

Metro Chicago Exports and the CED Offers Assistance Through Grant Program to Will County Companies Looking to Export

Grants Help Small and Medium-Sized Companies Navigate Opportunities for Exporting

Will County, Illinois (April 21, 2016) — [Metro Chicago Exports](#) in conjunction with Will County Center for Economic Development (CED) has announced the launch of the 2016 Grant Program, presented by JP Morgan Chase & Co. The single-round Grant Program will award grants up to \$5,000 to help small and medium-sized companies in Will County and other counties in Northeastern Illinois maximize their export potential and engage with customers in international markets.

In fall 2016, Metro Chicago Exports will host a pitch fest during which both 2015 and 2016 grant recipients will be eligible to submit a pitch for additional funding totaling \$30,000. Information about the pitch fest will be shared closer to its launch.

“This program offers a unique opportunity to assist Will County businesses that may already be exporting or are considering it for the first time” said John Greuling, President and CEO of the Will County Center for Economic Development (CED). “A grant of \$5,000 can go a long way in offsetting the costs of reaching international markets through research, trade shows, multi-language marketing materials, etc.”

The 2016 Grant Program builds on the success of last year’s program which provided 54 Northeastern Illinois-based companies with grants for reimbursing costs associated with exporting, including executive training, trade show participation, and international certifications.

Metro Chicago Exports’ mission is to increase exporting by small and medium-sized companies in the seven-county region (comprised of Cook, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry and Will counties), thereby increasing revenue and driving regional growth. Metro Chicago Exports is also part of the Global Cities Initiative, a joint project of the Brookings Institution and JPMorgan Chase that aims to catalyze a shift in economic development priorities and practices resulting in more globally connected metropolitan areas and more sustainable economic growth.

“Exporting enables companies to reach new customers, but the process of selling to foreign markets can be difficult to navigate,” said Metro Chicago Exports Managing Director Thomas Hulseman. “Through our Grant Program, we help companies engage in the global market by offsetting the costs associated with exporting.

The 2016 Metro Chicago Export Grant Program is funded through a \$250,000 contribution from JPMorgan Chase & Co. This year’s contribution will also enable a \$20,000 total investment to help defray the costs for companies that participate in Illinois’ executive ExportTech program.

Applications for the 2016 Grant Program are open and will be accepted through May 27, 2016, with grant award notifications commencing on or around July 11, 2016. The application process involves two steps – an initial online Client Assessment and a formal review of export plans, capabilities and potential. Companies that pass the Client Assessment phase will be invited to submit more comprehensive information about their plans to go global as part of the Grant Application process. If potential barriers to maximizing export potential are identified during the Client Assessment, companies may be referred to export service providers to assist them in formulating international export plans.

Additional details and eligibility requirements pertaining to the 2016 Metro Chicago Exports Grant Program are available at www.MetroChicagoExports.com.

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About Metro Chicago Exports

Metro Chicago Exports is an unprecedented collaboration between the seven counties in Northeastern Illinois (Cook, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry and Will) and the City of Chicago to increase exports from small and medium-sized companies and to support regional job growth. By providing resources, information and grant funding, Metro Chicago Exports serves as a conduit to opportunities in the global marketplace and empowers companies to maximize their exporting potential. For more information, please visit: www.MetroChicagoExports.com.

About the CED

The Will County Center for Economic Development is a private-non profit development corporation whose mission is the retention and expansion of existing companies and the recruitment of new companies to Will County. The CED services include providing information on Will County communities, real estate, labor force and business incentives and guide companies through the development location process.

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