



STATE TRADE EXPANSION PROGRAM (STEP)

ASSISTING TEXAS SMALL BUSINESSES TO CREATE AND EXPAND EXPORT CAPACITY



Through a partnership with the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA), the Texas Governor's Office of Economic Development and Tourism (OOG) and the U.S. Department of Commerce, the State Trade Expansion Program (STEP) grant aims to increase the number of Texas small businesses exporting to foreign markets and to boost the value of exported goods and services. The STEP program is funded through a grant from the U.S. Small Business Administration.

STEP is designed to offer eligible Texas businesses technical assistance, export research and best practices, market expansion opportunities, participation in state-led trade shows, and financial support to conduct individualized export activities. Texas small businesses, as defined by SBA's definition of eligible small business concerns (ESBCs), may take advantage of the three following opportunities. The STEP Program will award Export Assistant grants not to exceed \$7,500 per year. ESBCs are required to provide a 25% company cash match (\$2,500) in conjunction with the stipend to participate in the following programs:

1) Export Training, Market Research and Consulting

Eligible Texas small businesses will have the opportunity to receive training, and market research assistance related to international sales, logistics, finance, compliance and personnel management. Applicants may select export training or consultation programs such as University of Texas – International Trade Center or Department of Commerce, or another entity, subject to approval by the grant administrators.

2) State Coordinated Export Events

In addition to their regular export assistance activities, OOG will coordinate the participation of Texas small businesses in two foreign trade shows. Eligible small businesses will receive free, turnkey, shared booth space and on-site assistance from experienced staff at the:

- **Hannover Messe** (April 23 -27, 2018) is the world's largest and most influential trade fair for industrial technology. To apply, navigate to: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Hannover_Messe_2018
- **Farnborough International Air Show** (July 16 – 22, 2018) is an international aviation and aerospace exhibition near London, UK and offers opportunity to showcase technologies of the aero-space industry and related equipment. To apply, navigate to: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FIA_2018
- **For more OOG-coordinated trade shows visit** www.businessintexas.com/about/events

TDA will coordinate the participation of Texas small businesses in five foreign trade activities.

- **Expo Antad & Alimentaria** (March 5 – 7, 2018) in Guadalajara, Mexico, is one of the largest trade shows for food and beverages.
- **Ildex Vietnam 2018** (March 14 – 16, 2018) a trade show in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, supporting the development of livestock, dairy, meat processing and aquaculture businesses.
- **Beef Australia 2018 Trade Show** (May 6 – 12, 2018) is Australia's National Beef Expo featuring more than 4,500 cattle from over 30 breeds and 500 businesses, along with seminars and tours to deliver innovative research and new products.
- **SIAL Trade Show** (May 16-18, 2018), in Shanghai, China is Asia's largest food innovation exhibition and showcases domestic and international producers and manufacturers of food products, wine and spirits, and food service equipment.
- **Trade mission to Brangus show** (June 1-7, 2018) in Argentina provides an opportunity for Texas cattle producers to engage with Argentinian cattle producers interested in both livestock and genetic exports.

3) Financial Assistance for Eligible Export Activities

To encourage companies to enter new international markets, the STEP Program will provide Export Stipends of up to \$7,500 to eligible businesses for approved export activities which can include, but not limited to the following:

- Customized U.S. Commercial services (i.e. Discover Global Markets Conferences, Initial Market Check/Gold Key Matchmaking Services, and International Partner Search)
- Foreign trade show exhibitions (registration fees and booth rental)
- Design of international marketing products and campaigns
- Expert financial counseling and training programs
- Compliance testing
- Subscription to export research tool to assist with market research
- Websites development, translation, search engine optimization, localization services
- Fees for shipping sample products
- Foreign language translations
- Foreign market sales trips
- Travel expense for participation in foreign trade missions and trade shows
- Services to support foreign market entry

Eligibility

The applicant must be a Texas-based business that: 1) meets SBA “Small Business Concern” size guidelines; 2) is not barred from receiving state and federal funding; 3) has a product/service manufactured, produced, processed OR value added in Texas; 4) has been in business for at least one year by the application submittal date, and 5) demonstrated an understanding of the costs associated with exporting.

The STEP program funds are awarded on the first come, first served basis. To apply, navigate to: <http://www.texasagriculture.gov/GrantsServices/GrantsandServices/StateTradeExpansionProgram.aspx>

For additional details contact TDA’s grants office at Grants@TexasAgriculture.gov

