



STATE OFFICER CANDIDATE INFORMATION PACKET 2026-2027

GENERAL INFORMATION

Ohio DECA state officers represent over 7,000 student members to a variety of key stakeholders, including fellow members, advisors, education administrators, business partners, public policymakers, and more.

The decision to run for a state office should not be made lightly or without a sincere commitment to serve. Members with the desire to serve and who have family, school, and advisor(s) support should consider participating in the Ohio DECA state officer screening process. The officer screening process will examine the attitudes and abilities of each officer candidate and reveal which individuals have most completely developed their leadership skills.

While challenging, an officer's term also brings personal and professional growth. Officers meet new people throughout the year – from DECA members across the globe to industry leaders who partner with the organization.

COMPOSITION OF OFFICER TEAM

The Ohio DECA officer team has five (5) elected positions and two (2) selected positions.

TERM OF OFFICE

Ohio DECA officers shall serve a term of one year. The year of service begins at the conclusion of the 2026 Career Development Conference and concludes at the closing of the 2027 Career Development Conference.

QUALIFICATIONS

The opportunity to become a State Officer is available to all active Ohio DECA members, in good standing, enrolled in an approved high school career-technical education program, with family, advisor and school support.

From the pool of candidates for elected officer positions, 10 candidates are selected and eligible to campaign for a position on the State Officer Team. Each chapter may submit **one candidate** for elected office. If more than one candidate from a chapter is sent to screening and is scored in the top ten candidates, the screening committee will choose the top-scoring candidate from that chapter to move on to the elected officer competition at CDC.

Additionally, State Officer candidates must review the Ohio DECA Event Calendar and confirm their availability to attend Career Development Conference (CDC), International Career Development Conference (ICDC) – Voting Session, State Officer Screening, and **ALL** State Officer Meetings. The listed conferences and meetings are **mandatory**.

APPLICATION

Candidates must submit an electronic application, Signature Form, and Participant Media Release Form at the [State Officer Application](#) by **January 30th, 2026, at 11:59 pm.**

For elected officers, they may also submit a one paragraph “Candidate Bio” that will be uploaded to the Ohio DECA website prior to the Career Development Conference to announce their candidacy for office. The bio must be limited to a maximum of 150 words.

REIMBURSEMENTS/PAYMENTS

The Ohio DECA pays for officers’ expenses associated with the Ohio DECA functions, such as the uniform, personal mileage to/from meetings (\$0.52/mile), lodging, meals (up to \$54.00/day), and state-level conference registrations. Local chapters must provide the official DECA blazer.

The State Officer’s school district and/or parents are responsible for International Career Development Conference (ICDC) costs, including transportation, lodging, registration fees, etc. The school district or State Officer, depending on the district’s policy, will receive a \$300 stipend upon completion of all required Officer activities at the ICDC. Local Advisors will notify Officers and the State Advisor of the school’s policy related to the ICDC stipend.

COMPONENTS OF THE OFFICER SCREENING PROCESS

Interview

The general interview consists of an interview with a panel of State Officers and volunteers. The interviewers ask questions about the candidate’s DECA experiences, career-technical education, leadership activities, and other pertinent activities.

Prepared Response

Each candidate will prepare a two-minute speech for the panel of judges. The candidate will prepare an answer to the following prompt:

You have been asked by your chapter advisor to present to a local business owner about DECA. Your chapter is hoping that this business will be a partner for the chapter, including providing funds, hosting workshops, and joining the Business Advisory Board. How would you inform and excite this business owner on the importance of DECA and marketing education for the next generation and the impact they can have on students?

The candidate may use notes, but may not exceed the two-minute time limit.

Cold/Unrehearsed Script Reading

Each candidate will read a one-page script to the panel of judges. The script will not be given to the

student until the interview and will be read without preparation or rehearsal. Excerpts will be pulled directly from previous year's Career Development Conference (CDC) scripts: Opening Ceremony, Mini Awards, or Grand Awards. **Please notify the state advisor or leadership coordinator, via email, of any visual impairment accommodations required to perform this task (i.e., translation to braille, larger font, reader, etc.)*

Selected Officer Presentations (Public Relations and Policy Advocate Only)

Candidates for Public Relations and Policy Advocate will present their plans to judges to build brand awareness or advocate for career-technical education, respectively.

- a. *Public Relations* | What is your public relations plan for Ohio DECA to obtain support and involvement from student members, advisors, and professional members?
- b. *Policy Advocate* | What is your advocacy plan for explaining to administrators, politicians, and stakeholders the benefits of participating in career technical education and career technical student organizations, like DECA, in Ohio?

Test

All officer candidates will take an objective test based on the [Ohio DECA Fact Sheet](#), [DECA Student Leader Resource Guide](#), [ohiodeca.org](#), and [deca.org](#) websites, [Leadership Reframed for the Workplace of the Future - Harvard Business](#) and [Lessons in Situational Leadership with Meg Whitman](#).

PREPARING FOR THE SCREENING PROCESS

The following materials are recommended resources as students prepare for screening:

- Ohio DECA Fact Sheet | www.ohiodeca.org/stateofficers
- Ohio DECA Website | www.ohiodeca.org
- DECA Inc., Website | www.deca.org
- DECA Inc. [Student Leader Resource Guide](#)
- [Leadership Reframed for the Workplace of the Future - Harvard Business](#) (New for 2025)
- [Lessons in Situational Leadership with Meg Whitman](#) (New for 2025)

STATE OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES

The primary responsibility of the state officer is to serve the organization in local, state, national, and international activities. The goal of the Officer team is to motivate and inspire DECA members, advisors, staff, educators, and others to achieve the mission of the organization.

It is important to realize that, although academics remain the number one priority, DECA officers will not be able to fall behind in responsibilities to Ohio DECA members. Below is a listing of typical responsibilities for **all** state officers.

- Develop and implement a Program of Leadership through ownership of an Impact Goal.

- Attend **all** required meetings, including Summer Retreat, CDC, and ICDC
- Develop a signature workshop presentation
- Abide by the rules and expectations, including projecting a professional image, using proper etiquette, and interacting positively on all social media, including personal accounts.
- When representing DECA, wear an official DECA blazer and professional attire
- Assist in the planning and organization of all Ohio DECA activities, including recruitment of judges for the district, state, and international conferences, and promoting Ohio DECA to civic and business organizations.
- Attend district conferences, representing the officer team and Ohio DECA.
- Develop projects as a team and implement plans to help Ohio members make an IMPACT on their chapter, school, and community in community outreach, membership development, and partner/sponsorship development, and submit IMPACT Awards
- Be available to and communicate consistently with Ohio DECA staff for any other duties that may arise.

LEADERSHIP

- Officers are expected to adapt to various situations and maintain the poise of confident leaders. This includes communicating the DECA brand, mission, and key organizational messages to a variety of audiences.
- Officers must exhibit integrity, responsibility, and trustworthiness.
- Officers must speak with purpose and communicate in a positive, honest and direct way.
- Officers must be mindful of how their actions represent the organization.
- Officers serve Ohio DECA members and should strive to put the success of DECA above themselves.

GROWTH MINDSET

- Officers must strive to better serve the organization in every way.
- Officers will learn from others whenever possible.
- Officers will accept and seek out constructive criticism and evaluation of their total performance.

ORGANIZATION + MANAGEMENT

- The role of an Ohio DECA state officer requires a commitment.
- Officers are expected to meet deadlines and communicate regularly.
- Officers should excel in time management.

ADDITIONAL AND SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES OF SELECTED STATE OFFICERS

PUBLIC RELATIONS REPRESENTATIVE

- Organize and implement a public relations campaign.
- Increase awareness of Ohio DECA through correspondence with the media and through Internet, Twitter, Facebook, Snapchat, the Ohio DECA website, and other communication channels, and manage these social media accounts.
- Implement a plan to help Ohio DECA Members make an IMPACT, specifically promoting DECA Month and Global Entrepreneurship Week.

POLICY ADVOCATE

- The Policy Advocate closely monitors changes in legislation and policies and informs the Board of Directors, officer team, and Ohio DECA membership of how these changes may impact the organization.
- Implement a plan to help Ohio DECA Members make an IMPACT to help Ohio DECA Members make an IMPACT in advocacy.
- Be knowledgeable of and monitor changes in various legislation and policies affecting Career Technical Education (CTE) and Career-Technical Student Organizations (CTSO) (e.g, Ohio Office of Career-Technical Education, Perkins V, Ohio Administrative Code Rule 3301-61-03 | Criteria for Career-Technical Program).
- Attend requested visits involving, but not limited to, administrators, business representatives, State Representatives, or other important individuals.
- Communicate with officers from other career-technical student organizations in Ohio to promote the value of all CTE programs.

REQUIRED MEETING DATES

All Ohio DECA officers are required to attend conferences, officer meetings, and DECA events throughout the year, and comply with guidelines for all travel arrangements. Officers are not permitted to leave early, arrive late, or miss any parts of these events. Failure to attend any of these important events may result in dismissal from the state officer team.

Event	Location	Dates
ICDC	Atlanta, GA	April 25-28, 2026
Officer Training	Columbus, OH	June 19, 2026
Ohio DECA Summer Leadership Retreat	FFA Camp Muskingum, Carrollton, OH	July 10-13, 2026
Officer Training	Columbus, OH	August 7, 2026
Officer Training	Columbus, OH	September 25, 2026
Officer Training	Columbus, OH	November 13-14, 2026
Officer Training	Columbus, OH	December 11, 2026
Officer Training	Columbus, OH	January 22-23, 2027
Officer Training/Screening	Columbus, OH	February 5-6, 2027
Ohio DECA CDC	Columbus, OH	February 2027 TBD

OHIO DECA STATE OFFICER CANDIDATE CAMPAIGN GUIDELINES

Responsibility

The officer candidate, local advisors, voting delegates, and all members from the candidate's school must observe all campaign regulations. These regulations are established to ensure fairness in the competition and to maintain the professional intent of the leadership conference. Failure to do so may result in the disqualification of the candidate.

Preparation

After receiving official notification of eligibility to campaign for State Officer, the following must be completed.

- You may choose a current, active Ohio DECA member to serve as campaign manager. *Note: Advisors and current state/national officers cannot serve as campaign managers.*
- Create a campaign theme by reflecting on the type of leader you will be and the reason you are seeking office.
- Develop a campaign speech. Each candidate will give a three (3) minute prepared speech during the Career Development Conference Election Session. Candidates may use note cards.
- Each candidate will have one (1) minute to answer an extemporaneous question, as part of the Career Development Conference Election Session. Questions will be professional in nature and will attempt to reveal the candidate's creativity and leadership ability.

Campaigning

All campaign guidelines are in effect from the day of screening until the conclusion of the Career Development Conference.

- Candidates are **NOT** permitted to contact other DECA members with the intent to campaign.
- Candidates may **NOT** visit with any chapters outside of their school facility for campaigning purposes or for preparation for campaigning.
- Candidates may **NOT** email, Facebook, Twitter, or use any other social media or any other internet avenues to contact other chapters or their members.
- Candidates may **NOT** campaign at organized DECA events, including at the state conference outside of the specific campaigning time.
- **No** items (promotional clothing, signs, etc.) may be worn or posted at the Career Development Conference. Instead, elected candidates will participate in a professional "Meet the Candidate" Session

Meet the Candidate Session

Each candidate will be assigned to their table before the Career Development Conference Election Session for the "Meet the Candidate" Session. They may set up their table immediately following the Opening Session, but may not interact with voting delegates during setup time. At the conclusion of the speaking portion of the Election Session, candidates will be released to their campaign table first for the Meet the Candidate session. No materials of any sort will be allowed to be distributed to delegates except for a business card with candidate contact information. Each candidate may have one campaign manager standing at their table to speak with voting delegates. The candidates may make use of display materials that fit on top of the 3 x 5 table to assist with communicating their ideas.

Social Media Campaigning

No campaigning is allowed via email or social media, aside from a school district or DECA district's

“congratulations and good luck” post.

Please note, candidates and their advisor(s) are responsible for the actions of members of their chapter. Make sure that individuals who support your candidacy are familiar with these important rules.

ELECTION INFORMATION

Voting Delegate Allocation

Local chapters exercise their voting privilege and conduct all business through student voting delegates. Each chapter registered for the Career Development Conference can select a maximum of five (5) voting delegates.

Voting Delegate Responsibilities

Voting Delegates play an important and vital role in the election of officers. Therefore, all voting delegates must understand and agree to fulfill the following responsibilities.

Specifically, voting delegates will:

- Read this information packet thoroughly; ask questions as necessary and abide by all campaign/election regulations.
- Attend the Career Development Conference Election Session.
- Listen to chapter members' recommendations following candidate speeches.
- Cast a ballot with up to five candidates

Election Process

The Career Development Conference Election Session is open to all members, advisors, and parents. Following the candidate speeches and extemporaneous question responses, all non-voting delegates (advisors, chapter members, parents) will be dismissed. Designated voting delegates will then have 15 minutes to question candidates before casting their votes for up to five (5) individuals.

Voting Procedure

Each ballot contains the names of all candidates. Each voting delegate must vote for up to five (5) candidates. If a ballot contains votes for more than five (5) candidates, the ballot will be void. Voting delegates will only be able to submit one ballot; double-check all selections carefully.

President and Secretary Selection Process

The selection of Ohio DECA's President and Secretary is overseen by the Ohio DECA Leadership Coordinators and is limited to the five (5) elected officers. The process focuses on who not only demonstrates exceptional leadership skills, experience, and knowledge, but also complements and strengthens the officer team as a whole. This process considers how each officer's abilities, communication style, and vision align with the team's dynamic and Ohio DECA's mission. We gather feedback from multiple sources to ensure a well-rounded evaluation and select leaders who can work collaboratively, inspire others, and contribute to a cohesive and effective team that serves all members across the state. The primary attributes officers are evaluated on are communication, teamwork and collaboration, decision-making and problem-solving, as well as organizational and time management.

APPENDIX

Application for Ohio DECA Officer Signature Form

Candidate Name: _____ **School:** _____

Candidate: I understand the official description of the responsibilities of Ohio DECA Officers, and I am willing to fulfill the responsibilities of the office I am seeking. I understand that I can be removed from office for failing to fulfill my responsibilities. I have read the expense reimbursement information and the guidelines for the office. I will attend all meetings and required activities and will not ask to be excused from any of the required events.

Candidate Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Advisor: This candidate is a member in good standing of the _____ DECA Chapter of Ohio DECA and International DECA. To the best of my knowledge, the information on this application form is factual. The candidate and his or her employer and parents/guardians understand the responsibilities of the office that the candidate is seeking. Employers and parents/guardians are willing to help the candidate fulfill the responsibilities of the office, as identified in this document.

If this student is elected/selected as an officer, I will attend the Ohio DECA Career Development Conference, the International Career Development Conference, and the Ohio DECA Fall Leadership Conference. I will also assist the candidate in fulfilling the requirements of office during the entire term including assistance with finding transportation to and from state officer training.

Advisor Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Principal/Director: I understand the responsibilities of the Ohio DECA Officer, advisor and school, as identified in this document. If the above-named candidate is elected/selected, I will permit the student and advisor to fulfill both their state and international responsibilities. I understand the responsibilities related to transportation to and from activities for the entire year of service. I have reviewed the expense reimbursement information. If this student is selected/elected as an officer, I will support their attendance at all activities. I will support the international conference attendance of both the teacher/advisor and student.

Principal/Director Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Parent/Guardian: I understand the responsibilities of the Ohio DECA Officer, as identified in this document, and I give my permission for my child to seek this office and to perform the duties and responsibilities. I have reviewed the expense reimbursement information and the required dates of service and agree to support my child. I will support their attendance at all meetings and required activities and will not ask for them to be excused from any of the required events.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Employer: I understand the responsibilities of an Ohio DECA Officer, and I understand that if the above-named candidate is selected/elected, he or she will be required to perform the assigned duties. I am willing to release this student trainee from work to perform these duties.

Employer Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Participant Multi-Media Release

I, _____, as parent or legal guardian/custodian of
_____ (student's name) who is an Ohio DECA State Officer
Candidate, authorize Ohio DECA to publicize my child's name, use videotapes, photographs, and
publish or cause to be published information relevant to his/her achievements. This information
may be used in local, regional, state or national publications of Ohio DECA to be released to
appropriate newspapers and/or news publications, as well as the Ohio DECA website.

I authorized release of the above information as it relates to Ohio DECA activities.

Signature of Parent or Legal Guardian/Custodian & Printed Name Date

Address/City/State/ Zip Code

Parent phone number

Student Signature (if 18 years of age or older) & printed name Date

Address/City/State Zip Code

Phone number



DECA Member Name _____

Judge Name _____

PUBLIC RELATIONS - SELF INTRODUCTION

Area	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	Points Awarded
Platform Deportment General Appearance, Poise, Manner, Eye Contact, Self Confidence, and Gestures	0 – 2	3 - 5	6 - 8	9 – 10	
Oral Presentation Content, Organization of Thought, Voice, Diction, and Grammar	0 – 2	3 - 5	6 - 8	9 – 10	

Self-Introduction (20 Points) _____



DECA Member Name _____

Judge Name _____

PUBLIC RELATIONS RATING SHEET

Area	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	Points Awarded
Public relations plan for Ohio DECA members to include: student, advisor and professional members.	0 – 5	6 – 15	16 – 25	25 – 30	
How would you describe DECA to an individual on an elevator who poses the question, “What is DECA?” in 60 seconds or less?	0 – 5	6 – 15	16 – 25	25 – 30	
What is the value of a Career Technology Program, which emphasizes business, finance, hospitality, marketing and management career fields for students.	0 – 3	4 – 5	6 – 7	8 – 10	
Career Goal Career Goal and Plans for Achieving Goal	0 – 3	4 – 5	6 – 7	8 – 10	
Professionalism Appropriate Business Appearance, Enthusiasm and Self-Confidence	0 – 6	8 – 10	11 – 13	14 – 20	

Self-Introduction (20 Points) _____

Interview (100 Points) _____

Written Examination (50 Points) _____

TOTAL (170 Points) _____



DECA Member Name _____

Judge Name _____

POLICY ADVOCATE - SELF INTRODUCTION

Area	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	Points Awarded
Platform Deportment General Appearance, Poise, Manner, Eye Contact, Self Confidence, and Gestures	0 - 2	3 - 5	6 - 8	9 - 10	
Oral Presentation Content, Organization of Thought, Voice, Diction, and Grammar	0 - 2	3 - 5	6 - 8	9 - 10	

Self-Introduction (20 Points) _____



DECA Member Name _____

Judge Name _____

POLICY ADVOCATE RATING SHEET

Area	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	Points Awarded
Value of Career Technology Program Which emphasizes business, finance, hospitality, marketing and management career fields for students?	0 – 5	6 - 15	16 - 25	25 – 30	
How would you advocate on behalf of Ohio DECA to a business professional, elected official or educational leader in 60 seconds or less?	0 – 5	6 – 15	16 – 25	25 – 30	
Plan for Ohio DECA to advocate to administrators, politicians and professional business stakeholders (20 Points)	0 – 3	4 – 5	6 – 7	8 – 10	
Career Goal Career Goal and Plans for Achieving Goal	0 - 3	4 – 5	6 - 7	8 - 10	
Professionalism Appropriate Business Appearance, Enthusiasm and Self-Confidence	0 – 6	8 - 10	11 - 13	14 - 20	

Self-Introduction (20 Points) _____

Interview (100 Points) _____

Written Examination (50 Points) _____

TOTAL (170 Points) _____