New Hampshire Department of BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

U.S. COMMERCIAL SERVICE United States of America Department of Commerce

U.S. Small Business Administration

Funded in part through a grant with the U.S. Small Business Administration

STEP Financial Assistance Award Application 2026/2027

Part 1: Introduction and Eligibility

The New Hampshire State Trade Expansion Program (NH-STEP) provides Financial Assistance Award (FAA) grants to eligible small businesses to support export-related activities. Grants reimburse 80% of eligible project costs, up to $8,000 per award. NH-STEP is funded in part by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) and administered by the New Hampshire Office of International Commerce (OIC).

To qualify for a FAA award, you must certify by checking the following boxes and signing below that the company you represent:

☐ is an export-ready U.S. business seeking to export goods or services of U.S. origin or containing at least 51% U.S. content.

☐ is registered in good standing with the New Hampshire Secretary of State and has been in business and profitable for at least one year.

☐ is not majority-owned by foreign persons or entities.

☐ meets the SBA small-business size standard applicable to its industry. (For information on SBA Small Size Standards, refer to https://www.sba.gov/category/navigation-structure/contracting/contracting-offices/small-business-size-standards)

☐ is not debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this federal grant program.

☐ agrees to provide quarterly progress reports to OIC about export successes resulting from activity funded by the award, including sales, contracts, joint ventures, or partnerships with distributors or agents. OIC may share this information with program partners, including the U.S. Commercial Service, SBA, and other organizations that work with OIC.

☐ agrees to allow photographic images, names, likenesses, and biographical information of company representatives to appear in print, film, digital images, or video produced by OIC or the U.S. Commercial Service, and to be disseminated by OIC or its designees for related publicity and promotional purposes. (I release OIC and its agents, employees, successors, assigns, and licensees from claims or liabilities arising from my appearance, participation, or incorporated artwork and its exhibition. I understand that OIC is not obligated to publish, exhibit, televise, or otherwise use my image or participation. OIC will obtain the applicant's written permission before using an export success story in a broad public release, such as a press release or blog post.)

Company Name:

Signature of authorized company official:

Date:

Print name: Title/Position:

Email Address: Phone:

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Part 2: Company Description

Company Name:

Address:

Company Website:

FEIN: Primary NAICS: State of Incorporation:

Years in Business: Employees in NH: Employees Worldwide:

Percentage of Foreign Ownership:

Do any of the following apply to your business? Please check all that apply.

- ☐ Veteran-Owned
- ☐ Woman-Owned
- ☐ Rural Business
- ☐ Disabled Veteran-Owned
- ☐ Socially and Economically Disadvantaged (includes minority businesses)

Which of the following applies to your company? Please check one.

- ☐ Market Expansion (businesses with more than 24 months export experience to one or more markets)
- ☐ New to Export (businesses with no export experience in the last 24 months or only “novice” export experience)

Years Exporting: International Branch/Office Countries:

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Part 3: Project Description

In the space below, please provide us with information about your company and how you intend to use the grant. Please answer the following questions:

- What does your company do?
- What is the primary product or service you want to export with this grant?
- Which foreign customers do you intend to target, in which countries are they located and in what sector are they engaged?
- What strategy do you intend to use to promote your exports to these customers?
- What specific activities will you undertake to implement this strategy?
- How do you expect these activities will support your strategy? (Provide specific details, dates and locations if you are going to travel for a trade show, trade mission or foreign business development trip.)
- What results do you anticipate this project will achieve in terms of export sales and job creation and retention in New Hampshire? (Provide specific numerical estimates.)

Please use the example provided below as a model to prepare a statement that answers the above questions and maximizes your chances for success.

Example Statement on export activities supported by this grant:

ZEDTECH is a flexible packaging manufacturer focusing on sustainability with a specialization in liquid packaging. Our primary customers are in the personal and home care supplies sector. Our signature product is ZED pouch, a paper-based pouch for liquids that is more eco-friendly than traditional plastic pouches. ZEDTECH wants to increase its ZED Pouch exports into the Latin American market by exhibiting at the Latin Pack Chile 2027 trade show in Santiago de Chile on April 16 – 18. 2027. We anticipate the show will help us grow our relationship with existing customers and form new relationships with new customers or distributors with the goals of increasing sales and reinforcing our position as an industry leader. We conservatively estimate an increase of sales worth $150,000 from new partners in Chile and Latin America gained from this show. This will allow us to create and fill two new manufacturing positions at our facility in Berlin, New Hampshire.

Please put your company's statement below.

Part 4: Budget

Expense Category	Estimated Cost	Reimbursable Expenses (80% of eligible expenses-not to exceed $8,000)
	$	$ 0.00
	$	$ 0.00
	$	$ 0.00
	$	$ 0.00
	$	$ 0.00
	$	$ 0.00
	$	$ 0.00
	$	$ 0.00
	$	$ 0.00
Total	$ 0.00	$ 0.00

FAA Grant Reimbursement: Allowable and Non-Allowable Expenses

ALLOWABLE EXPENSES	NON-ALLOWABLE EXPENSES
• Export-related enhancements to websites, apps, or e-commerce platforms, including translation	• Activities outside the grant period: STEP 13, June 30, 2026–September 29, 2027; or STEP 14, October 1, 2026–September 29, 2027
• Department of Commerce subscription services	• Compensation, wages, or salary of any employee of the grant recipient
• Export-related training and education courses	• Alcoholic beverages, meals and incidentals, phone and internet usage
• Design of international marketing materials, including digital materials and ad placements	• Passport or visa fees; immunizations (including COVID vaccinations and tests)
• Costs related to foreign product certifications/compliance testing	• New product development or alteration of existing products
• Costs associated with international intellectual property protection	• Printing of international marketing materials (including brochures, flyers, posters, etc.)
• Fees for shipping sample products	• Television and radio production costs
• Virtual or in-person international trade shows, foreign trade missions, or foreign market sales trips	• Capital goods, product samples, giveaways, supplies, and conference registrations
• Airfare*	
• Hotel**	
• Premiums on trade insurance (e.g., Ex-Im Bank premiums)	
• Any other eligible expenses, subject to review	

** Limited to one person, economy class on a US air carrier, or in compliance with Airline Open Skies Agreements [Fly America Act] provisions: http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/103191. Also provide location you will be traveling to, and the month you will be traveling in.*

*** Limited to one person, subject to US State Department Foreign Federal Hotel Per Diem Rates: https://aoprals.state.gov/web920/per_diem.asp. For reimbursement, submit invoices containing only room rates, taxes, and/or hotel fees; amenities are not eligible. Also provide the city where you will be staying and the number of nights you will be staying.*

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Part 5: Certifications and Disclosures

Please review the application for completeness and accuracy prior to submission. Incomplete applications will be returned, and funding may be exhausted before a revised application is submitted and reviewed.

I certify that the information provided in this application is true and correct. I understand that any false statements made as part of this application and any supporting documents may result in substantial civil and/or criminal liability and sanctions.

Signature of authorized company official:

Date:

Print Name:

The US Small Business Administration (SBA) would like to give eligible small business concerns the opportunity to expand your knowledge and resources of other programs that are offered by the agency. Please check the appropriate box if you would like for your company's name and contact information to be shared with other SBA programs. Your choice to participate or not, will not change the status or your participation with STEP. SBA's aim is strictly to share information about other opportunities with you.

☐ YES ☐ NO

Part 6: Additional Information

Review Process

- Your application will be reviewed by a staff member of the NH Office of International Commerce (OIC) with the assistance of a three-person advisory review committee.
- You must demonstrate that you have a viable ***project*** or ***plan*** to promote export growth with the activity you propose.
- Your application will be scored using the following criteria:
  - Company Description (5 points)
  - Project Description (35 points)
  - Economic Impact (50 points)
  - Project Budget (10 points)
- Only eligible applications that receive an average score of 70 or higher (out of a possible 100 points) will be approved for an award, subject to the availability of funds.

Reimbursement Process

- Awardees will recover authorized funds only after their activity has been completed and all documentation and receipts are submitted in a single package to the NH Office of International Commerce.
- The FAA Reimbursement Form and Instructions for completing the Form can be found online at STEP FAA Reimbursement | Granite State District Council (nhexportassistance.com).
- All reimbursements must be listed on the Reimbursement Form, provided by the NH Office of International Commerce. Only itemized receipts, or invoices with eligible expenses and proof of payment, will be reimbursed.
- If an award activity is not executed for any reason the applicant is responsible for all activity costs; no pre-paid activity costs for non-executed activities will be reimbursed.
- Reimbursement payments will normally be issued within a month of submission.

Further Questions?

- Contact Alan Dillingham with the Office of International Commerce at (603) 271-0323 or Alan.J.Dillingham@livefree.nh.gov