

Massachusetts Small Business Development Center
Massachusetts Export Center



2026 Massachusetts STEP Program Application

You must submit your application online at www.mass.gov/export/step.

The deadline for application submission is Friday, October 9, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. ET

IMPORTANT NOTES:

- Prior to completing your STEP application, please complete or update your [Request for Advising](#) record with the Massachusetts Export Center / Massachusetts SBDC. We cannot consider STEP applications submitted by companies without a Request for Advising already on file.
- During this STEP program period, eligible activities should begin no earlier than June 30, 2026 and end no later than July 31, 2027.
- Applicants can include activities that have already occurred prior to the application deadline, but not before June 30, 2026.
- The Massachusetts Office of International Trade and Investment (MOITI) and the Massachusetts Export Center are no longer able to consider STEP applications for companies that have received three or more STEP grants in the past. If you need verification of the number of STEP grants that your company has received, please contact the Massachusetts Export Center (Julia Dvorko at dvorko@isenberg.umass.edu) or MOITI (Melissa Clary at melissa.clary@mass.gov).

Thank you for applying to the Massachusetts State Trade Expansion Program (STEP). We suggest that you complete the application on a computer rather than a mobile device. We advise that you compile all necessary information before you begin to complete the application form. The following is information that you will need in order to complete the application:

- Basic company contact details and key facts (e.g., Federal Tax Identification Number, employment data, revenue data, product/service information, etc.)
- Background information on the company's existing export activity (e.g., export sales information, key export markets, channels, international marketing activities, budget, etc.)
- Anticipated export goals and strategies over next three years (international marketing plan)
- Proposed export development activities under the STEP program, including sales projections, job growth projections and detailed budget information.

Please save your answers as a separate Word document before entering the data into the online application. There is no functionality to save partial applications.

With this information compiled in advance, we anticipate that it will take less than 45 minutes to complete this application. Please note that answers to all questions are required.

The Massachusetts Export Center will offer a free 1.5 hour webinar about the STEP application process on Friday, September 25, 2026 at 12:00 p.m. ET. The webinar will discuss the parameters of the Massachusetts STEP program and walk participants through the STEP grant application process. Please note that there are important changes to the scope of the program this year. For details on the webinar and to register, visit our website at www.mass.gov/export and click on the training tab.

Please note: There is no advantage for early applicants. We encourage you to participate in the webinar and compile a thorough, thoughtful and strategic application for the greatest chance of approval. Once you submit the application, a confirmation page will appear indicating that your application has been submitted for review. In addition, you will receive email confirmation with your application details. If you do not see both items, make sure that you correct any errors and submit the application.

The deadline for application submission is Friday, October 9, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. ET.



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

SBA ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS & ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF RISK

Company Name: _____

Federal Tax ID Number: _____

Applicants must answer "yes" to the following questions for application to be accepted into and considered for the Massachusetts STEP program.

Per the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), you MUST meet the following business size requirement AND the U.S. content requirements in order to be eligible for the STEP program. In addition, you must verify your understanding of the other statements.

I certify that the business meets the definition of an eligible small business concern as defined by Section 503 of the Trade Facilitation and Trade Enforcement Act of 2015. [Click here to view the official definition.](#) Verification is the burden of the applicant.

- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
-

I certify that I am an export-ready U.S. company seeking to export goods or services of that are 51% or more of U.S. content. Small businesses engaged in STEP-supported export activities must be an export-ready U.S. company seeking to export goods or services of U.S. origin or have at least 51% U.S. content. STEP applicants should reference existing U.S. government regulatory guidance for determination of U.S. content. [Click here for STEP U.S. Content Definition/Formula.](#)

- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
-

I understand that grant awards are made on a competitive basis and that there is no guarantee that my application will be funded.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

I understand that applications for vague or ineligible activities will automatically be disqualified.
[Click here for details on eligible activities and ineligible activities.](#)

- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
-

I understand that the Massachusetts Export Center and MOITI reserve the right to reduce grant amounts awarded, depending upon funding level appropriated for the STEP program.

- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
-

I certify that I am a direct representative of the applicant business and not an outside consultant submitting the application on behalf of a client business.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

COMPANY INFORMATION

Contact Name: _____

Title: _____

Company Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: _____

Cell Phone: _____

Fax: _____

Email: _____

Website: _____

Owner/President Name: _____

Owner/President Email: _____

Product or Service Description:

Year Established: _____

Number of Employees in MA: _____

Number of Employees Worldwide: _____

Annual Revenue: \$_____

Year Started Exporting: _____

EXPORT ACTIVITIES, READINESS & COMMITMENT

	Export Sales	Exports as a % of Total Revenue
2024	\$	%
2025	\$	%
2026 (estimated)	\$	%

Has your company previously received a STEP grant? If yes, please list the amount of export sales that the STEP program helped to support. *Your answer to this question will directly affect your ability to secure future STEP funding.*

☐ Yes \$ _____

☐ No

If your business is currently exporting, list your top three geographic export markets.

What channels or direct sales relationships has your company established to access export markets? Be specific.

What is the current annual export development budget of the business?

\$ _____

Does the business have staffing resources committed to developing international markets?

	Yes	No
Dedicated Personnel		
Dedicated Time		

If yes to question above, please list name(s), titles(s) and estimated hours per week:

Please briefly list any relevant international trade experience among key employees:

Please list any specialized training provided to employees over the past year related to exporting.

Does your company have a written export compliance program?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

Please check any applicable export controls for your products, technology or services:

- ☐ ITAR Controlled
- ☐ EAR Controlled
- ☐ EAR99
- ☐ Don't know

Does your company have a procedure for screening against transactions involving restricted parties, restricted end uses, and/or restricted destinations?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

INTERNATIONAL MARKETING PLAN & PROPOSAL

What are your company's export goals and growth strategies for the next three years? Include target international markets (please list them), export market entry channels, export business development strategies and other relevant information.

Has your company conducted market research in support of its international business plan, and if so, what sources have you used to attain market intelligence?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Sources:

Please select activities for which you would like apply for STEP funding. [Click here for details on eligible and ineligible activities.](#)

STEP Eligible Activities:

(Note that these activities must take place during the STEP program dates.)

- Exhibiting at foreign trade shows or conferences and direct related costs
- U.S. Department of Commerce international business development services
- Localization of websites for international target export markets
- Design of export market-specific marketing media

Note: Applications for vague or ineligible activities will be automatically disqualified. MOITI, the Massachusetts Export Center and SBA do not endorse, recommend or partner with any 3rd party vendor for delivery of services associated with STEP-reimbursable activities.

Please provide details on the above proposed activities, including information on how these activities will integrate into your company’s existing business operations and provide long-term benefit to your export development program.

Export sales projections resulting from STEP-funded activities:

2027: \$ _____

2028: \$ _____

2029: \$ _____

Job creation projections resulting from STEP-funded activities:

2027: _____

2028: _____

2029: _____

Please list the countries you expect to reach through the proposed STEP-funded activities:

PROPOSED BUDGET

Please note that STEP applications must be made for a minimum of \$6,000 and grants will be capped at \$20,000 per business to reimburse for costs associated with qualified project activities undertaken during the grant period of June 30, 2026 - July 31, 2027. The SBA has requested that applicants with activities earlier in the grant period be given priority. The Massachusetts Export Center and MOITI reserve the right to reduce grant amounts, depending upon funding level appropriated for the STEP program.

Please note that all receipts should be submitted for reimbursement within 30 days after the completion of all activities.

Each grant recipient will be required to provide a match to cover a portion of the total approved cost. New-to-STEP applicants have a 10% match requirement. All other firms have a minimum of 20% match requirement. Applicants are encouraged to list the full amount of anticipated match, even if it exceeds minimum requirements. The higher match amount demonstrates strong commitment to exporting.

STEP Grant Totals

Total STEP Reimbursement Amount Requested: \$ _____

Total Company Match Amount: \$ _____

Please describe any activities and costs that will constitute the match:

STEP Activity Details

Notes:

- *The cumulative amount for all activities must be at least \$6,000 and not exceed \$20,000.*
- *Activities that have already taken place, been paid for or have been booked, should be listed first. Thereafter, please list activities in order of priority.*
- *Upon review of the application, the requested amount of reimbursement may be reduced depending on the availability of funds.*

Activity 1

Title/Location/Description: _____

Dates: _____

Total Cost of Activity: \$ _____

Requested STEP Reimbursement Amount: \$ _____

Required: Has this activity been paid for, booked, or neither?

- ☐ Paid
- ☐ Booked
- ☐ Neither

Activity 2

Title/Location/Description: _____

Dates: _____

Total Cost of Activity: \$ _____

Requested STEP Reimbursement Amount: \$ _____

Required: Has this activity been paid for, booked, or neither?

- ☐ Paid
- ☐ Booked
- ☐ Neither

Activity 3

Title/Location/Description: _____

Dates: _____

Total Cost of Activity: \$ _____

Requested STEP Reimbursement Amount: \$ _____

Required: Has this activity been paid for, booked, or neither?

- ☐ Paid
- ☐ Booked
- ☐ Neither

Activity 4

Title/Location/Description: _____

Dates: _____

Total Cost of Activity: \$ _____

Requested STEP Reimbursement Amount: \$ _____

Required: Has this activity been paid for, booked, or neither?

- ☐ Paid
- ☐ Booked
- ☐ Neither

Activity 5

Title/Location/Description: _____

Dates: _____

Total Cost of Activity: \$ _____

Requested STEP Reimbursement Amount: \$ _____

Required: Has this activity been paid for, booked, or neither?

- ☐ Paid
- ☐ Booked
- ☐ Neither

CERTIFICATIONS

The applicant certifies that:

- To the best of my knowledge, the data in this application is correct and supporting documentation will be available to MOITI and the Massachusetts Export Center for review upon request.
- I understand that submitting false or misleading information may result in being found ineligible for reimbursement and permanent disqualification from any future participation in this program.
- My company meets the SBA eligibility criteria for the STEP program, including compliance with SBA size standards and U.S. content requirements.
- STEP funds will only be used for those activities included in the project budget and approved pursuant to the written application. Modifications to the proposed budget and activities require prior approval.
- I understand that MOITI and the Massachusetts Export Center may conduct confidential surveys following the completion of the activity, and I will answer those surveys in a timely manner.
- I understand that I will be accountable for submitting paperwork, documenting expenses and meeting deadlines under the STEP program and that failure to do so may impact my eligibility for reimbursement under the program.
- I understand that MOITI and the Massachusetts Export Center will not authorize release of financial and other company-confidential details provided on this application, except when required under applicable federal and state statutes, rules and regulations. It is understood that release of such information will be made available for the purposes of financial audits. It is also understood that my company name and city/town may be released for STEP program publicity purposes.
- I understand that the Massachusetts STEP program is funded in part by a grant from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) and that my contact details may be shared with the SBA for promotion of other SBA programs and services. I understand that grant awards are made on a competitive basis and that there is no guarantee that my application will be funded.

☐ I agree

☐ I do not agree

VOLUNTARY CONSENT TO RELEASE INFORMATION

The U.S. 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 and other federal agencies. Please check the appropriate box if you would like your company's name and contact information to be shared with other relevant agencies to learn more about federal export programs. Your choice to participate or not, will not change the status of your participation with STEP. The SBA's aim is strictly to share information about other opportunities with you.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

I hereby certify that I am an authorized representative of the company indicated and that all information provided in this document, as well as any accompanying documents, is true and complete to the best of my knowledge.

Please sign using your mouse or using your finger on a touchscreen.

Applicant's Name: _____

Title: _____

Company Name: _____

Date: _____