

Grant Support for the Trade Mission to Africa

The International Trade & Investment (ITI) Office within the Missouri Department of Economic Development is pleased to offer grant support for qualifying Missouri companies participating in the World Trade Center St. Louis – Trade Mission to Africa in November 2026.



ITI administers the [Missouri State Trade Expansion Program \(MO STEP\)](#), a cost-share reimbursement grant funded in part through a Cooperative Agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration. Below are eligible expenses related to the Trade Mission to Africa.

Eligible Activity	Eligible Activity Reimbursement Calculation and Cap	Reimbursement Estimate for Trade Mission to Africa
Trade mission fee	60% reimbursement, up to \$5,000	\$3,000 <i>(60% reimbursement of \$5,000 fee)</i>
Airfare	Actual cost, up to \$1,000 <i>(one MO traveler; economy fare)</i>	\$1,000
Total Award Estimate:		\$4,000

STEP Eligibility Criteria

The target for this program is Missouri small business exporters. Special consideration is given to businesses in manufacturing. For purposes of implementing MO STEP, the below operationally defines the term ‘eligible small business’ as an entity that:

- Has 500 employees or fewer;
- Is licensed to do business in the State of Missouri and is in good standing with the Missouri Secretary of State;
- Has been in business in Missouri for no less than 1-year on the date of application for funding;*
- Is operating profitably in the US;
- Has demonstrated export sales potential and intent, understanding the costs associated with exporting and doing business with foreign purchasers, including the cost of freight forwarding, custom brokers, packing and shipping, and has a strategic plan in effect for exporting;** and
- Has goods and services that are either of US origin, or have at least 51% US content.

**Must have been issued a Missouri business charter by the Missouri Secretary of State for at least one year.*

***A copy of the applicant's export plan may be required to complete the application.*

Overall Eligible Expenses & Reimbursement Amounts for STEP

STEP 13 (Federal FY25) Cycle: August 1, 2026 – September 29, 2027		
Eligible Expenses	Calculation	Maximum Reimbursement
Trade show	60% base reimbursement 70% for key market	\$6,000
Trade mission or foreign market sales trip	60% base reimbursement 70% for key market	\$5,000
Airfare for eligible activity	Actual cost	\$1,000
Lodging for eligible activity	Actual cost	\$1,000
Export training program	Actual cost	\$2,500
EXIM premiums (Pilot category; max 3 awards total. First come, first served)	60% base reimbursement 70% for key market	\$4,000
Overall Cap: \$20,000		

See STEP Guidelines for additional details and contact ITI for guidance.

Key Markets: Australia, Brazil, Canada, Europe & UK, India, Israel, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Southeast Asia, Taiwan, and United Arab Emirates

Funding Considerations: Program benefits are limited to funding availability. Overall grant funds and/or funds specific to eligible activity categories might become depleted before the end of the grant cycle and/or before a company hits the maximum reimbursement available. All awards are contingent on federal funding through the U.S. Small Business Administration.

Additional Information: Certain expenses for market media design, product translation, and US Commercial Service Export Service Fees (e.g., Gold Key) are eligible if these categories/activities are directly associated with a trade show, trade mission, or foreign market sales trip. The expenses are to be included in the eligible activity category cap and not a separate category.

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