



New York Wine & Grape Foundation

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**Request for
Comprehensive Statewide Vineyard Survey Services
September 15, 2023**

1. Organizational 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 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 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 is "to be the world's premier region for cool and cold climate viticulture."

2. Statement of Need

New York State lacks a current and comprehensive survey of acres of grape varieties grown. USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) completed the last comprehensive vineyard survey in 2011. The wine industry has more than doubled in size since 2011, two new AVAs were established for the Champlain Valley and Upper Hudson, while the juice grape industry experienced a period of contraction and declining consumer demand. The changes in New York's grape industry require current data to facilitate business decisions, research priorities, marketing messaging, and tracking economic impact.

The New York grape and wine industry's continued strategic growth requires the execution of a vineyard survey at least every two years to obtain detailed statistics necessary to monitor the dynamics of industry changes. An industry need is felt for a wide range of accurate information about new acreage, bearing acreage, non-bearing acreage, varieties, tonnage, average price, and data by growing region. The updated vineyard survey will provide the opportunity to analyze the changes occurring in the grape and wine industry.

The vineyard survey is important to the New York Wine & Grape Foundation's mission because we serve as the industry's primary economic development and promotion entity.

Current and accurate vineyard data supports our research funding priorities, which are supported by State and private sector funding. The data supports our initiatives to promote the industry to trade, media, and consumers across the world. Survey data on production can provide benchmark figures required to compare New York winegrowing regions, both internally and with key domestic and international winegrowing regions.

The vineyard survey is also a valuable source of data for the private sector to help make commercial decisions. A winery or juice processor could use vineyard data to understand the number of growers and the available specific grape varieties in each growing region to help identify suitable sites for its processing plants. Farm machinery and input suppliers could use the data to assess the potential demand for their products. A company planning to establish a business in a particular location could use vineyard data to assess the viability of grape vineyards.

3. Summary of Vineyard Survey Efforts To-Date

Until 2012, the New York office of NASS conducted a vineyard acreage survey approximately every five years. The data collected from this survey provided industry organizations and the media with important information about how the grape industry in New York State was evolving over time. For example, it illustrated the change in the mixture of grape varieties that were being cultivated in the Finger Lakes region, as it started to shift from one heavily focused on 'native' varieties like Concord and Catawba, to one with a more diverse mix of grape varieties, especially *vinifera* varieties used for premium winemaking such as Riesling, Cabernet Franc, and Chardonnay.

The most recent vineyard survey was conducted by NASS in 2011 and published in 2012. Since that time, NASS has indicated that they will no longer be conducting these surveys due to a lack of funding. Since the 2011 NASS survey, the number of wineries licensed in New York has increased 72% from 285 to 490, and two new American Viticulture Areas (AVAs) were established, one for the Champlain Valley (2016) and a second for the Upper Hudson (2018). Both these regions specialize in cold-hardy grape varieties, whose cultivars have only become publicly available in the past 15 years. The emergence of these regions and their planted grape varieties is not captured in the 2011 survey or in the Census of Agriculture.

The five-year Census of Agriculture, last compiled in 2017, is the only remaining statistical summary of vineyards and acreage in New York. The data includes only acreage by county, but no breakdowns by variety or production. Within New York, grapes are the second largest fruit and vegetable crop by acreage (33,000 acres) and value, with annual production valued at \$69 million in 2017.

In 2019, to try to bring the state's vineyard acreage data up to date, NYWGF, Cornell Cooperative Extension, members of the New York grape industry, and Cornell University's Survey Research Institute (SRI) worked together to fund and develop a new vineyard acreage survey for the state. The survey was launched in June 2019 primarily as an online survey, and hard copies were also mailed to all growers in the NYWGF database.

The survey was sent to over 1,100 grape growers in the NYWGF database. Of those, just over 600 contacts included email addresses, meaning they received both e-mail and hard copy versions of the survey. The response rate to the online survey was approximately 32%, or about 200 responses. The hard-copy surveys did not add significantly to these totals. Several reminders and phone follow-ups were made by SRI staff to growers who had not responded to the survey. These efforts did help to improve the numbers to some extent, but funding limitations did not allow for calls to every grower who had not responded.

In all, the survey documented approximately 15,800 vineyard acres in New York. Previous surveys (e.g., 2012 Statewide Survey, 2017 USDA Ag Census) have shown that there are between 30-35,000 acres of vineyards in the state, which would mean that the 2019 survey ultimately ended up documenting only half of the state's estimated total acreage. After analyzing the data, the survey leadership team decided that the results from the survey were too incomplete to be useful.

4. Statement of Request:

NYWGF seeks a partner(s) to assist with the execution of a statewide comprehensive vineyard survey to commence no later than February 1, 2024. The ideal candidate (or company) will have grape and/or agricultural industry knowledge, experience administering accurate and unbiased surveys that guarantee participant confidentiality, developing strategic communications/outreach to encourage survey participation, and the ability to develop and manage contact management databases.

5. Scope of Services

NYWGF seeks to replicate this survey on a biannual or annual basis, and the project plan should include a budget and proposed project scope to conduct a survey in 2024 and 2025.

Specific duties to include:

Project Administration and Planning

- Creation of project schedule with key milestones and deadlines
- Manage and coordinate project advisory community to be made up of NYWGF Staff and Board Members, Industry Stakeholders, and Cornell Cooperative Extension
- Management of sub-consultants if necessary

Audit of existing vineyard acreage datasets, grape pricing, and grower contact lists

- Work with industry and public sector partners to identify existing datasets
- Obtain and review public and private datasets
- As possible with available permissions, consolidate data sets and identify gaps

Create updated and accurate grower database

- Create a strategy to address grower database gaps identified audit

- Identify partners willing to share grower lists and/or be communication conduits
- Create a solicitation process to capture current grape grower contact info
- Develop a new database management system to maintain, update, and grow the list of New York grape growers

Online and Paper Mail Survey

- Develop a questionnaire in partnership with the project advisory committee
- Programming/testing instrument for web administration – including sample setup and 3 reminder emails
- Programming/testing of a paper mail survey
- Administration of 3 full and 2 postcard mailings, including data entry

Note: The survey must be able to guarantee that individual results will be kept confidential and be easily replicable for future years to repeat the survey.

Survey Outreach and Marketing

- Hire and train staff for contact database management, data entry, and phone call outreach
- Implement a highly visible promotional campaign with a clear case/rationale for participation
- Develop engagement plan for outreach participation by NYWGF Staff and Board, Regional Associations, NY Farm Bureau, Cornell Cooperative Extension, and Key Industry Suppliers
- Provide marketing tools (email templates, banner ads, postcard templates, informational one-pagers, etc.) for industry partners and stakeholders to promote survey participation
- Plan to participate and present at winter industry conferences/meetings

Note: NYWGF plans to provide survey participation incentives like free/discounted tickets to the industry's annual conference, B.E.V. NY, to be held March 5&6 in the Finger Lakes

Final Report and Complete Data

- Summary of survey results in a high-quality and graphical report similar to those published by the Virginia Wine Marketing Office and Oregon Wine Board
- Delivery of combined web/mail data file, grower database, and codebook

6. Resources

2012 USDA NASS New York Vineyard Survey Questionnaire

2013 USDA NASS New York Vineyard Survey Report

2019 NYWGF Cornell Vineyard Survey (these would likely be the preferred set of questions)

2023 Finger Lakes Grape Price Survey

OP-ED: Disappearing Crop Statistics

OP-ED: Grape Crush Reports Are Essential for U.S. Wine Industry Growth

OP-ED: How vineyard acreage and varieties in New York have changed

OP-ED: Inaccurate and out-of-date vineyard survey data threatens the New York State grape industry

OP-ED: The USDA's Agricultural Statistics Service Cancels Data Report for NY Grapes Overview of the 2019 Oregon Vineyard and Winery Report Methods

2019 Oregon Vineyard and Winery Report

GRAPHIC: 2019 Oregon Vineyard and Winery Report

EMAIL SOLICITATION: COMPLETE THE 2021 OREGON VINEYARD & WINERY SURVEY

2022 Virginia Commercial Grape Crush Report

7. Project Budget and Timeline

Budget - The budget range for this project is **up to \$100,000** for a survey to be executed in 2024 and 2025, however, NYWGF will entertain an increased amount for this project with sufficient rationale and demonstrated ROI. The RFP respondent can expect that NYWGF will provide a certain level of NYWGF staff and board support to assist with project deliverables.

Project Budget must cover all professional services, legal services, and administrative costs, including all fees, travel, telephone, postage, printing, accommodations, meals (if applicable) and GST.

Timeline - We would like to officially make the survey public no later than February 1, 2024, to coincide with promoting the B.E.V. NY Conference, to be held in March 2024. We are hoping that the execution of the 2024 survey and final report be achievable within **12 months**, and the project commencing starting either November or December 2023. If that is not achievable, please tell us and propose the timeline that you believe would work best.

8. Evaluation of Proposal

If all the necessary skills are not on your current team, we still welcome you to submit a proposal.

Do you have the ability to pull together skills from your network and assemble the absolute best of the best? We would love to have them work on our project - we just need to know why you think they are so great and how you will manage that partnership.

Alternatively, if you feel strongly that your company is the absolute right fit for a few components of this RFP, and you would prefer to deliver solely on those, just tell us. If you are the best fit and partner for that deliverable, we will certainly consider your proposal.

Again, all proposals must include **a detailed budget, work plan, and timeline** for the deliverables and should also summarize:

- Demonstrated grape and/or agricultural industry knowledge, experience administering surveys, developing strategic communications/outreach, and the ability to develop and manage contact management databases
- Key project personnel and relevant credentials
- Examples of management of similar projects and successful deployment

9. Authority

The selected agency will work with the NYWGF as an independent contractor. The method and means of performing the services and the hours the Consultant is working will be entirely within the Consultant's control. All expenses must fall within the program budget and be pre-approved by NYWGF.

10. Discrimination Clause

The NYWGF is an equal-opportunity employer and does not discriminate on the basis of 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.

11. Instructions for Submitting Proposals

Proposals should be submitted electronically to:

Samuel Filler
Executive Director
New York Wine & Grape Foundation
e. ny2024vineyardsurveyrfp@nywgf.org

Questions regarding this RFP should be directed to ny2024vineyardsurveyrfp@nywgf.org no later than September 26th, 2023.

All proposals are due by 5:00PM on Friday, October 6th, 2023

12. Estimated Project Timeline

Issue RFP	9/15/23
Bidders Zoom Conference	
Registration Link: https://nywgf.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZAtc-2gqTlvG9bNFrCz005iSLA324anp73i	9/27/23
Proposal Submitted	10/6/23
Review Deadline (<i>Candidates Notified of Interview Dates</i>)	10/16/23
Project Award	11/6/23
Project Completion	9/1/25

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.