



## **STEP 2015-16 Guidelines**

The U.S. Small Business Administration's State Trade and Export Promotion (STEP) grant initiative provides funding to states and U.S. territories to increase the number of businesses that export. Administered by Maine International Trade Center (MITC), the objective of the STEP Financial Assistance Award is to encourage Maine companies to develop new international markets. Eligible companies can be reimbursed for specific expenses related to business matchmaking, trade shows, or export skills and compliance training.



*Funded in part through a  
Cooperative Agreement with the  
U.S. Small Business Administration*

### **Support for International Business Matchmaking**

Eligible companies may be reimbursed up to \$1,000 for business matchmaking programs, such as the US Commercial Service's Gold Key Matching Service, or with other private entities with prior approval of MITC. This support is intended to help you to identify qualified, international buyers, distributors, or partners for your business to increase your exports. Your company may apply for up to two of these grants per year.

### **Support for Trade Shows**

Industry-specific trade shows can provide small businesses with valuable exposure to international distributors and buyers. Eligible companies may be reimbursed up to \$4,000 per company per year for trade show participation. Qualified expenses include: badge and booth registration, production and shipping of market appropriate materials, and booth signage.

### **Support for Export Skills & Compliance Training**

Are staff in your shipping department in need of international documentation training? Do International Traffic in Arms Regulations and Export Administration Regulations seem overwhelming, causing you to walk away from prospective international sales? MITC will reimburse up to \$2,500 per company per year for on-site private training, export compliance audits, or for offsite professional development export skills and compliance training. Do you have an export training need not mentioned, here? Talk to us!

## **STEP 2015-16 Guidelines (cont.)**

### **Eligibility**

In order to apply, companies or firms must meet the U.S. Small Business Administration's definition of small business, and manufacture or perform at least 51% of the covered good or service in Maine, and meet any other SBA guidelines for receiving federal grants.

### **Required for Application**

Companies must apply for the STEP Financial Assistance Award in advance. Funds may not be used to pay for activities or costs incurred prior to the approval of the activity. The application must be submitted within 60 days of the proposed activity.

### **Required for Reimbursement**

Notice of application approval, copy of meeting schedule, paid invoices for international business matchmaking and/or training services, and completion of the first post-activity survey. MITC will conduct confidential surveys following the completion of the supported activity and at 6 and 12 months following the activity.

### **Questions**

For more information, please contact Dana Eidsness ([eidsness@mitc.com](mailto:eidsness@mitc.com)) or Wade Merritt ([merritt@mitc.com](mailto:merritt@mitc.com)).