

## ARIZONA'S STATE TRADE AND EXPORT PROMOTION PROGRAM - STEP

With funding under a grant from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) and matching funds contributed by the Arizona Commerce Authority (ACA), ACA has launched Arizona's State Trade and Export Promotion (STEP) program which will be undertaken with public and private sector partners in Arizona. The STEP program will assist Arizona small businesses (defined as those with less than 500 employees) to enter export markets for the very first time or to expand into new markets. This will enable these businesses (which account for 98% of the businesses in Arizona) to increase their revenues via international sales and to thereby be even more significant engines for job creation and economic growth in Arizona.

In a nutshell, the program is focused on assisting small and medium-sized Arizona companies (those under 500 employees) to become first-time exporters. Under the program, we are also assisting companies who already are exporting to enter new additional export markets. We are doing this through a variety of services, as well as technical assistance, training/education/workshops, trade missions, among others. In addition to delivering services to companies, we also have available funding to assist companies with fees associated with trade missions, international partner searches, arrangements with face-to-face meetings with potential customers in collaboration with Commercial Officers at US Embassies and Consulates, etc. I will be organizing 4 seminars/workshops in 2012 which will provide practical training and education to companies - with topic areas such as legal issues, financing, marketing, etc. I will also organizing a couple of trade missions and delivering a couple of trade missions, including one to Canada.

This is a state-wide initiative.

The webpage for the STEP program is located at <http://www.azcommerce.com/az-step-grant.aspx>. As you can imagine, I will be adding regularly to the webpage to update companies on program events, activities, and services.