

2025-2026 Competitive Events Guidelines

Business Plan



Business Plan gives members the opportunity to develop and present a comprehensive plan for launching a new business. This event highlights the importance of business planning as a tool for evaluating, organizing, and communicating a business concept. It includes a pre-judged asset (written report) and a live presentation to a panel of judges.

Event Overview

Division	High School
Event Type	Team of 1, 2, or 3 members
Event Category	Presentation
Event Elements	Pre-judged Asset and Presentation

Educational Alignments

Career Cluster Framework Connection	Management & Entrepreneurship
NACE Competency Alignment	Career & Self-Development, Critical Thinking, Communication, Leadership, Professionalism

The business must not have been in operation more than 12 months prior to the first level of competition (District Leadership Conference).

District

Vermont FBLA does not host district conferences.

State

See below for the list of required competition items; Vermont FBLA requires the same items set by National FBLA at our State Leadership Conference. Vermont FBLA will also provide the items listed below, except for power, a projector, or a screen in the finals round. Presentation events will have a 1-minute set-up time. Most presentations will happen in a large Armory, and all competitors may present to the judges in a preliminary round.

National

Required Competition Items

	Items Competitor Must Provide	Items FBLA Provides
Preliminary Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conference-provided nametag Photo identification Attire that meets the FBLA Dress Code Technology and presentation items 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Table
Final Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conference-provided nametag Photo identification Attire that meets the FBLA Dress Code 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Table Power Projector with HDMI cord Projector screen

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology and presentation items, including any adapter or cord needed beyond an HDMI connection 	
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Important FBLA Documents

- Competitors should be familiar with the Competitive Events [Policy & Procedures Manual](#), [Honor Code](#), [Code of Conduct](#), and [Dress Code](#).

Eligibility Requirements

To participate in FBLA competitive events at the National Leadership Conference (NLC), the following criteria must be met:

- **Membership Deadline:** FBLA national membership dues must be paid to the specific division by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on March 1 of the current school year.
- **Repeat Competitors:** Members may only compete in an event at the NLC more than once if they have not previously placed in the top 10 of that event at the NLC. If a member places in the top 10 of an event at the NLC, they are no longer eligible to compete in that event at future NLCs, unless the event has been modified beyond a name change. Chapter events are exempt from this procedure.
- **Conference Registration:** Members must be officially registered for the NLC and must pay the national conference registration fee to participate.
- **Official Hotel Requirement:** To be eligible to compete, competitors must stay within the official FBLA housing block.
- **State Entry Limits:** Each state may submit up to four entries per event.
- **Event Participation Limits:** Each member may participate in:
 - One individual or team event, and
 - One chapter event (e.g., *Community Service Project* or *Local Chapter Annual Business Report*).
- **Competitor Responsibility:** Only registered competitors are permitted to plan, research, prepare, and set up their presentations. Advisers and others may not assist.
- **Participation Requirement:** To be eligible for an award, each competitor must complete all components of the event at the National Leadership Conference.
- **Team Composition:** All members of a team must be from the same local chapter.
- **Identification at Check-in:** Competitors must present valid photo identification (physical or digital) that matches the name on their conference name badge. Acceptable forms include a driver's license, passport, state-issued ID, or school ID.
- **Late Arrivals:** Competitors will be allowed to compete until such time that the results are finalized, or participation would impact the fairness and integrity of the event, as determined by Competitive Events staff. If judges have left the competitive event area, it is no longer possible to compete. Five penalty points will be assessed for late arrivals in any competitive event.
- **Event Schedule Notes:**
 - Some events may begin before the Opening Session.
 - All schedules are posted in local time for the NLC host city.
 - Schedule changes are not permitted.

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Event Administration

This event consists of three phases: a pre-judged asset, preliminary presentation, and a final presentation.

Pre-judged Asset Details: Report

Submission Deadline

- A PDF of the report must be uploaded through the conference registration system by the state-specified deadline.

Asset Requirements:

- All content must be original and created specifically for this competition.
- QR codes and links are not allowed in the asset.
- Advisers or others may not assist in preparing the project. It must be created entirely by the competitor(s).
- Assets must be new, original work and may not have been submitted at any previous National Leadership Conference.

Judging & Ownership

- Assets will be judged prior to the National Leadership Conference (NLC).
- Pre-judged assets will not be returned. All submitted projects become the property of FBLA and may be published or reproduced for promotional purposes.

Research

- Information must be supported by credible, well-documented sources.
- Any use of copyrighted material, images, logos, or trademarks must be properly documented.

Event Specific Information

- **Number of Pages:** The report will be no more than seventeen (17) pages.
- Reports should follow the rating sheet sequence and be formatted to fit on 8 ½" x 11" paper.
- The first page (front cover) should include the name of school, state, name of the business, and school year (2025-2026) on the cover.
- The second page must include a table of contents and each page must be numbered.
- Divider pages and appendices are optional and must be included in the page count.
- The business must not have been in operation more than 12 months prior to the first level of competition (district/region/section or state).
- Reports will follow this sequence, mirroring the rating sheet:
 - *Executive Summary:* Provides a brief synopsis of the key points and strengths included in the plan.
 - *Company Profile:* Includes basic details of the business, including an overview, mission statement, location, legal structure and governance, organization and goals.
 - *Industry Analysis:* Provides an analysis of the larger industry in which the business will belong, analyzes key trends and strategic opportunities in the industry, demonstrates an understanding and awareness of external business decisions.
 - *Target Market:* Provides a brief overview of the nature and accessibility of the targeted audience. Analyzes the market's potential, current patterns, and sensitivities.
 - *Competitive Analysis:* Includes an honest and complete analysis of the business' competition and demonstrates an understanding of the business' relative strengths and weaknesses.

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- *Marketing Plan and Sales Strategy:* Demonstrates how the business' product or service will be marketed and sold, includes both strategic and tactical elements of the marketing and sales approach.
- *Operations:* Provides an overview of business operations on a day-to-day basis, including production processes, physical facility reviews, use of technology, and processes followed to ensure delivery of products or services.
- *Management and Organization:* Describes the key participants in the new business venture and identifies human resources the business can draw upon as part of the management team, employee pool, consultants, directors, or advisers. It also portrays the role each will play in the business' development and discusses compensation and incentives.
- *Long-Term Development:* Gives a clear vision of where the business will be in three (3), five (5) or more years. It offers an honest and complete evaluation of the business' potential for success and failure and identifies priorities for directing future business activities.
- *Financials:* Indicate the accounting methodology to be used by the business. Discuss any assumptions made in projecting future financial results. Present projections honestly and conservatively.
- *Appendix:* Includes copies of key supporting documents (e.g., certifications, licenses, tax requirements, codes, letters of intent or advance contract, endorsements, etc.).

Preliminary Presentation Details

Timing Structure

- **Equipment Set-Up:** 3 minutes
- **Presentation:** 7 minutes (a one-minute warning will be provided)
- **Question & Answer (Q&A):** 3 minutes
- **Important:** Time allocations are exclusive. The presentation must begin immediately after the 3-minute set-up time concludes. Time may not be shifted between segments. Competitors will not interact with judges during the set-up period.

Venue & Format

- Presentations occur in-person at the National Leadership Conference (NLC).
- Competitors/teams are randomly assigned to presentation sections.
- Presentations will take place in a large, open area with a designated space of approximately 10' x 10', which includes a table and chairs for the judges.
- The preliminary round is closed to conference attendees and audience.

Technology Guidelines

- **Internet Access:** Not provided
- Presentations must be delivered using one or two personal devices (laptop, tablet, mobile phone, or monitor approximately laptop-sized).
- If using two devices, one must face the judges and the other must face the presenters.
- Projectors and projector screens are not permitted, and competitors may not bring their own.
- Wireless slide advancers (e.g., presentation clickers or mice) are allowed.
- External speakers are not allowed; audio must come directly from the presenting device(s).
- Electricity will not be available.

Non-Technology Items

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- Pre-judged asset, visual aids, samples, notes, and other physical materials related to the project may be used.
- Items may be placed on the provided table or on the judges table, if space allows.
- No items may be left with the judges following the presentation.

Restricted Items

- Animals, except for authorized service animals.
- Food, which may be used for display only and may not be consumed by judges.
- Links and QR codes, which may be shown but may not be scanned or clicked by judges at any time.

Research

- Information must be supported by credible, well-documented sources.
- Any use of copyrighted material, images, logos, or trademarks must be properly documented.

Team Expectations

- In team presentations, all members must actively participate in the delivery of the presentation.

Event Specific Information: Competitors should incorporate the following aspects in the presentation

- Business Concept and Company Profile
- Marketing Aspects
- Operations and Management Plans
- Financial Documents & Projections
- Risks & Adverse Results
- Long-Term Goals

Final Presentation Details

Timing Structure

- **Equipment Set-Up:** 3 minutes
- **Presentation:** 7 minutes (a one-minute warning will be provided)
- **Question & Answer (Q&A):** 3 minutes
- **Note:** Each time segment is exclusive. Once the 3-minute set-up period ends, the 7-minute presentation time begins automatically. Competitors may not shift time between segments. Competitors will not interact with judges during the set-up period.

Advancement to Finals

- The top-scoring competitors or teams from each preliminary section will advance to the final round in equal numbers.
- The number of competitors or teams advancing to the final round depends on the number of preliminary sections:
 - 2 sections: Top 6 from each section advance
 - 3 sections: Top 4 from each section advance
 - 4 sections: Top 3 from each section advance
 - 5 sections: Top 3 from each section advance
 - More than 5 sections: Top 2 from each section advance

Audience & Viewing Rules

- Final presentations may be open to conference attendees, depending on space availability.

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- Finalists may not view other presentations in their own event.

Technology Guidelines

- **Internet Access:** Provided (*Please be aware that internet access at conference venues may be unreliable. Always prepare a backup plan in case the connection is lost or does not work with your device.*)
- Presentations must be delivered using one or two personal devices (laptop, tablet, mobile phone, or monitor approximately laptop-sized).
- If using two devices, one must face the judges and the other must face the presenters.
- If the final round takes place in a conference room, the following equipment will be provided: a projector, projector screen, power access, and a table.
- Competitors using laptops or devices without an HDMI port must bring their own compatible adapters.
- It is the responsibility of final-round competitors to decide whether or not to use the provided technology.
- Wireless slide advancers (e.g., presentation clickers or mice) are allowed.
- Electricity will not be available.

Non-Technology Items

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- Items may be placed on the provided table or on the judges table, if space allows.
- No items may be left with the judges following the presentation.

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Scoring

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- The pre-judged asset score will be added to the preliminary presentation round scores to determine which competitors or teams advance to the final round from each section.
- The final presentation score determines the top winners.
- Pre-judged asset score will be used to break a tie.
- All judging decisions are final. Results announced at the National Leadership Conference are considered official and will not be changed after the conclusion of the National Leadership Conference.

Penalty Points

- Competitors may be disqualified if they violate the Code of Conduct or the Honor Code.
- Five points are deducted if competitors do not follow the Dress Code or are late to their assigned presentation time.

Recognition

- A maximum of 10 entries (individuals or teams) may be recognized per event.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

- FBLA complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) by providing reasonable accommodations for competitors. Accommodation requests must be submitted through the conference registration system by the official registration deadline. All requests will be reviewed, and additional documentation may be required to determine eligibility and appropriate support.

Recording of Presentations

- Unauthorized audio or video recording is strictly prohibited in all competitive events.
- FBLA reserves the right to record presentations for educational, training, or archival purposes. Competitors should be aware that their presentations may be recorded by FBLA-authorized personnel.

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Business Plan Pre-Judged Asset (Report) Rating Sheet

Expectation Item	Not Demonstrated	Below Expectations	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations	Points Earned
Executive Summary <i>Provide brief and concise Executive Summary. Convince reader that business concept is sound and has a reasonable chance of success</i>	<i>No Executive Summary</i>	<i>Executive Summary is provided but does not show evidence of sound business concept OR reasonable chance of success</i>	<i>Executive Summary is proved AND show evidence of sound business concept and reasonable chance of success</i>	<i>Executive Summary serves as a strong introduction and transitions into the remainder of the report</i>	
	0 points	1-8 points	9-12 points	13-15 points	
Develop Company Profile <i>Legal form of business Effective date of business Company mission statement/vision Company governance Company location(s) Immediate development goals Overview of company's financial status</i>	<i>More than one of the components listed is not addressed</i>	<i>Description of one or more components is limited OR one or more components is not described</i>	<i>All components are described adequately</i>	<i>All components are described adequately with supporting documentation</i>	
	0 points	1-8 points	9-12 points	13-15 points	
Present Industry Analysis <i>Description of industry (size, growth rates, history) Trends and strategic opportunities with industry</i>	<i>More than one of the components listed is not addressed</i>	<i>Description of one or more components is limited OR one or more components is not described</i>	<i>All components are described adequately</i>	<i>All components are described adequately with supporting documentation</i>	
	0 points	1-8 points	9-12 points	13-15 points	
Present Target Market <i>Target market defined (size, growth, potential, needs) Effective analysis of market's potential, current patterns, and sensitivities</i>	<i>More than one of the components listed is not addressed</i>	<i>Description of one or more components is limited OR one or more components is not described</i>	<i>All components are described adequately</i>	<i>All components are described adequately with supporting documentation</i>	
	0 points	1-8 points	9-12 points	13-15 points	
Discuss Competition <i>Key competitors identified Effective analysis of competitors' strengths and weaknesses Potential future competitors Barriers to entry for new competitors identified</i>	<i>More than one of the components listed is not addressed</i>	<i>Description of one or more components is limited OR one or more components is not described</i>	<i>All components are described adequately</i>	<i>All components are described adequately with supporting documentation</i>	
	0 points	1-8 points	9-12 points	13-15 points	
Marketing Plan & Sales Strategy <i>Key message to be communicated identified Options for message delivery identified and analyzed including Web process Sales procedures and methods defined</i>	<i>More than one of the components listed is not addressed</i>	<i>Description of one or more components is limited OR one or more components is not described</i>	<i>All components are described adequately</i>	<i>All components are described adequately with supporting documentation</i>	
	0 points	1-8 points	9-12 points	13-15 points	
Operations <i>Business facilities described Production plan defined and analyzed Workforce plan defined and analyzed Impact of Technology</i>	<i>More than one of the components listed is not addressed</i>	<i>Description of one or more components is limited OR one or more components is not described</i>	<i>All components are described adequately</i>	<i>All components are described adequately with supporting documentation</i>	
	0 points	1-8 points	9-12 points	13-15 points	



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Expectation Item	Not Demonstrated	Below Expectations	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations	Points Earned
Management & Organization Key employees/principals identified and described Board of Directors, advisory committee, consultants, and other human resources identified and described Plan for identifying, recruiting, and securing key participants described Compensation and incentives plan	More than one of the components listed is not addressed	Description of one or more components is limited OR one or more components is not described	All components are described adequately	All components are described adequately with supporting documentation	
	0 points	1-8 points	9-12 points	13-15 points	
Provide Long-term Development Goals for three, five, or more years are identified and documented Risks and potential adverse results identified and analyzed Strategy in place to take business toward long-term goals	More than one of the components listed is not addressed	Description of one or more components is limited OR one or more components is not described	All components are described adequately	All components are described adequately with supporting documentation	
	0 points	1-9 points	10-16 points	17-20 points	
Financials Type of accounting system to be used is identified Financial projections are included and reasonable <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 1 monthly cash flow • Year 1 monthly income statement • Yearly income statements for Years 1, 3 and 5 	More than one of the components listed is not addressed	Description of one or more components is limited OR one or more components is not described	All components are described adequately	All components are described adequately with supporting documentation	
	0 points	1-9 points	10-16 points	17-20 points	
Substantiates and cites sources used while conducting research	Sources are not cited	Sources/References are seldom cited to support statements	Professionally legitimate sources & resources that support statements are generally present	Compelling evidence from professionally legitimate sources & resources is given to support statements	
	0 points	1-6 points	7-8 points	9-10 points	
Report Format					
Format and design a business report	Does not format document	Inconsistent formatting, excessive white space, and/or unrelated graphics and/or photos	Consistent formatting throughout the report	Utilizes full bleed, effective use of space, related defined graphics, and consistent formatting	
	0 points	1-2 points	3-4 points	5 points	
Include correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling	More than 5 grammar, punctuation, or spelling errors	3-4 grammar, punctuation, or spelling errors	No spelling errors, and not more than 2 grammar or punctuation errors	No spelling error, and not more than 1 grammar or punctuation error	
	0 points	1-2 points	3-4 points	5 points	
Guideline Protocols					
Adherence to Competitive Events Guidelines	Competitor(s) Did Not Follow Guidelines	Execution Aligned with Guidelines: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Report was submitted as PDF ✓ Links or QR codes were not used (unless in citations) ✓ Report was 17 pages or under ✓ Report followed the sequence of the rating sheet & formatted for 8 1/2" x 11" paper ✓ Cover Page with all criteria listed, table of contents included, all pages are numbered ✓ Business not in operation for longer than 12 months 			
		0 points	10 points		
Pre-judged Asset Total (190 points)					

Name(s):	
School:	
Judge Signature:	Date:

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Comments:

Business Plan Presentation Rating Sheet					
Expectation Item	Not Demonstrated	Below Expectations	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations	Points Earned
Describes business concept and company profile	<i>No evidence of business concept or company profile</i>	<i>Business concept OR company profile described</i>	<i>Business concept AND company profile explained</i>	<i>Business concept and company profile explained including how the concept matches the profile</i>	
	0 points	1-6 points	7-8 points	9-10 points	
Explains marketing aspects of business	<i>No marketing evident</i>	<i>One aspect of marketing explained</i>	<i>Two aspects of marketing explained</i>	<i>Three or more aspects of marketing to increase company presentation explained</i>	
	0 points	1-8 points	9-12 points	13-15 points	
Describes operations and management plans	<i>No evidence of company, operations plan, or management plan</i>	<i>Description of operations OR management plan</i>	<i>Description of operations AND management plan</i>	<i>Detailed description of operations and management with plan for future growth</i>	
	0 points	1-8 points	9-12 points	13-15 points	
Provides information on financial documents and projections	<i>No evidence of financial documents or company projections</i>	<i>Provides information on at least one financial document OR one projection</i>	<i>Provides information on two financial documents and at least one projection</i>	<i>Provides information on at least three financial documents and at least three projections</i>	
	0 points	1-6 points	7-8 points	9-10 points	
Identifies and analyzes risks and adverse results and provides plan to avoid adverse results	<i>No evidence of risks or adverse results</i>	<i>One risk OR adverse result is given: no evidence of planning</i>	<i>Two risks and at least one adverse result identified; includes a plan with at least one step to avoid adverse results</i>	<i>Three risks and at least one adverse result identified; includes a plan with at least two steps to avoid adverse results</i>	
	0 points	1-6 points	7-8 points	9-10 points	
Identifies long-term goals	<i>No goals identified</i>	<i>Only one goal identified</i>	<i>Two goals identified</i>	<i>Three or more goals identified with specific plan to achieve the goals</i>	
	0 points	1-6 points	7-8 points	9-10 points	
Presentation Delivery					
Statements are well-organized and clearly stated	<i>Competitor(s) did not appear prepared</i>	<i>Competitor(s) were prepared, but flow was not logical</i>	<i>Presentation flowed in logical sequence</i>	<i>Presentation flowed in a logical sequence; statements were well organized</i>	
	0 points	1-6 points	7-8 points	9-10 points	
Consistently displays confidence, poised body language, engaging eye contact, and effective voice projection.	<i>Did not demonstrate any of the listed skills</i>	<i>Demonstrated 1-2 of the listed skills (confidence, body language, eye contact, or voice projection)</i>	<i>Demonstrated 3 of the listed skills (confidence, body language, eye contact, or voice projection)</i>	<i>Demonstrated all skills, enhancing the overall presentation</i>	
	0 points	1-6 points	7-8 points	9-10 points	

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Demonstrates the ability to effectively answer questions	<i>Does not respond to questions or responses are completely off-topic.</i>	<i>Provides incomplete or unclear answers that show limited understanding.</i>	<i>Responds accurately and clearly to most questions, showing adequate understanding.</i>	<i>Responds confidently with clear, accurate, and thoughtful answers that enhance the overall presentation.</i>	
	0 points	1-6 points	7-8 points	9-10 points	
Presentation Protocols					
Adherence to Competitive Events Guidelines	Competitor(s) Did Not Follow Guidelines	Execution Aligned with Guidelines: (All criteria must be met) ✓ Used only allowable technology devices (sizing specs followed; maximum of two, with only one facing judges at a time) ✓ Maintained professional boundaries during set-up time (no interaction with judges) ✓ Did not leave materials behind after the presentation ✓ Links or QR codes were displayed appropriately (not clicked or scanned by judges) ✓ Audio was presented without external speakers (preliminary round) Avoided use of food or live animals			
		0 points	10 points		
Staff Only: Penalty Points (5 points for dress code penalty and/or 5 points for late arrival penalty)					
Presentation Total (110 max)					
Name(s):					
School:					
Judge Signature:					Date:
Comments:					