

State Trade and Export Promotion (STEP) Program

The State Trade and Export Promotion (STEP) program for South Carolina seeks to increase the exporting activity among small and disadvantage businesses. The project will serve three types of businesses: 1) Those that have never exported but want to investigate; 2) Those that have exported but with limited success; 3) Those that are experienced exporters. Interested applicants should review the information below prior to completing the online questionnaire form.

Is your company eligible?

Companies interested in participating in the STEP program must meet SBA and the evaluation committee's guidelines. In addition companies must meet the criteria as defined in at least one of three groups:

SMALL BUSINESSES ENTERPRISES (SBES)

Business must be organized for profit, independently owned and operated for at least one year with 500 or fewer employees (or otherwise be in accordance with SBA small business guidelines)

SMALL RURAL BUSINESSES

Located in one of the following counties: Abbeville, Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell, Cherokee, Chester, Chesterfield, Clarendon, Colleton, Darlington, Dillon, Fairfield, Greenwood, Hampton, Lancaster, Laurens, Lee, McCormick, Marion, Marlboro, Orangeburg, Sumter, Union, or Williamsburg

What will you get?

STEP funds cover the cost for export development via the U.S. Commercial Service's Gold Key Service, international partner searches and advertisement in the Commercial News USA publication. In addition, funds can be used to provide targeted market research reports, translation of marketing materials or website, international manufacturing certifications, and participation in training/workshops such as Export University as well as country specific seminars. All funds must be approved in advance and are distributed as reimbursements to the company.

What's the application process?

Qualified companies must be headquartered in South Carolina and currently have an exportable market ready product. Interested applicants will need to complete and submit the STEP questionnaire form, which will then be reviewed and approved by an evaluation team to determine the export potential of the candidate. Approved companies will be notified of the next steps and must agree to share the results with the S.C. Department of Commerce and U.S. Commercial Service. Companies that do not qualify will be notified with rationale for the decision.



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For additional information please contact:

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