

Metro Chicago Exports Awards 50 Export Grants to Local Businesses

\$230,000 in Grants from JPMorgan Chase Will Help Small and Medium-Sized Companies Navigate Opportunities in International Markets

CHICAGO (July 14, 2016) — [Metro Chicago Exports](#) today announced it has awarded grants to 50 companies through its 2016 Grant Program, funded by JPMorgan Chase & Co. The grants, totaling \$230,000 will help small and medium-sized companies in Chicago and Northeastern Illinois maximize their export potential, expand their customer base, and create local jobs and/or increase revenue.

Metro Chicago Exports is also finalizing plans to host a pitch fest in October 2016 during which applicants will be eligible to submit a pitch for additional funding totaling \$30,000.

“As Metro Chicago Exports works to help local businesses increase their global reach and competitiveness, the impact will be felt across the city and our region,” Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel said. “Trade is a key part of the economic backbone of Chicago. By forging a broader platform for products and services we can drive exports and create jobs, reinforcing our reputation as a global hub for industry.”

“Small- and medium-sized companies are the foundation of our regional economy,” said Cook County President Toni Preckwinkle. “The 2016 Metro Chicago Exports Grant Program is an excellent example of the regional effort to ensure that local companies are well equipped to maximize their potential to create jobs and increase revenue.”

This year’s recipients span a range of industries including construction, digital media, energy, food services, health care, technology solutions, manufacturing and retail, and represent Cook, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry and Will counties and the City of Chicago.

“Our 2016 grant recipients represent the unlimited potential of local Illinois companies and the vast opportunity presented by international markets,” said Metro Chicago Exports Managing Director Thomas Hulseman. “By minimizing barriers to exporting, companies are better positioned to increase revenue and create local jobs, and we expect great results from the companies selected.”

Now in its second year, the Metro Chicago Exports Grant Program provides grants of up to \$5,000 to help area companies offset costs associated with exporting such as international regulatory compliance, marketing tools including website translation, and other business development costs. Open to companies new to exporting, moderate exporters and experienced exporters, the grant program is funded through a contribution from JPMorgan Chase.

“These grants make a big difference for small companies like ours,” said Jamie Kaplan, Chief Financial Officer and Senior Vice President, Pinch Provisions. “Through our 2015 Metro Chicago Exports grant, we were able to take on the costs of product and packaging compliance for the European Union and Australia. As a result, Pinch Provisions’ personal care kits are now available in the United Kingdom, Ireland, and France, and we’re preparing to expand further.”

Metro Chicago Exports has also led the region in bringing ExporTech™, a national program that helps companies develop strategic export plans, to Illinois for its inaugural cohort. Applications are still open for the 2016 Fall Cohort and additional details are available at www.MetroChicagoExports.com.

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About Metro Chicago Exports

Metro Chicago Exports is an unprecedented regional 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 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.

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.

For more information, please visit: www.MetroChicagoExports.com.

About Pinch Provisions

Pinch Provisions® is the world's leading purveyor of premium emergency essentials, combining the sensibility of a fashion brand with the functionality of a general store. Its coveted personal care kits (including the Minimergency®, Shemergergency®, and Hemergergency®, among others) are sold in over 3,000 stores worldwide. Women- and family-owned and operated, the company's office and manufacturing facility is located just outside of Chicago in Elk Grove Village, Illinois.

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