



U.S.  
COMMERCIAL  
SERVICE

United States of America  
Department of Commerce

# U.S. COMMERCIAL SERVICE

## AMERICA'S EXPORT EXPERTS

# RURAL EXPORT CENTER



## ANNUAL REPORT

# 2021



INTERNATIONAL TRADE ADMINISTRATION  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE



275 International Trade Specialists in 106 U.S. Cities

1,000 Foreign Service Officers & Staff in 80 Countries



U.S.  
COMMERCIAL  
SERVICE

United States of America  
Department of Commerce

# Deputy Assistant Secretary Message

## Made in Rural America. Delivered Worldwide.

Greetings,

The Rural Export Center reflects the U.S. Department of Commerce's commitment to enable rural companies to grow U.S. export sales abroad and increase jobs in rural America. As we mark the one-year milestone since the opening of the Center, we are proud of the work we have accomplished on behalf of rural America and recognize the increased importance of the Center in helping rural companies recover from the pandemic and restore jobs through new export sales.

Historically, rural companies have faced steeper challenges to grow their business through new export sales. The challenges include lack of access to resources to support trade, perception of risk, and distance from service providers that would otherwise help to facilitate an export transaction. Moreover, small companies from rural communities have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic and require - now more than ever - dedicated resources to survive and grow.

As we set out in March 2020 to establish the Rural Export Center, the COVID-19 global pandemic arrived. Knowing that small rural companies would be hit hardest by the ensuing economic downturn, we quickly pivoted to establish a virtual Rural Export Center, and within a few months we were successfully ensuring equitable access to international trade resources.

After operating virtually for the first year, we have seen demand for the Center's signature "RAISE" market research report rapidly grow across the country. As we turn the corner from the pandemic and move into the second year of service to rural America, we are committed to building on our initial success and ensuring equity of access to more rural clients across the country.

Sincerely,

Joseph Hanley

Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary – U.S. Field Operations  
U.S. Commercial Service, International Trade Administration  
U.S. Department of Commerce



# WHAT IS THE RURAL EXPORT CENTER

## OUR VALUE

The Rural Export Center (REC) was created in 2020 to provide timely and differentiated research, with unique tools and analysis for actionable recommendations that help rural exporters identify new buyers, markets and strategies in international markets. [Learn more about the REC.](#)

## WHY A RURAL EXPORT CENTER?

Rural American companies are located great distances from information, contacts, gateways and services that facilitate export success, so they are often less apt to pro-actively pursue exporting. What keeps so many capable US firms from exporting more pro-actively? Three key ingredients – knowledge, confidence and connections.

## HOW WE ASSIST RURAL EXPORTERS

The REC removes these three barriers and empowers rural exporters by reducing the cost and complexity of growing international sales. Their RAISE (Rural America's Intelligence Service for Exporters) market research delivers actionable market intelligence and their WGR (Website Globalization Review) delivers proven digital analytics and ecommerce strategies. With this customized market intelligence in hand, rural exporters approach the world with knowledge and data-driven strategies, propelling their expansion into new global export markets.

# ABOUT US



The Rural Export Center (REC), located in Fargo, North Dakota, was created in 2020 to assist rural companies overcome barriers to export.



The U.S. Commercial Service leverages its unique global network, both in the U.S. and overseas, to help rural companies expand into new markets.

## OUR STAFF



Heather Ranck  
Director



Joshua Erickson  
Research Analyst



Haley Coffield  
Research Analyst



Kate Best  
Research Analyst



Erik Anderson  
Staff



Kyle Berger  
Staff



Rita Adejude  
Staff



Rikka Bergstrom  
Staff

## NOTE FROM THE REC DIRECTOR

*"Do you wish you could speed up market selection and reduce faulty decision making on market selection, partner identification and entry strategies? The U.S. Commercial Service's new RAISE market research service leverages powerful databases, proven processes and our unparalleled global network to provide rural American exporters with customized market intelligence that will rank countries, identify potential partners and provide actionable recommendations to help you enter new markets faster and more cost effectively."*

- Heather Ranck, Director, U.S. Commercial Service & Rural Team Leader, Fargo North Dakota

# YEAR-AT-A-GLANCE



1,828

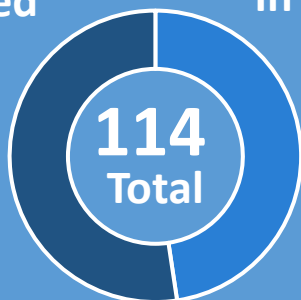
# of Clients Assisted

Completed

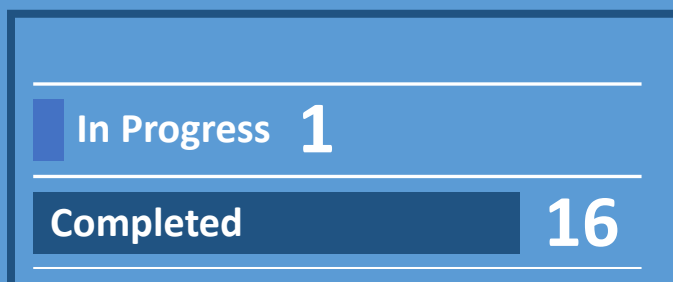
46

In Progress

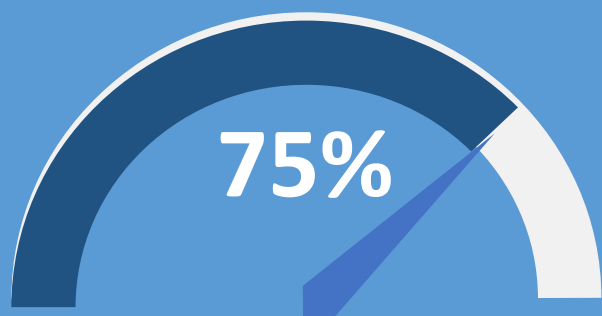
68



RAISE Research Reports



Website Globalization Reports



Inquiry Conversion Rate

32 Hours

Matrix

32 Hours

One Country Report

27 Hours

Buyer List

126 Hours

Matrix + 3 Country + Buyer List

Average Hours Per Report



18

# of States With Clients Served



28

# of Industries Represented

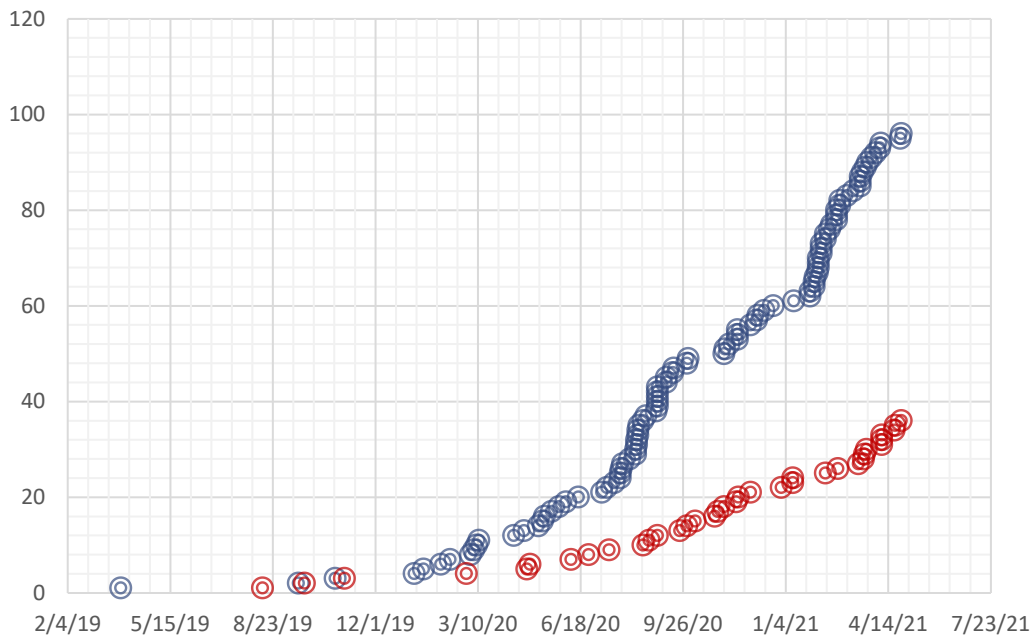


# CLIENT ENGAGEMENT



## INCREASING INQUIRIES

◎ Initial Inquiries    ◎ Paid Inquiries



As a small business owner, I cannot express how helpful, insightful, professional, and accommodating the U.S. Commercial Service has been. The thought of exporting and the perceived trials and tribulations associated with such seemed too daunting for a small company based in rural West Virginia. However, USCS uses a pragmatic, logical, “small step” based approach to make the process far less intimidating.

- Jason Diwik – P3 Carbon (Hurricane, WV)

## INDUSTRIES REPRESENTED

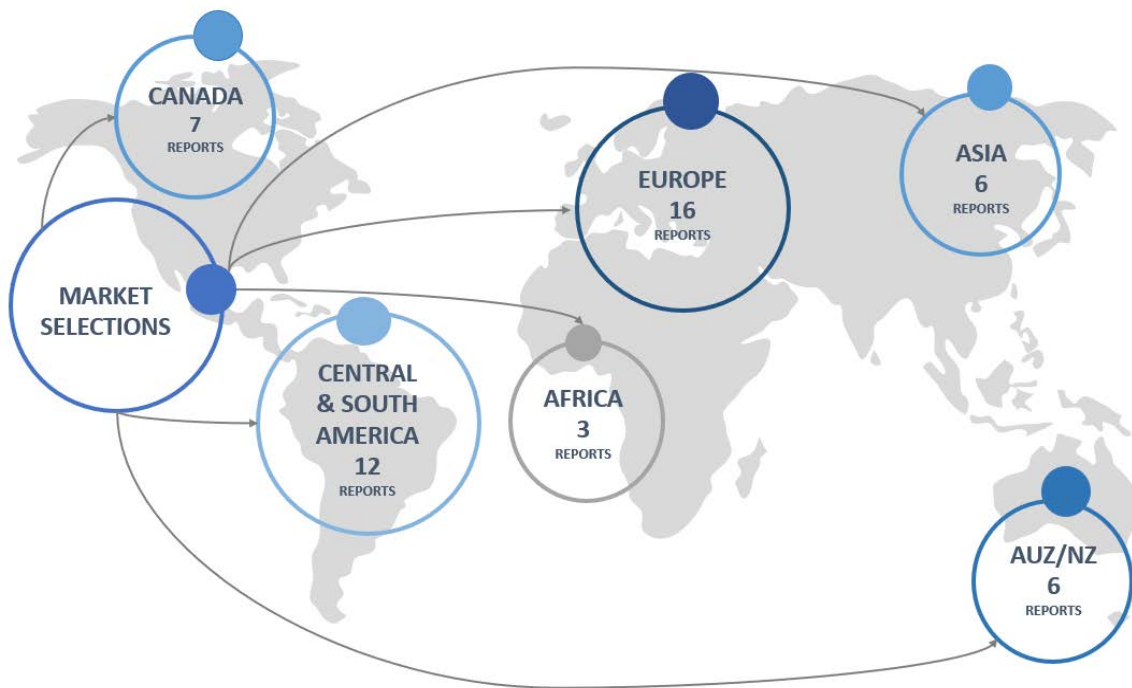
Aerospace and Defense  
Agricultural Chemicals  
Agricultural Machinery  
Building Products  
Coatings  
Education Publishing  
Electrical Systems and Lighting  
Fabrics  
Food  
Glass  
Insurance Services  
Lawn and Garden Equipment  
Machinery and Tools  
Medical Devices  
Plastic Products  
Plumbing  
Police Equipment  
Process Controls  
Pumps, Valves and Compressors  
Recreational Vehicles  
Scientific Laboratory Equipment  
Specialty Vehicles  
Telecommunications Equipment  
Unmanned Aircraft Systems  
Vitamins and Supplements  
Water and Wastewater  
Water Monitoring  
Weapons and Accessories

# CLIENT ENGAGEMENT

”

The REC is an economic research service that you can use to find partners, or you can use the information to help your in-country partners expand. Getting a comprehensive contact list was invaluable; and being able to share that with our new distributor allows us to hit the ground running.

- Jim Hamel, CFO, Swanson Health Products, Fargo, ND



## RURAL EXPORTERS REACH FOR NEW MARKETS

Rural exporters leverage RAISE market intelligence to develop new export markets globally.

”

This is my second time turning to the U.S. Commercial Service to help my team and I map out an effective and efficient international go-to-market strategy. Their experience steered us away from mistakes made by others and their research allowed us to eliminate a lot of the guesswork and stay hyper focused. With the results they provided via their RAISE program, we selected the top three viable countries and were provided the nuances needed for a streamlined execution. We recommend them without reservation to anyone planning to expand their market globally.

- Brian Brasch, PRx Performance, Fargo, ND

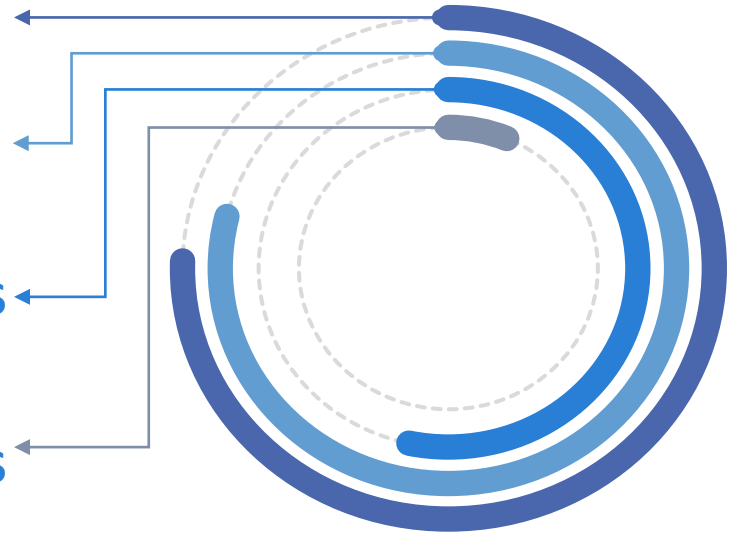
# PROGRAM OVERVIEW

**46** RAISE REPORTS  
COMPLETED

**68** RAISE REPORTS  
IN PROGRESS

**16** WEBSITE GLOBALIZATION REVIEWS  
COMPLETED

**1** WEBSITE GLOBALIZATION REVIEWS  
IN PROGRESS



## PARTICIPATING STATES



## PARTICIPATING STATES REACHING 17 STATES IN YEAR ONE

**Totaling 114 Reports (Completed & In Progress)**

California  
Connecticut  
Iowa  
Kansas  
Kentucky  
Montana  
New Hampshire  
New Jersey  
New Mexico  
New York  
North Carolina  
North Dakota  
South Carolina  
Vermont  
West Virginia  
Wisconsin  
Wyoming

