Export Voucher Program FAQs

How many vouchers can I receive?

Companies can qualify for one STEP voucher per federal fiscal year.

If a company’s application for a voucher is denied, can it re-apply for a different event or activity in the same year?

Yes.

Can a company apply for an export voucher after it has already attended and paid for an event or activity?

Applications for an export voucher will only be considered for events or activities taking place in the future.

Can an export voucher be used for more than one sales trip or trade show?

No.

Can one trip with multiple stops qualify for an export voucher?

Yes, as long as the destinations are within the same general region of the world. The export voucher cannot be used to fund “around the world” tickets.

If I was awarded a voucher for a specific event, can I use that award for another event if our plans change?

No- the voucher must be relinquished and you must submit another application for the new event.

Can a voucher be used to cover the expenses of more than one employee?

No, unless the voucher is used to cover expenses related to a Commerce-supported trade show or mission. In this case, the voucher may apply to two employees.

Can a distributor who plans to purchase goods for export receive a voucher?

Vouchers may be approved for these companies if at least 51% of the product’s value-added (including R&D) is from the U.S.

How do I know if I’m an SBA defined small business?

You can go to the WA Department of Revenue [website](http://apps.dor.wa.gov/BRD/) to look up your NAICS code. Then you can plug in your NAICS code and company information into the [SBA tool](https://www.sba.gov/sites/default/files/files/Size_Standards_Table_2017.pdf) to determine if you are a small business.

What is a Statewide Vendor Number (SWV#) and why do I need one?

The state of Washington requires vendors (which include Export Voucher recipients) to have a Statewide Vendor Number [(SWV#)](http://www.des.wa.gov/services/contracting-purchasing/doing-business-state/receiving-payment-state/statewide-vendor-number-lookup) before they can be paid by any state agency. If the Department of Commerce approves your Export Voucher application, this is how you will receive your reimbursement.

What is a cash match?

For every STEP voucher awarded, the company must demonstrate that they have paid at least 25% out of pocket, which will not be reimbursable. If you receive a $4000 voucher, you must pay for $1000 out of pocket.

What conditions must be met for my airfare to be reimbursed?

You must fly basic economy and use a US carrier when available, or an airline from an [Open Skies Partner](https://www.state.gov/e/eb/rls/othr/ata/267129.htm) if a US carrier is not available. When you return from your trip, you must submit your boarding passes and the email confirmation from the airline stating your itinerary and confirmation of payment.

When can I expect to be reimbursed after my trip?

All necessary documents must be submitted 30 days after the last travel date. Once everything is submitted, you can expect to see your reimbursement in 2-3 weeks.

What other financing options besides the Export Voucher program are available to help Washington small businesses?

Companies that meet the criteria for an Export Voucher may also be eligible for other Department of Commerce initiatives. These services leverage federal, state and private funding to increase small business access to capital that helps grow businesses and create new jobs.