

Objectives of the Program

Saskatchewan Trade & Export Partnership's (STEP) US Market Funding Program is an initiative designed to support the marketing efforts of STEP Members in the United States. Funds are provided to assist members in entering the US market. Eligible activities must take place between April 1, 2026 and March 31, 2027.

Who Can Apply

Applicants must meet all of the following requirements:

- Be a STEP Pre Market, Regular or Premium Member.
- Must be new US market development
- Be in full compliance of all government laws and regulations.
- Have minimum annual sales of \$25,000.
- Be an incorporated business, partnership or proprietorship registered federally or provincially and operating in Saskatchewan for a minimum of two years. Applicants may be required to provide proof of incorporation or supporting documentation.
- Be able to provide a written trade strategy or export marketing upon request.
- Must be participating in a STEP-led trade activity to a new export market (can be exhibiting or walking)
- STEP Premium Members may also apply for eligible business development activities outside of trade shows (must still be new market development).
- STEP Pre Market Members are eligible for funding solely for participation in trade events; expenses related to trade show booths or exhibiting are not covered.
- Have not received funding from any previous STEP funding programs to enter this market.

Please Note:

- The US Market Funding Program is designed to help reduce market-entry risk for Saskatchewan based exporters. Applicants must be able to demonstrate economic benefit to the province.
- If applicant is not headquartered in Saskatchewan, then 30% or more of total revenues need to be generated from Saskatchewan facilities to be eligible for the US Market Funding Program.
- Considerations will also be made to ensure a broad number of sectors across Saskatchewan can benefit from the program.

Ineligible Candidates

- Government entities and employees, associations, educational institutions, not-for-profit organizations, brokers, agents and distributors are not eligible to apply for funding.

Applications must be received no later than 45 days prior to the proposed visit to trade show, trade event or trade mission.

****Meeting eligibility criteria does not imply automatic access to program assistance.**

Funding limits

- The non-repayable contribution from the US Market Funding Program will not exceed 50% of approved eligible costs
- STEP Pre Market Members may submit one (1) application per fiscal year to a maximum of \$1,000 CAD.
- STEP Regular and Premium Members may submit one (1) application per fiscal year to a maximum of \$2,500.00 CAD.
- Each application must include a minimum total expense of \$1,000 CAD.

**** STEP's fiscal year is April 1 – March 31.**

Eligible Costs:

Eligible costs may be reimbursed at up to 50%. Eligible costs, reimbursed at the approved rate, include:

Travel Costs:

- Return economy airfare or mileage for up to two applicant employees.
- Mileage is calculated using the provincial mileage rate based on Google Maps distance.
- Ineligible travel costs:
 - Flights purchased with points.
 - Business or first-class airfare.
 - Seat selection and travel insurance.
 - Online vacation/group packages.
 - Additional person travel beyond approved activity dates.

Accommodations

- Hotel accommodations for up to two employees (excluding incidentals).
- Time Shares and accommodations paid with points are not eligible.

On Ground Transportation

- Does not include personal or company vehicles.
- Ineligible transportation costs:
 - Parking expenses.
 - Rentals paid with points.

Trade Show Costs

- Booth Space and standard booth furnishings (carpet, power, Wi-Fi, display case, table, chairs).
- Trade show registration fees.
- Ineligible trade show costs:
 - Membership fees and sponsorship costs

Shipping Costs

- Shipping of trade show booths only.
 - Does not include shipping of products or samples.

Translation & Interpretation Costs

- Translation of marketing materials for the specific trade event (printing excluded)
- Accredited interpreters for the target market (must not be company employees)
- Language must be specified.

****All representatives must be full-time employees, and all invoices must be billed directly to the approved company or participating employees.**

Reimbursement Process:

Funding is provided on a reimbursement basis only for eligible direct costs already incurred; funding advances are not available.

- Within 21 days of completing the trade activity, applicants must submit detailed invoices or receipts and clear proof of payment for the following eligible expenses:

- travel costs
 - E-tickets or airline receipts, or
 - Mileage calculated using Google Maps
- Accommodation expenses
- On-ground transportation costs
- Trade show exhibition and/or registration fees
- Shipping costs for a trade show booth
- Translation of marketing materials or interpretation services specific to the trade event
- A detailed itinerary of the business program conducted while abroad
- A completed evaluation form outlining actual business generated from the visit (*available from the Program Administration*)
- All required documentation must be submitted within 21 days of the conclusion of the trade event or activity.
- Once all required documentation is received and approved, reimbursement will be issued by EFT within four weeks in Canadian dollars.
- The EFT payments will be made to the company or legal entity, not the individual.

Compliance and Default

Failure to meet the documentation requirements or submission timelines will result in the applicant being considered in default. In cases of default, the applicant's eligibility will be rescinded, and no reimbursement will be issued.

Applicants may not use other Canadian government funding (federal, provincial, or municipal) to cover the same eligible costs, including travel, accommodation, on-ground transportation, trade show fees, shipping, translation or interpretation services.

STEP may contact applicants up to six months after their return to request a report on the outcomes and results of the trade activity.