

STATE TRADE & EXPORT PROGRAM (STEP)

2015 Grant - Year 4

Nebraska Department of Economic Development
U.S. Commercial Service
U.S. Small Business Administration

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Introduction:

The Nebraska Department of Economic Development (DED) has received a State Trade and Export (STEP) grant from the US Small Business Administration (SBA) to: 1) increase the number of small businesses in Nebraska that are exporting; and 2) increase the value of exports for those small businesses that are currently exporting.

This program will provide Eligible Small Business Concerns (ESBCs) across Nebraska funding to defray costs incurred to access international markets through the IMAG Program (International Market Access Grant Program). In addition, ESBCs may apply for scholarships to attend the ExporTech 2016 program and to receive intermediate and advanced market research reports available through the University of Nebraska at Omaha and the Nebraska Business Development Center (NBDC).

IMAG (International Market Access Grant) Program Details:

1. Domestic or International Trade Shows, Missions, Conferences or International Sales Trips:

Eligible activities must be executed by direct employees of the applicant company; ALL travel must be approved by SBA prior to departure.

Category 1: STEP will provide up to \$2,000 for an eligible business to attend a qualified export focused activity in the United States; eligible expenses include expenses incurred for up to 2 direct employees from the Nebraska facility;

Category 2: STEP will provide up to \$5,000 for an eligible business to attend a qualified export focused activity outside the United States; eligible expenses include expenses incurred for up to 2 direct employees from the Nebraska facility;

A 50% company "match" of the maximum reimbursement amount allowed for this activity is required for STEP grant recipients having previously participated in this STEP activity; Reimbursement is capped at \$15,000/year per company.

2. Participation in US Department of Commerce Business Matchmaking Programs:

STEP will reimburse application fees related to the following US Department of Commerce programs: Gold Key, International Partner Search, International Company Profile, Business Facilitation Services, or other approved USDOC programs. ***Pre-approval by the US Commercial Service in Omaha is required.***

A 25% company “match” of the maximum reimbursement amount allowed for this activity is required; Approval for USDOC Business Matchmaking Programs is limited to two (2) programs /year per company.

3. Cost of International Advertising:

STEP will provide up to \$2,000 toward the cost of an ad placed in an advertising venue focused on international export opportunities;

A 25% company “match” of the maximum reimbursement amount allowed for this activity is required; Reimbursement is capped at \$2,000/year per company.

4. Translation Services:

STEP will provide up to \$5,000 for an eligible business to translate and print company profiles, catalogs, product literature, packaging, labels or manuals for international distribution;

Approval is limited to two (2) awards per company or a maximum reimbursement of \$5,000/year per company; a 25% company “match” of the maximum reimbursement amount allowed is required to qualify.

STEP will provide up to \$3,000 for an eligible business for translation and search engine optimization to accommodate international marketing needs;

Approval is limited to one (1) award per company or a maximum reimbursement of \$3,000/year per company; a 25% company “match” of the maximum reimbursement amount allowed is required to qualify.

5. 3rd Party Product Testing:

STEP will provide up to \$2,000 toward the cost of product testing required to verify international standards, registration or certification required to enter a foreign country;

Approval is limited to two (2) awards per company or a maximum reimbursement of \$2,000/year per company; a 25% company “match” of the maximum reimbursement amount allowed is required to qualify.

Research and Training Program Details:

In addition to the IMAG Program, DED will contract with three partner agencies to provide market research and training opportunities as follows:

1. Intermediate Market Research Reports will be available through the Nebraska Business Development Center (NBDC) in Omaha through the University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO). These reports will provide international market research to assess global demand, identify potential markets, and/or investigate specific markets of interest to individual companies. Reports are capped at one report per company. Contact for this service is: Harold Sargus, NBDC, hsargus@unomaha.edu or Josh Nichol-Caddy, NBDC, jnicholcaddy@unomaha.edu.

2. In-depth, extensive report focused on market entry analysis that addresses industry, company, and product specific international opportunities and challenges in the client's country of interest will be available through an International Business Consulting Project which is a component of the UNO Executive Master of Business Administration Program. Contact for this service is: Bill Swanson, UNO, wswanson@unomaha.edu.

3. Scholarships for up to eight (8) eligible small business entities to participate in the 2016 ExporTech Program, an export acceleration program sponsored by the Nebraska Manufacturer's Extension Partnership (MEP) through the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. This program guides participants through the process of assessing export readiness, market research and training, culminating in an export marketing plan uniquely designed for their company. Contact for this service is: Bob Walters, NMEP, rwalters2@unl.edu.

For additional information contact:

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