



MICHIGAN  
**DECA**

*Community Outreach Guide for Chapters*

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# I. INTRODUCTION

This guide is designed for chapters to network with local businesses, organizations, and community leaders. The materials provided in this guide are intended to help you get off the ground and build a solid foundation that can help your chapter obtain support in the form on judges, fundraising, and chapter resources.

## A. How to Use This Guide



This guide is not meant to eliminate the work involved in Public Relations or building relationships within your community, but rather intended to give you a starting point so that you know you are headed in the right direction. We recommend that you take the materials provided in this guide and tweak them accordingly so that they fit your chapter's identity. We do not recommend using our materials word for word, they should be adapted to meet your local needs.

# II. PRESENTATIONS

## A. Overview

Having a concise presentation that answers the question, “what is DECA” is another important piece to your public relations efforts. Clearly explaining the opportunities and benefits that DECA has for students is crucial for any community outreach. A prepared presentation can be used in front of a variety of local organizations, such as the Chamber of Commerce, Rotary, SCORE, and other service organizations. Whether you are asking for a grant or simply asking an audience to come in and spend time with your members to provide feedback on their events, a prepared presentation is a major key to success.

## B. Template

In order to help our members to the greatest extent, we have created a presentation template to help you get started. To download our DECA presentation template (Microsoft Powerpoint), visit [www.mideca.org](http://www.mideca.org) and navigate to “Membership Presentation” section under the “Membership” tab (<http://mideca.org/members/membership/membership-presentation/>). A script can also

be found, to help guide the presentation. It is also a good Idea to include chapter photos in your Powerpoint to give the presentation a personal feel and allow you to talk about your chapter's achievements. You can also include your personal DECA story, where you discuss why you joined the organization and what kind of amazing opportunities being involved has given you.

### III. SPONSORSHIP LETTERS

#### A. Overview

Sponsorship letters are a great way of reaching out to your community in order to raise funds. In addition, you can use this letter as a starting point to introduce your chapter to local businesses. Businesses are always looking to support youth in their community. Thus, it never hurts to ask some of these small businesses for sponsorships in order to pay for your DECA expenses. While the sponsorships may be smaller, when they are added up they can significantly lower your costs for DECA activities.



However, the business you are reaching out to will likely want some form of marketing in exchange for their sponsorship. Some ways you can give them this exposure are as followed:

1. Putting their companies logo on the back of your chapter T-Shirt
2. Contacting the local newspaper and having them do an article about your chapters activities. Then, in the article you can mention your sponsors.
3. If your chapter has social media accounts, you can post your sponsors on that account. Then have your members share your post so that it can gain even more exposure.
4. If your chapter has a website, you may place the company's logo on your homepage.

This is not a complete list, so if there are other ways that you think would better promote the companies that sponsor you, certainly do them. Every chapter is different and will use a different combination of sponsorship. Below, you will find a template that you can use for the initial contact as well as an index-sized card you can include to ask for a donation. If you don't already have a spreadsheet of local businesses and their mailing

addresses, try visiting the local chamber of commerce for a business directory or other clubs in your school that may already have one compiled.

## **B. Template**

Use the templates and ideas provided on the next two pages to get started. Remember that you should tweak each letter to fit your chapter's identity and sound as genuine as possible.

A template for the letter can be found on <http://mideca.org/teachers/docs/resources/>

{Chapter Name}  
{Address}  
{City, State, Zip}

{Month}{Day},{Year}

Dear {Name of Business},

DECA is a student-led organization at our high school that gives students the opportunity to explore fields such as marketing, finance, hospitality, entrepreneurship and management. We write business plans, give presentations, and compete in role plays that are judged by business professionals like you from a variety of industries. In addition, we attend numerous conferences each year in order to gain real-world, hands on experience that will help us succeed in our future. DECA gives students the opportunity to travel around the nation and network with over 220,000 members worldwide. Through DECA, we are able to enhance our public speaking, leadership, and marketing abilities.

Our DECA chapter would like to ask you to support these talented students by becoming a sponsor. Unfortunately, the success that our program offers students does not come without a cost. Our members are dependent upon the support and generosity of community members like you to help keep our goals and educational opportunities alive.

We are asking your company for a donation in any amount so that we may allow these students to experience all that DECA has to offer. In exchange for your donation, we will provide an {Insert desired incentive/advertisement}. This will give your company exposure throughout the community. (Also, any donations you make are all tax deductible. Our chapter will give you the paperwork following your donation.)

We thank you for your time and support in helping us take advantage of this unique opportunity.

Sincerely,

{Signature}

{Member Name}

{Member Email}

{Member Phone Number}

**\*If your chapter has the paperwork on file to make their donations tax deductible, insert the sentence in the third paragraph with the parentheses. If not, simply remove that sentence.**

Use this as an idea to create your own postcard!

I want to become a sponsor of {Chapter Name}



*Preparing Emerging Leaders and Entrepreneurs*

Please check your donation amount below and return this card with your donation to the address listed on the right.

Please Mail Donations To:

| Amount                         | Advertisement                                            |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$50  | Name of business on website                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 | Logo on our T-Shirts, website                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$250 | Logo on T-shirts, website, banner at school/events       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 | Large logo on T-shirts, website, banner at school/events |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other |                                                          |

{Chapter Name}  
 Attn: {Name}  
 {Address}  
 {City, State, Zip}

Name of Business: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Email: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please make checks payable to: {Chapter Name}*

**Thank you for your donation!**

These letters can be formatted anyway your chapter chooses, but one suggestion is to include an introductory letter, donation index card, smaller return envelope pre-stamped with return address, and a pamphlet or brochure showcasing your chapter (optional).

## IV. DIGITAL MEDIA

### A. Social Media

Social media is another excellent resource to build yours and your chapter's public image. Coupled with creative new ideas, social media is an excellent tool to network with DECA members and chapters throughout the state and even the globe. On the other hand, make sure to put together a team of two to three people to help run the social media accounts. The best platforms to use are Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.



Tips for a successful chapter social media account:

1. Choose an appropriate handle (ex. @MichiganDECA shows your association/chapter name and that you are affiliated with DECA).
2. Include appropriate profile/cover photos (ex. chapter photo with all members or a DECA inspired graphic, which can be easily made using <https://www.canva.com/>).
3. Write bio that showcases what your organization does, and be sure to include your location so it's easy for other chapters to connect if they understand you are both from the same association.
4. Post relevant material about what your chapter is up to, and be sure to use the #MIDECA and tag @MichiganDECA (ex. current fundraisers, achievements, new members, etc.).
5. Use hashtags that coincide with DECA and their activities (ex. #DECAMonth, #DECAICDC, etc.)
6. Post high quality content, including good resolution images that make your chapter look as awesome as it is!
7. Be interactive with your chapter's members and other people from the DECA community (ex. favoriting other's photos, commenting, shouting out members, etc.)



8. Be sure to participate in the #DECAMonth Photo Challenge during November, as it is a great way to gain chapter exposure. Hundreds of chapters and members will be posting daily photos, so it is a great way to increase your outreach.
9. Try to gain local followers in order to show potential sponsors and members what your chapter is up to. Start by following them so they see your account.

## B. Chapter Websites

Having a professional website for your chapter can boost your online image when people search for you. On your website, you can post your press releases, news articles, and information about your chapter. While this guide doesn't cover all the steps of making your website in its entirety, we recommend you try using Wix.com, Squarespace, or Wordpress for a simple, cost effective, and efficient solution.



## V. GRANT WRITING

### A. Overview

Applying for grants (a sum of money given by an organization) is not only an exciting and rewarding way to receive funds for your chapter, but also a great way to spread the awareness of DECA into your community. Rotary Clubs, Community Foundations, and even Youth Advisory Councils are located all across your state. Grant applications will vary depending upon the organization, but all of them allow you to discuss what DECA is and how it has and will continue to benefit the community. It is important to uphold professionalism and understand what it is that each question is asking.

### B. Template

It is difficult to provide a complete template for writing grant applications since each application will differ, but bulleted tips are provided below to help guide your writing process.



- Learn about the organization’s philosophy, the grant’s criteria and purpose, and any restrictions that may prevent you from applying for that grant.
- Check the timeline for submission and the funding cycle you’re applying within to ensure that you would receive the money in time for conferences.
- Create a way to show that the funds you received were successfully used (Ex. a spreadsheet showing allocated funds) to create a lasting relationship with the organization.
- If asked to come in for an interview or presentation, bring pamphlets or brochures to hand to members that includes photos of your chapter.
- Be sure to always send out “Thank You” cards to each organization you receive funds from with member’s signatures.

### **C. Outreach**

Use the links provided below to begin your search for organizations near you that may be accepting grants.

- Rotary Clubs: <https://my.rotary.org/en/search/club-finder>
- Council of Michigan Foundations: <https://www.michiganfoundations.org/directory>
- Local chamber of commerce and school board

## **VI. BUSINESS RELATIONS**

### **A. Overview**

One of DECA's guiding principles is connecting to business. By doing this, your chapter will gain several valuable resources that will help you be successful, including funds, connections, and knowledge. There are numerous ways for your chapter to reach out to local businesses, and we have listed some important avenues below.

### **B. Guest Speaking/Judging**

Businesses can give many more valuable assets than just monetary funds. We encourage you to explore the possibility of having businessmen and women of the community join your DECA meetings to give insight into their field and be available to help with your DECA projects. We also encourage you to have these community leaders come in and act as a judge before competition season. This will allow them to ask questions about your project so you can edit and improve before your go in front of an actual DECA judge. You can reach out to these community members by:

- Sending a personal letter to local businesses asking if they would like to further connect to your DECA chapter and offer their knowledge to help improve your DECA projects.
- Send a professional email to the leaders asking for their help.
- Personally go to local businesses kindly asking to speak to the manager if he/she is available and if not, ask for he/she's contact information so you may get in touch at a later date. This method is preferred as you are more likely to get a response.

### **C. Fundraising**

Building strong connections with businesses is a great gateway to establishing fundraising opportunities. Local restaurants, ice cream places, and convenience stores are great for sponsorships, but they are also great places for hosting fundraisers. In order for fundraisers to take place, effective and professional connections must be established with these businesses through professional conversations and meetings. Be sure to meet with the business' owners multiple times and showcase what a great organization DECA is. Bring in flyers and your personal stories to show them how DECA prepares emerging leaders and helps with member's futures. Here are a few ways to host fundraisers with local businesses:

- Restaurants could allow a percentage of customers' bills to be donated to your chapter for a night (Ex. Which Wich Sandwiches, Chipotle, local restaurants, etc.).
- Ice cream locations could donate \$1-2 dollars per ice cream sold in a single night.
- Have chapter members sell items from businesses using order forms (Ex. Krispy Kreme Donuts).
- Host a silent auction at your school and ask local businesses to donate goods and services. Start by going to businesses and asking them for products that they sell (gift cards also work). Then, set up the auction at a major community event (homecoming, festivals) so you can get many participants. Businesses will love the free exposure and helping a good cause. Be sure to showcase where each item is from.

## **VI. CONCLUSION**

Michigan DECA sincerely hopes that this guide provides chapters with ideas and templates to help improve their relationships with local entities. If these materials are

used correctly and efficiently, a solid base will be built in your community to help your chapter receive sustainable resources for years to come.

Guide contributors: 2016-17 and 2017-18 State Executive Councils