

SUSANA MARTINEZ
GOVERNOR

JON BARELA
CABINET SECRETARY



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Contact: Angela Heisel
(505) 629-5148
Angela.Heisel@state.nm.us

New Mexico Economic Development Accepting Applications for Small Businesses to Participate in 2015 STEP Grant International Trade Program

Opportunities Available to Qualified New Mexico Businesses Interested in Expanding into New Markets, 18 Major Trade Events Scheduled Worldwide through Next Year

Santa Fe - The New Mexico Economic Development Department's (NMEDD) Office of International Trade is pleased to announce it will begin to coordinate for, recruit and assist New Mexico companies to participate in major international trade events. The 18 trade events will take place over the course of the next year in various countries targeted to different industries. NMEDD's Office of International Trade Office was awarded \$197,500, its third round of funding under the U.S. Small Business Administration State Trade and Export Promotion (STEP) program of which allows the department to provide a wide range of services to assist New Mexico business grow their export base internationally.

"Gov. Martinez and I have been working hard to position New Mexico as a leader in international trade and have seen great growth in New Mexico businesses expanding into new worldwide markets," said Economic Development Secretary Jon Barela. "Exporting is one of the best ways to create new jobs and grow our economy and we look forward to continuing to match New Mexico businesses with new international customers."

The New Mexico Economic Development Department's proposal was one of only 24 proposal submissions accepted for funding. The grant will allow NMEDD to cover the cost of booth space, interpreters and translators; and in some instances reasonable shipping costs for trade show participants. NMEDD's Office of International Trade will also pay for Gold Key Service arrangements made by the U.S. Department of Commerce on behalf of New Mexico companies accepted for matchmaking services abroad. The Gold Key Service offered by the U.S. Department of Commerce provides qualified trade leads for New Mexico businesses in major markets abroad once they have determined that there is a market for that product in the target country. Selected companies will have pre-qualified meetings and appointments organized on their behalf with viable distribution partners.

The STEP program was designed to assist eligible small businesses as defined by the SBA to participate in international trade shows and trade missions abroad in order to expand their international sales and develop distribution channels in the fast-growing overseas marketplace.

Besides the calendar of major trade events that are to be supported, the New Mexico STEP program plans to organize New Mexico companies to participate in quarterly trade missions to Mexico with assistance and guidance from the recently opened New Mexico Trade and Higher Education Office in Mexico City. The office in Mexico City is a joint effort between the City of Albuquerque, NMEDD and the University of New Mexico to assist New Mexico companies with their product distribution efforts in Mexico and also to promote bi-national higher education programs and student exchanges with the University of New Mexico. The Mexico City office will organize meetings with potential distributors in Mexico and companies can join the jointly sponsored trade missions conducted by the Office of International Trade and the Albuquerque Bernalillo County Trade Alliance (ABCTA) in Albuquerque. Participation in the trade show programs and trade missions is open to all New Mexico companies. The ABCTA may likewise organize participation in qualified, major trade events and international matchmaking with assistance and support under the New Mexico SBA STEP Program.

New Mexico companies must request, complete and file a self-representation form certifying their status as an SBA eligible small business concern in order to be considered for participation in the program. To see if your company is eligible to participate and to view list of scheduled trade events visit: gonm.biz/International_Trade.aspx or contact Edward Herrera by e-mail at Edward.Herrera@state.nm.us

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