

USTR NEWS

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Kirk Unveils New USTR Initiative on Small- and Medium-Sized Businesses

Lead Trade Agency to Seek Opportunities to Boost Exports, Grow Jobs Here at Home

Washington, D.C. – U.S. Trade Representative Ron Kirk today unveiled the first steps in a new initiative aimed at increasing exports by small- and medium-sized firms in the United States. Citing trade as a major tool for the country's economic recovery, Kirk said that USTR's new effort to bolster trade opportunities for small- and medium-sized businesses can ultimately grow jobs here at home as companies sell more goods and services worldwide.

Kirk announced that USTR is requesting an investigation by the International Trade Commission to better understand how many of America's small- and medium-sized enterprises export now, their role in generating employment and economic activity in the U.S., and how increased trading opportunities might benefit these businesses and their workers. At the same time, Kirk is convening a USTR-wide working group to ensure that the lead trade agency's policymaking and enforcement efforts immediately seek to better serve small- and medium-sized enterprises.

"USTR is sharpening its focus on small- and medium-sized American businesses to craft new trade policies and enforce existing ones in ways that will help these firms grow exports around the world, and grow jobs here at home," Kirk said. **"This Administration has promised a trade agenda that is more responsible and more responsive to the needs of American workers, families, and businesses. Small- and medium-sized enterprises are at the heart of employment and job creation here in the United States, and so a heightened focus on helping this sector is the right thing for USTR to do. American companies of all sizes must export their goods and services to get our economy growing again."**

The USTR effort will focus on identifying and increasing opportunities for small- and medium-sized businesses to export both goods and services. Services, in particular, account for 80 percent of U.S. jobs. The ITC investigation will be of exceptional value with regard to examining and enhancing services exports, as traditional U.S. government statistics do not report services trade by firm size.

Kirk said that the ITC investigation and the USTR working group are just the beginning; USTR will also work in conjunction with agencies tasked with trade promotion – such as the U.S. Department of

Commerce and the Small Business Administration – that have complementary programs on export expansion in small- and medium-sized firms. USTR will seek to set priorities for new trade agreements and for the implementation of existing trade agreements that are more responsive to the needs of these businesses and their workers, so that export promotion programs at other agencies have a better chance to succeed. Kirk said that announcements of further steps in USTR's initiative on small- and medium-sized businesses will be made in the coming months.

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