

State Trade Expansion Program Export Voucher Program Guidelines

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Administered by the Washington State Department of Commerce
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Table of Contents

Section I – General Information.....	1
A. Program Overview	1
B. Summary of Export Voucher Process.....	1
C. Participant Eligibility	2
Section II – Program Specifics	2
A. Important Program Points	2
B. Eligible Events and Activities.....	3
C. Regarding Airfare	4
D. Post Event Process	4
Section III – Program Administration.....	4

Section I – General Information

A. Program Overview

The State of Washington Department of Commerce Export Assistance Program seeks to increase the number of eligible small business concerns (ESBC) that export. The program is funded in part by the U.S. Small Business Administration’s State Trade Expansion Program (STEP).

The Export Voucher program is used to reimburse eligible ESBCs up to \$5,000 for specific export-related expenses. Voucher awards will be based on funds available, the number of applications submitted and the merits of the applications- especially the projected sales resulting from the activity; late, weak or incomplete applications are ineligible for reimbursement.

B. Summary of Export Voucher Process

- Applications requesting airfare reimbursement must be submitted electronically at least **6 weeks in advance** of the first day of travel; if airfare reimbursement is not required, your application may be submitted **4 weeks in advance**.
- Commerce reviews applications and provides official notice of decision by email

- Companies complete paperwork requirements such as SBA self-representation form and registration for DUNS number and Statewide Vendor number
- Companies execute proposed activity, incurs expenses
- Companies submit invoices, receipts, and a confidential post-event survey within 30 days of activity, or by September 21, 2017 if activity occurs at the end of the STEP year.
- Commerce issues a check, assuming all criteria have been met

C. Participant Eligibility

Qualifying Washington companies must:

- Be organized or incorporated in the U.S.
- Be operating in the U.S.
- Meet a) the applicable industry-based small business size standard established under section 3 of the Small Business Act; or b) the alternate size standard applicable to the program, under section 7(a) of the Small Business Act and the loan program, under Title V of the Small Business Investment Act of 1958 (15 U.S.C. 695 et seq.) The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) size standards are found at 13 C.F.R Part 121. Use the following sba.gov link for information on size standards for your business based on your NAICS code: https://www.sba.gov/sites/default/files/files/Size_Standards_Table.pdf
- Be in good standing with the Washington State Department of Revenue.
- Have a Federal Identification Number tied to a Washington address.
- Adhere to the following additional program criteria:
 - (a) have been in business for not less than the 1-year period ending on the date on which the Export Voucher is provided;
 - (b) demonstrate understanding of the costs associated with exporting and doing business with foreign purchasers, including the costs of freight forwarding, customs brokers, packing and shipping;
 - (c) have in effect a strategic plan for exporting; and,
 - (d) demonstrate export readiness.
- Agree to provide information on export sales data resulting from the Export Voucher funding, and respond to all subsequent Commerce surveys on a timely basis. Commerce will send surveys every six months, for up to 5 years. By applying for an export voucher, you are agreeing to respond to these confidential surveys with information on export sales data.

Section II – Program Specifics

A. Important Program Points

- **ESBCs are limited to one Export Voucher per program year (10/1/2017 to 9/30/2018)**
- ESBCs must be either “new to export” or “new to market” – that is, the event/activity must help them to enter a new market, where they do not already have significant export sales.
- Export Vouchers are non-transferable between events.
- Applications for past events will not be accepted.

- Export Voucher reimbursement is limited to 75% of paid eligible expenses, up to \$5,000.
- ESBCs will be required to provide receipts and invoices for the voucher amount as well as 25% of the voucher award in “cash match” or non-reimbursable, out of pocket expenses.
- The 25% company cash match may not come from any other federal government source.
- Preference will be given to the following ESBCs:
 - ESBCs that are minority-owned, Native American-owned, veteran-owned, disabled veteran-owned, woman-owned, rural, or socially and economically disadvantaged
 - ESBCs that focus on technology industries including aerospace, information communication & technology, life sciences, clean technology, advanced manufacturing.
- An Export Voucher may be used to cover participation costs (including airfare) for only one individual, unless the activity/event is a specific trade show or mission targeted by Commerce, in which case it may be used to cover costs for up to two individuals. See <http://www.exportwashington.com> for a list of events targeted by Commerce.
- Companies that are awarded a voucher may receive less than the award amount if they do not submit enough eligible or cash match expenses or other documents.
- **If you elect not to participate in the activity after you have submitted an application, please notify michele.ko@commerce.wa.gov as soon as possible so funds can be made available to other ESBCs.**
- **If you do not submit all the necessary documents within 30 days of the last event date, the STEP Program Manager retains the right to revoke your voucher award.**
- These terms and conditions are subject to change without notice based on funding availability and changes in federal and state procedures and laws.

B. Eligible Events and Activities

Only specific events and costs are eligible for reimbursement:

Eligible Events

- Trade Shows, Trade Missions
- Foreign Market Sales Trips

Eligible Expenses

- Airfare (compliant with the [Fly America guidelines](#))
- Trade Show and Trade Mission Fees
- Payment of website fees for translation, SEO, and localization (capped at \$3000)
- Shipping of samples (capped at \$2000)
- Compliance testing an existing product for entry into an export market (capped at \$2000)
- Services from the US Commercial Service

Cash Match Expenses

- Hotel, meals, transportation, any other export expenses that does not include entertainment or alcohol

C. Regarding Airfare

Prior approval is needed for airfare reimbursement. In addition, the following requirements must be met in order to receive reimbursement for airfare:

- The traveler must use a US carrier when available, or a carrier from a country with a current [Open Skies Agreement](#) with the US.
- **Boarding passes** must be retained and submitted to Commerce. If boarding passes are not available, a travel confirmation sent directly from the airline (requested and sent post trip) is acceptable as well.
- An email confirmation (pre trip) from the airline stating the itinerary and form of payment must be submitted to Commerce.
- Airfare will only be reimbursed for one traveler unless the event is Commerce supported- in which case prior approval must be received.
- Airfare must be **economy class**. Premium economy is not economy. If free upgrades are given, please notify the STEP Manager. If a traveler wishes to fly premium economy or business class, they can do so and pay the difference out of pocket if they send a screenshot (or an equivalent) of the cost of an economy class ticket on the same flight.
- Airfare purchased with frequent flyer miles is ineligible for reimbursement.

D. Post Event Process

Once you return from your trip, you will receive an email from the STEP Program Manager requesting the following:

- Self-representation form (if you have not yet submitted it).
- Invoices and matching receipts for your reimbursable and cash match expenses.
- If airfare was approved as a reimbursable expense: boarding passes and email confirmation from the airline stating the itinerary and form of payment.
- [Statewide Vendor Number](#) (if you have not yet submitted it, please send your application to payeehelpdesk@watech.wa.gov). SWV numbers are how state agencies send payments (in our case reimbursements) to companies.
- [DUNS number](#) (if you have not yet submitted it) which verifies the existence of your company globally.

Section III – Program Administration

- Department of Commerce decisions on Export Voucher reimbursements are final.
- The financial and commercial information pertaining to or in application for an Export Voucher will be kept strictly confidential pursuant to **RCW 42.56.270**. Any information given on an application or subsequent completion report and surveys will only be reported as part of aggregated data from multiple Commerce clients that does not identify any individual responses or companies.

Voucher Acceptance Agreement

I, the below signed, have read, understood, and accepted the program guidelines stated above. I accept the voucher award amount as notified by the STEP Program Manager. I understand that failure to comply with the program guidelines may result in a reduction or revocation of my voucher award. I agree that if my company elects not to use the voucher award, I will let the STEP Program Manager know as soon as possible to allow the funds to be re-allocated to another ESBC. I understand that should I fail to submit all necessary documents to the STEP Program Manager within 30 days of the last travel date, the STEP Program Manager reserves the right to revoke my award.

Voucher Recipient Signature

Voucher Recipient Company

Date

Contact Information:

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