

Policies and Procedures

“HWCCC Chamber Connects Groups”

Section 1

Objective

The HWCCC Chamber Connects Group is an affiliated program of the Hagerstown-Washington County Chamber of Commerce, whose objective is to help businesses grow through bi-weekly networking meetings. The purpose of the program will be to generate new business through quality leads and referrals. This will be accomplished by strong commitment, communication, and friendship.

Section 2

Membership

The Chamber Connects Group shall consist of no more than twenty-five (25) active members. These members shall be of businesses and/or organizations that do not directly compete. In order to be eligible for the Chamber Connects Group, one must meet the following:

- a) be employed by a business or organization
- b) the business or organization must be a member of the Hagerstown-Washington County Chamber of Commerce
- c) the business or organization membership must be in good standing with the Chamber of Commerce
- d) not present direct competition to an already existing member of the Chamber Connects Group
- e) refrain from discussing other products/ or services that another member may represent in the group
- f) be the person who will be in regular attendance of meetings
- g) be able to designate an alternative representative (substitute) to attend all meetings in their absence, who will actively participate in place of the absent member

Section 3

Obligation

- a) All members are expected to provide valid business leads/referrals on a regular basis. There will be no set quota, but the member will be expected to actively participate on a continuing basis.

- b) All members or their alternative representative (substitute) are expected to be in attendance regularly for all bi-weekly meetings. If a member or alternative representative has more than two (2) consecutive unexcused absences (failure to notify group member or Chamber staff), their status shall be called before the group for a vote on removal.
- c) More than five (5) absences by a member or alternative representative (*does not matter if they are excused or unexcused*) in a calendar year will be cause for the member to have their status called before the group for a vote on removal.
- d) The HWC Chamber and the governing board of the Chamber Connects Group will review any request for a leave of absence. A leave of absence will ensure the member that the group will not allow a competitor to join during their leave.
- e) Members are expected to participate in a “Presentation” about themselves and their business in order to help other members learn more about their company.
- f) Members are expected to pay any associated group fees in a timely manner.

Section 4

Selection of Members

- a) An application of membership shall be submitted to either the Director of Membership Development or the office of the Hagerstown-Washington County Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber of Commerce, before acceptance into a Chamber Connects Group, will review the information provided by the applicant to ensure no competition exists and that the applicant is in good standing with the Chamber.
- b) All applicants are asked to attend one meeting before acceptance into the Chamber Connects group.
- c) The applicant may be denied membership based on eligibility requirements. If competition exists (group has final approval), the applicant may be offered the chance to join other possible related groups. If the applicant is not in good standing with the Chamber, they will be given no more than one month in order to take care of the matter.
- d) Once the applicant has been approved, the applicant will become an official member upon notification by the Chamber of Commerce office.
- e) An individual of the same business may not participate in another similar group associated with the Hagerstown-Washington County Chamber of Commerce. If by chance a member has been removed from a Chamber Connects group, he or she will be asked to wait at least one quarter before joining another similar group.

Section 5

Meeting

- a) Regular Breakfast/Lunch meetings of the Chamber Connects Groups shall take place on the day determined by the HWC Chamber. The Chamber shall also determine time and location. Any changes to either the time or location of the meeting must first be approved by the Chamber office.
- b) Meetings will be conducted with any number of Chamber Connects members in attendance.
- c) It will be the responsibility of the individual presiding and members to make sure the meeting runs in an orderly fashion.
- d) Weather policy for the groups will follow the HWC Chamber's Weather policy. Policy can be found on the Chamber's website.
- e) Guests will be allowed to attend two (2) Chamber Connects meetings.
- f) All guests will be asked to make a presentation as to why they are interested in the Chamber Connects group.

Section 6

Fees and Dues

- a) The Chamber Connects Groups are a free membership benefit to any Chamber member in good standing.
- b) Chamber Connects Groups that are held in Chamber member offices may impose a small meeting fee to cover the costs of providing outside beverages and food. This fee is not exceeding \$5, and the group must receive approval from the Chamber office before charging its members.
- c) It will be the responsibility of the member to pay for his or her own breakfast or lunch.
- d) Guests will also be responsible for their own breakfast or lunch unless the individual who invited them would like to pick up their cost.

Section 7

Governing Board

- a) A governing board as elected by the Chamber Connects members shall manage the affairs of the Chamber Connects Group. The governing board shall act upon nominations and applications as well as establishing and refining policies and procedures with the support of the Chamber staff.
- b) The term of office for all governing board members shall be one (1) calendar year.
- c) Each governing board member shall hold their office until his or her successor has been elected and qualified.
- d) Selection of incoming governing board must begin in October and is contingent on approval by the Chamber office.

- e) A vacancy may be filled by appointment of the governing board until the next election.
- f) Any governing board member may be removed by a majority vote of the board when, in its best judgment, the interests of the Chamber Connects Group will be served.

Section 8

Duties of Governing Board

It shall ultimately be the joint responsibility of the Governing Board and the Members of the Chamber Connects to recruit new members in order to maintain a full group of twenty-five (25) members.

- a) The Moderator shall preside over all meetings of the Chamber Connects. Also, the Moderator will be responsible for coordination of all functions of the governing board. The Moderator shall be the leader to the members and hold a relationship with the HWC Chamber of Commerce.
- b) The Communication Coordinator shall assist the Moderator in all duties and will be responsible for presiding over meetings in the absence of the Moderator. The Communication Coordinator shall be in charge of arranging the weekly “Presentations” and “Professional Development Moment” schedules. Also, the Communications Coordinator will be responsible for notifying members of meeting dates and times, as well as any other information pertaining to the group. The Communications Coordinator shall be responsible for the business card “binder.”
- c) The Performance Monitor shall be responsible for recording all leads/referrals shared. Also, the Performance Monitor will help to promote the Chamber Connects Group by awarding those who have been recognized by the group for achievements.
- d) The Membership Coordinator shall oversee all funds in relation to the Chamber Connects Group group. The Membership Coordinator shall record attendance. The Membership Coordinator shall work with the Chamber Connects Group and the governing board to advise of upcoming member/applicant information. Also, the Membership Coordinator shall be responsible for the orientation of all new members.
- e) Also, the Governing Board will be responsible for the production of any informational brochures highlighting each member of the Chamber Connects Group.
- f) The Governing Board will be responsible for the production of any “closed groups” that will be created on Social Media for the purpose of allowing members to connect better. The Director of Membership Development and Director of Member Services must also be made Admins to any groups.

The Hagerstown-Washington County Chamber Connects Groups were established in January of 2014