

# Guidelines for *Speak Up! Speak Out!* Participants

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## WHAT TO EXPECT

*Speak Up! Speak Out!* (SUSO) is a three-part program:

1. **Classroom Implementation**—Teams of students engage in an investigative process around a community problem, issue, or challenge that is relevant to their lives. Facilitators lead students through the investigative process and provide resources, tools, and strategies for students to conduct their own research, gather and weigh differing perspectives, and develop a solution to the problem/issue/challenge.
2. **Classroom Support**—Facilitators in Central Texas or DFW areas will receive at least one visit from a SUSO coach. Coaches are past SUSO facilitators who have sponsored winning teams. They will also be available throughout the process to support you through implementation and answer any questions. Facilitators will also be provided with a facilitation guide that will help guide students through the project process.
3. **Classroom Civics Fair:** Each participating facilitator can submit a maximum of three teams to semifinals. We recommend hosting a classroom civics fair to identify the three teams moving forward. A resource for hosting a civics fair is provided on our website.

## HOW TO PREPARE

### Speeches

Each team is responsible for two speeches, one informative and one persuasive. The ideal presentation is logical in flow, easy to follow, organized, and well researched. The solution is original and innovative. Participants should engage the audience, keep their attention, and answer questions from the judges.

- **Informative Speech (5 minute max)**
  - Define the problem, state its importance, and detail the problem's impact on the community
- **Persuasive Speech (5 minute max)**
  - Explain the proposed solution, detail the benefits and feasibility of the proposed solution, and examine the consequences of failing to adopt the proposed solution

### Digital Presentations

Digital presentations are visual representations of the problem and solution. Students use these during their speeches to enhance the impact of their message.

- Develop a digital presentation about your problem and solution using PowerPoint or Prezi
- Provide visitors with a firm grasp of your points in just a few minutes
- Use charts, graphs, illustrations, audio clips, video, etc. to meet the team's goals

## PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES

- We strongly recommend maintaining team sizes within the optimal range of 4-8 students per team to maximize benefits from cooperative learning.
- Each individual facilitator can submit a maximum of three teams to the semifinals.
- Teachers receive a stipend of \$200 for attending the professional development and registering at least one team. Finalist teams' schools receive a stipend of \$200 to support participation in the State Civics Fair
- We strongly recommend beginning the project at least six weeks before the semifinal submission due date.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The *Speak Up! Speak Out!* professional development seminars strengthen and enhance educators' instructional practices in implementing action civics in their classrooms. It also supports program planning. Former SUSO facilitators will share their experiences as well as tips and tools for creating a program structure that fits within the existing classroom curriculum.

- Attendees will receive a \$200 stipend after registering at least one team of students.
- CPE credit will be granted for educators from Austin ISD, Dallas ISD, Fort Worth ISD, Pflugerville ISD and San Antonio ISD
- For districts not granting credit, facilitators will receive a certificate and can file the PD as "Independent Study" to receive credit

## IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

Please meet the following deadlines to avoid elimination from the competition

- *September 4<sup>th</sup>*: Deadline to register for professional development seminar
- *September 9<sup>th</sup>*: Central Texas professional development at UT Austin
- *September 16<sup>th</sup>*: Dallas–Fort Worth Area professional development - TBD
- *October 2<sup>nd</sup>*: Participating teacher registration due
- *October 3<sup>rd</sup>*: Deadline to sign up for a school visit
- *October 6<sup>th</sup>*: Payee Information Form (PIF) due
- *October 16<sup>th</sup>*: Team registration form due
- *December 11<sup>th</sup>*: Semifinalists submissions due
- *January 12<sup>th</sup>*: State Finalists announced
- *February 8<sup>th</sup>*: State Civics Fair



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# Frequently Asked Questions

**\*\*Please visit [speakupspeakout.org](http://speakupspeakout.org) for general program information and materials\*\***

## **SUSO Program Questions**

### **What is Speak Up! Speak Out! (SUSO)?**

SUSO is a project-based learning experience created to provide an opportunity for young people to identify community issues that matter to them and design a realistic solution to that problem. It was created to help educators promote civic action in young people and help them explore how they can approach effective change efforts in their communities. The program's ultimate goal is to help foster the growth of future citizens who are engaged and willing to work to impact their own lives and communities. Young people work in teams, completing a project over the course of a semester and ultimately creating a presentation to be shared in a public platform. Teams are supervised by an adult facilitator.

### **What is a Civics Fair?**

A Civics Fair is a competition that brings together all of the young people who have participated in SUSO projects over the course of a semester so they can share and appreciate all of their great work and brilliant ideas. The competition aspect creates a structure of specific learning goals that will help young people develop skills for presenting to and working within organizations and governments to pursue real community change in the future. Teams present their solutions to an audience made of their peers and a panel of judges to seek meaningful feedback. Students first compete in their school/classroom Civics Fair held in late fall. Selected teams will advance to the State Civics Fair competition held at the State Capitol Building in February.

### **How do I get started?**

You may get your group(s) started by participating in the professional development seminar in September, offered both in Dallas and Austin. This session is required for all participating facilitators. From there, you may introduce the program to your students by with the SUSO introductory materials provided to you by the project manager. You and your group(s) may also:

- Review the student packet and project process with your group(s)
- Facilitate a civic engagement activity provided in the facilitator's packet
- Request the regional coordinator visit your site to introduce the project to you and your participants in person. Please call or email for appointment availability.

After the introduction of the project, schedule a time for your group(s) to meet about once a week for an hour or two, or possibly more frequently if starting the project in October. If you would like more lesson plans or activities to help you introduce SUSO, please contact the regional coordinator for more information.

### **How much time does it take to create a project for SUSO?**

Some teams spend all semester on a project, and some teams spend a couple of weeks. It depends on how frequently the teams meet and for how long. Typically, the

research necessary to thoroughly complete a project requires several weeks, especially if a group is interviewing key community members. We recommend you start a project at least six weeks before the State Civics Fair in February.

**How many students should we have participate in the program?**

There is no requirement for the number of students participating in the SUSO program. Some schools have adopted the project school-wide, while others offer the project as a small afterschool program. The only limit is the facilitator's capacity. However, please keep in mind not all teams will be selected to compete in the State Civics Fair.

**How many participants should be on a team?**

SUSO allows a maximum of 10 students per team. We recommend including four to eight students per team to allow the team members full participation in the whole process and adequate teammate support in creating the presentation. Smaller teams may find it difficult to handle a complex project in the time limit, and larger teams may not provide adequate opportunity for each teammate to fill an important role either during creation or presentation of the project. However, many teams have had success with both larger and smaller numbers. Judge your group(s) based on your knowledge of their abilities and strengths.

**SUSO State Civics Fair**

**How are teams selected to attend the State Civics Fair?** Each facilitator may submit three teams to the State Civics Fair Semifinals, which is held virtually by sending submissions of presentations to be judged in the winter. From this pool, 50 teams will be selected to advance to the State Civics Fair in February at the Texas State Capitol Building. In situations where facilitators have more than three teams participating in the program, we recommend you hold an internal preliminary competition to narrow it down to three teams to represent your school/program in the Semifinals. One suggestion is to have students present speeches or digital presentations to their peers at the end of October/early November and to have participants vote on who they want to represent them at the competition.

**How do I host my classroom Civics Fair?** SUSO will provide all facilitators with a guide on how to host your classroom Civics Fair. If you would like additional support in facilitating your Fair in addition to the guide, the program outreach coordinator and program director will be happy to assist.

**How do I submit my three teams to the Semifinals?** After holding your classroom Civics Fair, video record your final three teams' presentations. We will accept video submissions from December 1-December 11 via Submittable, an easy-to-use online platform for video submissions. SUSO will provide you with the link to the submission page in early November.

**When is the State Civics Fair?**

The State Civics Fair is scheduled for February 22, 2018 at the State Capitol Building in Austin, Texas. If you are selected to compete at the State Civics Fair but have a conflict or get closer to the date and your team is not able to participate, please call or email the program manager as soon as you know so another team may take your place.

**What do the presenters need to bring to the State Civics Fair?**

All presenting teams need to bring a USB containing their presentations and any visual aids that they wish to bring (all of which are the exclusive responsibility of the teams and will not be cared for or provided by SUSO).

**What do facilitators need to bring to State Civics Fair?**

Facilitators at the State Civics Fair must bring with them any incomplete paperwork and a valid photo ID.

**Are parents invited to the State Civics Fair?**

Parents are welcome attend the State Civics Fair to observe their student's presentations during the competition portion of the event. However, due to limited seating capacity in the auditorium, only students and their facilitators are allowed to attend the awards ceremony following the presentations. SUSO will not provide parking or lunches to family members who attend the State Civics Fair.

**Judging and Awards****How are the projects judged?**

A panel of community volunteers will judge the presentations for the Civics Fair Semifinals as well as at the State Civics Fair. Scores are averaged separately for each team and then added together for a final overall score. Below the rubrics on the judges' forms will be a section for comments and nominations for awards in several special categories. Middle school and high school are judged separately. Please refer to the example rubrics at the back of the Facilitator's Guide and Student Packet for judging criteria.

**If we win, how do we receive and use the prize money?**

Prize money is distributed through schools/organizations in the weeks following the event. Once the check has been deposited, it is up to you and your winning team to determine the best use of the funds. We recommend putting it towards implementing the solution proposed by the team.

**Transportation****Do you provide transportation to the Civics Fair?**

SUSO does not provide transportation. If you are in a school, please work to secure activity bus transportation as soon as you confirm your participation. If you are a part of an organization with access to a bus or van, please use your organization's transportation. You may also choose to utilize carpooling according the policies and

regulations of your organization. Please review your school's or program's rules regarding transportation to special events as early as possible. If you do have concerns about getting your participants to the State Civics Fair, please contact the program manager as soon as questions arise. We will be happy to work with facilitators who contact us in a timely manner.

**My school district/organization does not provide bus transportation for long distance trips. What can I do?**

Please contact the project manager to discuss your options.

**Stipend and Supplies**

**Does SUSO provide facilitator stipends?**

Yes, all SUSO facilitators will receive a stipend of \$200. However, we require that facilitators attend our professional development seminar in September and submit at least one team to the State Civics Fair semifinals to receive the stipend.

**When do I get the stipend?**

Within 30 days after the completion of all paperwork by all facilitators (usually following the State Civics Fair).

**General Feedback**

**I have an idea for how to improve SUSO. How can I provide you with that feedback?**

You may always provide feedback directly to the project manager by phone or email. The SUSO team is always looking for ways to improve the facilitator and participant experience to ensure the best possible educational outcomes.