

## *Standard*

# EXPORTMD GRANT APPLICATION QUALIFICATIONS

Marketing your firm's products and services in foreign markets can be costly. The ExportMD Program, an initiative of the Maryland Department of Commerce's (Maryland Commerce) Office of International Investment and Trade (OIIT), is designed to help offset some of the costs of marketing internationally for the State's small and mid-sized companies.

### **Q. What is the ExportMD program?**

- A. Maryland companies that receive an ExportMD award are eligible for up to \$5,000 in reimbursement for expenses associated with an international marketing initiative as described in their application for the program. Companies may submit up to \$10,000 in eligible expenses, for which the ExportMD program will reimburse 50% of the cost, up to the maximum of \$5,000. In addition, to assist with executing their initiative, companies can also receive up to 40 hours of assistance from OIIT's trade experts located in countries around the globe.

### **Q. What expenses are eligible for reimbursement?**

- A. Expenses related to an international marketing initiative as described in your application, albeit limited to the following: U.S. Department of Commerce's International Trade Administration export programs and services, trade show fees, airfare, ground transportation, hotel stays, and translation of print and electronic marketing materials. Expenses are not eligible if accrued prior to the start of the six-month grant period, and are to pertain to a maximum of two foreign markets.

### **Q. Does my firm qualify for the ExportMD program?**

- A. Yes, if your company:
- Is a for-profit company
  - Has been in business for at least one year
  - Has business operations in Maryland
  - Is in Good Standing with the Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation, and its Principal Office address as registered with the agency is a Maryland one
  - Has not received an ExportMD Award in the last 2 years
  - Is a "small business," as defined by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) size guidelines (The SBA size guidelines are available from OIIT's regional managers)
  - Has some history of existing sales (domestic or international)
  - Is planning an international business initiative to commence and conclude over a future six month period
  - Has met with your OIIT regional manager to discuss your export plans

### **Q. How do I determine whether my company meets the "small business" eligibility requirement?**

- A. To qualify for the cost reimbursement element of an ExportMD grant, a company must be a "small business," as determined by SBA size standard. Companies must not exceed the employee number or annual sales figure thresholds as set by that Federal agency, determined by an ExportMD applicant's North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code. Applicants should determine their firm's

NAICS code(s), and then view SBA's cross-reference guide, available from an OIIT regional manager, to ascertain whether they qualify as a "small business."

**Q. What is the process and timeline for the ExportMD program?**

- A. Applications for the ExportMD program are reviewed on a monthly cycle). Taking the example of an application submitted for the January 1 deadline round, the process is as follows:
- Prior to January 1: Company meets with an OIIT regional manager to discuss application process and export plans, receives application forms
  - By no later than January 1: Company submits completed application to OIIT Regional Manager by 5:00 pm.
  - Early January: OIIT regional manager will provide feedback on the application, if applicable, before the applications get submitted to the review committee
  - February 1: Review committee makes its final decisions about awardees, and companies receiving the awards receive grant agreements from Maryland Commerce. Grant period begins.
  - July 31: Grant period ends; deadline for completion of activities and submission of invoice and initial report to OIIT.
  - July 31, following year: Final report due to OIIT.

**Q. What is the review committee's role?**

- A. ExportMD applications are reviewed by an outside review committee comprised of rotating members. The review committee's members have a variety of backgrounds and experience in international business and exporting, and make the final decisions about the ExportMD awards. The review committee does not include any Maryland Commerce or OIIT staff.

**Q. Is there a deadline for submitting an ExportMD application?**

- A. Yes. OIIT accepts ExportMD grant applications from qualifying companies on a monthly cycle. The application deadlines are the 1<sup>st</sup> of every month. See above.

**R. What expenses are eligible for reimbursement?**

- B. Expenses related to an international marketing initiative as described in your application, albeit limited to the following and associated with a maximum of two of an applying company's employees:

*Allowable*

- Airfare up to six months in advance of the approved travel
- Baggage fees
- Ground transportation fees
- Lodging (based on GSA/Department of State per diem rates with the lesser amount-receipt amount/per diem amount to be the allowable reimbursable amount)
- Registration fees, standard booth space, standard build out for trade shows up to one year in advance of the approved trade show
- Trade mission fees
- Currency exchange fees
- Meeting space audio/visual for reverse trade missions
- Other associated and allowable travel expenses
- Fees for shipping sample products (capped at \$2,000 of reimbursement\*) per Eligible Small Business Concern (ESBC) per award year. \*The cap includes marketing material expenses (printing of brochures, flyers, etc.)
- Cost of compliance testing an existing product for entry into an export market (capped at \$2,000 of reimbursement) per ESBC per award year

- Export research tool subscription used to assist STEP Clients with market research (capped at \$1,000 of reimbursement) per ESBC per award year
- Website development (translation into foreign language\*, search engine optimization, localization services (capped at \$3,000 of reimbursement) per ESBC per award year.  
\*Translation expenses may be pertinent for print documentation and media too, not only online
- Language interpretation service expenses (capped at \$1,000 of reimbursement) per ESBC per award year

*Unallowable*

- Expenses related to an unapproved traveler or destination
- Meals
- Alcoholic beverages
- Passport or visa fees
- Immunizations
- Expenses related to entertaining current or prospective clients or government officials
- New product development or alteration of existing products
- Cellphones and cellphone charges
- Computer equipment
- Gifts/giveaways
- Laundry expenses
- Outside consulting fees
- Personal entertainment (tours, etc.)

**Q. How do I apply?**

- A. Please contact an OIIT regional manager to arrange an initial meeting. To be directed to the appropriate regional manager, please contact the ExportMD Administrator, Linda Reibert, at [linda.reibert@maryland.gov](mailto:linda.reibert@maryland.gov) or 410-767-0685.