



# International Market Access Grant for Exporters (IMAGE)

FY2021 Program Year Handbook



Development  
Services Agency



U.S. Small Business  
Administration

# Table of Contents

- What is IMAGE?** ..... 1
- Company Eligibility** ..... 1
- Eligible Activities** ..... 1
  - Grant Caps..... 2
  - Eligible Grant Activities ..... 2
  - Ineligible Costs/Activities ..... 3
- IMAGE Key Dates** ..... 4
- The Grant Process** ..... 4
  - Application ..... 7
  - Due Diligence Checks ..... 4
  - Signing the Grant..... 4
  - Amending the Grant ..... 5
- Reimbursement Requests** ..... 5
  - Necessary Documentation..... 5
- Economic Impact Collection** ..... 5

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## What is IMAGE?

**The International Market Access Grant for Exporters (IMAGE)** program provides grant funds to eligible business to engage in eligible export promotion activities.

Companies can access up to \$10,000 in 2021 grant year funds (Oct. 1, 2020 to Sept. 29, 2021) on a reimbursement basis. Activities are eligible for a 50% reimbursement, except for export training, which is 100%\* reimbursable for the 2021 grant year.

**IMAGE** is funded in part by the U.S. Small Business Administration's (SBA) State Trade Expansion Program (STEP).

## ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

### Important Information about Grant Activities

- Activities must be approved before the activities are conducted.
- The earliest date that an activity can begin is the application approval date or Oct. 1, 2020, whichever date is later.
- All grant activities must be completed by the completion date listed in the application but no later than Sept. 29, 2021. If the activity is not completed by Sept. 29, 2021, it cannot be reimbursed. No exceptions.
- Changes to activities can be made. For more information, please reference the section "Amending the Grant."

## COMPANY ELIGIBILITY

- Company operates a licensed for profit business in Ohio to manufacture, assemble, and/or distribute a product or provide an exportable service.
- Company certifies that the products to be promoted contain a majority of U.S. content. U.S. content is valued at export works price minus the aggregate value contributed by foreign suppliers, including labor and material.
- Company has identified qualifying and achievable export activities or initiatives requiring financial support and has, in effect, a strategic plan for exporting.
- Company asserts that it meets the requirements of the [Table of Small Business Size Standards](#) set forth by the SBA.
- Company has been in business for no less than one year before applying for IMAGE.
- Company attests that it shall not knowingly enter into any transactions with a person in the Excluded Parties List System.
- Company must be in good standing with all state of Ohio agencies.

# GRANT CAPS

For 2021 grant year funds (Oct. 1, 2020 to Sept. 29, 2021), the following caps are in effect

Overall grant cap	\$10,000
Website Development, eCommerce, Website Translation	\$10,000
International Marketing (design, translation, and placement)	\$6,000
Compliance Testing	\$6,000
Export Training	\$5,000*
Shipping	\$4,000

If an activity category is not capped, the entire grant (up to \$10,000) can be used for that activity.

## ELIGIBLE GRANT ACTIVITIES



### International Website Development

- Search Engine Optimization (SEO)
- Globalization
- Localization
- Translation



### E-Commerce

- Online market listing fees
- Platform fees, including hosting and/or maintenance fees
- Expenses to set up websites to accept international payments



### International Marketing

- Design of international marketing materials
- Video production costs
- Translation of international marketing materials, including audio and video
- International ad placements (online ads, magazine ads, social media, etc.)



### Compliance Testing

- Testing that is required for entry into an international market CE mark
- Costs to create required compliance manuals (excluding printing costs) for International Traffic in Arms Regulation (ITAR), Export Administration Regulations (EAR), federal traderegulation, and other export regulatory compliance.\*



### Export Training (100% reimbursable)\*

- Trainings, classes, credentials, or certifications
- Costs for materials, classes, and test fees
- Must pass the course or obtain the credential or certification to be reimbursed



### Virtual Trade Shows

- Registration costs
- Promotional costs



### International Trade Shows

- Booth costs
- Registration costs
- Promotional costs
- Shipping costs



### Domestic Trade Shows with an International Element

- Booth costs
- Registration costs
- Promotional costs
- Shipping costs



## Trade Missions/Virtual Trade Missions

- *(Note: Trade Missions are group trips organized by a government or an economic development entity. Individual trips are not considered trade missions.)*
- Registration costs
- Economy-class airfare (subject to Fly America Act: [link](#))
- Lodging (subject to U.S. State Department per diem rates: [link](#))
- Travel expenses are limited to two people
- Eligible days of travel are two days before the start of the event and one day after



## Supported Individual Market Visit

- *(Note: Must be accompanied by a completed project from Ohio's International Market Support (IMS) Program ([link](#)) or U.S. Commercial Service's Gold Key program.)*
- Supported individual market visits must be used to conduct new business. For example, grant funds cannot be used to visit an existing distributor in a foreign market but could be used to meet with a potential partner in the foreign market.
- Economy-class airfare (subject to Fly America Act)
- Lodging (subject to U.S. State Department per diem rates)
- Travel expenses are limited to two people
- Eligible days of travel are two days before the start of the event and one day after
- Other costs may be eligible but must be pre-approved. (If there are other costs that you would like to be considered, please choose the "Other" option when completing the application.)



## Shipping of Sample Products



## U.S. Commercial Service Programs

- Discover Global Markets
- Trade Winds, Certified Trade Missions, Trade Show Representation, International Trade Fairs
- Featured U.S. Exporter and Business Service Provider Listing
- eCommerce Innovation Lab Reports

## INELIGIBLE COSTS/ACTIVITIES

- If an activity or cost is not outlined above, applicants should consider those costs and/or activities to be ineligible. If you are not sure if a cost/activity is eligible or if you have an idea for a new cost/activity, email [image@development.ohio.gov](mailto:image@development.ohio.gov). Before emailing, refer to the list below for popular requests that are ineligible.
- Some examples of ineligible costs/activities:
  - » Printing costs
  - » Radio/television/virtual reality production (however, translation expenses may be eligible)
  - » Food and beverages
  - » Costs to purchase or create company promotional items (for example, pens with a company logo)
  - » Any travel within the United States (other than connecting flights to reach an international market on a pre-approved trip)
  - » Visa fees
  - » Customer discounts/coupons
  - » Anything that is considered illegal under local, state, or federal law
  - » Anything that is deemed offensive or is of a sexual nature
  - » Communications costs, including international cell phone plans, charging cables, etc.



## IMAGE Key Dates

<b>September 2020</b>	Round 1 applications open. Subsequent rounds may or may not be conducted depending on the availability of funds.
<b>Oct. 1, 2020</b>	2021 grant year begins. Grantees can commence activities on this date or on the date their applications were approved, whichever is later.
<b>Dec. 11, 2020:</b>	Round 1 application period closes at 3 p.m.
<b>May 3, 2021</b>	Grantee must email <a href="mailto:image@development.ohio.gov">image@development.ohio.gov</a> by this date if he or she will no longer be able to utilize all award funds. If changes occur after this date, email as soon as possible.
<b>Sept. 29, 2021</b>	Grant year ends. All activities must be completed by this date.
<b>Oct. 29, 2021</b>	All reimbursement requests must be submitted.
<b>November 2021</b>	Final economic impact collection will be emailed to grantees.

## THE GRANT PROCESS

### Application

The link to the application portal is: [development.force.com](http://development.force.com). This link can also be found on the IMAGE [website](#). Applications must be received and approved before activities can begin.

For the 2021 grant year (Oct. 1, 2020 to Sept. 29, 2021), the application will be divided into two portions. First, applicants will provide required application information except the proposed activities. Due to program changes for the 2021 year, each applicant will be contacted by phone by the IMAGE program manager (Andrew Bost) before the second portion of the application will be opened. When the second portion of the application is opened, the applicant will be able to log back into the application portal to complete the application by providing proposed grant activities.

### Due Diligence Checks

Before an application is fully approved, the IMAGE program manager will ensure that the applicant:

- Does not have any Ohio tax issues
- Is in compliance with Ohio EPA
- Is registered with the Ohio Secretary of State to do business in the state of Ohio
- Has signed the debarment and self-representation forms
- Meets SBA size standards
- Is registered with Ohio Shared Services

To expedite the grant process, grants will be issued before the Ohio EPA checks are complete; however, reimbursement requests cannot be processed until the applicant clears this check. Similarly, a grant may be issued while a company registers or updates its registration with Ohio Shared Services, but the applicant cannot be reimbursed until the registration is complete and accurate.

**Registering with Ohio Shared Services:** The supplier registration with Ohio Shared Services is necessary to reimburse grantees as Ohio Shared Services will issue the reimbursement and will maintain the necessary banking information for clients. To register with Ohio Shared Services or to update a registration, go to this website: [supplier.ohio.gov](http://supplier.ohio.gov). If you have any issues, please refer to the contact link at the bottom of the website to get in touch with Ohio Shared Services staff.

### Signing the Grant

A grant agreement will be emailed to the contact email provided in the application. The applicant should review for accuracy and sign on the signature page.

Email signed grant agreements to [image@development.ohio.gov](mailto:image@development.ohio.gov).

## Amending the Grant

If a grantee needs to make changes to the activities that were initially approved, the grantee should email [image@development.ohio.gov](mailto:image@development.ohio.gov) with the following information as soon as possible:

- The activities (if any) that the grantee will no longer be completing
- Information for the new activity, including:
  - » The name of the activity
  - » The start date of the activity
  - » The completion date of the activity
  - » The country being targeted by this activity
  - » The total cost of the activity
  - » The amount that will be requested for reimbursement
  - » A URL if applicable/available

## REIMBURSEMENT REQUESTS

Grantees must submit reimbursement requests within 60 days of completing each activity but no later than Oct. 29, 2021, for activities taking place in August and September 2021. The reimbursement portal is a separate link at the bottom of this portal: [development.force.com](http://development.force.com). This is the same portal that the grantee used to apply for the grant.

Grantees will not be able to submit reimbursement requests right away. The reimbursement portal will be turned on when the grantee is emailed a fully executed (countersigned) grant and all due diligence checks clear. A detailed, step-by-step guide to submitting reimbursement requests will be included in an e-mail with the fully executed (countersigned) grant.

## Necessary Documentation

The following information/documentation must be included with each reimbursement request via the reimbursement portal. All reimbursement requests must include:

- Invoices
- Proof of payment. Proof of payment should be a bank/credit card statement, a wire transfer, an invoice showing a paid/zero balance (marked by vendor), or a cleared check that can be retrieved from a financial institution. A screenshot taken from accounting software is not sufficient proof of payment.

## Additional documentation listed below for each category of activities:

- International Website Development/e-Commerce
  - » Documentation showing that the work was completed
- International Marketing
  - » Screenshot or picture of ad/work done
- Compliance Testing
  - » Documentation showing the work was completed/the CE mark was attained
- Export Training
  - » Documentation showing that the training was completed/passed.
- Virtual Trade Shows
  - » Screenshot showing participation
- International Trade Shows
  - » Picture of booth
- Domestic Trade Shows
  - » Picture of booth
  - » Business cards/list of international contacts made
- Trade Mission/Virtual Trade Mission
  - » Trade mission itinerary
- Supported Individual Market Visits
  - » Business cards/list of contacts made
  - » If using U.S. Commercial Service's Gold Key, a copy of the Gold Key that was done
  - » If using Ohio's International Market Support (IMS) program, additional documentation beyond invoices and proof of payment is not necessary, as this information is accessible internally.

## ECONOMIC IMPACT COLLECTION

Economic impact will be gathered whenever a reimbursement request is submitted as part of the reimbursement portal. A final survey will be sent to all grantees in early November 2021. Impact collection is key to the continuation of IMAGE and is mandatory for all grantees.

In the event of a public records request, only aggregate program information, including impact, is provided.