

INDIANA STATE TRADE AND EXPORT PROMOTION (IN-STEP) PROGRAM

What is the IN-STEP program?

The Indiana Economic Development Corporation (IEDC) launched a new program to elevate and promote Hoosier-made goods in the global marketplace. The Indiana State Trade and Export Promotion (IN-STEP) program assists Indiana small businesses in developing and expanding export-related activities, opening up new markets around the world. Indiana ranks among the top 15 exporting states in the U.S., with businesses shipping products and goods such as automotive parts, pharmaceuticals and agricultural commodities to global customers. The IN-STEP program will continue to build on this momentum by helping small businesses identify, market and sell their products or services in international markets.

Which businesses can apply for IN-STEP?

Indiana small businesses defined by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) are eligible to apply for the IN-STEP program. The SBA's small business [size standards](#) vary by industry, number of employees and annual receipts.

What is the eligibility criteria to apply for IN-STEP?

Indiana small businesses must meet the following eligibility criteria to qualify for IN-STEP program funds:

- » An applicant business must be in operation for at least a year
- » An applicant business must be new to exporting or market expansion
- » An applicant business must be a client of the Indiana Small Business Development Center. An applicant business must be in accordance with the SBA's size standards
- » An applicant business' goods must be made in the U.S. or composed of at least 51% U.S. content

What is the role of the Indiana Small Business Development Center?

Prior to applying for the IN-STEP program, small businesses must register as a client of the [Indiana Small Business Development Center](#) (SBDC). Business advisers across the Indiana SBDC's ten statewide offices will provide free expert guidance and resources to help small businesses create export plans. Additionally, Indiana SBDC business advisers will assist small businesses in applying for and navigating the IN-STEP program.

Who administers the IN-STEP program?

The IN-STEP program is administered by the IEDC. The IN-STEP program Review Panel accepts applications on a rolling basis and selects eligible businesses to participate in the IN-STEP program.

What activities are offered through IN-STEP?

Applicant businesses have the option to choose up to three of the following eligible export-related activities, one from Option 1, one from Option 2 and one from Option 3. Applicant businesses have the option to choose only one activity from a single option category, and do not have to choose an activity from Option 1 in order to choose an activity from Option 2 or Option 3. Choosing one service or mixing and matching services is allowable, however any combination of the options selected cannot exceed the annual reimbursement limit of \$12,500.

Option 1 activities include:

1. International and domestic trade shows; or
2. International trade missions

Option 2 activities include:

1. U.S. Department of Commerce export services;
2. Export research tool subscription used to assist businesses with market research; or
3. Export training

Option 3 activities include:

1. Cost of compliance testing or certification for an existing product for entry into an export market; or
2. Website translation into additional languages, search engine optimization and localization services

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Total reimbursements under the IN-STEP program will cover up to 50% of a small business' eligible costs (not to exceed \$12,500). Indiana small businesses must submit all paperwork no later than 40 days before the start of IN-STEP program activities.

- » Option 1 activities will receive reimbursements up to 50% of eligible costs (not to exceed \$10,000)
- » Option 2 activities will receive reimbursements up to 50% of eligible cost (not to exceed \$2,500, except for the fees for an export research tool subscription to assist with market research which is capped at \$2,000)
- » Option 3 activities will receive reimbursements up to 50% of eligible costs (not to exceed \$6,000, except for search engine optimization and localization services which are capped at \$10,000)

Applicant businesses will be notified of eligible funding once applications are processed. Companies will be required to pay for all export-related activities, and then will be reimbursed up to 50% of eligible costs (not to exceed \$12,500) upon their completion.

What are the eligible and ineligible expenses under IN-STEP?

Please reference the IN-STEP Expense Guidelines one pager for additional information.

What is the process of applying for IN-STEP?

- » Applicant business confirms it is in accordance with [SBA size standards](#)
- » Applicant business registers as a client of the Indiana SBDC
- » Applicant business applies for the IN-STEP program through its Indiana SBDC regional office

How do eligible small businesses receive reimbursements for IN-STEP?

Once approved, applicant businesses will complete its activities and submit a reimbursement form and post-program survey to the IEDC. The IEDC will also conduct nine- and 18-month follow-up surveys so businesses may share specific program highlights.

When does the IN-STEP program application close?

The IN-STEP program online application is available on a rolling basis until all IN-STEP program funds are distributed or until December 31, 2021.

Please contact IEDCTrade@iedc.in.gov if you have questions.



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