and how policymakers can provide the resources necessary to continue building a bridge between high schools and the modern business world.



# DIFFERENT WAYS TO ADVOCATE

Advocating comes in many different forms. Your preferred way of advocacy will depend on what is available and what you find most comfortable. Whichever method you choose, make sure you are prepared, professional, and polite!

**Emailing  
policymakers**

**Setting up  
a Zoom  
meeting**

**Visiting  
them in  
person**

## MAKE IT A CHAPTER ACTIVITY

Advocating doesn't have to be an individual task. By working with other officers and members in your area, you can amplify your voices and make an even larger impact. The more people the better! To increase the likelihood of success in your advocating journey, make advocacy a yearly tradition in your chapter. Set aside a day, week, or month, ideally in February surrounding FBLA-PBL Week, dedicated to advocating for different things in FBLA your chapter strongly supports. You can utilize the templates provided in the rest of this guide to show sample testimonies and emails to your members, and prepare them to speak with their policymakers.

### TIMELINE OF CHALLENGE

**Funding & Support Advocacy**  
January to March

**NLC**  
June

**FBLA-PBL Week**  
February

**Challenge  
Submissions  
Due April 1!**

**Media & Promotional Advocacy**  
April to December



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# **SECTION 3**

## **What is Advocacy & How to Work with Policymakers**

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# WHAT IS THE CTE CAUCUS?

The CTE Caucus is a **bipartisan** group that works for the improvement of Career-Technical Education and Career-Technical Student Organizations.



## Useful Links

[House Career & Technical Education Caucus](#)  
[Senate Career & Technical Education Caucus](#)  
[Congressional Directory](#)



Building a strong connection with policymakers and their staff starts by establishing yourself as a reliable source of information. Your thoughts and opinions are better heard when you have a relationship with your policymaker! Here are general guidelines to help you develop strong connections with your federal, state, and local officials. **As you advocate to policymakers maintain CTE and FBLA as bipartisan issues!**

## BUILDING THE CONNECTION

Building a strong relationship takes time, persistent communication, and politeness! Send them an email that expresses your thoughts on a Career & Technical Education-related issue and shows your expertise.

Follow and interact with them on social media:

- Call their office and express your thoughts on Career & Technical Education -related policy directly
- Request a meeting or their attendance at any event such as your state leadership conference
- Attend a town hall or other event where the policymaker is in attendance

**Whether you write, call, or visit your policymaker, there are important guidelines to follow to maximize your output:**

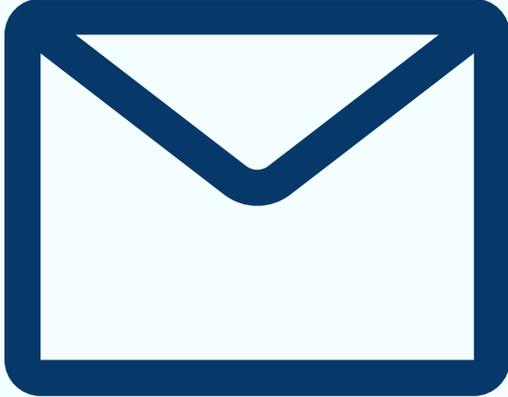
Identify yourself as a **constituent** by providing your address, location of your school, contact information, and if contacting federal policymakers, your congressional district.

Identify yourself as a **member of FBLA**. This will further enhance your credibility & effectiveness by linking you to a broader advocacy effort.

**Be personal** - Share your FBLA story and what this organization means to you. Let your messages reflect your personality, use humor, and make it memorable!



# EMAIL



You can send a formal business letter to your policymakers or their staff members via email. In your letter, you can include important information including current issues or legislation impacting Career & Technical Education, and explain why you need their help or support. It is important to be clear and concise.

## HERE ARE SOME GUIDELINES TO FOLLOW TO MAXIMIZE YOUR IMPACT:

### CONTENT

Establish yourself as a resource – Let policymakers know that you are an expert in your field and can provide additional information and expertise on the issue and impact of the proposed legislation.

Share your experiences as an FBLA member and explain how the policies at hand can help the policymaker’s constituents

Ask for a reply

Thank them for their time and attention

### FORMATTING

Double check your grammar and spelling

Keep it short – limit your letter to one to two pages

Save your letter as a PDF file

Use appropriate address, salutation, and business letter formatting

Use an easy to read font (Times New Roman 12-point)



# MEETINGS

In-person visits may not be allowed in some areas in some states and locations. Virtual visits with state and local policymakers are still an effective grassroots advocacy tool that can be used in your advocacy journey.

## HOW TO SET UP A MEETING WITH POLICYMAKERS:

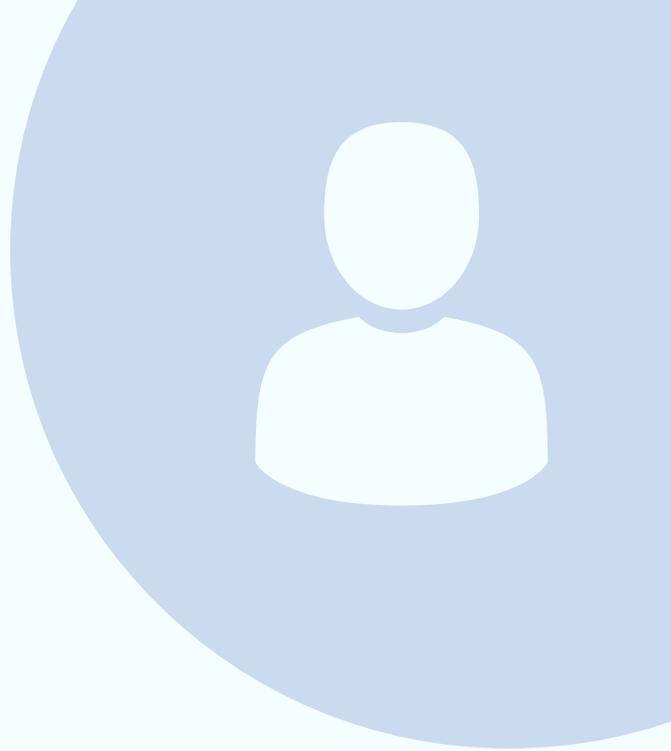
1. Find their contact information/website
2. Email the policymaker specifically writing the reason behind the meeting
3. Write in business professional writing, and double check for spelling errors
4. Send it out and reply to any responses in 24 hours!

## HERE ARE SOME TIPS TO MAXIMIZE YOUR VIRTUAL MEETING:

1. Make your appointment in advance
2. Do your homework
3. Be on time, flexible and brief
4. Listen carefully and answer questions truthfully
5. Summarize main points
6. Dress professionally
7. Double-check your wifi and microphone
8. Have a plan!



# SHARING YOUR STORY!



When speaking with policymakers, it is important to explain why FBLA is important to you. By sharing a personal story and the impact FBLA has had on your life, you will be better able to connect with policymakers and leave a lasting impression.

Everyone's story is unique and different which is what makes personal anecdotes so intriguing and interesting to listen to. When it comes time to talk, take a deep breath and know that you got this!

Before emailing or scheduling a meeting with any policymaker, you should think about how FBLA has changed your life and shaped you into the person you are today.

What is one of your favorite memories? What made you fall in love with this organization? Writing down these ideas is a great way to put your thoughts in order so you can organize them to tell an impactful story.

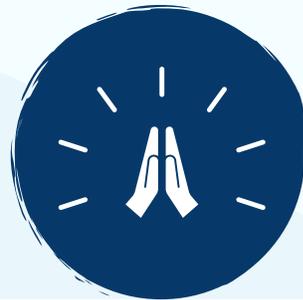


# HOW TO CONTINUE THE CONNECTION...



1

Contact them about specific legislation or issues.



2

Thank them for a positive vote on your issue or on actions taken that are important to the community.



3

Share positive information about your program and your students.



4

Share news articles or research studies on your program with your officials. This can publicize your program, highlight the impact it has made on local constituents, and continue developing rapport with policymakers.



5

Personally visit with influential policymakers.



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# **SECTION 4**

## **Community & Media Outreach**

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# UTILIZING LOCAL MEDIA

Advocacy comes in many different forms, ranging from political advocacy in relation to government legislature or on a larger outlet, the media where we have the ability to impact thousands if not millions.

## DEVELOPING A LARGE MEDIA LIST

Developing a media list is one of the most important aspects of advocacy, but it must be handled in a strategic manner.

## WHO SHOULD STUDENTS REACH OUT TO?

A great place to start in terms of gaining influential contacts is through local, state, and national legislatures. Therefore, by contacting members of Congress for a meeting, we essentially incentivize them to support an influential issue not only in the congressional house but also in the media.

## CONTACT

- FBLA Celebrity Alumni
- Celebrity with an Influential Business (Rare Beauty, Fenty Beauty, Kode with Klossy)
- Business (Sponsorship)

## How should students determine where to reach out to?

It is imperative that students reach out to well informed and credible resources in order for the information to be based as acceptable advocacy.



# WHAT NEXT?

## REACHING OUT

It is crucial to reach out to media sources in a formal and professional manner for them to value FBLA as a valuable source of advocacy.

### **STEPS TO EFFECTIVELY REACH OUT TO BE FEATURED:**

Keep it short

Use appropriate address, salutation, and business letter formatting

Personal narrative (Share your experiences as an FBLA member)

Establish yourself as a resource (let writers know that you are an expert in your field and can provide additional information)

Thank them for their time and attention and ask for a reply (Leave your contact information)

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# **SECTION 5**

## **Resources**

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# EMAIL TEMPLATE

Hi [policymaker title] (EX: Representative Harris),

I hope this email finds you well! I am a student at [your high school] High School as well as a constituent of your district. I'm reaching out on behalf of Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA), a Career & Technical Student Organization (CTSO) that prepares over 250,000 students around the world to become community-minded business leaders through relevant career preparation and leadership experiences.

[3-5 sentence personal anecdote on your experience in FBLA and your purpose]. As a four-year FBLA member and chapter President [your role in FBLA], I have experienced firsthand how powerful CTSO experiences set students up for success. Joining this organization in my freshman year, FBLA has played a huge role in shaping me into the leader I am today. This year, my chapter and I are continuing our efforts to lobby support to [your goal].

Would you be available for a 15-minute Zoom meeting sometime in the next few weeks to discuss this issue? I would love the opportunity to discuss CTE/CTSO related legislation with you.

Thank you for your consideration and support of CTSOs. I look forward to hearing back from you soon.

Sincerely,

[Your name]



# PROCLAMATION TEMPLATE

[Date]

Honorable [Name][Official Title][Mailing Address]

Dear [Name]:

The Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) is a Career & Technical Student Organization (CTSO) that prepares over 250,000 students around the world to become community-minded business leaders through relevant career preparation and leadership experiences. [Include a personal anecdote on how FBLA has affected your life, chapter, school, community, etc.]

FBLA would be honored if you would sponsor an official proclamation to recognize February as FBLA-PBL week. Your proclamation would lend official recognition to the important role FBLA plays in the lives of young leaders around the world as well as emphasize your personal commitment to supporting your constituents. I have enclosed a sample proclamation which may help your office compose the appropriate proclamation for our [City/County/State/School] (Include a sample proclamation).

If you or your staff have any questions regarding this request or the sample proclamation, please feel free to reach out to me at [contact information]. I will follow-up with your office on this request in the next few days. Thank you for your support for FBLA and your consideration on this request.

Sincerely,

[Name][Title]



# Additional Resources

Resources created by Association for Career & Technical Education



## A BUSINESS LEADER'S GUIDE TO Congressional CTE Advocacy

Policymakers want to hear from employers and business leaders in their districts, and your voice can help support CTE!

### ENGAGING POLICY-MAKERS:



#### Introduce Yourself

Schedule an initial meeting or contact with your Member of Congress or their staff to introduce yourself, your business, your education partners, your business' impact on the state's economy, and your major policy issues such as the skills shortage, workforce development initiatives, funding for training programs or any other issues affecting CTE and your business.



#### Provide an Opportunity to See Your Business Firsthand

Organize a tour of your business, a visit to a worksite or a product/service demonstration. This is your opportunity to provide your Member of Congress with a deeper understanding of your business and industry. These events can generate local news coverage, present photo opportunities and provide real examples for policymakers who may not be familiar with your work. These tours can also be used to highlight current employees who have come through CTE programs.



#### Continue to Build the Relationship



Building a relationship based on regular communication builds trust and ensures your voice will be heard! Ideas include:

- **Weigh in on important policy issues.** Call or write your Member when important education and workforce development issues arise. ACTE's Legislative Alerts provide step-by-step instructions and talking points.
- **Attend town hall meetings and community events.** Even if you don't participate in a public discussion, these opportunities can provide you with an opportunity to speak individually before or afterwards with policymakers or their staff.
- **Join a formal feedback group or council.** Many Members of Congress have advisory councils focused on specific issues and composed of leaders within their states or districts.
- **Write in the local paper.** Writing letters to the editor or op-eds can be an effective way to spread the positive CTE message to Members of Congress.
- **Join a professional organization.** Local, state and national organizations can offer opportunities to advocate with like-minded colleagues and for face-time with local policymakers.



- In any communication, be sure to share:
  - ✓ the name, location and a brief overview of your business
  - ✓ how many people your business employs
  - ✓ your position
  - ✓ the education and skills your employees need
  - ✓ how specific policies could impact your business
  - ✓ how Congress can further support your business

- Members of Congress have one office in D.C. and most have multiple offices in their district or state. Often, starting with a district/state office is best if you are setting up an initial meeting or business tour. Later, you should connect with the D.C. office to weigh in on specific policy issues, but your local contacts can help direct your inquiry.
- Locate your elected officials here: [www.congressweb.com/acte](http://www.congressweb.com/acte)

For more information on congressional advocacy, including more detailed tips, resources and talking points, visit [www.acteonline.org/advocacy](http://www.acteonline.org/advocacy).

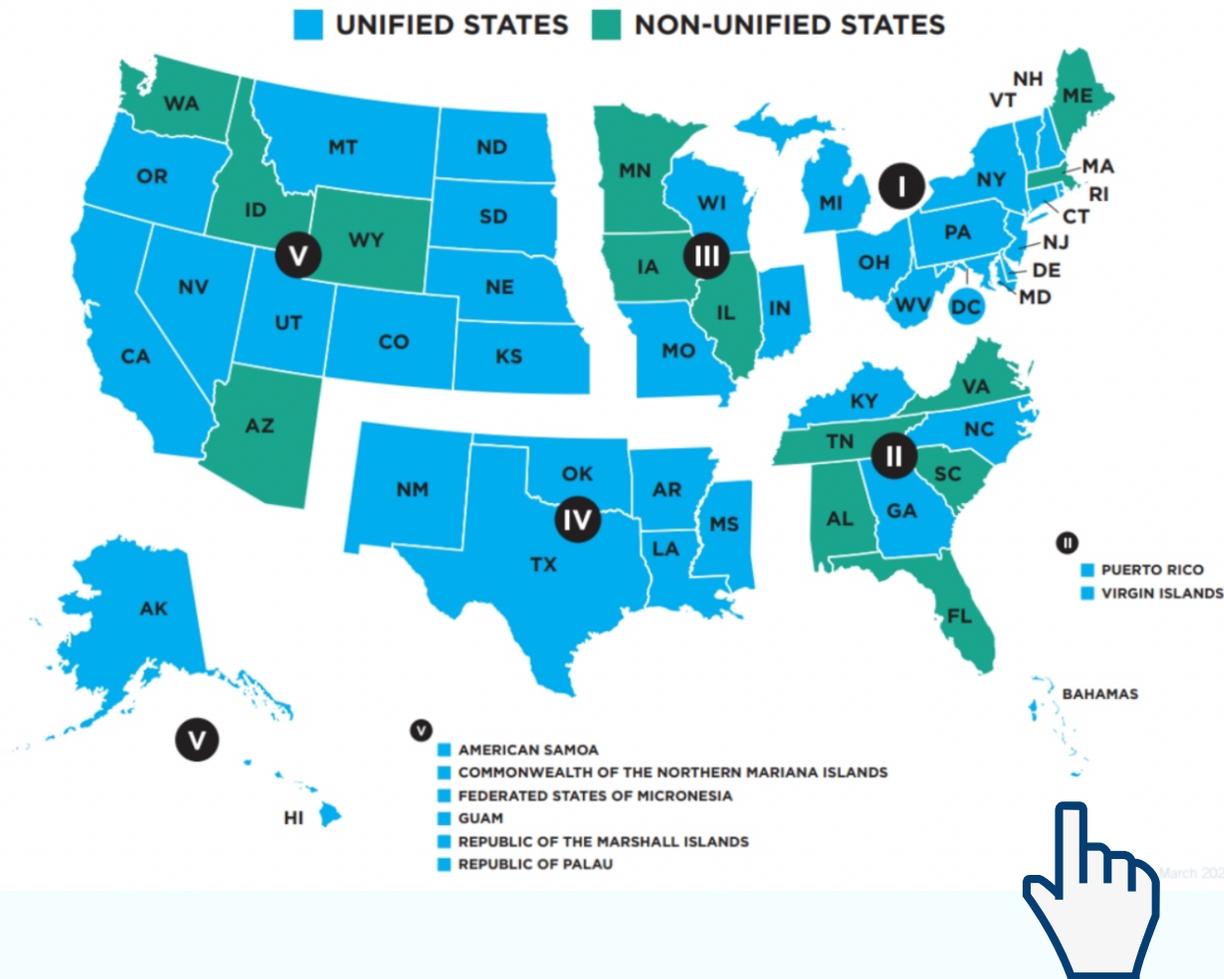


# Additional Resources

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## STATE FACT SHEETS

South Carolina



Utilize ACTE's website for a State Profile on CTE and CTSO's in your state to support your advocacy efforts!

