



## **STATE TRADE AND EXPORT PROMOTION (STEP) PROGRAM - FY 2015 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **What is the State Trade and Export Promotion (STEP) Program?**

The State Trade and Export Promotion (STEP) Program, authorized by the Small Business Jobs Act of 2010, is a pilot export development program. This program makes matching-fund cooperative agreements (a type of grant) to states for them to assist 'eligible small business concerns' enter and succeed in the international marketplace. The program's statutory outcomes are to increase the number of U.S. small businesses that are exporting, and to increase the dollar value of exports by U.S. small businesses.

### **Who manages the Program?**

The STEP Program is managed at the national level by the Office of International Trade (OIT), part of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). At the state level, STEP Program assistance is managed and provided by state government organizations. A map of the current state awardee organizations and points of contact is at located at:

<https://www.sba.gov/offices/headquarters/oit/resources/14315>

### **How much funding does the STEP Program have?**

For Federal FY 2015, Congress appropriated \$17.4 million for STEP Program awards. See the below table for Federal funding by state. States will use these funds to provide financial assistance to small businesses from October 2015 through September 2016.

### **How does the matching funds requirement work in the STEP Program?**

In most cases, the SBA provides 75% of monies required to fund the approved state proposals, and the states provide 25%. For a few states that have a high export volume (California and Washington for FY 2015), SBA provides 65% of required funding, and the states provide 35%.

### **What services does the STEP Program provide?**

STEP awards provide financial assistance for eligible small business concerns to participate in foreign trade missions, foreign market sales trips, export tradeshow, and export training workshops. In addition, STEP awards assist with subscriptions to services provided by the U.S. Department of Commerce, payment of website translation fees, design of international marketing campaigns, and other export initiatives determined to be appropriate by OIT.

Each state designs their STEP program to meet the specific export development needs of their state and local small business communities. Therefore, the programs vary from state to state, and perhaps from one area to another within states.

### **How do small businesses obtain assistance under the STEP program?**

Small businesses that want to receive assistance under the STEP Program should contact the organizations serving the states in which they are located. A listing of state STEP Program points of contact for current year awards can be found at:

<https://www.sba.gov/offices/headquarters/oit/resources/14315>

### **Can small businesses apply to SBA for funding under the Program?**

No, only state entities are eligible to apply to SBA for funding under the STEP Program. States use SBA award funds, and their own monies, to provide assistance directly to eligible small businesses. Interested small businesses should contact their state STEP Program's point of contact for current year awards, which can be found at:

<https://www.sba.gov/offices/headquarters/oit/resources/14315>

### **How were grants awarded under the Program?**

On April 8, 2015, SBA issued Program Announcement No. OIT-STEP-2015-01, inviting states, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the U.S. Virgin Islands to submit applications to compete for an award to conduct export development activities under the STEP program. The competition closed on May 20, 2015. SBA received forty-six applications.

### **What was the selection process?**

Applications were processed using a pre-established merit-based review process, consisting of three phases. The first phase was the Threshold Review during which applications were reviewed for completeness and adherence to application requirements. Next, the Tier I Review phase was an evaluation process conducted by a panel of experts from the Federal international trade community and the SBA. Finally, the Tier II Review phase was comprised of technical and budgetary analyses conducted by OIT program staff. As a result, the SBA made awards to those states who earned an award through this competitive process. See the table below for state awardees and award amounts.

### **Did all states that applied receive funding under Program?**

Forty of the forty-six applicants earned an award during the FY 2015 competitive process.

### **How can I receive more information?**

Please visit the STEP Program webpage for more information about the program and Federal and state contact information: <https://www.sba.gov/offices/headquarters/oit/resources/14315>

**FY 2015 STEP PROGRAM  
FEDERAL AWARDS**

<b>State</b>	<b>Federal Award</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Federal Award</b>
Alabama	\$115,251	Nebraska	\$300,570
Arkansas	\$207,535	Nevada	\$300,000
California	\$747,781	New Hampshire	\$199,878
Colorado	\$195,938	New Jersey	\$498,000
Connecticut	\$350,000	New Mexico	\$193,700
Delaware	\$276,741	New York	\$663,893
Hawaii	\$750,000	North Carolina	\$746,800
Idaho	\$346,708	North Dakota	\$287,694
Illinois	\$685,855	Ohio	\$700,000
Iowa	\$190,000	Oregon	\$450,000
Kansas	\$296,533	Pennsylvania	\$698,613
Kentucky	\$400,000	Puerto Rico	\$288,650
Maine	\$161,048	Rhode Island	\$373,000
Maryland	\$518,413	South Carolina	\$349,218
Massachusetts	\$500,000	Utah	\$395,000
Michigan	\$750,000	Vermont	\$174,461
Minnesota	\$564,132	Virginia	\$578,500
Mississippi	\$540,100	Washington	\$747,300
Missouri	\$599,000	West Virginia	\$200,000
Montana	\$347,688	Wisconsin	\$712,000

Awardees were determined using a competitive process, as required by the Small Business Jobs Act of 2010 and the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act of 2015.