

FACT SHEET
U.S. SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE
STATE TRADE AND EXPORT PROMOTION GRANT PROGRAM
Program Announcement No. OIT-STEP-2012-01

- The STEP Program is a pilot Federal-state partnership grant initiative, intended to increase the number of small businesses that export and the value of exports by the small business sector.
- The Program was authorized by the Small Business Jobs Act of 2010 for a three year period, and funded at \$30 million per year, for the first two years. Under it, competitively awarded grants can be made to the 50 states, District of Columbia, Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands, Guam, and American Samoa.
- Services to be provided by states to ‘eligible small business concerns,’ under the Program include support for participation in foreign trade missions and market sales trips, subscription to services provided by the Department of Commerce, design of international marketing products and campaigns, export trade show exhibits, training, and other efforts aligned with Program goals.
- Under the Program, in most cases the Federal government provides 75% of the funding required for the total project, and states provide 25%. However, for the top three states in value of exports, the Federal government provides 65% of total funding, while states provide 35%.
- The first round of competitive grants was awarded in September 2011, for performance during the period October 2011 – September 2012. In the first round, SBA awarded 52 grants totaling \$30 million. The average value of awards was \$577,000.
- The second round of competitive STEP grants will be awarded in September 2012, for performance during the period October 2012 – September 2013. Individual state project award amounts will vary, based on each state’s proposed project plan and budget.
- For the second round of grants, SBA is prioritizing projects that target provision of assistance to ‘eligible small business concerns,’ that are owned and controlled by socially and economically disadvantaged individuals, women, and by veterans and/or service-connected disabled veterans; are located in rural areas; promote new-to market export opportunities to the People’s Republic of China; and/or promote regional, industry focused, innovation clusters.
- The STEP Program Announcement for the second round of awards is posted at www.Grants.gov. The application period will be March 27, 2012 through May 17, 2012. Awards will be issued September 30, 2012.