

- **MCE** is an unprecedented regional collaboration between the seven counties of Northeastern Illinois and the City of Chicago with the goal to increase exports from small and medium-sized businesses, while supporting regional job growth. ~~The initiative is guided by a Steering Committee comprised of economic development organizations from across the area, with the support of the region's elected officials.~~ We have become ^{an} example of our region working together!

- As a **regional** initiative, Chicago is one of 28 metro areas participating in the **Global Cities Initiative** – a project between JPMorgan Chase and The Brookings Institution – to help metropolitan areas re-orient their economies toward greater engagement in world markets

- We remain committed to helping local firms to maximize their exporting potential.
- We work as a conduit to opportunities in the global marketplace
 - In which over 90% of the world consumers and more than 70% of the world's purchasing power are located outside the US.
 - ~~Selling goods and services to untapped international markets helps increase revenue and can drive overall profitability for our businesses~~

- MCE is working to support job growth in the region ^{in which}
 - >345,000 jobs were supported by exports of goods from IL in 2014
 - ~~Growth in exports helps create new employment opportunities in the region and~~
 - ~~Selling to foreign markets helps companies expand their marketing base and diversify risk so they're not solely dependent on the local economy~~

- Our program is centered around three main pillars to advance the region's exports:

- 1st: **Develop a targeted pipeline of export-ready firms**
Launched Illinois' inaugural ExporTech program; cohort-based approach, ~~sponsored by Commerce's NIST-MEP and Commercial Services~~, to help firms develop formal export growth plans
- 2nd: **Enhance the export ecosystem**
 - Facilitate the coordination of referrals to appropriate export service provider as well to provide an online export roadmap
- 3rd: **Reduce the cost of international trade by offering micro-grants;** ^{funded by MCE}
 - The grants provide <\$5,000 to help businesses reduce roadblocks to their international trade, specifically export. Many uses of the funds have been for partner searches, tradeshow participation, and marketing/website translations
 - ^{These} Grants facilitated our engagements with **237 SMEs** (135 in Cook)
 - **Awarded \$425,000 to 104 SMEs** (\$275,445 to 62 SMEs in Cook)
 - The program was so successful that Kane County stepped up with a Match Program for recipients of our grant program with a matching \$5,000 ^{for Kane County businesses.}

We continue to make progress in building the region's export through the execution of strategic partnerships ~~with IMEC, Ex-IM and US Department of Commerce.~~ In addition, we are pleased to see the Initial impact that has been reported ^{involving}

- **\$11M revenue increased** (\$2M Cook) AND **\$6M revenue retained** (\$628K Cook)
- **36 jobs created** (30 Cook) AND **81 jobs retained** (63 Cook)
- As a testament to our work, we recently received "Edie" award from IL Chamber of Commerce and IL Economic Development Association as a significant economic development project completed in Illinois
- We would like to thank President Preckwinkle for her leadership in creating the CRGI and We firmly believe that Cook County's past and future support of our work will continue to strengthen our region's economic future!