



New York Wine & Grape Foundation

1 Keuka Business Park,
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Penn Yan, NY 14527

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Request for Proposals Sustainable Vineyard Inspector

[January 14, 2022](#)

I. Background Information

The New York Wine & Grape Foundation (NYWGF) was created by the State of New York in 1985 as a private, non-profit organization. The enabling legislation established a financing mechanism for promotion and research, providing the industry with both short-term assistance and the potential for long-term viability. NYWGF's programs are developed by a 21-member Board of Directors in consultation with other representatives from industry and state government. The activities carried out by NYWGF are designed to support all uses of New York-grown grapes from all regions of the state. The mission of the NYWGF (updated in February 2018) is to "promote the world-class image of New York grapes and wines from our diverse regions to responsibly benefit farmers, producers and consumers through innovative marketing, research, communication, and advocacy." The vision of the NYWGF (updated in February 2018) is "to be the world's premier region for cool and cold climate viticulture."

II. Scope of Services

NYWGF is developing a third-party certification for sustainably grown grapes and wine. The basis for this certification will be a grower self-assessment followed by third-party verification according to the latest edition of VineBalance, a workbook that addresses input reduction, soil health, water protection, energy conservation, resources and waste, ecosystem health, climate resiliency, continuous improvement, and social equity. Growers who achieve certification will be permitted to use the program logo for special labeling and direct-to-consumer marketing.

From March to May of 2022, the NYWGF will begin a Pilot Program to test the mechanism for certification with a group of approximately twenty-five (25) grape growers. The Pilot Program will be headquartered within Yates County but open to growers across the state. Roughly 80 percent of the participating growers will be located within the Finger Lakes American Viticultural Area (AVA) with an additional 20 percent located in outer regions such as the Lake Erie, Hudson Valley, Niagara Escarpment, Long Island, and Champlain Valley AVAs.

NYWGF is seeking an independent contractor to serve as a third-party verifier to perform vineyard site inspections during the Pilot Program. The role of the Sustainable Vineyard Inspector will be to travel to participating vineyards and verify growers' self-assessment of their sustainability practices using the latest edition of the VineBalance workbook.

Please click here the [history of VineBalance](#) and the latest [VineBalance update](#), which is currently under review for clarity, functionality, and versatility in vineyards across New York State. A finalized version of VineBalance 2022, that has been refined through grower feedback, will be released in late February.

III. Deliverables:

The Sustainable Vineyard Inspector will review completed VineBalance workbooks in digital Google Doc format for approximately twenty-five (25) grape growers and perform on-site inspections to verify the accuracy of grower self-assessments. During these site visits, the inspector will provide one-one-one consultation to educate growers about sustainable management practices, clarify any inconsistencies between the grower and inspector assessments, and provide guidance for continuous improvement.

The timeframe for the completion of this project is March 15, 2022, to May 15, 2022.

IV. Project Budget

The budget range for VineBalance workbook review and on-site vineyard inspections for approximately twenty-five (25) grape growers during the Pilot Program is **\$12,500 or \$500 per vineyard***. This amount must cover all professional services, legal services, and administrative costs, including all fees, telephone, postage, and printing. Mileage will be reimbursed at the FY 2022 IRS Standard Mileage Rate. Accommodations and meals when traveling outside of the Finger Lakes AVA will be reimbursed at the FY 2022 New York Per Diem Rate. However, the quality of the expertise of the firm/consultant will be considered in negotiating the final price for the services to be rendered. NYWGF anticipates that success on this Pilot Program could provide an opportunity for ongoing partnership in following years.

* The number of grape growers is an estimate and may be slightly more or less than twenty-five (25).

V. Evaluation of Proposal

Proposals must include a timeline for onsite inspections and summarize:

- Demonstrated experience in sustainable agriculture, natural resources, or ecosystem management
- Demonstrated experience working directly with farmers for on-farm education purposes
- Knowledge of viticulture and enology in the Northeast, preferably New York State
- Key project personnel and relevant credentials
- Examples of management of similar projects
- Detailed project budget and timeline

VI. Authority

The Sustainable Vineyard Inspector will work with the NYWGF as an independent contractor. The method and means of performing the services and the hours when work is performed will be entirely within the Sustainable Vineyard Inspector's control. All expenses must fall within the program budget and be pre-approved by NYWGF.



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VII. Discrimination Clause

The NYWGF is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital/familial status. The NYWGF complies with all provisions of the U.S. government's Executive Order 11246 dated September 24, 1965, and the rules, regulations, and relevant orders of the Secretary of Labor.

VIII. Instructions for Submitting Proposals

Proposals should be submitted electronically to:

Whitney Beaman
Sustainability Program Manager
Email: whitneybeaman@nywgf.org
Phone: 716-867-6577

Questions regarding this RFP should be directed to whitneybeaman@nywgf.org no later than 5:00PM on Monday, February 14, 2022.

All proposals are due by 5:00PM on Monday, February 21, 2022.

NYWGF reserves the right not to award a contract if, in the opinion of the evaluators, no suitable proposal is received. NYWGF is not liable for any costs associated with any company's response to this RFP.