STATE EVENT · 2026–27

ARIZONA DECA PITCH COMPETITION

Find a gap. Build the business that fills it.

ARIZONA DECA

EVENT GUIDELINES

THE CHALLENGE

Find an underserved market or unmet need — anywhere, not just in Arizona — and pitch a business that fills it. Round 1 is an online entry. The top 10 pitch live to an investor at the State Career Development Conference (SCDC).

YOUR PITCH ANSWERS FIVE QUESTIONS

01
THE GAP
What need is going unmet, and for whom?

02
THE BUSINESS
What do you sell, and how does it fill the gap?

03
CUSTOMERS & REVENUE
Who buys, and how do you make money?

04
COSTS & FUNDING
What does it cost to start and to run?

05
MARKET IMPACT
Who benefits, and what changes?

ELIGIBILITY

- **One member per entry. No limit per chapter.**
- **Advisor approval required. Your chapter advisor approves your entry by signing the Statement of Assurances. No advisor signature, no entry.**
- **Register for SCDC. You must be registered to attend SCDC. Registration closes January 21.**
- **Original work only. Your entry cannot be your own competitive event project. Reusing it means disqualification.**

KEY DATES

Event launches	**November-December**
Entries due	**Wed, Feb 3, 2027 11:59 p.m. Arizona time**
Finalists announced	**Tue, Feb 16**
Finalist schedule forms due	**Thu, Feb 18**
Round 2 at SCDC	**Feb 25–27 Arizona Grand Resort & Spa**
Scores & judge comments sent	**By Fri, Mar 12**

*All Dates are subject to change

HOW IT WORKS

ROUND 1
Online entry
Video, one-page summary, slides PDF and signed Statement of Assurances.

JUDGING
Business judges
Each entry is scored by two business judges; scores are averaged.

ROUND 2
Live at SCDC
Top 10 pitch to one judge playing an investor, then answer questions.

Round 1: Online Entry

SUBMIT ALL FOUR PARTS

1

STATEMENT OF ASSURANCES

Signed by you, a parent or guardian, and your chapter advisor. The advisor signature is your entry approval — without it, the entry is not accepted.

2

PITCH VIDEO

Up to 7 minutes. Trimming the start and end is fine. Share as a YouTube Unlisted or Google Drive link that anyone with the link can view.

3

ONE-PAGE SUMMARY + SOURCES PAGE

8.5 × 11 in., margins at least 0.5 in., type at least 10 pt. Header: ARIZONA DECA PITCH COMPETITION, business name, market served and date. Follow outline I–V: The Gap, The Business, Customers & Revenue, Costs & Funding, Market Impact. List sources on a separate page.

4

SLIDE DECK

One PDF, up to 20 slides.

ANSWER THE INVESTOR QUESTIONS IN ROUND 1, TOO

Round 1 is scored on the same form as Round 2, and investor Q&A is worth 25 of 100 points. Make sure your video or summary answers all four:

1. **What are your sales so far, or your projected first-year sales? How did you get that number?**
2. **Walk me through one sale. What does it cost you, and what do you make?**
3. **Who's your competition, and why would customers pick you?**
4. **How much money do you need to start, and what will you spend it on?**

HOW ROUND 1 IS JUDGED

FEB 4–5

Entry check

Arizona DECA staff check every entry for completeness and apply penalty points.

FEB 5–16

Business judges

Bankers and Arizona DECA board members score entries online. Two scores per entry, averaged.

FEB 16

Finalists

The top 10 advance to Round 2 at SCDC.

FEEDBACK FOR EVERYONE

Every entrant receives their scores and a written judge comment after SCDC

Round 2: Live Investor Pitch

THE SESSION

Each finalist has a 15-minute session with one judge playing an investor. Any visuals are allowed, and props are encouraged. Sessions are scheduled with a 45-minute buffer around each finalist's other SCDC events.

PITCH	INVESTOR Q&A
Up to 10 minutes — stopped at 10:00	About 5 minutes

0:00 10:00 15:00

THE FOUR INVESTOR QUESTIONS

1. **"What are your sales so far, or your projected first-year sales? How did you get that number?"**
2. **"Walk me through one sale. What does it cost you, and what do you make?"**
3. **"Who's your competition, and why would customers pick you?"**
4. **"How much money do you need to start, and what will you spend it on?"**

The judge asks these four first, then may ask their own questions.

GUEST INVESTORS

- **Guest investors may observe Round 2 sessions.**
- **Any offer goes through Arizona DECA state staff, the student's advisor and a parent.**
- **No one-on-one contact with students. No ownership stakes or loans.**
- **Guests watch all 10 sessions or none.**

PRIZES

1ST & 2ND	Trophy + ICDC Leadership Academy spot
3RD – 5TH	Arizona DECA swag
ALL FINALISTS	Certificate + judge feedback

Prizes are subject to change.

Evaluation Form

Entry # _____ Business name _____ Judge # _____

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	Little/No Value	Below Expectations	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations	Judged Score
CONTENT · 12 POINTS EACH · 60 TOTAL					
I. THE GAP Identifies an underserved market or unmet need, backed by evidence	0–3	4–7	8–10	11–12	
II. THE BUSINESS Explains the product or service and how it fills the gap	0–3	4–7	8–10	11–12	
III. CUSTOMERS & REVENUE Defines the target customer and how the business makes money	0–3	4–7	8–10	11–12	
IV. COSTS & FUNDING Realistic start-up costs, cost per sale and funding needs	0–3	4–7	8–10	11–12	
V. MARKET IMPACT Shows who benefits and how the market changes	0–3	4–7	8–10	11–12	
PRESENTATION · 5 POINTS EACH · 15 TOTAL					
VI. DELIVERY Clear, organized and easy to follow	0–1	2	3–4	5	
VII. VISUALS Slides, visuals or props support the pitch	0–1	2	3–4	5	
VIII. PERSUASION Professional, confident and convincing	0–1	2	3–4	5	
INVESTOR QUESTIONS & ANSWERS · 25 POINTS					
IX. INVESTOR Q&A Answers the four investor questions with specific numbers and sound reasoning	0–7	8–14	15–21	22–25	
				TOTAL POINTS (100)	

JUDGE COMMENT

One thing that worked:

One thing to improve:

Penalty Point Checklist

Entry # _____ Participant _____ Chapter _____

PENALTY	YES	NO	POINTS
Participant or parent/guardian signature missing on the Statement of Assurances	☐	☐	15
Video is over 7:00 or is not one continuous take	☐	☐	5
Summary is longer than one page	☐	☐	5
Summary does not follow outline I–V	☐	☐	5
No sources page	☐	☐	5
Slides PDF missing, or over 15 pages	☐	☐	5
TOTAL PENALTY POINTS			

NOT ACCEPTED

An entry without the chapter advisor's signature is not accepted. An entry that reuses the student's own competitive event project is disqualified.

ROUND 2

There are no penalty points in Round 2. The pitch is stopped at 10:00 and the session ends at 15:00.

Checked by _____ Date _____

Statement of Assurances & Academic Integrity

Participant name

Chapter / school

Email

Business name

BY SIGNING, THE PARTICIPANT CONFIRMS THAT

- ☐ **The entry is my own original work. Ideas, data and images from others are cited on the sources page.**
- ☐ **The entry is not my competitive event project for this year. I understand that reusing it means disqualification.**
- ☐ **I am registered to attend the Arizona DECA State Career Development Conference (SCDC).**
- ☐ **All figures in my entry are real or clearly labeled as projections, and I can explain how I got them.**
- ☐ **If I advance to Round 2, I will follow the guest investor rules: any offer goes through state staff, my advisor and a parent; no one-on-one contact, ownership stakes or loans.**
- ☐ **Arizona DECA may share my business name, chapter and results, and may use my entry for educational purposes.**

SIGNATURES

Participant signature | Printed name | Date

Parent / guardian signature | Printed name | Date

Chapter advisor signature | Printed name | Date

Your signature approves this entry.

Penalties: a missing participant or parent/guardian signature is 15 penalty points. A missing advisor signature means the entry is not accepted.

Sample One-Page Summary

SAMPLE ENTRY · Fictional business, survey and figures, for illustration only. Your entry follows the same format without this banner.

ARIZONA DECA PITCH COMPETITION

Shade Squad

Shade and cooling, booked by the tournament day.

Market: Casa Grande, Arizona youth sports tournaments
February 3, 2027

74%	$85	$520	12 days
of parents cut their day short from heat	per canopy per day, with misting	profit per tournament day	to break even, about one season

I THE GAP

Casa Grande hosts youth soccer and softball tournaments from March through October, when afternoon highs often pass 100°F. Most fields have no shade structures, so families bring their own pop-up tents or sit in the sun. The organizers we interviewed said they have no budget for permanent shade.



Parents surveyed at two spring tournaments who said **heat cut their time at the field short**

II THE BUSINESS

Shade Squad rents 10 × 20 ft canopies with battery misting fans by the tournament day. Families get shade and cooling at every field; organizers get a better event without buying equipment.

1 · BOOK Organizer picks fields and canopy count → **2 · SET UP** Our crew is up by 7 a.m., before game one → **3 · COOL** Shade and misting fans all day → **4 · PACK UP** We clear out after the last game

III CUSTOMERS AND REVENUE

Tournament organizers and league boards pay; families benefit. We reach organizers through league directors, the city's youth sports planning meeting and referrals from past events. At $85 per canopy per day, a typical tournament books 8 canopies, or $680 per day.

Price per canopy per day



Rentals come with no delivery or misting.

IV COSTS AND FUNDING

Start-up costs are $6,000. Each tournament day costs about $160 in fuel, crew pay and batteries, leaving about $520. We break even after 12 tournament days. **We are asking for $6,000 in exchange for 20 percent of profits for three years.** We will track tournament days booked, canopies per booking and repeat organizers.

Start-up: $6,000



▪ Canopies + misting $3,600 ▪ Trailer $1,800 ▪ Insurance $600

One tournament day: $680



▪ Costs $160 ▪ Profit $520

V MARKET IMPACT

Shade Squad moves the market from do-it-yourself tents to a booked event service that organizers build into the entry fee. Party-rental companies lose tournament business they were never set up to serve. Competitors would struggle to copy us quickly: we hold season contracts with league boards, our crew sets up by 7 a.m., and every booking comes with a heat plan built for that field.

TODAY Shade is each family's problem → **WITH US** Shade is part of the event

A separate sources page (not shown) lists the survey, organizer interviews, rental price quotes and equipment prices.

FORMAT RULES

- **8.5 × 11 in., one page**
- **Margins 0.5 in. or more**
- **Type 10 pt or larger**
- **Header with event name, business name, market served and date**
- **Outline I–V in order**
- **Sources on a separate page**