

2026-2027 Competitive Events Guidelines

Introduction to Programming



Introduction to Programming allows members to design and develop a basic computer program based on a given topic. Members demonstrate their coding skills, logic, and creativity by presenting the completed program to a panel of judges.

Event Overview	
Division	High School (9 th & 10 th grade only)
Event Type	Team of 1, 2, or 3 members
Event Category	Presentation
Event Elements	Presentation with a Topic

Event Information:	
<u>National Leadership Conference:</u> Timing Structure: • Equipment Set-Up: 3 minutes ○ No interaction allowed with judges during this time. • 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. Important Notes: • 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. • 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.	<u>State/Region:</u> Review Region and State Sections further on in this document.

*** Event specifics are continued below. Review the document in its entirety.

2026-2027 Topic

Local Business Digital Ordering System

Many small businesses are expanding their services by offering customers the ability to place orders digitally. Develop a digital ordering system for a local business of your choice that provides customers with a convenient and user-friendly ordering experience.

Your program should allow customers to browse products or services, place and manage orders, calculate purchase totals, and review order information. Competitors should determine the specific features and functionality that best support the needs of the selected business and its customers.

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Your program should also account for real-world situations, such as unavailable items, inventory limits, invalid entries, or customer budget constraints.

Use any programming language or environment that demonstrates your understanding of variables, conditionals, loops, functions, lists or arrays, user input, and basic program organization.

How can your system improve the customer experience while helping a local business operate more efficiently?

Region

This is not a region event.

State

State Eligibility

Each chapter may enter two (2) teams of 1, 2, or 3 members of active local chapters in FBLA Connect, the FBLA membership system. An active chapter is defined as having members “pending or paid” at the time of the “state-only” registration published on the PA FBLA website.

In order to be registered for this event, student data is imported into Blue Panda, the event registration and competitive events management system, from FBLA Connect. Students are imported and able to be registered only if identified as having “pending or paid” membership. “Paid” membership is defined as a dues payment for the student received by National FBLA; “pending” membership is defined as membership for which payment is due to National FBLA 60 days from the date the student appears on the membership invoice.

Members may compete in an event more than once if they have not previously placed in the top ten of that event at NLC. If a member places in the top ten of an event at NLC, they are no longer eligible to compete in that event at RLC, SLC, or NLC.

It is the responsibility of the local chapter adviser

- to pay membership dues for all competitors by the published submission deadline for this event and to register students through Blue Panda by the published deadline.

Finalists for this event will be an equal number advancing from the State Qualifying Round to a maximum of 15. Finalists will be notified by the PA FBLA Executive Director/State Chairman by the date indicated on the FBLA website. Finalists will be required to give an oral presentation at the SLC.

State Procedure

State Qualifying Round

1. Competitors will be allowed to select a presentation time on the published date from a set timeframe once registration has closed. Once a presentation time has been selected, it cannot be changed. If a competitor does not select a time to present, one will be randomly assigned from the remaining time slots. At the selected presentation time, competitors will join a Zoom meeting. Competitors will then give their presentation to a panel of judges during the meeting.
2. Competitors may join Zoom individually from multiple computers or as a team from one computer.
3. Competitors may join Zoom from school, home, or other location.
4. Competitors may be seated or standing during the Zoom presentation.

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5. The participants must comply with the PA FBLA Dress Code which can be found at <https://www.pafbla.org/about-pafbla/dress-code/>. If the participants do not comply, points will be deducted **UNLESS** there is an egregious violation.
6. Competitors will be allowed to share their screens during the presentation.
7. Competitors will not be allowed to use chat, whiteboard, or any other features in Zoom other than to share their screen.
8. Competitors should incorporate the following aspects in response to the topic
 - **Code Quality & Structure:** Demonstrate organized, readable code using clear structure and meaningful function names.
 - **User Experience:** Design a program that is easy to navigate with clear instructions for the user.
 - **Input Validation:** Apply input checks that ensure the data is in the correct format and makes sense.
 - **Functionality:** Explain how the program solves the assigned problem and connects to the topic.
 - **Data & Logic:** Use appropriate data structures and logical flow to support program goals.
 - **Documentation:** Include all required documentation and credit any external resources used:
 - o A readme file that explains how to use the program
 - o The source code
 - o A list of any templates or libraries used
 - o Clear credit for any outside resources.
9. The competitors must perform all aspects of the presentation (e.g. speaking, set-up, operating AV equipment, etc.) Other representatives of the chapter may provide no additional assistance.
10. The competitors must be visible to the judges.
11. Visual aids and samples specifically related to the project may be used in the presentations.
12. Advisers may not participate during the actual delivery of the presentation, including assisting with setup, distribution of handouts, operation of audiovisual equipment, etc.
13. Five (5) minutes will be allowed to set up and remove equipment or presentation items.
14. Seven (7) minutes will be given to describe the project and the results obtained.
15. At the end of six (6) minutes, a timekeeper will give a one-minute warning, and at seven (7) minutes the timekeeper will announce "TIME". When time is called, the presenter must end the presentation.
16. Following each presentation, the judges will conduct a three-minute (3) question-and-answer period.
17. Links and QR codes (for display only; cannot be clicked or scanned by judges before, during, or after the presentation).
18. The Zoom presentation will not have an audience.
19. Up to 15 finalists will be announced based on the qualifying round score.
20. After the announcement of the finalists, presentations can be changed in preparation for the state competition.
21. The qualifying round score will not be used in the final round.

Conference Requirements

1. The event consists of two parts: (1) qualifying round presentation and (2) an oral presentation.
2. Participants are required to complete both parts to be eligible to win an award.

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Oral Presentation

1. The participants must comply with the PA FBLA Dress Code which can be found at <https://www.pafbla.org/about-pafbla/dress-code/>. If the participants do not comply, points will be deducted UNLESS there is an egregious violation.
2. The participants must perform all aspects of the presentation (e.g., speaking, set-up, operating AV equipment, etc.) Other representatives of the chapter may provide no additional assistance.
3. Visual aids and samples related to the project may be used during the presentation; however, no items may be left with the judges or audience.
4. Advisers may not participate during the actual delivery of the presentation, including assisting with setup, distribution of handouts, operation of audiovisual equipment, etc.
5. Competitors should incorporate the following aspects in response to the topic
 - **Code Quality & Structure:** Demonstrate organized, readable code using clear structure and meaningful function names.
 - **User Experience:** Design a program that is easy to navigate with clear instructions for the user.
 - **Input Validation:** Apply input checks that ensure the data is in the correct format and makes sense.
 - **Functionality:** Explain how the program solves the assigned problem and connects to the topic.
 - **Data & Logic:** Use appropriate data structures and logical flow to support program goals.
 - **Documentation:** Include all required documentation and credit any external resources used:
 - o A readme file that explains how to use the program
 - o The source code
 - o A list of any templates or libraries used
 - o Clear credit for any outside resources.
6. Links and QR codes (for display only; cannot be clicked or scanned by judges before, during, or after the presentation).
7. The chapter must provide the computer for the event. An LCD projector, screen, table, and electrical power will be provided on-site. Participants that will be utilizing Apple products or other devices that do not have an HDMI port will need to provide their own adapters.
8. Internet access is provided as Wi-Fi or cable. Internet access may not be Wi-Fi, so competitors should plan appropriately when selecting devices on which to present. Please note that internet reliability at any conference venue cannot be guaranteed. Always have a backup plan in case internet connections go down.
9. Five (5) minutes will be allowed to set up and remove equipment or presentation items.
10. Seven (7) minutes will be given to describe the project.
11. At the end of six (6) minutes, a timekeeper will stand until noticed and hold up a colored timecard indicating one minute is left, and at seven (7) minutes the timekeeper will stand and hold up a colored timecard indicating time is up. When time is called, the presenter must end the presentation.
12. Following each presentation, the judges will conduct a three-minute (3) question-and-answer period.
13. The performance is open to all conference attendees, except performing participants of this event. If participants of the event view other presentations before or after their scheduled presentation time, they (or their team if they are part of one) will be disqualified.

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State Judging

A panel of judges will select the finalists, and all decisions of the judges are final.

Judges must make a definitive decision on ranking. Ties are not permitted. The decision of the judges is final.

State Awards

The state will present a maximum of ten (10) awards at the State Leadership Conference.

National Conference Eligibility

The first-, second-, third-, and fourth-place award-winning projects at the State Leadership Conference are eligible for entry at the National Leadership Conference. All NLC qualifiers will be expected to present a seven-minute (7) oral presentation of the project at the NLC.

In the event that the local chapter of the first-, second-, third-, or fourth place winning project cannot attend the National Leadership Conference or does not wish to have its project submitted for competition at the National Leadership Conference, it is the responsibility of the:

local chapter adviser

- to contact the PA FBLA Executive Director/State Chairman about not participating at the National Leadership Conference.

PA FBLA Executive Director/State Chairman

- to contact the next eligible award winner about participating at the National Leadership Conference.

National

Required Competition Items

	Items Competitor Must Provide	Items FBLA Provides
Preliminary Presentation	• Conference-provided nametag • Photo identification • Attire that meets the FBLA Dress Code • Technology and presentation items	• Table • Internet Access
Final Presentation	• Conference-provided nametag • Photo identification • Attire that meets the FBLA Dress Code • Technology and presentation items, including any adapter or cord needed beyond an HDMI connection	• Table • Power • Projector with HDMI cord • Projector screen • Internet Access

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.

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- **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:
 - o One individual or team event, and
 - o 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 Administration

This event consists of two phases: a preliminary presentation and a final presentation.

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

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- **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 no more than three personal devices (laptop, tablet, mobile phone, or monitor approximately laptop-sized).
- 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

- 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 response to the topic

- **Code Quality & Structure:** Demonstrate organized, readable code using clear structure and meaningful function names.
- **User Experience:** Design a program that is easy to navigate with clear instructions for the user.
- **Input Validation:** Apply input checks that ensure the data is in the correct format and makes sense.
- **Functionality:** Explain how the program solves the assigned problem and connects to the topic.
- **Data & Logic:** Use appropriate data structures and logical flow to support program goals.
- **Documentation:** Include all required documentation and credit any external resources used:
 - A readme file that explains how to use the program
 - The source code
 - A list of any templates or libraries used
 - Clear credit for any outside resources

Final Presentation Details

Timing Structure

- **Equipment Set-Up:** 3 minutes
- **Presentation:** 7 minutes (a one-minute warning will be provided)

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- **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.
- 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 no more than three personal devices (laptop, tablet, mobile phone, or monitor approximately laptop-sized).
- 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

- 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.
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Team Expectations

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Event Specific Information: Competitors should incorporate the following aspects in response to the topic

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- **Functionality:** Explain how the program solves the assigned problem and connects to the topic.
- **Data & Logic:** Use appropriate data structures and logical flow to support program goals.
- **Documentation:** Include all required documentation and credit any external resources used:
 - A readme file that explains how to use the program
 - The source code
 - A list of any templates or libraries used
 - Clear credit for any outside resources

Scoring

- Preliminary round scores are used to determine which competitors or teams advance to the final round from each section.
- Final round scores determine the final rankings and top award winners.
- Judges are responsible for breaking all ties in both preliminary and final rounds.
- 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.

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- 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.

Important FBLA Documents

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

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Introduction to Programming Presentation Rating Sheet

Expectation Item	Not Demonstrated	Below Expectations	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations	Points Earned
Code Quality					
Appropriate use of comments, naming conventions, and proper formatting	No comments provided	Comments provided but are not logical	Comments provided assist judges throughout the demonstration	Comments provided are logical, useful, and complete	
	0 points	1-6 points	7-8 points	9-10 points	
The program is modular in a way that makes logical, readable sense	The program is written as one large block with no use of functions, methods, or modular structure.	Some attempt is made to break the program into sections, but the structure is unclear, inconsistent, or difficult to follow.	The program uses a modular structure with clear functions or methods. Each part of the program is organized in a way that makes sense and supports readability.	The program is highly organized with well-named, purpose-driven functions or modules. The structure makes the code easy to read, understand, and maintain, showing a strong understanding of clean programming practices.	
	0 points	1-6 points	7-8 points	9-10 points	
User Experience					
User interface is intuitive or clear instructions are provided	No instructions provided and is not intuitive	Instructions provided or program is not intuitive	Appropriate & clear instructions are provided	Program is intuitive and clear instructions are provided	
	0 points	1-6 points	7-8 points	9-10 points	
Users can easily navigate between pages	No help menu or navigation system incorporated	Includes basic help menu and usable navigation	Interface contains no spelling errors, has interactive help menu, and has no navigation errors	Program use also includes an intelligent feature such as an interactive Q&A	
	0 points	1-6 points	7-8 points	9-10 points	
User input is validated	User input isn't validated	User input validation attempted, but does not catch important edge cases or is not done correctly	User input is validated	Input validation applied on both syntactical and semantic levels	
	0 points	1-2 points	3-4 points	5 points	
Functionality					
Program addresses all parts of the prompt	Program does not address the topic/problem	Program addresses the topic/problem at a minimal level	Program fully addresses the topic/problem	Program fully addresses the topic/problem, and the correlation is explained in the instructions	
	0 points	1-6 points	7-8 points	9-10 points	
Program generates a presentable report	Output reports are not accurate or not available	Output reports are not sufficient to analyze data	Output reports are error free and provide all necessary information to analyze data	Output reports allow user to customize and analyze information	
	0 points	1-6 points	7-8 points	9-10 points	
Data storage	There is no storage of data	Variables are used inconsistently, or in a way that is unclear	Variable name and usage is clear. Variables store data that updates when necessary. Each variable performs only one job, and the correct data type is used	More complex data storage such as arrays and lists are used where appropriate and variable scope makes sense	

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	0 points	1-2 points	3-4 points	5 points	
Expectation Item	Not Demonstrated	Below Expectations	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations	Points Earned
Documentation					
Comprehensive documentation is included: readme file, source code, templates/libraries used, and attribution for any open-source or copyrighted material.	No documentation is provided, or required components are missing entirely.	Some documentation is provided, but it is incomplete, unclear, or missing key parts (such as attributions or templates used).	Documentation is mostly complete and includes a readme file, source code, and list of templates/libraries. Proper attribution is given where required.	Documentation is thorough, well-organized, and complete. All required components are included, clearly labeled, and professionally presented. Proper credit is clearly given for all external resources.	
	0 points	1-9 points	10-16 points	17-20 points	
Presentation Delivery					
Statements are well-organized and clearly stated	Competitor(s) did not appear prepared	Competitor(s) were prepared, but flow was not logical	Presentation flowed in logical sequence	Presentation flowed in a logical sequence; statements were well organized	
	0 points	1-6 points	7-8 points	9-10 points	
Consistently displays confidence, poised body language, engaging eye contact, and effective voice projection.	Did not demonstrate any of the listed skills	Demonstrated 1-2 of the listed skills (confidence, body language, eye contact, or voice projection)	Demonstrated 3 of the listed skills (confidence, body language, eye contact, or voice projection)	Demonstrated all skills, enhancing the overall presentation	
	0 points	1-6 points	7-8 points	9-10 points	
Demonstrates the ability to effectively answer questions	Does not respond to questions or responses are completely off-topic.	Provides incomplete or unclear answers that show limited understanding.	Responds accurately and clearly to most questions, showing adequate understanding.	Responds confidently with clear, accurate, and thoughtful answers that enhance the overall presentation.	
	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: ✓ Used only allowable technology devices (sizing specs followed; maximum of three) ✓ Presentation aligned with the assigned topic ✓ 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	1-10 points		
Staff Only: Penalty Points (5 points for dress code penalty and/or 5 points for late arrival penalty)					
Presentation Total (130 points)					
Name(s):					
School:					Section:
Judge Signature:					Date: