



DCCED's International Trade Assistance Grant (ITAG)



Administered by the State of Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development, Office of International Trade

FAQs

What is the difference between STEP and ITAG?

STEP is the State Trade Expansion Program, a grant program that is administered by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). STEP is available for states and territories to apply and help fund their export assistance programs. The International Trade Assistance Grant (ITAG) is the State of Alaska's name for the program that utilizes the SBA's STEP funds. You may see references to both STEP and ITAG throughout the program materials.

What is the program performance period?

SBA STEP 11 funds have a program performance period from September 30, 2023-September 29, 2025. DCCED will accept ITAG applications from companies to use STEP 11 funds until June 30, 2025. The application period will close early if all available funds have been awarded. If more SBA STEP 11 funding becomes available after June 30, 2025, DCCED will reopen ITAG for applications. If an application is received before the cut-off date, but funding is unavailable, that application will be wait-listed and have priority if ITAG re-opens.

What is a Unique Entity Identifier, why do I need one, and how do I get one?

The ITAG program is a passthrough of federal funds. All entities applying for federally funded awards are required to have a valid unique identifier. A Unique Entity ID (UEI) is issued by SAM.Gov. Registering for a UEI is free for all entities doing business with the State of Alaska or the Federal Government. To obtain a UEI, go to [SAM.Gov](https://sam.gov) and follow the instructions to register your entity.

Who is eligible?

International Trade Assistance Grants are awarded to small businesses that meet the U.S. SBA's definition and can self-certify their eligibility. Small businesses are generally defined as those with 500 or fewer employees; however, SBA might have different parameters based on your company's NAICS code. Candidates must evaluate and certify their eligibility by submitting two required SBA forms and one business survey form: Self-Representation as a Small Business, Debarment Certification, and the DCCED Business Survey. Please see the Program Guidelines for additional eligibility criteria.

How does the funding work?

Funded in part through a grant with the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), money is available to assist Alaska small businesses seeking to begin or grow international sales. ITAG reimburses up to 75 percent of a company's eligible expenses, with a maximum reimbursement amount of \$10,000 for the current grant cycle. Eligible applicants may apply for multiple activities until they reach the maximum reimbursement amount for that program performance period.

What is the process?

Applications are processed and awarded on a rolling first-come, first-served basis until all funds are expended. Applications should be submitted at least **30 business days** before the start of any intended activity. A Grant Agreement must be signed before initiation of covered activities. *Grants will not cover any activity retroactively.*

Required Documents: Download, print, and sign the Self-Representation as an Eligible Small Business Concern and Debarment Certification forms and complete the DCCED Small Business Survey. These forms are required and will need to be submitted along with your application. Proof of an active SAM.Gov registration is also required. A screenshot of the website that shows your company's active status will suffice.

International Trade Assistance Grant Application: Complete the ITAG application by downloading the PDF application and guidelines from the ITAG website. Submit your completed application to DCCED's ITAG Program Manager via email.

Application Review: Once your application is submitted, it will be reviewed by DCCED. This process may involve communications between the DCCED and the applicant, so please be sure to submit your application as early as possible and at least 30 business days before the start of an intended activity to ensure adequate time for the review process.

Application Approval: If your application is approved, you'll receive a confirmation email that will include an award letter and instructions on the next steps. Your ITAG Grant Document Packet will include:

- *Grant Agreement:* This document will detail the requirements for your grant. Once reviewed, this will need to be signed by a member of the management team from the participating company and returned by email to DCCED.
- *Initial and Quarterly Performance Report:* This form will detail your initial sales associated with the attended tradeshow or other eligible event. This form is required to complete the reimbursement and must be submitted within 30 days of the final date of the export event listed on the grant agreement. This form must also be completed on a quarterly basis for the duration of the federal program performance period (September 29, 2025) in order to report on ongoing sales as a result of the export activity.
- *Expense Detail Report:* This form will compile all eligible expenses that you would like to consider for your grant reimbursement. Complete this form by listing all eligible

expenses associated with the tradeshow or other eligible event. Please be sure to submit all receipts/proof of payment for any expense listed on this form. Any expense listed on this form that does not include a valid proof of payment will not be included in your grant reimbursement. This form is required for reimbursement and must be submitted within 30 days of the final date of the tradeshow/event listed on the grant agreement.

Does my company need to fill out the follow-up surveys and reports once we have received our reimbursement?

Yes. The SBA requires the state to report on all STEP fund recipients after their activity has concluded. Your company will be required to fill out quarterly reports for the duration of the federal program performance period (September 29, 2025). **Not completing the reporting requirements will result in your company being ineligible to receive future grants from the ITAG program, forfeiture of any remaining grant funds under ITAG, and reimbursement to DCCED of grant funds already expended.**

How are reimbursements calculated?

Reimbursements will be awarded up to 75 percent of the total costs submitted. The minimum award amount is \$1,000 and the maximum award amount is \$10,000.

For example, if your company applies to the ITAG program to attend an export training that costs \$1,500 and your application is accepted for 75 percent reimbursement, the calculation would be $\$1,500 \times 0.75 = \$1,125$. Your company would receive a reimbursement of \$1,125 for that activity. Total costs cannot be lower than \$1,335 to meet the 75 percent reimbursement floor of \$1,000.

The maximum amount a company can be reimbursed is \$10,000 regardless of the total costs in the application. For example, if your company applies for expenses totaling \$15,000, your reimbursement will still only be \$10,000 even though 75 percent of \$15,000 is \$11,250.

Activities *may* be awarded for reimbursement at less than 75 percent of expenses if there are insufficient funds to meet 75 percent of expenses.

The activity my company wants to apply for does not reach the \$1,000 minimum. Can we combine activities in one application?

Yes, eligible activities can be combined into one application to meet the \$1,000 reward floor. For example, your company may opt to apply for export training that costs \$1,200 and utilize a U.S. Department of Commerce subscription service that costs \$500. You would list both activities in your application with the total expected cost of \$1,700.

If you have additional questions, please contact DCCED's STEP Program Manager listed on the ITAG website: www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/InternationalTradeAssistanceGrant.aspx