



# 14 ways to promote exports & investment in your region

## GET STARTED

**1 CONVENE:** Bring together regional and metropolitan economic leaders and assets – such as key corporations, service providers, workforce, and transportation infrastructure – to specifically identify your area’s advantages and competencies for export and investment promotion. Connect with businesses and develop strategies to better understand their needs.

**2 THINK LOCAL:** There is no one-size-fits-all approach to promoting exports and investment, and each community has unique market advantages. Identify your assets and develop a brand. Gather local market insight and assess your industry strengths. When considering an investment attraction strategy, include operating costs, supply chain management, access to natural resources, transportation infrastructure, workforce development, access to technology, and quality of life in your assessment.

**3 FOSTER REGIONAL COLLABORATION:** By creating regional identities and fostering collaboration, communities can successfully market their area globally and create effective export and investment plans.

**4 KNOW YOUR TOOLS AND RESOURCES:** Learn about numerous federal, state, and local resources available to you and area companies using [Export.gov](http://Export.gov) or through the International Trade Administration’s “Basic Guide to Exporting” and “Trade Finance Guide.” Consult your state trade office. When considering investment, connect with SelectUSA, a U.S. government initiative housed in the U.S. Department of Commerce’s International Trade Administration. SelectUSA provides assistance to companies as well as U.S. cities, regions, and states to facilitate business investment into the United States. Learn more about programs and services available at [SelectUSA.gov](http://SelectUSA.gov).

## TAP INTO GLOBAL MARKETS TO CREATE AND SUPPORT JOBS

**95 percent** of the world’s consumers live beyond U.S. borders.

Effective local and regional leaders recognize that their competition may no longer be with each other, but with regions around the world.

Encourage your community to consider international customers and investors to support local job creation and economic development.

## GOING FORWARD

**5 DEVELOP A PLAN:** With a regional identity and key players around the table, develop an actionable plan to promote exports and investment. The Metropolitan Export Initiative aims to help leaders create an export plan within a six to nine-month period. The Brookings Institution has published “10 Steps to Delivering a Successful Metropolitan Export Plan,” for metropolitan areas everywhere to take advantage of best practices and start planning. When undertaking the planning process, consider local policy implications that could discourage or encourage growth.

**6 EDUCATE:** Ensure that companies in your area know whether they have an exportable product or service and know about available resources at the federal and state level to help grow their business. Broaden the definition of exports to include activities like services exports, international visitors, and services to foreign students. For example, facilitate a briefing or seminar series to educate businesses about federal and state investment and export assistance resources and financing. Engage local staff of the International Trade Administration’s U.S. Commercial Service at one of more than 100 U.S. Export Assistance Centers (USEACs) across the country. Many USEACs also house experts from the Export-Import Bank, the Small Business Administration, and other federal entities with regional networks. Consider partnering with federal resources in novel ways, such as training for community banks and lenders.

**7 IMPROVE ACCESS TO INFORMATION:** One way to share up-to-date resources is to make sure that the city or regional website dedicated to business assistance provides information on opportunities and events related to exporting. Consider linking to local, state and federal trade resources.

**8 SUPPORT YOUR AREA’S EXPORT PIPELINE:** Help identify export-ready companies and refer them to regional, state and federal assistance providers, such as your Small Business Development Center or local U.S. Export Assistance Center (U.S. Commercial Service). Make sure businesses interested in exporting are connected to available trainings, missions, and assistance.

# “Showcase how trade and investment efforts support the community’s overall economic well-being.”

**9 LEVERAGE EXISTING GLOBAL CONNECTIVITY:** When evaluating local assets, look at the make-up of your metropolitan area and consider how to enhance existing global connections. For example, consider partnering with diaspora or immigrant communities and businesses. When selecting a city or region to visit, find a community that complements the industries, clusters and assets your area seeks to grow. For investment promotion, work with SelectUSA to devise a data-driven approach for market segmentation. Look to your state government, local businesses, or universities to identify foreign countries and cities that may already have a relationship with your city.

**10 PARTNER WITH AREA HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS:** Higher education ranks among the country’s top 10 service exports. Tuition and living expenses paid by international students and their families brought in nearly \$21 billion to the U.S. economy during the 2010-2011 academic year. As a source of investment, exports, and workforce development, educational institutions should be involved in your export and investment planning discussions. Area institutions can serve as key partners, with a strong knowledge base, research, and potential for successful internship and workforce development programs.

**11 ESTABLISH A BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS MENTORSHIP PROGRAM:** Connect established exporters and investors in your area with growing businesses to share expertise and know-how in a particular market or sector. Closely affiliated with the U.S. Commercial Service’s U.S. Export Assistance Centers, the 56 District Export Councils nationwide are organizations composed of established export leaders from their local business community.

**12 CONSIDER A FOREIGN TRADE ZONE:** A Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ) helps encourage exports and investment by allowing delayed or reduced duty payments on foreign merchandise, as well as other savings. Local governments and organizations, such as ports or economic development organizations, can apply to create an FTZ in their communities.

**13 ORGANIZE:** Consider organizing trade and investment missions to key global markets to promote your region for economic development. Your local U.S. Export Assistance Center (U.S. Commercial Service) can help. State trade offices often coordinate missions abroad as well. Globally, high-ranking U.S. federal officials, state governors and mayors are viewed favorably as top leaders representing their markets to tout its exports and its winning attributes for investment.

**14 BUILD EXPORTS AND INVESTMENT INTO YOUR BROADER ECONOMIC STRATEGY:** With an eye to growth and global competitiveness, seek alignment between exports and foreign direct investment; innovation in manufacturing and services; investments in freight and logistics; and the development of a globally fluent workforce. It is critical to promote coordinated messages about trade and investment, and to showcase how trade and investment efforts support the community’s overall economic well-being.

*Sources: Brookings Institution; National League of Cities Center for Research & Innovation; U.S. Department of Commerce (U.S. Foreign and Commercial Service)*

The International Trade Administration’s mission is to create prosperity by strengthening the competitiveness of U.S. industry, promoting trade and investment, and ensuring fair trade and compliance with trade laws and agreements.



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