

FACT SHEET
U.S. SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE
STATE TRADE AND EXPORT PROMOTION GRANT PROGRAM
Program Announcement No. OIT-STEP-2014-01

- 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, funded at \$30 million per year for the first two years, and \$8 million for the third year. Under it, competitively awarded grants can be made to the 50 states, District of Columbia, Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa and the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands.
- 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 51 grants totaling \$29 million. The average value of awards was \$568,000.
- The second round of competitive STEP grants was awarded in September 2012, for performance during the period October 2012 – September 2013. In the second round, SBA awarded 52 grants totaling \$30 million. The average value of awards was \$577,000.
- The third round of competitive STEP grants will be awarded in September 2014, for performance during the period October 2014 – September 2015. Individual state project award amounts will vary, based on each state’s proposed project plan and budget.
- For the third round of grants, SBA will emphasize the return on investment (ROI) of the proposed activities which support the proposed milestone goals. The ROI is the measure of export sales derived from the activity divided by the Federal award amount expended on the activity.
- The STEP Program Announcement for the third round of awards is posted at www.Grants.gov. The application period will be April 21, 2014 through May 20, 2014. Awards will be issued by September 30, 2014.