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Small Business Trade and Export Assistance Funds Available

[Oklahoma City] – Applications are now available to assist small businesses with funding for export promotion and training through the State Trade Export Promotion Grant (STEP) program administered by the U.S. Small Business Administration. The Oklahoma Department of Commerce has been awarded \$326,800 in STEP grant funding which will be used to provide training opportunities, research & market entry reports, and reimburse participant companies for approved activities associated with attending trade events, trade missions, website translation and international marketing initiatives for companies across Oklahoma.

Commerce anticipates that by using the newly awarded grant funds to support various trade and export training and activities, Oklahoma could see a more than \$31 million increase in exporting, benefiting small businesses in our state and expanding Oklahoma’s economy.

“The intent of this program is to increase the number of small businesses that are exporting, and to increase the value of exports for those small businesses that are currently exporting,” said Nicole Boyles, STEP Grant Director, Oklahoma Department of Commerce. “This funding from the SBA is a critical component in our overall Export & Trade program in Oklahoma. The STEP grant funds we’ve received help us to build the capacity of current and future small business exporters to compete in the global marketplace and expand their customer base outside of the U.S.”

“With 85% of the state’s businesses qualifying as small businesses, being able to provide the necessary export and trade services to these companies is no small feat,” said Brent Kisling, Executive Director, Oklahoma Department of Commerce. “Our team is dedicated to supporting these companies and growing the number of Oklahoma companies that export – which benefits both Oklahoma’s economy and each individual business.”

“Oklahoma businesses have been severely impacted by disruption in the economy caused by COVID-19,” said Boyles. “Trade events were abruptly cancelled and trade opportunities virtually ground trade to a halt. We are excited to announce that applications are available for small businesses to apply for funding. These funds will equip Oklahoma companies with the tools necessary to continue to operate and thrive during this pandemic and future economic disruptions.”



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To be considered for the Oklahoma STEP Fund, all applicants are required to submit an application and supporting documentation. The application form, guidelines and requirements can be found online at okcommerce.gov/step. For more information, contact Jesse Garcia, Global Project Manager, at stepfund@okcommerce.gov or (405) 815-5136.