

IN-STEP GRANT PROGRAM

The Indiana State Trade Expansion Program (IN-STEP) provides international trade support to Indiana small businesses in the form of financial assistance toward eligible and approved trade expansion activities. IN-STEP can provide reimbursement of up to \$15,000 per calendar year for related eligible expenses incurred through the execution of the approved trade support activity at a reimbursement rate of 80% following the approval of the application by the IEDC.

PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for IN-STEP funding, companies must 1) apply for an eligible IN-STEP activity, 2) identify at least one target international market, and 3) provide a detailed scope and budget.

A company must meet the following minimum requirements:

- Become a registered vendor with the State of Indiana;
- Be in operation for at least one year;
- Be new to exporting or pursuing market expansion;
- Be an Indiana Small Business Development Center (Indiana SBDC) client;
- Be in accordance with SBA size standards, which categorizes small businesses based on measures like industry, number of employees and annual receipts. Use the SBA's Size Standards Tool to see if your company qualifies; and
- The business' goods must be made in the U.S. or composed of at least 51% US material.

IN-STEP ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

- International and domestic trade shows
- International trade missions
- Translation for international languages, Search Engine Optimization (SEO), and website globalization and localization services
- International marketing media design
- US federal and private export and commerce support and training services
- Product compliance testing or certification

APPLICATION PROCESS

1. Complete online IN-STEP application

- Business Information
- Business Export History
- Proposed International Trade Activity Scope of Work and Budget
- Business Background Check – Submission of Required Support Documents

2. Email notice of approval shared by IN-STEP team

3. Submit required documents to proceed with State of Indiana contract process

- State of Indiana Vendor Forms
- Finalized scope of work
- Finalized budget sheet

4. Contract is executed and activity is officially eligible for reimbursement once activity has been completed

5. Reimbursement Process

- Following the completion of the approved trade activity, company must provide the following documents to the IEDC within 45 days of activity completion.
- Completed IN-STEP International Trade Support Reimbursement and Post-Program Survey (2 pages)
- Proof of payment documentation: formats can include itemized receipts, PAID invoices, certifications, bank statements, etc.
- If applicable, registration materials that confirms attendance and participation in approved activities.
- Failure to submit these items may result in the reimbursement being denied and prevent the company from receiving funds in the future.

EXPENSE GUIDELINES

GENERAL EXPENSE ELIGIBILITY

1. All expenses must directly relate to the execution of the approved activity and category to qualify for reimbursement.
2. Expenses related to travel for the approved activity must be incurred during the official activity window and must be directly related to the business purpose of the trip.

Example: Uber/Taxi expenses to and from the airport, to and from business meetings, to and from conference or trade show location during official travel window ARE eligible

Uber/Taxi expenses incurred during the window but un-related to the business reason for travel are NOT eligible for reimbursement.

Uber/taxi to personal meals, meetings, activities are NOT eligible.

The IEDC retains the right to request additional information about line-item expenses included in any reimbursement request to ensure the expense falls within the eligibility guidelines.

ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

INTERNATIONAL AND DOMESTIC TRADE SHOWS OR INTERNATIONAL TRADE MISSIONS

TRAVEL COSTS

- Travel, lodging, and general reimbursement for two company employees, including round trip economy airfare on a U.S. carrier, in accordance with the Fly America Act
- Lodging costs to be reimbursed at the nightly rate set by the U.S. Department of State (international) and the U.S. General Services Administration (domestic)
- Lodging duration must match official activity window unless there is a documented explanation and exception
- Luggage Fees (expense from checking a bag at an airport)
- Parking fees
- Economy rate ground transportation for business activities surrounding conference travel (taxi, uber, lyft, etc.)
- Mileage Per Diem reimbursement at the rate of \$0.70 per mile for use of personal vehicle or rental vehicle during official activity window.
 - Eligible for up to two company employees.
 - Requests for mileage per diem reimbursement for more than one vehicle must accompany a business justification.

TRADE SHOW EXHIBITION COSTS

- Booth space rental, design and construction
 - Booth rental, booth design, electricity, carpet, furniture, shelves, tablecloths, banners
 - Expenses must come from explicitly related and essential components of a successful trade show booth. Components, if reusable, must only be used for the purposes of trade show participation and export-development activities. IEDC retains the right to deny an expense that is not confirmed to have been directly relevant to the approved activity.
- Registration or Credential Expenses for two company employees
- Fees for shipping sample products
- Freight cost to ship both materials and products
- Product Translation Services
- Translation of supplemental material, including flyers, handouts, business cards

TRANSLATION FOR INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGES, SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION, AND WEBSITE GLOBALIZATION AND LOCALIZATION SERVICES

- Translation of website into foreign languages, translated add-ons, plug-ins or updates
- Search engine optimization
- Website globalization and localization services

INTERNATIONAL MARKETING MEDIA DESIGN

Design, translation, production of marketing material or advertising plans to increase access and product awareness in international markets

- Brochures
- Social media platforms
- Websites
- Billboards
- Newspapers
- Posters
- Branding
- Advertising.

U.S. FEDERAL AND PRIVATE EXPORT AND COMMERCE SUPPORT AND TRAINING SERVICES

- U.S. Department of Commerce Services and U.S. Federal Government Trade Resources Scheduling matchmaking appointments
- Creation of market research and industry specific briefings
- Export strategy and planning consultation
- Export seminars/webinars
- Trade workshops
- Market research subscription tools

PRODUCT COMPLIANCE TESTING OR CERTIFICATION

- Product compliance testing or certification to increase international market access

INELIGIBLE EXPENSES

Includes but are not limited to the following:

- Airfare not compliant with the Fly America Act
- Immunizations
- Individual meals
- Travel per diem (meals)
- Passport and visa fees
- Alcohol
- Drugs
- Incidental costs
- Medical expenses
- Administrative costs
- Gifts and souvenirs
- Cellphones, cellphone charges and landline charges
- TV and radio production
- Salaries and office expenses
- Company uniforms or clothing
- Business Cards, unless translated for approved activity
- Unapproved trade activities
- New product development or alteration of existing Product
- New or augmented marketing materials and advertising campaigns to draw international visitors to a state for purposes other than meeting prospective client for export activities
- Expenses related to entertaining current or prospective clients or government officials
- Travel expenses for distributors or sales representatives not employed by the business
- Any expense incurred by traveling to, selling to, or attending an activity in an adversary nation (BOLIVIA, CUBA, IRAN, NORTH KOREA, SYRIA)

IN-STEP

IN-STEP is funded in part through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration. In accordance with Section 632 of Public Law 117-328: Indiana State Trade and Export Promotion Program Year 13 total program funding is \$765,000, including federal funding (74% - \$565,000) and non-federal funding (26% - \$200,000).

