

MAXIMIZE YOUR
MOMENTUM
DECA

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP GUIDE

2021-22

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A LETTER FROM YOUR VP OF EVENT MANAGEMENT

What's up Wisconsin DECA! My name is Grace Powell and I am serving as your Vice President of Event Management this year. As I progress through my term, I am seeking to help make a positive impact on our organization and leave a legacy that will help and impact our members. This guide is for that purpose - I hope that chapters will find the resources provided as useful and that this can be something for members to utilize for years to come.

The Professional Membership Guide was created in hopes of clarifying "professional membership," which can be often seen as a confusing term for chapters, members and advisors alike. Professional membership is an extremely broad term that encompasses many aspects of our organization, so we have broken it down into sections as outlined on the previous page. The Professional Membership Guide provides chapters opportunities to enhance their relationships by providing advice and ideas. DECA is an area filled with opportunities for students, and this is a commonly overlooked source of those. Whether you wish to recruit judges, gain professional experience, or simply secure a chapter sponsorship, it falls under professional membership.

I hope that you find this guide helpful and that you feel free to contact me with any questions on the topic. Thank you for taking the time to read the guide, I wish you the best luck on your DECA journey!



PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP

Professional membership is the term used to encompass all members who come from businesses or outside organizations in order to benefit DECA chapters. This concept usually coincides with business partnerships, especially at the high school level. Most chapters utilize professional membership by bringing in mentors, speakers, and volunteer judges from local businesses and corporations in order to heighten the experience for their members.

Professional membership is important because it is able to open many doors for DECA members. The mission statement of DECA is to "Prepare emerging leaders and entrepreneurs in marketing, finance, hospitality and management in high schools and colleges across the globe." Working with professionals with experience in these fields provides invaluable information to students that would otherwise be inaccessible. Professional members also count toward your total membership numbers, meaning that your chapter can earn more state spots and complete more expansive state-wide initiatives.



Quick tip: Yes, professional members count towards total membership, so you can earn more spots at SCDC!

GAINING MEMBERS

Although it may not seem like it, many businesses and professionals would love to work with a DECA chapter but simply have not been asked about it. The way to remedy that situation is to put together a plan to reach out to the businesses and business organizations in your area and make it easy for people to become professional members.

Get your best marketing team to work on this project - because this task is all about marketing!

1. **Start by identifying the target market in your area.** Which business organizations or businesses include the group of people that you want to involve?
2. **What is in it for them?** Think about why they would be interested in being a professional member. Perhaps they want to see their local school develop strong business students. Maybe they were in DECA in the past and know the value. Create a message that addresses some of these reasons.
3. **Create a simple marketing piece** that can be left with people after speaking with them so they have something to refer to as they consider membership.
4. **Gain visibility!** Write an article for the local newspaper. Contact local business and social organizations (i.e. Lions Club, Kiwanis, Chamber of Commerce) and ask if you can give a presentation to the members.

5. **Create a goal** - publicize the goal and get the entire community to know about the goal. In today's COVID environment this is going to take a little extra effort because of size limitations for meetings - so make sure you are using social media across all platforms to gain awareness.

Recognize that the target audience may spend more time on Facebook than Tik Tok - but get the message out.

6. **ASK FOR THE SALE!** After every presentation provide the opportunity to sign up at that time - make signing up easy so people who are on the fence don't miss the opportunity because it is too difficult.



Quick tip: Think of who you are marketing to, and then develop an in-depth plan selling DECA to your targets.

Further in this guide we will address some of the real benefits that can be garnered from a vibrant professional membership community. Just remember the age old adage - if at first you don't succeed, try, try again! Once the momentum builds you will be amazed at how easy it is to gain membership at the professional level. More information regarding professional membership can be found on both wideca.org and deca.org.

ALUMNI MEMBERS

One of the easiest ways to grow your membership (and earn additional spots for state) is to focus on adding Alumni Members.

These people know the value of DECA - they participated in events and activities and they still have connections to your specific chapter. It doesn't take a tremendous amount of explanation for these members to understand the value of DECA - but they still have reasons why they might not automatically join. Once again, growing this base takes a little marketing.

First, understand if your chapter has ever made a concerted effort to grow this segment of membership. Make a plan in terms of how to get your message out to this group and ask them to join as Alumni. Is cost an issue? Some chapters cover the dues - others equate it to 3 Starbucks drinks over the course of a year.

Talk about the importance of continuing support to existing members - plant the seed now that you want them to stay involved.

For recent alumni, focus on how active participation is a great talking point in interviews and might resonate with someone looking at their resume.

Just like with the Professional members - set a goal that you publicize and measure your progress. You might even have a contest with your existing members to see how many alumni each can recruit.

Quick tip: Create a chapter alumni Facebook group, and/or ask your advisor if you can accept payments online for alumni dues.

Once you start to build this membership, engage them! Ask them to be speakers at your meetings - one positive from this pandemic is that everyone is used to Zoom calls and even if your alumni are at college, they can still be a part of the meeting. Finally, utilize alumni to help at Districts - most alumni will be on break during that window, so it is an easy way to stay involved.





Addressing Questions

Many people who say they cannot join often have very similar reasons. These may include: “I don’t have time”, “I can’t afford it”, and “I don’t think I’d be much help.” Here’s how you can effectively counter each of these statements, to help put their minds at ease:

“I don’t have time.” - College students and business professionals can be extremely busy people, and it is important to recognize and respect that fact. Explaining to them that even a base level membership assists the chapter, and that there are no required meetings and events should make it seem more attainable.

“I can’t afford it.” - This is most commonly an issue with college students on a tight budget and can be an issue in places with expensive membership dues. Wisconsin DECA alumni dues are \$8 plus \$8 DECA Inc. fees. However, this does not include any additional chapter fees for items like shirts. The low cost of joining a Wisconsin DECA chapter makes this relatively attainable for all. However, if all else fails, some chapters have chosen to waive fees for alumni members and utilize chapter funds to pay the necessary dues.

“I don’t think I’d be much help.” - Due to the large scale of some chapters, people will often underestimate the impact they can have on students. Alumni members possess what many members may lack: experience. Alumni members may have competed in the past, or may work in relevant fields to the career cluster that members are competing in. They can serve as mock judges and guest speakers to elevate members’ experience. On top of that, simply having them join as members will provide students with more opportunities to compete at state, as stated on the previous page. Further information regarding Alumni Membership can be found on wideca.org and on deca.org under “High School Membership” .



FUNDRAISING

Now that we have taken the steps to build chapter membership, let's look at some ways to add value to the community through involvement.

DECA has so many amazing fundraisers throughout the year - and many Wisconsin chapters have had huge success building these events into annual traditions. Chapters often participate in the statewide events, such as Trick-or-Can and Miracle Minutes, but each school has its own unique culture and set of events.

For example, LHS DECA in Wisconsin Rapids sells "Raider Cards", filled with discounts at local businesses, and every year they send out letters to various businesses seeking to create a partnership. The letter outlines discounted Raider Cards and social media recognition for all partners. The combination of fundraising with the community and businesses results in large amounts of returning professional members continually.

If your chapter hasn't done any statewide events ever or is struggling to brainstorm new fundraising ideas, reach out to other chapters to ask for help - or any Leadership Council member or State Officer can help get you more information.

WI DECA posts about various fundraising opportunities frequently so make sure to stay up to date with social media for more info!

Taco John's Buy 1 combo meal & get 1 at equal or lesser value FREE (one use only)	Polito's -WR Buy a 20" specialty, get a 14" 1-topping FREE (one use only) and Buy 1 slice, get 1 FREE (2 uses only)	Shoe Sensation 20% OFF any non-clearance item, in-store only (one use only)	Tropical Smoothie Buy 1 smoothie, get 1 FREE (one use only)	Dairy Queen FREE medium sundae (one use only)
Cravings Buy 1 medium beverage, get 1 at equal or lesser value FREE (one use only)	White Sands Mini Golf One FREE round of golf w/ purchase of 2, 2 scoops of ice cream (one use only)	 2020-2021	Rubi Reds One FREE 1 lb sweetened dried cranberries (one use only)	Domino's FREE medium 1-topping pizza, carryout only 9-1-19 to 5-31-20 (one use only)
Checkers Buy 1 Checkers Burger, Get 1 FREE (one use only)	RAIDER CARD 100% of Proceeds Benefit the LHS DECA program Valid THRU 9/30/2021 \$10 each			Chips-WR Buy any sandwich & large fries, get same FREE (one use only)
Romano's Pizzeria \$5 off a 16" pizza (one use only)	Rocky Roccoco Buy 1 slice, get 1 FREE (one use only)	Tamaracks Pub \$5 off a 16" pizza (one use only)	Italia's Restaurant \$5 off a 16" pizza 715-423-8259 (one use only)	Anchor Bay FREE 7" Pizza w/equal or greater purchase (one use only)

Where to start:

Start small - having a successful event can build the confidence to work on the next one. Keep great information that went into each event so next year you have good records and can set a goal to improve on the prior year.

This year will undoubtedly have challenges - it is hard to perform the "miracle minute" if there are no in-person games, so creativity will be key this year! Don't be afraid to take some of your fundraisers virtual or find a way to make them safe by socially distancing.

For more fundraising ideas check out [this blog](#) from Massachusetts DECA.

Professional Members can help out fundraisers in many ways, so be creative! Through a business partnership (page 16) chapters can create resources that could provide materials for events (does your community have a print shop?), workers/volunteers, or simply a venue.

 **Quick tip:** Involve professional members with fundraisers and local events, as well as statewide initiatives.

SCHOLARSHIPS

ICDC is often a hallmark of achievement for DECA members, but getting there can be a challenge.

However, there are numerous scholarship opportunities available in the DECA world!

DECA.org contains a variety of useful corporate scholarships that you can apply for before competition season. Additionally, DECA Inc. offers college scholarships for its highest achievers as a reward for their outstanding work.

Does your chapter offer any scholarships for graduating seniors? Wouldn't it be great if they did? One way to build engagement from all members is to earmark a portion of fundraising efforts towards scholarships.

But don't limit your pursuit of scholarship money just to the traditional fundraising efforts. Every community has various businesses or philanthropists that are willing to support higher education. Consider creating a marketing piece to try to start a fund that businesses can contribute toward. State clearly how much each recipient will receive (\$500 is a good starting amount) and the criteria that will be used to award scholarships. By creating a solid story behind the effort and a clear definition of how awards will be granted, it is easier for potential donors to feel that their funds will be utilized in an appropriate manner.



Quick tip: You could try to get a financial management or accounting business to offer scholarships to a senior who is planning on majoring in finance or accounting.

Make sure you talk to your school administration to understand how to structure such a fund - many booster clubs have done something similar and there is a specific way these must be set up.

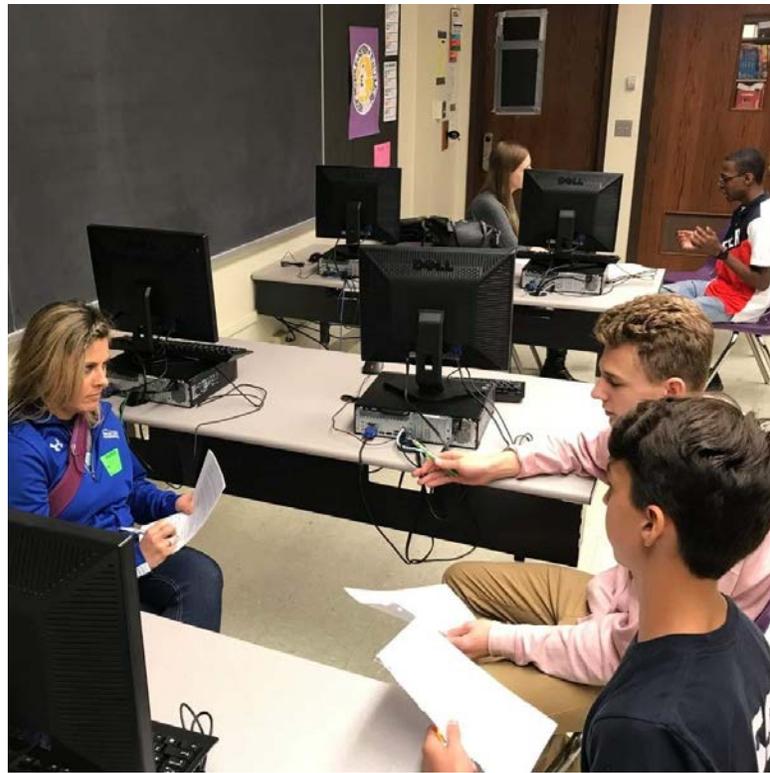
VOLUNTEERING

Once a chapter has a solid base of alumni members and business partners, they have the ability to call on both groups when the need for volunteers arises. Like stated earlier in the guide, people can volunteer in countless ways. Here are a few:

Guest Speakers - The goal of bringing in alumni and professional members is to utilize their experience. Many DECA alumni end up finding successful careers that are in line with DECA's competitive events and are able to provide unrivaled information about the functions of real life businesses.

 **Quick tip:** Send a hand-written thank you note to any volunteers to help deepen your relationship with them!

Coaches/Mock Judges - Professional members can act as judges in practice scenarios within chapters, as well as at competitions all across the state. Returning members make great judges because of their extensive competition experience. This experience also makes them extremely valuable in mock role play competitions, as they can better educate students on improvements that can be made in order to mold them into DECA champions.



Judges - Professional members can act as judges at competitions all across the state. Returning members make great judges because of their extensive competition experience.

As assistant advisors - This is a great option for alumni or business partners who have more time to dedicate to the program than the average member. This is a great option for students who attend a local college, or to graduates who decided to take a gap year. Having a former student as an advisor can enhance current students' experiences by providing them with a mentor figure they can more closely relate to than their normal advisor. As always, more information on volunteering and getting involved with Wisconsin DECA is available at wideca.org.

As the "Gaining Members" section of the guide (page 5) describes, there are a variety of ways you can recruit professional members. Once you have them as members, it can be very easy to forget to maintain interaction with them. Through volunteering opportunities, you can help to keep the relationship strong and open the door for more potential opportunities in the future.

Quick tip: Create a database of your alumni and professional members with their contact info and grow it every year!

Professional members are typically more than willing to help out chapters, and such volunteering is truly crucial aspect of DECA. Through it, chapters open a door to new opportunities and create a wide network of resources for their use. Without volunteering, it is a struggle to organize and implement events and projects. When approaching professional members to volunteer, try and have an idea of what you want the collaboration to look like, and communicate it with them.



BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS

At this point, we've established how chapters can find opportunities to learn, collaborate, and even obtain scholarships. But who's the best provider for these resources? Businesses!

Through business connections, chapters can achieve limitless possibilities while also gaining valuable professional experience. However, many chapters struggle to follow through with securing business partnerships. As with all things DECA, it's important to enter the situation well informed.

When beginning this process, look at your local businesses. See which ones would work well with your chapter. Maybe you have existing connections with some, or maybe a business has strong ties with DECA. Whatever it may be, strategize with your chapter and determine what you are seeking to get out of the partnership, such as guest speakers or judges. Additionally think of what you can offer the business in return! From there, develop a well thought out pitch for you to approach the business with.

Reach out to the business and seek to implement your plan. Things may change, but with your existing strategy, it makes this connection much easier. And that's it! Through the initiative you show, many businesses will be overjoyed to connect, and if not keep your head up- there will be more opportunities.



IMPLEMENTING PARTNERSHIPS



When developing a business partnership, there are endless possibilities of what the relationship will look like. You could have a set plan outlining their role, you could simply partner with them for one event, the list goes on. Here, we'll be going over two prospective models chapters can use to establish year-long partnerships with businesses. Both models are tried and true, used successfully by chapters such as Appleton East and Sun Prairie DECA in the past. Take a look at the table below to learn more about both models and find out which one would work best for your chapter!

TIERED BUSINESS MEMBERSHIP	BUSINESS SPONSORSHIP MENU
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Businesses choose their level of involvement• Examples would be bronze, silver, gold, and platinum tiers• The higher the tier, the larger the involvement, and the larger the rewards for the businesses• Possible upper-level rewards could be:<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ logo on chapter t-shirt◦ shoutout on social media• Very flexible model• Gives a clear understanding of both parties' involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Businesses are given a list of all the sponsorship opportunities offered by a chapter• Each list name has a name and an assigned price<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Ex. Logo on chapter t-shirt (\$__)• Businesses go through the menu and check off the opportunities they're interested in• The total sponsorship amount would then be summed at the bottom• Great for chapters with lots of smaller, more distinct sponsorship offerings• Extremely flexible system• Gives businesses freedom of choice

THE COMMUNITY PARTNERS INITIATIVE

Elevating Business Sponsorships Into Community Partnerships

Business sponsorships go a long way in helping DECA chapters hold events and achieve their goals throughout the year. They represent a generous contribution from the community to their local DECA chapter. But what if we could advance that relationship? What if we could create an even more mutually beneficial relationship between chapters and communities? What if we could elevate our standard businesses sponsorships into full-on community partnerships?

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP: A NEW KIND OF COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DECA CHAPTERS AND THE BUSINESSES IN THEIR COMMUNITIES. ALLOWS FOR STRONGER DECA INVOLVEMENT IN THE COMMUNITY

HOW DO WE CREATE COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS?

This year, Wisconsin DECA will be launching the Community Partners Initiative (CPI). It's a newly designed toolkit made specifically to help DECA chapters create and continue community partnerships. **Make sure to check out the CPI Promotional video on the Leadership Library website and the WI DECA Instagram for more information!**

As the name suggests, community partnerships are collaborative relationships between DECA chapters and their *entire* communities. So, in order to effectively craft community partnerships, DECA chapters must target local groups of businesses, known as businesses associations rather than try and go door-to-door.

In Wisconsin, there are two main types of business associations, Businesses Improvement Districts (BIDs) and Chambers of Commerce (CoCs). Both are made up of local small businesses that come together to pool their resources and achieve common goals. It is because of this that they serve as a valuable gateway for DECA chapters to forge stronger ties to their communities.

The Community Partners Initiative (CPI) cont.

WHAT'S IN THE CPI TOOLKIT?

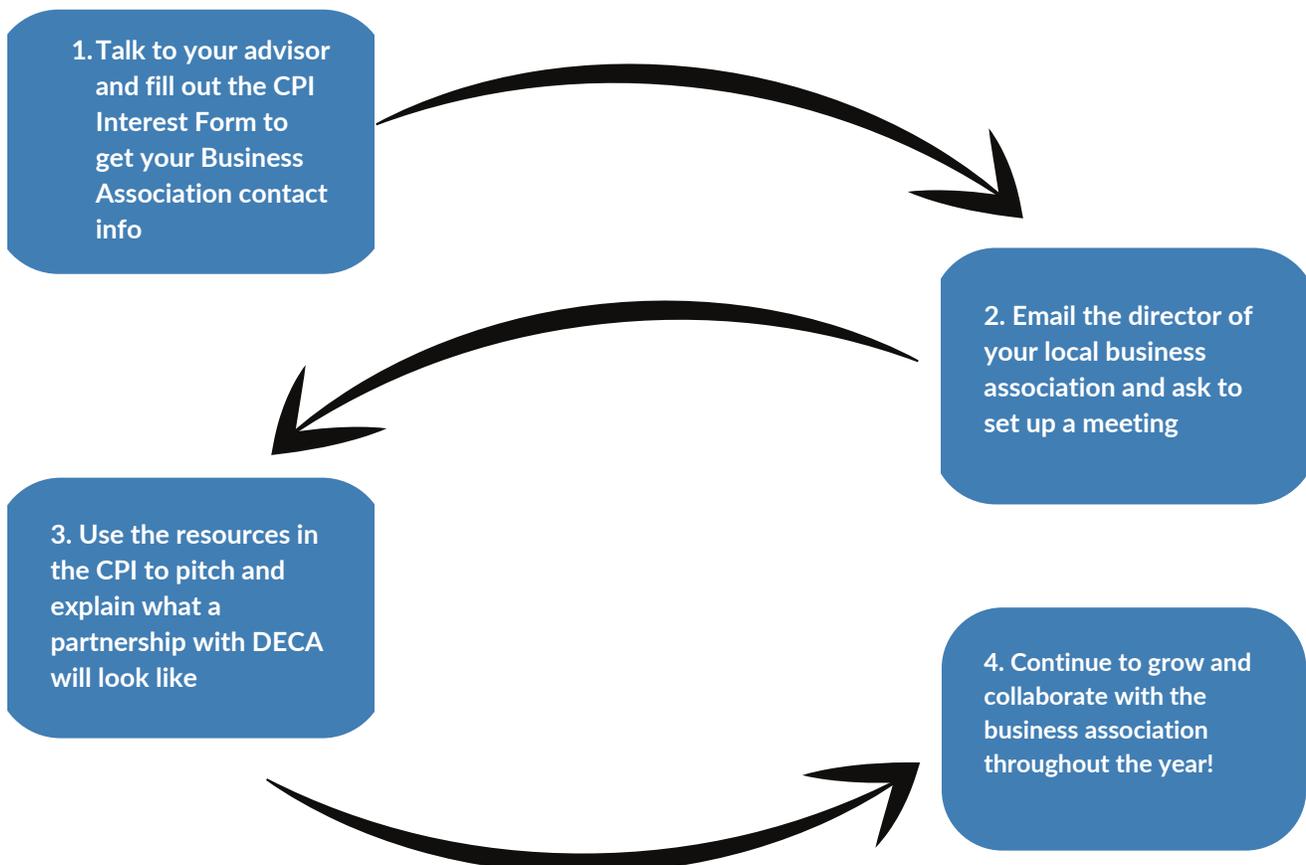
Basically, the toolkit will contain all types of resources meant to support DECA chapters as they create a network of community partnerships. There will be three main types of content in the CPI:

The Directory: Need help getting in contact with business associations in your community? This resource will help DECA chapters get in contact with the business associations in their area. Reach out to WI DECA to get the information for the specific business association(s) that are in your community. **Have your advisor fill out this interest form for more info.**

Articles: These are short writeups that offer tips and best practices for creating and maintaining community partnerships. As the year goes on, we'll be releasing more articles into the toolkit to help support chapters as they further their relationships with their communities. Articles will be available on the CPI page on the Leadership Library Website.

Event Ideas: These are short plans of possible events DECA chapters can team up with their local business association to complete. These will also be released throughout the year. Event ideas will be available on the CPI page on the Leadership Library Website.

HOW DO WE CONNECT WITH BUSINESS ASSOCIATIONS?



The Community Partners Initiative (CPI) cont.

BENEFITS

By working with business associations, we create a mutually beneficial relationship for chapters, members, and business associations. Take a look at the chart below to find specific examples of real benefits:

For DECA Chapters

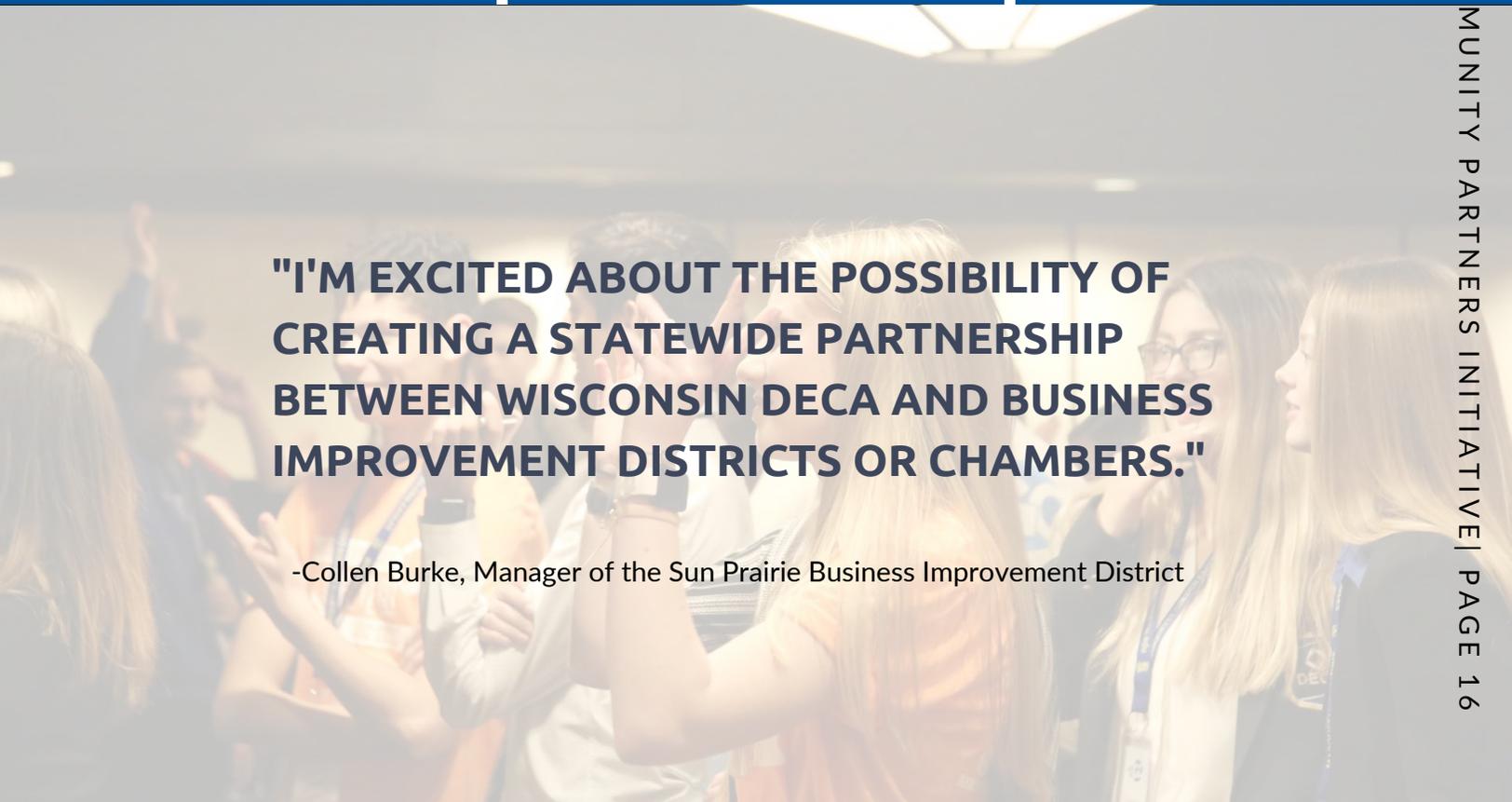
- Local business sponsors
- Closer ties to their communities
- Volunteering opportunities

For Student Representatives

- Learn about entrepreneurship by working with real entrepreneurs
- Apply learning to the real world
- Networking opportunities
- Internship/job opportunities

For Business Associations

- Increase in community engagement and awareness of local businesses
- Large, responsible corp of volunteers
- Fresh ideas



"I'M EXCITED ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF CREATING A STATEWIDE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN WISCONSIN DECA AND BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS OR CHAMBERS."

-Collen Burke, Manager of the Sun Prairie Business Improvement District

RESOURCES

Quick tip: Team 56 is always available if you need any help with projects or activities, so feel free to reach out!

As described in the previous page, I have attached the Appleton East template for Business Partnership letters. Additionally I have included any other links referenced or alluded to throughout the guide. I want to thank you for reading through this guide, and I hope you find it helpful! If there are any questions about the content, please feel free to reach out to me (contact information in next page). I can't wait for this next level year with all of you! - Grace Powell

Dear Potential Business Partner,

The Appleton East DECA Chapter has grown immensely over the past fifteen years. We thank you for your past support of our chapter. As you may remember, DECA is "An Association of Marketing Students." It helps develop emerging leaders and entrepreneurs in marketing, finance, hospitality and management, while taking time to help out in our community. Within the next year, we will be taking part in different community service efforts in partnership with MDA-Muscular Dystrophy Association, Special Olympics, St. Joseph's Food Pantry, Pillars, Feeding America, The Salvation Army, and many other local charities and organizations. We will also participate in marketing competitions at the district, state, and international level against other DECA member.

The experience we have gained thus far through DECA helps us prepare for our dreams and goals in our future careers. Our chapter officers will soon be attending summer workshops where we will create great plans for this upcoming school year. Many of our initiatives will require some financial backing for things such as bus rentals, volunteer meals, and printing. We would also like to reduce the expense of competition and travel so that these opportunities are open to more students. By creating business partnerships with businesses like you, our success is made possible.

Last year we had partnerships with a variety of local businesses. Partnerships help make the majority of our chapter's budget, which is used to prepare future leaders in marketing. By contributing just \$200 to our chapter, you will obtain the following benefits:

- A logo of your business will be placed on the back of our frequently worn DECA t-shirts – a great way of advertising! Close to 300 East students & faculty, business partners, and Appleton Area School District board members and administrative personnel wear these throughout the school year.
- An Appleton East DECA shirt and framed certificate of appreciation to display in your place of business.
- Recognition in our East Parent's Newsletter that is sent to every student's residence.
- Recognition in our DECA display case on the first floor at Appleton East High School. This is a highly visible display that most of the students view daily.
- Recognition on the Appleton East DECA Facebook page, Twitter page and Instagram account. Combined we have over 5,000 followers.
- Recognition in our promotional kit given to influential people within the Appleton Area School District during Career & Technical Education Month.
- Recognized by National DECA, an organization of approximately 200,000 members, as a professional member. As a professional member you will receive a quarterly magazine – DECA Direct.
- Recognized on our Appleton East DECA website with a short bio about your company/links to our website.
- The opportunity to interact more closely with students from Appleton East through guest speaking, judging, job shadowing, etc.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We hope we will be able to begin our business partnership with you in the near future! You can expect a call from me within the next few days to answer any questions you may have. If you have any specific questions, feel free to reach one of us at the number below. You can also call my advisor, Mrs. Stefanie Fude, at (XXX) XXX-XXXX.

Sincerely,

Stefanie Fude, Marketing Teacher/DECA Advisor (XXX) XXX-XXXX

Alex Wickershiem, VP of Business Partnerships (XXX) XXX-XXXX

WI DECA Professional Membership blog post: <https://www.wideca.org/why-join-answers-for-alumni-and-professional-members/>

Massachusetts DECA fundraising blog: <http://massdeca.org/blog/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/DECA-Fundraising-Ideas-for-Chapters-1.pdf>

DECA Direct alumni involvement article: <https://www.decadirect.org/2015/07/20/how-to-stay-involved-in-deca-no-matter-what-age/>

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