

# Trade Talk Tuesday

## Advocacy: Assistance on Winning Government Tenders

December 7, 2021

Thank you for joining the U.S. Commercial Service, and the East and West Michigan District Export Councils, for 'Trade Talk Tuesday: Financing Your Exports.' This handout highlights our discussion today, along with additional resources.

### Advocacy Center Services

The Advocacy Center helps U.S. companies to win foreign government contracts across the globe. We work with your company to pursue foreign government contracts when you are competing against foreign firms. Advocacy assistance is provided to businesses of all types and sizes, but you must apply and qualify to receive advocacy services.

Advocacy assistance may involve:

- Meetings between key foreign decision-makers and high-ranking U.S. Government (USG) officials
- Direct support from USG officials stationed abroad
- Letters to foreign decision-makers
- Coordinated action by USG agencies

Our mission is to marshal USG resources and authority in order to level the playing field on behalf of U.S. business interests as they compete against foreign firms for specific international contracts or other U.S. export opportunities. In doing so, the Advocacy Center helps create and retain U.S. jobs through exports.

### Why We Advocate

- Promotes U.S. exports, supports U.S. employment and increases global market share for U.S. businesses
- Counters foreign government advocacy and political pressure, thus "leveling the playing field" for U.S. companies
- Encourages transparency, promotes fair treatment of U.S. companies and addresses bribery and corruption in tender processes

### When Should We Contact the Advocacy Center?

- When considering pursuing a foreign government procurement
- When concerned about getting fair treatment in the procurement process
- Before applying for advocacy assistance

### Export Resources

#### U.S. Commercial Service — The U.S.

Commercial Service is part of the U.S. Department of Commerce's International Trade Administration and helps U.S. companies increase their export sales. We have offices in 100 U.S. cities and in more than 75 countries. We can help:

- ❖ Develop your export strategy
- ❖ Conduct market intelligence
- ❖ Identify target markets for your product
- ❖ Find distribution partners
- ❖ Perform background checks on partners
- ❖ Conduct overseas promotions

#### East & West Michigan District Export

Councils (DEC) — The Michigan DEC's are experienced business owners and exporters who volunteer alongside the U.S. Commercial Service to offer small and medium-sized companies in Michigan hands-on consulting, advice and resources to grow internationally.

- ❖ **East Michigan DEC** - [www.eastmichigandec.org](http://www.eastmichigandec.org)
- ❖ **West Michigan DEC** - [www.exportwestmichigan.com](http://www.exportwestmichigan.com)

### **How Does This Benefit U.S. Firms?**

- Centralizing commercial advocacy services in one office
- Mobilizing resources in support of U.S. company proposals and business opportunities
- Offering an institutionalized process in support of the U.S. national interest, creating and retaining US jobs and expanding the U.S. export base

### **Multilateral Development Banks and Contacts**

Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) are organizations comprised of donor and borrowing member countries that provide financing and advice for the purpose of economic advancement in developing countries. These Banks finance development projects worth billions of dollars throughout the world.

Doing business with any of the MDBs depends on a company's ability to do business in the country where the project will be implemented, and with the borrowing government that runs the procurement process. Knowledge of the local language, culture, business practices, legal system, and other local conditions is essential.

The Advocacy Center has MDB Liaison Officers at each of the five MDBs to assist U.S. companies on how to work with these banks, advocate on procurement and contracting issues to ensure fair and equal treatment, and increase the proportion of MDB projects won by U.S. firms. Services include:

- Counseling on how to approach the MDB and borrowing governments.
- Meeting with MDB project managers to provide U.S. firms with updates on specific projects.
- Identifying upcoming projects that present a good opportunity for U.S. firms.
- Identifying funded projects with business opportunities for U.S. companies.
- Informing U.S. firms of relevant Invitations to Bid (specific procurement notices).
- Advocating that project bids from U.S. companies receive fair and equal consideration as foreign countries' project bids.
- Keeping U.S. firms informed of MDB procured contracts, including policy studies (on subjects such as gender, the environment, etc.) and goods/ services directly procured by the MDB.

For more information on MDB liaison contacts and Advocacy Center contacts by region and country, please visit our website: <https://www.trade.gov/advocacy-center-contacts>.

### **Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) — MI-STEP**

**Funds** — The MI-STEP program administered by the MEDC provides direct reimbursement to eligible small businesses to develop or expand export-related activities. To learn more, contact [export@michigan.org](mailto:export@michigan.org).

### **ExportMI Service Provider**

**Directory** — Connect with local trade assistance partners critical for your export success, including banks.



### How to Apply for Advocacy

1. A company seeking USG support in specific commercial and defense competitions must submit a completed advocacy questionnaire to the Advocacy Center for review. We strongly urge companies interested in applying for USG advocacy support to speak with an advocacy center staff member prior to filling an advocacy questionnaire.
2. Together with the U.S. Embassy and relevant USG agencies, the Advocacy Center will conduct due diligence on the requesting company, bid/project, and the competition.
3. Following the due diligence process, the Advocacy Center and, if necessary, other USG agencies, in consultation with the U.S. Mission (Embassy) in the country concerned and with other members of the interagency task force, will make a national interest determination to identify whether the project qualifies for USG support.
4. The Advocacy Center is the point-of-contact for companies requesting USG advocacy for sales of defense-related goods and services covered by the International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR). After initial review and due diligence, the Advocacy Center refers defense advocacy cases to agencies concerned with ITAR decisions.

For more information on how to apply for advocacy assistance and to access the application, please visit our website: <https://www.trade.gov/how-apply-advocacy>.

*Thank you for  
joining us!*

- The U.S. Commercial Service and the  
East & West Michigan DEC's





## The World is Open for Your Business

Our global network of experienced trade professionals is located throughout the United States and in U.S. Embassies and Consulates worldwide. Whether you're looking to make your first export sale or expand to additional markets, we offer the expertise you need to connect with lucrative opportunities and increase your bottom line.



### Export Counseling

- Develop effective market entry and sales strategies.
- Understand export documentation requirements and import regulations of foreign markets.
- Navigate U.S. government export controls, compliance and trade financing options



### Market Intelligence

- Analyze market potential and foreign competitors.
- Obtain useful information on best prospects, financing, laws, and cultural issues.
- Conduct background checks on potential buyers and distributors.



### Business Matchmaking

- Connect with pre-screened potential partners.
- Promote your product or service to prospective buyers at trade events worldwide.
- Meet with international industry and government decision makers in your target markets



### Commercial Diplomacy

- Overcome trade obstacles to successfully enter international markets.
- Benefit from coordinated U.S. government engagement with foreign governments to protect U.S. business interests.

### Let Our Global Network Work for You

#### Detroit & Pontiac (East Michigan) Offices

Director:

Jennifer Moll, [Jennifer.Moll@trade.gov](mailto:Jennifer.Moll@trade.gov)

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#### Grand Rapids (West Michigan) Offices

Director:

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International Trade Specialist:

Allie VanDriel, [Allie.Vandriel@trade.gov](mailto:Allie.Vandriel@trade.gov)



# East Michigan District Export Council



## Counseling

East Michigan District Export Council (DEC) Members provide practical, hands-on counseling for small and medium sized companies, to assist them with export sales.



## Trade Education

For current trade resources and events view the East Michigan District Export Council website: [www.exportwestmichigan.com](http://www.exportwestmichigan.com)



## Mentoring

Mentees have access to DEC Members who are experts in their fields such as logistics, finance, sales, marketing, accounting and international trade law.



## U.S. Commercial Service Partner

DEC Members are officially appointed by the U.S. Secretary of Commerce. Members partner with the U.S. Department of Commerce's U.S. Commercial Service to provide valuable resources for exporters.



To connect with DEC Members, contact:

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