

2020 CALIFORNIA STATE TRADE EXPANSION PROGRAM

Request for Proposals

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE 59.041

Released:

February 20, 2020

Revised:

February 28, 2020

Grant Proposals Due:

By 5:00 pm PT on March 6, 2020

No late submissions accepted.



California Department of Food and Agriculture

Office of Grants Administration

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About the Program

Purpose

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), in partnership with the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz), is accepting proposals for the 2020 California State Trade Expansion Program (STEP). STEP funds must support projects that **help small businesses enter exporting or expand their exporting activities to additional markets.**

Funding and Duration

CDFA anticipates that up to \$900,000 per year for federal fiscal years 2020 and 2021 will be awarded to California through a competitive federal grant award from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), Office of International Trade (OIT) to support STEP activities.

The SBA will award STEP grants for a one-year base period and an option period of one year. For projects submitted by CDFA and the STEP partners, first year activities will occur between January 1, 2021 and September 29, 2021 (nine months). The second year will begin September 30, 2021 and continue through September 29, 2022. The second year is subject to SBA discretion, continuing program authority, available funding and performance in the first year of the award. Accordingly, CDFA and the STEP partners will prioritize proposals with the highest likelihood of success in the first year of the program.

Sub-grant amounts are available to eligible organizations in California for up to \$50,000 per activity. The maximum grant duration is one year, nine months, and grant funds cannot be expended before January 1, 2021, or after September 29, 2022.

In addition to the competitive process described in this document, up to \$600,000 of California's total STEP application per federal fiscal year is reserved for the California STEP partner organizations: CDFA for administrative and project activity costs, the Inland Empire Center for Entrepreneurship, California State University, San Bernardino, which facilitates California's federally mandated STEP Director; the Los Rios Community College District Center for International Trade and Development which administers California's Individual Company Export Program; and GO-Biz.

CDFA reserves the right to offer an award amount less than the amount requested or otherwise modify the proposal in funding or scope.

Eligibility and Exclusions

Non-profit and local and state government entities, including tribal governments; and public or private colleges and universities are eligible to apply. Individuals are not eligible to apply. There is no limit on the number of concept proposals applicants may submit; however, each concept proposal should be for a wholly unique project. Applicants should not submit multiple concept proposals for a single project.

STEP funds cannot duplicate activities funded by other state or federal grant programs.

Grant funds will not be awarded for projects that directly benefit or provide a profit to a single organization, institution, or individual.

Due to the unique nature of the State Trade Expansion Program goals and objectives, the following additional eligibility requirements apply:

- Must be able to demonstrate prior experience in providing export assistance to small companies (according to SBA small business size standards), including but not limited to the execution of international trade events that involve connecting California small businesses directly to potential international buyers and/or strategic partners.
- Must have working knowledge of U.S. Department of Commerce, International Trade Administration export support programs and/or U.S. Department of Agriculture, Foreign Agricultural Service export promotion programs.
- Must have a staff member or members who are knowledgeable and experienced in providing export assistance to small businesses.
- Must have prior experience in managing and complying with federal contracts, grants or other cooperative agreements, and federal cost accounting principles.
- Must have sufficient financial resources to execute the proposed activity and await reimbursements which can range from 60 to 120 days.

Cost Share

The STEP program includes mandatory cost share of at least 35 percent of the total project or 53.84 percent of the federal funds requested. Cost share must be comprised of not less than 50 percent cash match and not more than 50 percent of in-kind contributions. Pursuant to the Code of Federal Regulations §200.306(b)(5) funds from other Federal awards cannot be used as cost share for this program.

Stakeholder Input

CDFA and Go-Biz seek comments about this Request for Proposal (RFP). Comments received will be considered when developing future STEP RFPs. Written comments should be submitted via email to: grants@cdfa.ca.gov by April 30, 2020. Include “STEP stakeholder comments” in the subject line of your email.

Application, Review and Notification

Grant Proposal Application

Applicants are required to complete and submit their proposal using the required templates available on the CDFA Grants Website: <http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/grants/>.

The grant proposal application consists of multiple parts:

- Cover Page
- STEP Checklist
- Project Narrative
- Budget Template
- Personnel Compensation Spreadsheet
- Additional required attachments

Proposals must be submitted electronically in a single email, with all required attachments to grants@cdfa.ca.gov by 5:00 p.m. PDT on March 6, 2020.

Review Criteria

CDFA and GO-Biz seek to fund concepts that provide a cost effective, integrated set of actionable export promotion activities, implemented by entities that have demonstrated experience in generating export promotion outcomes associated with this project.

Review Process

CDFA will conduct an internal administrative review to ensure applications received are complete and applicant organizations are eligible to receive STEP funds if selected. A STEP proposal review committee will evaluate and rank each proposal.

Notification and Feedback

Applicants selected for funding will be notified when the U.S. Small Business Administration announces 2020 STEP awards in Fall 2020. Feedback is not available for this program.

Timeline

Proposal	Date
Release Request for Concept Proposals	February 20, 2020
STEP Webinar	February 26, 2020 1:30pm PT
Proposals Due	March 6, 2020
Proposals to SBA for Approval	April 2020
Award	Date
Announce and Award Funding	Fall 2020

Funding Areas

CDFA has developed two funding areas consistent with the State Trade Expansion Program qualified export activities. Examples of each funding area are intended to clearly define the 2020 STEP priorities and help prospective applicants to develop their proposals.

Funding Area I: Foreign Trade Mission

Foreign trade missions organize a group of companies to participate in a series of marketing events in specific international locations for the purpose of engaging directly (face-to-face) with potential buyers and strategic partners.

In this funding area, CDFA will consider projects that are well defined along an industry cluster or set of related clusters, in a particular geographic region (national, sub-national or continental), that propose a set of activities that have the potential for near term and longer term export outcomes (export sales, distribution agreements, and purchase agreements). It is expected that the applicant organization can demonstrate it has market reach to the industry cluster or clusters. Ninety percent (90%) or more of proposed project funds shall directly benefit the participating small businesses.

Typical Elements of a Trade Mission May Include:

- Pre-arranged matchmaking meetings for participating companies in each destination, including utilization of the U.S. Department of Commerce, Gold Key or Platinum Key Service, and/or U.S. Department of Agriculture, Foreign Ag Service business matching, or business matching provided by qualified in-country partners.
- Marketing promotion events, including presentations to the trade; displays and product evaluation and sampling events, and media interviews.
- Informational sessions on market access, product registration and/or marketing intelligence
- Networking and promotional events targeting private sector buyers and governmental influence.

Funding Area II: Organizing Participation in International Trade Show Exhibits

Organizing a group of companies to participate in an industry trade show exhibition outside of the United States, including recruitment, exhibition contracting and design and on-site support during the event.

In this funding area, CDFA will consider projects that integrate multiple marketing promotional activities (examples provided below) that propose a set of activities that have the potential for near term and longer-term export outcomes (export sales, distribution agreements, and purchase agreements). It is expected that the applicant organization can demonstrate it has market reach to the industry cluster or clusters. Consideration will also be given to those trade show exhibitions that have been approved by the US Department of Commerce. Ninety percent (90%) or more of proposed project funds shall directly benefit the participating small businesses.

Typical Elements of a Trade Show Exhibition Include (but not limited to):

- Contracting for exhibition space.
- Recruitment of qualified small businesses to participate, including design of marketing collateral, coordination with trade show organizer, U.S. Department of Commerce and other organizations.
- Design and build out of exhibition space.
- Provision of accessories, and display elements to facilitate the proper display and merchandising of products and services.
- Facilitation of on-site (within the trade exhibition) matchmaking and/or offsite

matchmaking services.

- Market briefings on regulations, market access and business development.
- Follow up and reporting of results.

Assistance and Questions

For assistance and questions related to the 2020 STEP process, please contact the California STEP Director Jeffrey Williamson by email jeffrey.williamson@csusb.edu or by telephone (714) 951-5446.

The California STEP partners will conduct one webinar on the 2020 STEP solicitation process on February 26, 2020 at 1:30pm PT. To register for the webinar, please email grants@cdfa.ca.gov.

In order to maintain the integrity of the competitive grant process, CDFA and the STEP Partners are unable to advise and/or provide individuals with any information regarding specific proposals during the solicitation process.