

Louisiana businesses looking to market goods and services to foreign customers can receive assistance through federal grants awarded to the state.

STEP grants can create an effective means of engagement for Louisiana companies that want to develop foreign markets for their products and services. If we can help Louisiana companies find business contacts in other countries, we can help them to increase and diversify their customer base. As that process unfolds, businesses can build on their success by creating and retaining local jobs.

The U.S. Small Business Administration has granted \$200,000 to Louisiana for the State Trade Expansion Program, or STEP. The goal is to increase the number of new small business exporters and sales of established exporters in the state.

The grants will reimburse allowable travel, registration and exhibit expenses on domestic or foreign trade shows; inbound or outbound trade missions; participation in export training workshops; U.S. Commercial Service user fees; and other activities. Grants may reimburse up to 75 percent for new-to-export companies and up to 50 percent for market expansion companies. The program will offer assistance of up to \$6,333 per company.

American Pollution Control Corp., an environmental remediation company based in New Iberia took part in international trade shows in Cairo, Egypt, and Ciudad del Carmen, Mexico, earlier this year with the help of STEP grants.

“Our efforts in Egypt helped us to receive a couple of purchase orders and invitations to bid on a few inquiries, and we are exploring opportunities of partnering with the Egyptian Petroleum Safety and Environmental Authority,” said Salah Mansour, AMPOL’s international business development manager. “In Mexico, our company won a two-year oil spill emergency services contract from a subsidiary of Eni, the Italian energy company.”

For more information or to apply for the program, contact Jessica Steverson at jessica.steverson@la.gov or 225-342-2537. You can also view more about the program on the LED website: <https://www.opportunitylouisiana.com/small-business/special-programs-for-small-business/step-grant>