



## ABOUT THE DISTRICT EXPORT COUNCILS

**District Export Councils (DECs)** are organizations of leaders from the local business community, appointed by a U.S. Secretary of Commerce, whose knowledge of international business provides a source of professional advice for local firms.

Closely affiliated with the Commerce Department's Export Assistance Centers, the 61 DECs throughout the country support the U.S. Government's export promotion efforts.

Currently there are about 1,500 DEC members who volunteer their time and specialized expertise to assist small and medium-sized businesses in their local communities establish or increase export sales, thus promoting our country's economic growth and creating new and higher-paying jobs for their communities.

DEC members also sponsor and participate in numerous trade promotion activities, as well as advocate for effective trade policy positions. In addition, DECs play a major role in the planning and coordination of export activities for their communities.

As a lead organization serving the international business community, DECs have the capacity to facilitate development of an effective export assistance network and can assist in coordinating the activities of trade assistance partners to leverage available resources.

DECs also serve as a communications link between the business community and the U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service, and support the export expansion activities of the U.S. Department of Commerce in a variety of ways within their communities.

### **The DEC Mission**

The DECs encourage and support exports of goods and services that strengthen individual companies, stimulate U.S. economic growth and create jobs. Export expansion activities are accomplished by working with the U.S. Export Assistance Centers to provide opportunities to promote greater export activity at the local level while developing a trade assistance network.

The mission of the District Export Councils is supported through activities such as:

- Counseling of local businesses;
- Identifying export financing sources for businesses;
- Creating greater export awareness in the business community locally;
- Identifying issues that affect export trade and implementation of constructive suggestions for improvement, which are then communicated to appropriate bodies for action;
- Supporting programs and services of the U.S. Export Assistance Centers;
- Building local export assistance partnerships with other organizations; and
- Promoting international education at the community level.

The DECs support their mission using funds that are generated through DEC fundraising activities, without any governmental appropriations. DECs may not raise funds for profit, and neither they nor their individual members may represent the U.S. Government in their capacity as DEC members.