



Funded in part through a Cooperative Agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration

STATE TRADE AND EXPORT PROMOTION FY '15

- Program Guidelines -

Section I – Program Information

A. Program Purpose

The program goal of STEP FY '15 is to aid companies in expanding their export initiatives and to increase eligible Connecticut companies' export sales by spurring participation in export opportunities. Eligible activities include trade shows, trade missions, marketing and internationalization, U.S. Department of Commerce services (Gold Key, International Partner Search, International Company Profile), export training opportunities, and export B2B matchmaking.

Reimbursements will be made towards eligible small businesses' registration/service fees and event participation expenses. The Department of Economic and Community Development's (DECD) application process vets applicants for eligibility and follows all U.S. SBA STEP procedures. STEP FY '15 funding levels for Medica 2015, Hannover 2016, and Farnborough 2016 are designated on the respective activity's application page. With Export General Assistance Funds, STEP eligible small businesses may apply to receive assistance up to \$6,500. All applications are due no later than August 15, 2016. Applications will be reviewed and funds will be distributed on a first-come, first-serve basis, pending Connecticut STEP FY '15 funding availability.

B. Qualifications

The STEP FY '15 funds are available to Connecticut companies that:

- Operate a registered business in Connecticut to manufacture, assemble and/or distribute a product, or provide an exportable service.
- Qualify as an "eligible small business concern". By definition of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), an eligible small business concern is a company that matches the criteria below:
 - 1. Complies with SBA size standards found at 13 C.F.R. Part 121 (Refer to Size standards by NAICS Part 121.201)
 - 2. Has been in business for not less than the 1-year period ending on the date on which assistance is provided under the STEP program;
 - 3. Is operating profitably, based on its operations in the United States;
 - 4. Has demonstrated understanding of the costs associated with exporting and doing business with foreign purchasers, including the costs of freight forwarding, customs brokers, packing and shipping; and,
 - 5. Has a strategic plan for exporting in effect.
- Must not be presently debarred, suspended, proposed for disbarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction by any Federal department or agency.

- Submit a completed application form and complete all other required documents with handwritten signatures, where applicable, prior to their proposed export activity, and **no later than August 15, 2016.**
- Execute their proposed STEP FY '15 export activity by September 29, 2016.
- Submit all reimbursement documentation to DECD within two (2) weeks of a completed activity and no later than October 13, 2016.
- Agree to provide DECD with export sales resulting from the STEP-funded activity via post-activity reports/surveys and updates.

Additional Notes:

- o DECD will accept applications for the minimum qualified amount of \$500 or greater.
- Companies may apply for reimbursement towards multiple activities within program budgetary limits.
 However, each application should contain one quantifiable activity. Applicants requesting assistance at multiple trade shows or trade missions should submit materials separately.
- STEP financial assistance for domestic export training/conference/seminar opportunities shall <u>not</u> exceed
 \$500 per attendee for up to 2 company employees (\$1,000 max) per training activity.
- STEP financial assistance shall not exceed \$3,000 per company, per program year for marketing, internationalization, website development, and printing costs.
- STEP financial assistance shall <u>not</u> exceed \$6,500 per company, per program year. All previous STEP FY '15 requests for assistance shall be considered in calculating eligible funding limits.

C. Qualifying Activities

Qualifying activities include:

- Foreign Trade Mission Participation*
- Export Trade Show Exhibit Participation*
- US DOC Commercial Services
- International Marketing of Export Products (see note above)
- Translation of Websites into Foreign Languages (see note above)
- International Trade Training Workshops (see note above)
- B2B Matchmaking Opportunities

D. Eligible Expenses

Eligible expenses associated with the activities listed above are as follows:

- Trade Mission / Trade Show costs including but not limited to: registration fee, booth fee, furniture, graphics, signage, and shipping
- Translation / Interpreter Fees
- USDOC Commercial Service Fees
- International Material/Collateral Translation and Printing Cost
- Website Translation
- Export Training Registration Fees
- B2B Matchmaking Registration Fees

E. Ineligible Expenses

^{*} Registration/Event expenses for an <u>individual company booth</u> towards an event in which <u>Connecticut sponsors a</u> shared booth will not be accepted (i.e., Medica 2015, Hannover H2FC 2016, and Farnborough Air Show 2016).

Expenses ineligible for reimbursement include, but are not limited to:

- Airfare, Ground Transportation, Lodging, etc.
- Meals, Beverages, Gratuity
- Compensation, wage, or salary of any employee
- Capital Goods, Product Samples, Supplies
- Product giveaways/Promotional Items
- Phone or Internet Usage
- Website Development
- Alcoholic Beverages

Section II – Filing Procedures

Login to the STEP FY '15 <u>Application Portal</u>. Create an account and follow the directions to submit your application. All applications must be submitted **no later than August 15, 2016.**

You will be asked to complete the following tasks:

- Complete and Sign the Connecticut STEP FY '15 Activity Application Form (in Application Portal)
- Review and Sign the SBA "Eligible Small Business Concern" <u>Self-Certification Form</u>
 (Refer to your North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) Code to determine your SBA Size Standard)
- Review and Sign the Federal Debarment Form
- Complete and Sign the <u>State of Connecticut Agency Vendor Form and the W-9 Form</u>
 (Both forms should have a matching Social Security Number or Federal Employer Identification Number)
- Complete and Sign a <u>Strategic Export Plan</u> on company letterhead (not required for Export Training Opportunities)

Note:

- While major qualifying activities from Section I, Part C may entail multiple qualifying expenses from Section I, Part D, one quantifiable activity should be submitted with each application. Example:
 - One application requesting assistance with Trade Show participation that includes a translator and a B2B event at the corresponding Trade Show is acceptable.
 - One application requesting assistance with participation in multiple Trade Shows or Trade Missions is unacceptable.

<u>Section III – Program Reimbursement</u>

- Reimbursements will be based on completion of approved activities <u>by September 29, 2016</u> and the submission of all reimbursement request documentation to DECD within two (2) weeks of a completed activity and <u>no later</u> <u>than October 13, 2016</u>. No partial reimbursement requests will be accepted.
- Once you receive an email notification that your application has been approved, complete your export event/activity as planned in accordance with your project budget.
- When your event/activity has been completed, login to your STEP FY '15 <u>Application Portal</u> account where you will be asked to submit the following:

^{*} Registration/Event expenses for an <u>individual company booth</u> towards an event in which <u>Connecticut sponsors a shared booth</u> will not be accepted (i.e., Medica 2015, Hannover 2016, and Farnborough Air Show 2016).

- Post-Activity Report/Survey;
- Receipts documenting payment of all registration and/or service fees and other costs associated with your approved STEP FY '15 fund activity and;
- STEP Grant Activity Invoice to request payment of your reimbursement from DECD;
- Documentation of payments for STEP FY '15 activities (i.e., bank statements, check stubs).
- Requests will be reviewed and processed as they are received on a first-come, first-serve basis. Processing time
 for the State of Connecticut payment system can take anywhere from 2-4 weeks. STEP FY '15 participants should
 incorporate this lead time into their internal budgeting processes as DECD will be unable to expedite individual
 company payments.

Section IV – Contact

For more information on the Connecticut STEP program, please contact Aaron Knight at 860-270-8059 or via email at aaron.knight@ct.gov.