

EXHIBIT A

STEP READINESS QUESTIONNAIRE

The Tennessee Export Initiative (TEI) at Belmont University, in partnership with the U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Commercial Service Tennessee, and the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) is offering eligible Tennessee small businesses the opportunity to participate in the State Trade Expansion Program (STEP) grant. Belmont University has been awarded the STEP grant, which is a federal grant administered by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) whose goal is to create economic growth by expanding Tennessee's export trade. Under the grant, Tennessee STEP offers eligible Tennessee small businesses a variety of services and programs to help new companies become exporters and help existing exporters expand their international business.

To be eligible to receive financial assistance under the Tennessee STEP grant, companies are required to complete the SBA Self-Representation Form AND the Eligibility Form.

Please review the program guidelines and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) before starting your application. This application should take about 15-20 minutes to complete, and we only need 1 or 2-sentence answers when required.

If you have questions or need help, please contact Jeffrey Overby, TEI@belmont.edu.

SBA SELF-REPRESENTATION AS AN ELIGIBLE SMALL BUSINESS CONCERN FORM

The undersigned seeks services from a State grant recipient under the Trade Facilitation and Trade Enforcement Act of 2015 (HR 644) which authorized the State Trade Expansion Program (STEP). Section 503 of the Trade Facilitation and Trade Enforcement Act of 2015 defines the term 'eligible small business concern,' as a business concern that:

1. Is organized or incorporated in the United States;
2. Is operating in the United States;
3. Meets:
 - a. The applicable industry-based small business size standard established under section 3 of the Small Business Act; or
 - b. The alternate size standard applicable to the program under section 7(a) of the Small Business Act and the loan programs under title V of the Small Business Investment Act of 1958 (15 U.S.C. 695 et seq.); The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) size standards are found at 13 C.F.R. Part 121. Use the following [sba.gov](https://www.sba.gov/size-standards/index.html) link for information on size standards for your business (<https://www.sba.gov/size-standards/index.html>)
4. Has been in business for not less than 1 year, as of the date on which assistance using a grant under this subsection commences; and
5. Has access to sufficient resources to bear the costs associated with trade, including the costs of packing, shipping, freight forwarding, and customs brokers.

Note: If do not meet the criteria above, you are ineligible for the STEP program.

The undersigned certifies that this is an export ready U.S. company seeking to export goods or services of U.S. origin or have at least 51% U.S. content.

Submitting false information in order to obtain services from a STEP grant recipient is a violation of Federal law. If you submit false information the Government may seek criminal, civil, and/or administrative remedies against you, pursuant to 18 U.S.C. §§ 1001, 1040; and 31 U.S.C. §§ 3729-3733. The Government may elect to exclude you from further participation in certain Federal programs and contracts if you submit false information in connection with receiving services from a STEP grant recipient.

I hereby certify that the business I represent is seeking services from a STEP grant recipient and is an eligible small business concern, pursuant to the above definition.

Signature

Date

Title

Company

STEP ELIGIBILITY

1. Does your company meet the SBA definition of a small business (per 13CFR Part 121)?

If you are unsure about this requirement, please use this guide: <https://www.sba.gov/size-standards/index.html>

Yes

No

2. Are the products or services offered by your company of U.S. origin or do they have at least 51% U.S.A. Content?

If you are unsure about this requirement, please use this guide: [How To: Calculate U.S. Content for Small Business Products: https://grow.exim.gov/blog/how-to-calculate-us-content-for-small-business-products-part-1](https://grow.exim.gov/blog/how-to-calculate-us-content-for-small-business-products-part-1)

Yes

No

3. Have your company been in business for more than one (1) year?

Yes

No

4. Is your company headquartered in Tennessee?

Yes

No

5. Is your company registered as a Tennessee for-profit business?

Yes

No

6. Is your company's executive leadership committed to exporting and willing and able to dedicate staff and resources?

Yes

No

7. Do you export or seek to export a good or service?

Yes

No

8. Does your company have the financial resources to actively support the marketing of your products/service in targeted overseas markets along with the costs of packaging, shipping and distribution?

Yes

No

9. Does your company maintain a website? *

Yes

No

If you answered “No” to any of eligibility questions 1-9 you are not eligible for the STEP program.

However, we encourage you to contact your nearest Small Business Development Center (SBDC). SBDCs provide counseling, training and financing to small businesses looking to increase sales and profit by taking their businesses global. Click here to find your local SBDC office - <https://tsbdc.org/centers/>

If you believe you are eligible for the STEP program, please continue to the next section.

BUSINESS PROFILE

1. Company name:

2. CEO / President:

3. Street:

4. City, State, ZIP:

5. Is your mailing address the same as your physical address?

Yes

No

6. If no, please provide your mailing address below:

7. Telephone:

8. Email:

9. Is this business an affiliate or subsidiary of another company?

Yes

No

10. If yes, please list the name of the parent company and location below:

11. Please provide a brief description of your business:

12. Please provide a full description of your main products or services:

13. NAICS Code:

A NAICS (pronounced NAKES) Code is a classification within the North American Industry Classification System. The NAICS System was developed for use by Federal Statistical Agencies for the collection, analysis and publication of statistical data related to the US Economy. NAICS is a self-assigned system,

which means that you pick the code that best suits your business and use it when asked for your code. If you don't already know your 6-digit NAICS number, you can look it up at <https://www.naics.com/search/>.

14. Year company established:

15. Estimated number of full-time employees in Tennessee:

16. Approximate annual revenue:

- a) Amount in USD: \$ _____
- b) Percent from domestic sales: _____%
- c) Percent from international sales: _____%

17. Approximate annual sales:

- a) Amount in USD: \$ _____
- b) Percent from domestic sales: _____%
- c) Percent from international sales: _____%

18. Please indicate if any of the following apply to your business (choose as many as apply):

- Woman owned. Not less than 51% unconditionally and directly owned and controlled by one or more women who are United States citizens.
- Veteran and/or service-connected disabled veteran owned. As defined at 38 CFR 3.1(d) and 13 CFR 125.8(g), small business concern owned and controlled by service-disabled veterans, is a person who served in the active military, naval, or air service and who was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable. Not less than 51 percent unconditionally and directly owned and controlled by one or more veterans who are United States citizens.
- Rural owned. An eligible small business concern located in a rural area, as defined at 26 USC 1393(2), Rural area. This includes any area that is outside of a metropolitan statistical area (MSA). MSAs have at least one urbanized area of 50,000 or more population, plus adjacent territory that has a high degree of social and economic integration as measured by commuting ties. See OMB Bulletin No. 15-01 for a complete list of MSAs.
- Socially and economically disadvantaged owned. Individuals (set forth in 13 C.F.R 124.103 and 104) who have been subjected to racial or ethnic prejudice or cultural bias within American society because of their identities as members of groups and without regard to their individual qualities; whose ability to compete in the free enterprise system has been impaired due to diminished capital and credit opportunities as compared to others in the same or similar line of business who are not socially disadvantaged. The socially and economically disadvantage individual must own not less than 51 percent of the firm. These include: Black Americans; Hispanic Americans; Native Americans (Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians, or enrolled members of a Federally or State recognized Indian Tribe); Asian Pacific Americans (the complete list is available at 13 C.F.R 103); and Subcontinent Asian Americans (persons with origins from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, the Maldives Islands or Nepal).
- Not Applicable

19. What are the primary industries you sell to?

- 20. Describe your typical customers?
- 21. How do you market and distribute your products in the U.S. market?
- 22. Could you promptly fill any new export orders from present inventory or other sources?

EXPORT ACTIVITY

- 1. Please indicate whether you consider your company to be NTE or ME as defined below (choose only one):
 - NTE – New to Export: Your company is new to exporting or has had limited experience exporting within the past 24 months.
 - ME – Market Expansion: Your company currently exports to one or more foreign markets and is seeking to expand into new country market(s), new market segment(s), and/or with a new product line within existing market(s).

If Market Expansion:

- i. How long have you been exporting?
 - < 1 year
 - 1-2 years
 - 2-5 years
 - > 5 years
- ii. What percent of your sales are through export?
 - >15%
 - 15% - 49%
 - 51% - 75%
 - >75%
- iii. Please list your current top five (5) export markets and the percentage of total sales to each country:

Country	% of total sales

- 2. Please briefly describe your company's current export strategy:

PERMISSIONS & CERTIFICATION

The applicant certifies that:

- To the best of my knowledge, the data in this application is correct and supporting documentation will be available to TEI for review upon request.
- I understand that submitting false or misleading information may result in being found ineligible for reimbursement and permanent disqualification from any future participation in this program.
- I understand that the Tennessee STEP program is funded in part by a grant from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) and that my contact details may be shared with the SBA for promotion of other SBA programs and services.
- I understand that information in this application will be shared with the TEI Office, District Export Councils of Tennessee, the U.S. Department of Commerce, and the U.S. Commercial Service Tennessee.

I agree

I do not agree

I hereby certify that I am an authorized representative of the company indicated below and that all information provided in this document is true and complete to the best of my knowledge.

Name (must be an authorized signer for the company)

Date

Title

Company

Signature

STEP Authorized Signer (Primary Contact Person). If the signer is not the CEO/President of the company, please provide executive authorization granting permission to the person named below to complete the above-named forms on behalf of the company.

Name

Date

Title

Company

Telephone

Email

I hereby authorize the person named above to prepare, sign, and submit the STEP forms listed above on behalf of the company. Authorized by:

Name

Date

Title (Must be the CEO/President

Company

Signature

For more information or assistance, please contact:

STEP Grant Director: Jeff Overby / 615-460-6499 / TEI@belmont.edu or similar

Upon hitting submit, the applicant should receive the following message:

Thank you for applying for eligibility to the Tennessee State Trade Expansion Program ("STEP").

You should hear back soon from the Tennessee Export Initiative (TEI) office regarding your eligibility. Should you be deemed eligible, you will then be provided a link to the official STEP Application in which you will propose the specific export development activities you intend to apply for, including sales projections, job growth projections and detailed budget information.

Here is your confirmation number: _____. Please save this number, as you will need it should you be invited to complete the STEP Application Form.