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Small Business Administration Trade and Export Promotion Programs

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Small Business Administration Trade And Export Promotion Programs

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Small Business Administration Trade And Export Promotion Programs:

Small Business Administration Trade and Export Promotion Programs Congressional Research Service, 2015-02-03 According to Census Bureau data approximately 1% of small businesses in the United States currently export With roughly three quarters of world purchasing power and almost 95% of world consumers living outside U S borders more attention is being paid to the potential of small business export promotion programs to grow small businesses and contribute to the national economic recovery In addition some Members of Congress believe the contributions of small businesses to commercial innovation and economic growth could be enhanced through greater access to growing international markets Consistent with these policy goals the Small Business Administration SBA provides export promotion and financing services to small businesses through its loan guaranty programs management and training programs and other initiatives SBA s Office of International Trade OIT coordinates these activities as it assists with four stages of export promotion 1 identifying small businesses interested in export promotion 2 preparing small businesses to export 3 connecting small businesses to export opportunities and 4 supporting small businesses once they find export opportunities The Small Business Jobs Act of 2010 P L 111 240 elevated trade within SBA by establishing an assistant administrator to lead OIT and report directly to the SBA administrator The act also authorized SBA to establish a three year State Trade and Export Promotion STEP pilot grant initiative Under the STEP initiative which was appropriated 30 million both in FY2011 and FY2012 SBA awarded grants to states with the goal of assisting eligible small business concerns with exporting The STEP program s authorization expired at the end of FY2013 but Congress appropriated 8 million for STEP in FY2014 and 17 4 million for FY2015 SBA s export related loans amounted to approximately 1 3 billion comprising approximately 5 7% of SBA s annual loan portfolio in FY2014 Although SBA has three loan programs that are specifically targeted toward exporters many of SBA s broader loan programs support export related activities Surveys indicate that relatively few clients of SBA s management and training programs request trade related counseling and that some choose to receive this information from other federal programs such as those provided by the Department of Commerce This report begins with the history role and scope of SBA s export promotion activities and the creation of OIT Next it uses quantitative data from SBA and qualitative data from other sources to provide performance analysis of SBA s international programs This report concludes with a presentation of three issues for consideration during an era in which concerns of fiscal responsibility and economic recovery are high priorities for many policy makers First are there market barriers impeding smaller firms from exporting Second is there a compelling interest for the government to promote exports in the name of national competitiveness Third are SBA s export promotion policies duplicative of other federal programs In the 113th Congress several bills were introduced to improve efficiencies among small business export promotion programs e g H R 1909 H R 1926 H R 1916 and S 1179

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