Maryland Global Gateway

Soft Landing Program for Foreign Companies

Frequently Asked Questions

Can my company participate in Global Gateway virtually?
The Maryland Global Gateway Softlanding Program is a physical softlanding program. In order to participate, your company must physically locate in one of our partner incubators/accelerators across the state for a six- month period.

Must my company remain in Maryland for six months consecutively?
Yes, the soft landing program is for a consecutive six-months. We understand that there are active company operations abroad. If there is a need to visit the company's headquartered country for a short period of time, it is allowable. We recommend always having at least one staff member physically at the Global Gateway partner organization site through the duration of the program to ensure program success.

When does my company receive the $10,000 grant?
The $10,000 grant is awarded to companies that ultimately sign an agreement with a Global Gateway partner organization. However, the funding is given directly to the Global Gateway partner organization on behalf of the company upon landing.

Who chooses how the $10,000 is spent?
The $10,000 grant is given directly to the Global Gateway partner organization on behalf of the company. The company must work with the Global Gateway partner organization on the overall strategy for the six month time period including how funds are spent.

When can the company start spending the $10,000 grant?
The company is liable for all expenses incurred before the official program start date written on the agreement between the Global Gateway partner organization and The Maryland Department of Commerce. Neither parties are responsible for reimbursement of expenses before the grant agreement is fully executed. Once the start date begins, note that some Global Gateway partner organizations require the company to pay for the eligible expenses up front, and will receive a reimbursement thereafter.

How many members of my staff can participate in Global Gateway?

The program supports programming for up to two staff members at a time. If at a point in the six-month period, there is a need to hire more staff in Maryland. Please communicate with the Global Gateway partner organization.

Can I hire someone in Maryland on behalf of my company to participate in Global Gateway?
Yes, we encourage hiring staff in Maryland overall.

How often are applications open for submission?
Application rounds open in the spring, summer, and fall season of each calendar year. For example, October 15- November 30, 2024 is our fall 2024 application round.

What happens if I miss an application round?
You are welcome to complete the Interest form which indicates your interest in the program, and will enable you to receive updates on the next round. Until the next round opens, you are welcome to engage our Global Gateway partner organizations to ask questions about their services and program offerings in the meantime.

Is it true that there may be another application to complete after acceptance into the Global Gateway program? Why?
Yes, some of our Global Gateway partner organizations have their own application form and process which must be completed in order to fully participate in the Global Gateway program at their site. Each Global Gateway partner organization is unique in their programming, and requirements which can be more or less broad than Global Gateway. We partner with a variety of organizations in order to give Global Gateway companies specialized and unique experiences.

What is considered an eligible reimbursable expense for the $10,000 grant?
1. **Physical Costs**
   a. Rent for a physical location within the incubator (incl. shared space and/or dedicated office space)
   b. Access to necessary facilities (e.g. laboratory space)
   c. Utilities, such as internet or phone coverage

2. **Programmatic Costs**
   a. Administrative or other program fees for participating companies
   b. Networking and marketing programs and other related events offered by the Grantee
   c. Membership costs for industry associations
   d. Marketing services offered by the Grantee

3. **Market Entry Costs**
    a. Fee for registering as a Maryland business
    b. Professional consultations (up to $5,000 maximum):
        i. Immigration/workforce
        ii. Accounting/international business/tax
        iii. Regulatory/market access/patents

What is not considered an allowable expense?
Non-Allowable Costs
    a. Grant Funds shall not be used to support the religious aspects of any event or promotional campaign.
    b. Grantee shall not use Grant Funds to offset, match, or subsidize any other state funds.
    c. Grant funds cannot be used on flights, accommodations, food, etc

Does rent and programming at all partners have the same cost?
Each Global Gateway partner organization has the fundamental services needed to support foreign companies. Given that each partner has different industry sectors, focuses, and unique programming, it is reflected in the cost for program support, leases, and more. We encourage all Global Gateway companies to be clear and transparent on their project budget,and expectations of incubator space and services.

What happens after the six month program period? Can the company stay longer than six months?
After the Global Gateway six month program, we encourage companies to remain in Maryland to continue to explore opportunities for business expansion. It is up to the company on their next step whether to be reconsidered to stay in the same Global Gateway partner organization site, or relocate within Maryland to another location.

Staff in my company will need support getting a visa in order to participate in the Global Gateway Program. What support can be offered and what visa is recommended for this program?
The Maryland Department of Commerce staff are able to write a visa letter of support for any company that has been approved to participate in the program. We encourage the company to consult with an immigration lawyer to ensure the correct visa application is processed.