



U.S. Small Business
Administration



Development
Services Agency

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NEWS RELEASE

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SBA's \$871,733 STEP Award Boosts Export Opportunities for Ohio's Small Businesses **Nationally, \$19 Million Awarded to Help Small Businesses Enter and Compete in the Global Marketplace**

COLUMBUS, Ohio – Ohio small businesses have access to \$871,733 in funding from the U.S. Small Business Administration's [State Trade Expansion Program](#) to help them expand with exporting opportunities. In all, the SBA has awarded \$19 million to 48 state and territory international trade agencies through its competitive STEP effort to support export growth among U.S. small businesses. Here in Ohio, the STEP award will support the International Market Access Grant for Exporters (IMAGE) program, which is administered by the Ohio Development Services Agency.

"SBA's STEP has been a critical resource for states to help their small businesses and entrepreneurs expand into international markets," SBA Great Lakes Regional Administrator Rob Scott said. "This is important because small businesses that export can grow revenue, contributing to a higher likelihood of them staying in business and strengthening local economies with job creation, especially in challenging times like this, as 95% of the world's consumers are beyond U.S. borders."

STEP is designed to assist Ohio with increasing the number of small businesses that export and the value of those exports. Since its creation in 2010 as part of the Small Business Jobs Act, STEP has recorded more than \$3.8 billion in exports and awarded approximately \$176 million in grants to fund export opportunities, increasing the footprint of American small businesses in countries worldwide. Ohio has received approximately \$7 million in STEP awards over the program's 10-year existence.

"STEP and SBA's [other export resources](#), including SBA-backed loans and local U.S. Export Assistance Centers, help remove barriers to market entry for small businesses. The SBA is delivering tools for small businesses in Ohio to diversify their customer base by offering their services and products abroad," said SBA Columbus District Director Everett Woodel.

The 2020 STEP awards will allow Ohio to assist small businesses with the information and tools they need to succeed in export-related activities in line with the program objectives. These objectives include participation in foreign trade missions, foreign market sales trips, services provided by the

U.S. Department of Commerce, as well as design of international marketing campaigns, export trade show exhibits, training workshops, and more.

“Ohio products and services are sought throughout the world. In 2019, Ohio companies had \$53 billion worth of international sales,” said Lydia Mihalik, Director of the Ohio Development Services Agency. “The IMAGE program, which is funded through the STEP award, is key to this success and continues to help Ohio small businesses compete in the global marketplace.”

For more information about the Ohio IMAGE program and to apply for grant funds, visit IMAGE.Development.Ohio.gov.

Individual STEP awards are managed at the local level by state government organizations. SBA’s [Office of International Trade](#) administers the STEP awards at the national level and its [guide to exporting](#) offers more information on STEP and other small business resources for international trade.

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About the U.S. Small Business Administration

The U.S. Small Business Administration makes the American dream of business ownership a reality. As the only go-to resource and voice for small businesses backed by the strength of the federal government, the SBA empowers entrepreneurs and small business owners with the resources and support they need to start, grow or expand their businesses, or recover from a declared disaster. It delivers services through an extensive network of SBA field offices and partnerships with public and private organizations. To learn more, visit www.sba.gov.

About the Ohio Development Services Agency

The Ohio Development Services Agency leads state economic development through programs and services that assist businesses, communities and individuals. The agency oversees the awarding of state and federal incentives, manages projects and programs that receive state and federal funding as well as marketing the State of Ohio through the Governor’s Office of Appalachia and TourismOhio.