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STATE TRADE AND EXPORT PROMOTION

Export General Assistance Fund Round Two - Program Guidelines -

Section I – Program Information

A. Program Purpose

Round Two of the Connecticut Export General Assistance Fund (GAF) aims to provide State Trade and Export Promotion (STEP) funding to eligible small businesses for participation in export opportunities. The program goal 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. With Export General Assistance Funds, STEP eligible small businesses may apply to receive assistance up to \$4,000. **All applications are due no later than August 15, 2014.** Applications will be reviewed and funds will be distributed on a first-come, first-serve basis, pending Connecticut STEP Round Two General Assistance Fund availability.

B. Qualifications

The Export General Assistance Fund is 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 U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) definition, 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, 2014**.
- Execute their proposed STEP GAF Round Two export activity **by September 29, 2014**.
- Submit all reimbursement documentation to DECD within two (2) weeks of a completed activity and **no later than October 13, 2014**.
- Agree to update DECD with export sales resulting from the STEP-funded activity via post-activity reports/surveys.

Additional Notes:

- DECD will accept Export General Assistance Fund 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 GAF Round Two financial assistance for domestic export training/conference/seminar opportunities shall **not** exceed \$500 per attendee for up to 2 company employees (\$1,000 max) per training activity.
- STEP GAF Round Two financial assistance shall **not** exceed \$4,000 per company, per program year. All previous GAF Round Two requests for assistance shall be considered in calculating eligible funding limits.

C. Qualifying Activities

Qualifying activities include:

- Overseas Trade Mission Participation*
- Trade Show Participation*
- US DOC Commercial Services
- Marketing / Internationalization
- Export Training Opportunities
- B2B Matchmaking Opportunities

* Registration/Event expenses for an individual company booth towards an event in which Connecticut sponsors a shared booth will not be accepted. (i.e., Hannover Messe 2014, Farnborough Air Show 2014)

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

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

* Registration/Event expenses for an individual company booth towards an event in which Connecticut sponsors a shared booth will not be accepted. (i.e., Hannover Messe 2014, Farnborough Air Show 2014)

Section II – Filing Procedures

Login to the General Assistance Fund [Application Portal](#). Create an account and follow the directions to submit your application. All applications must be submitted **no later than August 15, 2014**.

You will be asked to complete the following tasks:

- Complete and Sign the Connecticut STEP General Assistance Fund Application Form (*in Application Portal*)
- Review and Sign the SBA “Eligible Small Business Concern” [Self-Certification Form](#)
(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 *both* the [State of Connecticut Agency Vendor Form and the W-9 Form](#)
(Both forms should have a matching Social Security Number or Federal Employer Identification Number)
- Complete and Sign a [Strategic Export Plan](#) 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**.

Section III – Program Reimbursement

- Reimbursements will be based on completion of approved activities **by September 29, 2014** and the submission of all reimbursement request documentation to DECD within two (2) weeks of a completed activity and **no later than October 13, 2014**. 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 [Application Portal](#) account where you will be asked to submit the following:

- Post-Activity Report/Survey;
 - Invoices/Receipts documenting all registration and/or service fees and other costs associated with your approved General Assistance Fund activity and;
 - STEP Grant Activity Invoice to request payment of your reimbursement from DECD;
 - Documentation of payments for STEP GAF Round Two 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 General Assistance Fund Round Two 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 General Assistance Fund, please contact Aaron Knight at 860-270-8059 or via email at aaron.knight@ct.gov.