Global NY State Trade Expansion Program (STEP)

STEP 13 – Guidelines (Version 1 – July 2026)

Program Overview

Empire State Development (ESD) is working in partnership with the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) to increase the number of small businesses that begin to export; increase the value of exports for small businesses that currently export; and increase the number of small businesses exploring significant new trade opportunities.

Funding Period and Level

The funding period runs from July 24, 2026, through September 29, 2027. Eligible companies may receive a maximum combined award amount up to $10,000. Reimbursement is calculated at 50% of total eligible costs, limited to specific activity caps. All submitted expense documentation is subject to approval and may be denied at Global NY's discretion.

STEP awards are issued on a first-come, first-served basis until funds are exhausted. Please note the following restrictions:

- No Retroactive Reimbursement: Activities completed or in progress prior to application submission are ineligible.
- Notification Requirement: Any changes to the original application must be submitted to ESD in writing; failure to provide adequate notice may void the award.
- Submitting an application does not guarantee funding or approval.

Eligibility Qualifications

- Must be a for-profit business, headquartered and registered to do business in New York State with the New York State Department of State
- Must maintain a physical employee presence within NYS
- Must have been in operation for at least one year prior to the application date
- Must be in good standing with all New York State government agencies
- The business must possess sufficient financial resources to cover trade-related costs
- Products or services must be export-ready and currently sold in the U.S. or international markets
- The export product/service must contain at least 51% United States content, as defined by the program's calculation guidelines (noted on the following page)
- A business must manufacture, assemble, or distribute the product (or provide an exportable service). Non-manufacturers must hold documented rights to export as an authorized distributor.
- Must qualify as an "eligible small business concern" under SBA size standards. Note that parent and subsidiary company data must be included in this calculation.
- Must not be currently debarred, suspended, or otherwise excluded from participation by any federal department or other agency.
- Eligibility may be further verified through site visits or telephone/video interviews

conducted by ESD.

Ineligible Industries (include but are not limited to)
Businesses acting as intermediaries for other companies, law firms, non-profit organizations, educational institutions, companies involved with cannabis, retail, real estate and companies that are recruiting foreign investment.

How to Determine United States Content for Manufactured Goods
U.S. content or manufactured goods = (factory price of a good) minus (aggregate value contributed by non-U.S. or foreign sources (e.g., costs or payments to foreign suppliers/providers/employees not resident in the United States)).

Factory Price of Good		$100
- aggregate value contributed by non-U.S. or foreign sources	Manufacturing costs (payment to foreign contract manufacturer)	-$25
	Value of all foreign-supplied parts/inputs/materials	-$20
	Foreign administrative costs	-$2
	Foreign transportation and logistics costs (up to a factory door)	-$2
	Licenses, royalties, and fees paid for foreign intellectual property	-$0
= U.S. Content		$51

How to Determine United States Content for Services
U.S. content for services = (contract value of the service, whether delivered in the U.S. or overseas) minus (aggregate value contributed by non-U.S. or foreign sources (e.g., costs or payments to foreign suppliers/providers/employees not resident in the United States)).

Contract value of the service		$100
- aggregate value contributed by non-U.S. or foreign sources	Staffing costs of foreign subcontractor	-$25
	Value of foreign inputs/materials used to execute contract	-$15
	Foreign based legal and administrative costs	-$9
= U.S. Content		$51

The following links may also be helpful in determining your U.S. content: EXIM Bank Manufactured Goods, EXIM Bank Services and EXIM Bank Overview.

Allowable Uses of Program Funds and Activity Selection Guidelines

1. Subscription to services provided by the Department of Commerce
Services available from the U.S. Commercial Service to assist a company with entering or expanding their markets, such as, choosing the best market for their products or services; evaluating prospective foreign business partners; increasing market potential; and gold key matchmaking services.

2. Trade show exhibition (International and qualified domestic trade shows)
A trade show is an exhibition to showcase and demonstrate a company's products and services.

This includes foreign trade shows appropriate for export development, and domestic trade shows, which have a significant international audience participation (at least 25% international attendees). If international attendee rates are not available, speak with your local Global NY representative. ***If you are attending to walk the show, or speak at the show without an exhibit space, this activity is not eligible for reimbursement. You must have a booth at the exhibition to be eligible.***

3. Qualified foreign market sales trips (Financial Assistance Award for Travel)

A qualified foreign market sales trip will allow a company to participate in organized trade missions and/or events that will enable them to explore or expand international business or sales opportunities. A trip must be organized by a professional trade organization, the U.S. Commercial Service, the U.S. Department of State, Foreign Embassy, Consulate or through ESD's foreign offices after use of the Export Marketing Assistance Service (EMAS Plus). A detailed agenda must be provided.

Evaluation Process

ESD will review applications and provide an eligibility determination within 30 business days of receipt. Please ensure all sections are complete and signatures are provided where required; incomplete applications will not be processed. Applicants are strongly encouraged to consult with an International Trade Manager prior to submission (see the final page for contact information) to ensure alignment with program requirements.

Eligible Costs (will vary based on activity):

- Airfare: Must comply with the Fly America Act.
    - One basic economy class ticket for one company employee is eligible.
    - If you upgrade, you must provide a screenshot/quote of the basic economy rate for the same flight, or the entire flight will be ineligible.
    - If you include flights to locations other than the location noted in the award letter, your entire flight will be ineligible.
    - Tickets booked more than six months in advance are ineligible for reimbursement.
- Lodging for one employee up to two days before and one day after the event. Rates are limited to the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) or Department of State per diem. The final invoice must show a nightly price breakdown and the name/address of the lodging facility.
- Meals & incidentals (M&IE) to align with eligible lodging nights. Rates are limited to the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) or Department of State per diem. Lodging receipts must be submitted to validate M&IE eligibility.
- Registration fees for one company employee
- Exhibit space fees
- Trade mission fees for one company employee
- US Department of Commerce fees
- **All eligible invoices must be issued to the STEP grantee's business name**
- **All eligible expenses must be paid from the STEP grantee's business financial account**

Ineligible Costs (include but are not limited to):

- Airfare that does not conform with the Fly America Act
    - Any airfare above basic economy (Business, First Class, Economy Plus, Extra Legroom, etc.)
    - Flights involving personal trips will make the entire flight ineligible.
    - Excessive early arrivals or late departures will make the entire flight ineligible
    - Excessive airfare upgrades will make the entire flight ineligible
- Baggage fees
- Shipping fees
- Compliance testing fees
- Immunizations, visa and passport fees
- New product development or alteration of existing products
- Cellphones and cellphone charges
- Television and radio production
- Efforts to create or augment marketing and advertising campaigns to draw international visitors to New York State
- Printing fees (brochures, handouts, business cards, banners, etc.)
- Capital or equipment purchases
- Ground transportation (taxi, bus, train, personal car, rental car, parking fees, etc.)
- Service fees (currency exchange fees, credit card fees, etc.)
- Promotional items or giveaways
- Invoices issued from the Empire State Development or Department of Economic Development
- Activities that are being funded or subsidized by other organizations
- Association fees, membership fees, sponsorship fees or legal fees
- Salary or payroll
- Any materials referencing cannabis (marketing, sales, or usage).
- Changes to hotels or flights (resulting from weather, delays, sickness, etc.)
- Purchase of miscellaneous items (easels, picture frames, chairs, tablecloths, etc.)
- Invoices paid in cash, with rewards points, with e-credits, on a barter system or paid by anyone other than the NY based STEP grantee
- Payments made through a personal financial account
- Invoices issued to or paid by parent/subsidiary companies or paid by anyone other than the NY based STEP grantee
- Lodging, meals, or incidentals for events within 50 miles of the applicant's office or home
- Any invoice dated or paid prior to the application date is ineligible, with two exceptions:
    - Trade Show Deposits: May be paid up to one year in advance.
    - Flight/Lodging: May be booked up to six months in advance.

Reimbursement

Upon completing an awarded trade activity, companies must submit all eligible receipts and proofs of payment as one single, combined PDF. Please note that ESD does not provide partial reimbursements; documents should only be submitted once the activity is fully concluded.

To receive payment, grantees must email a comprehensive reimbursement package to Global NY upon the completion of the awarded activity.

1. Required Documentation
    a. Formal Invoices: Must be on company letterhead and include the grantee's name/address, detailed scope of work, date, invoice number, and total cost.
    b. Proof of Payment: Acceptable documents include bank statements, credit card statements, or wire transfer confirmations. Relevant charges must be clearly highlighted.
        i. Transactions must originate from the grantee's business account (personal account payments are ineligible).
        ii. Financial Statements: Statements must display the business name and address of the NY based STEP grantee. Any payments made through a personal financial account are not eligible for reimbursement.

2. Project Reporting
    a. A completed Project Impact Report (PIR) must be submitted alongside your financial documentation for data collection.
    b. A secondary PIR will be required at a later date to capture long-term performance statistics.

Processing

Following the expense review, reimbursement typically takes six weeks to process. Please note the following terms:

- Grant recipients may receive a 1099 tax form in connection with the award.
- Global NY reserves the right to request additional supporting documentation and to void grants if records appear altered.
- All submissions are subject to review; reimbursement remains at the sole discretion of Global NY and may be denied at ESD's discretion.
- ESD reserves the right to terminate or suspend the grant award at any time, effective immediately, without prior notice to the recipient.

Global NY Directory

If you have additional questions, please contact the Global NY representative in your region below. General questions can also be directed to globalny@esd.ny.gov or 212- 803-2300.

Region	Counties	International Trade Manager
Capital District	Albany, Columbia, Greene, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Schenectady, Warren and Washington	Kathryn Bamberger Kathryn.Bamberger@esd.ny.gov 518-270-1133
Central New York	Cayuga, Cortland, Madison, Onondaga and Oswego	Carolyn Baker-Scott Carolyn.Baker-Scott@esd.ny.gov 212-803-2300
Finger Lakes	Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Orleans, Seneca, Wayne, Wyoming and Yates	Carolyn Baker-Scott Carolyn.Baker-Scott@esd.ny.gov 585-399-7060
Long Island	Nassau and Suffolk	Loretta Beine Loretta.Beine@esd.ny.gov 631-435-0717
Mid-Hudson	Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan, Ulster and Westchester	Global NY globalny@esd.ny.gov 212-803-2300
Mohawk Valley	Fulton, Herkimer, Montgomery, Oneida, Otsego and Schoharie	Kathryn Bamberger Kathryn.Bamberger@esd.ny.gov 518-270-1133
New York City	Bronx, Kings, New York, Queens and Richmond	Folashade Olatunbosun Folashade.Olatunbosun@esd.ny.gov 212-803-3218
North Country	Clinton, Essex, Hamilton, Jefferson, Lewis, Franklin and Saint Lawrence	Kathryn Bamberger Kathryn.Bamberger@esd.ny.gov 518-270-1133
Southern Tier	Broome, Chemung, Chenango, Delaware, Schuyler, Steuben, Tioga and Tompkins	Global NY globalny@esd.ny.gov 212-803-2300
Western NY	Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie and Niagara	Mo Sumbundu Mo.Sumbundu@esd.ny.gov 716-846-8347