

NGWB Grant Final Report (FY23-24)

Contract #18-13-282 - NWGGA – Marketing

Grant Amount \$90,000.00

Contact Information

Group: Nebraska Winery and Grape Growers Association
Contact: Alyssa Brodersen
Phone: (402) 761-2216
Address: P.O. Box 10
Milford, NE 68405
Email: alyssa@nebraskawines.org

Issue of Interest

The Nebraska Winery and Grape Growing industry in the state of Nebraska continues to be an underpromoted industry. While NWGGA has been focusing on awareness, there is still a large market that is unaware of the great products that Nebraska has available. Many Nebraska consumers are still not aware of the fact that grapes not only grow but thrive in Nebraska and that award-winning wines are being produced and enjoyed in the state. By continuing to promote the industry as a category, we will strive to introduce even more new consumers to wines and the events and activities of wineries and vineyards as a tourism attraction. The Nebraska Winery & Grape Growers Association continues to promote the industry by promoting Nebraska wines to Nebraska consumers.

Approach to Problem

NWGGA has focused its marketing efforts in this grant cycle on advancing the Nebraska Wine Passport digital program and developing additional resources for Nebraskans to enjoy Nebraska wine and wineries. The association has also continued to concentrate on nurturing the Nebraska Wine Fans email list and utilizing paid social media and SEO marketing placements. Partnerships have been established with community and statewide organizations such as Visit Omaha and the Nebraska Tourism Commission to promote the 2023 Holiday TOAST Nebraska and the 2024 TOAST Nebraska wine festivals, as well as the 2023 & 2024 Nebraska Wine Passport. Additionally, NWGGA partnered with KeTV to promote the 2024 TOAST Nebraska wine festival and will continue to work with them to promote the 2024 digital passport program and 2024 Holiday TOAST Nebraska. RAAM Marketing, a subsidiary of Advanced Association Management, managed social media graphics, copywriting, ad placements and purchasing, moderation and optimization, and audience building.

Goals/Achievement of Goals

Email Marketing

Since early March 2021, the RAAM marketing staff has fostered a consumer-focused email list called “Nebraska Wine Fans.” Email marketing is one of the highest-converting and lowest-cost marketing strategies for NWGGA. By building this list, the NWGGA is able to:

- Market directly to a highly specific and interested group of consumers
- Gain demographic information on what markets in Nebraska are converting
- Cross-reference and upload the list to optimize sponsored ad placements on social media
- Engage regularly (weekly) with target audience through Weekend at the Winery email

List Growth

February 2021	1,195
June 2021	6,157 (+415% from start)
June 2022	15,412 (+91.9% annual growth)
June 2023	20,338 (+31.9% annual growth)
June 2024	23,762 (+6.8% annual growth)

Lead Generation

The emails are captured one of three ways:

- Digital passport enrollment (2,564 enrolled)
- Direct link sign ups on social media posts
- TOAST Ticket Purchases
- Onsite event booth QR Code
- Promotional Website Pop-Up
- Nebraska Tourism Website Ads for Nebraska Wine Fans List
- Passport rack cards & flyers sent to Convention & Visitors Bureaus and partners throughout the state

The highest converting lead generator is the Nebraska Wine Passport. By offering this free program in exchange for their email, NWGGA is capturing information from their target market – someone interested in wine and visiting Nebraska wineries – while simultaneously promoting traffic to the wineries. It is imperative to continue to be able to promote the passport specifically via the online platform through the summer and fall of 2024 when traffic is the highest. To date 2,564 consumers have enrolled in the digital passport program. Participants from 19 different states participate in the digital passport program, further contributing to Nebraska Wines reach throughout the country. This year Passport rack cards and flyers with QR Codes we also sent out to member wineries, NE tourism brochure locations, and locally owned Nebraska small businesses and boutiques that have promoted the paper passport in the past.

Email Engagement Rates

The data collected from the previous year is leveraged to convert new subscribers for the following year (i.e. 2023 data is leveraged to collect 2024 data). As we leverage more and more fine-tuned lists on social media ad buys, we find that we collect better quality subscribers. As email engagement rates seem to fall, we have engaged SMS direct companies for text marketing but need to ensure alcohol marketing compliance prior to engaging.

	Open Rate	Click Rate
Current Full List Average	31.8%	2.1%
2019 Initial List	27.1%	1.9%
2020 NE Wine Fans Subscriber List	30.5%	2.1%
2021 NE Wine Fans Subscriber List	31.5%	2.0%
2022 NE Wine Fans Subscriber List	42.4%	2.9%
2023 NE Wine Fans Subscriber List	34.0%	1.9%
2024 NE Wine Fans Subscriber List	32.0%	1.2%*

*The average email open rate for all industries as analyzed by Mailchimp's 2024 report is 21.33%. The average click-rate is 2.62%. Segmented audiences may impact based on TOAST emails.

SEO Optimization

Ad placement funds were also used for SEO optimization on Google Ads. A direct ad was placed to combat confusion due to the toastnebraska.com domain redirect.

	Impressions	Clicks	Conversion
2022 TOAST Nebraska Ad	13,171	1,230	9.3%
2023 TOAST Nebraska Ad	22,400	2,630	11.7%
2024 TOAST Nebraska Ad	9,900	3,890	39%

Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing has continued to be a valuable tool for marketing the Nebraska wine industry. A portion of grant ad placement funds were leveraged via Facebook and Instagram ads. Nebraska Wines continued to manage two Facebook pages, Nebraska Wines and TOAST Nebraska Wine Festival. Lookalike audiences have been maintained by intermittently uploading the Nebraska Wine Fans list throughout the year. This allows Facebook to cross-reference those who have signed up for the list and withhold marketing from them (saving funds from re-marketing to purchasers) while marketing to consumers similar to them. This has proved to be a highly effective audience-building strategy. The continued monitoring of audiences and engagement has also allowed NWGGA to adjust strategies in real-time to be the most effective with marketing dollars.

Current Demographics

The current audiences for Nebraska Wine Fans (Facebook and MailChimp) are an indicator of the interested audience we are reaching. The net cast for consumers includes:

- Consumers 21-65+ years of age (all)
- Lookalike audiences for current subscribers
- Interested in wine, beer, alcoholic beverages (some, not all met)
- Interested in concerts, festivals, bars, tailgating (some, not all met)
- Located in:
 - Nebraska
 - All surrounding states

Additional Projects

- **Wine Competition Reimbursements** – In February of 2024, NWGGA launched wine competition reimbursements of up to \$250 for wineries that wished to participate in local or national wine competitions. The goal of this project is to encourage wineries to participate in competitions, thereby enhancing their visibility and recognition within the Nebraska wine industry. This project is ongoing and will be offered until allocated funds are expended.
- **Wine Writer Reimbursements** – In February 2024, NWGGA also launched wine writer reimbursements of up to \$500 for wineries that wished to hire a wine writer to promote their business. The goal of this project is to elevate the profile of Nebraska wineries and cultivate broader awareness and appreciation for their products. This project is ongoing and will be offered until December 15, 2024.
- **TOAST BOOTH MINI-GRANT** – The final program that NWGGA launched in February 2024 was the TOAST Booth Mini-Grant. This project provides financial assistance to wineries to enhance their booth infrastructure and staff training. This includes improving the layout and design of booths to accommodate higher traffic loads during events, as well as training staff to effectively execute wine club and bottle sale campaign initiatives as directed by each winery. The goal of this project is to enhance the TOAST Nebraska visitor experience, increase sales opportunities, and improve wineries' ability to engage with customers. This project is ongoing and will be offered until May 31, 2025.

Results, Conclusions, Lessons Learned

Overall, NWGGA continues to monitor marketing strategies and adjust as needed to allow for the highest reach and largest impact for our social media and email messaging, allowing us to stretch marketing dollars further while remaining effective.

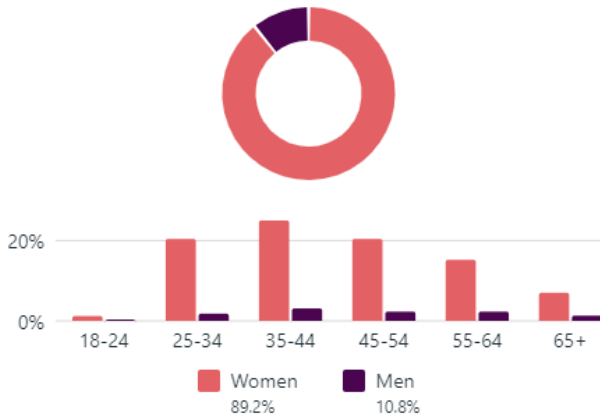
We currently are managing the email marketing subscriber list of 18,000+ and a Facebook community page of approximately 8.3k. Overall social media reach for the 23-24 promotions was over 3.8 million impressions and reached over 1.2m people.

Progress Achieved According to Outcome Measures

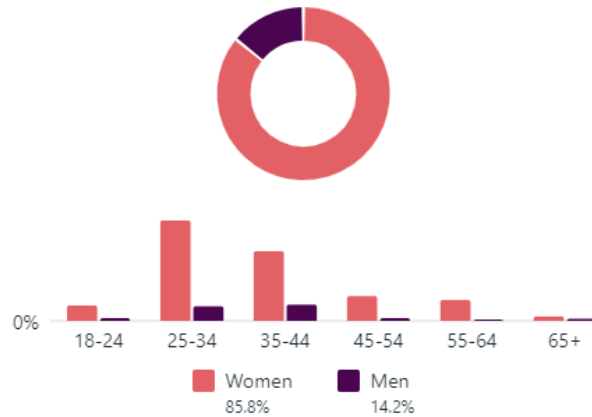
The overall promotions for the 2023-2024 year were successful and the NWGGA marketing committee and AAM/RAAM Marketing team are very pleased with our overall results. By launching and testing other new campaigns, such as the 2024 digital passport, wine competition program, wine writer program, & TOAST booth program, NWGGA is excited to see the growth and new opportunities presented in the coming years for Nebraska wine industry promotion.

NEBRASKA WINES COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS:

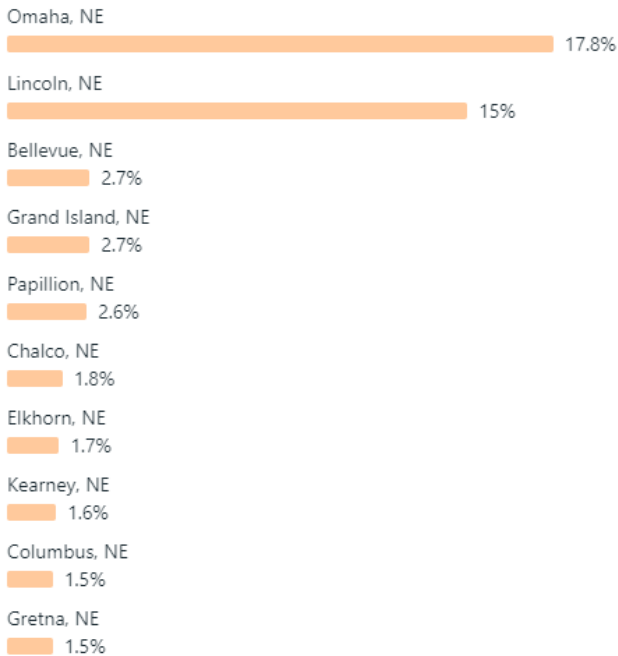
Age & gender ⓘ



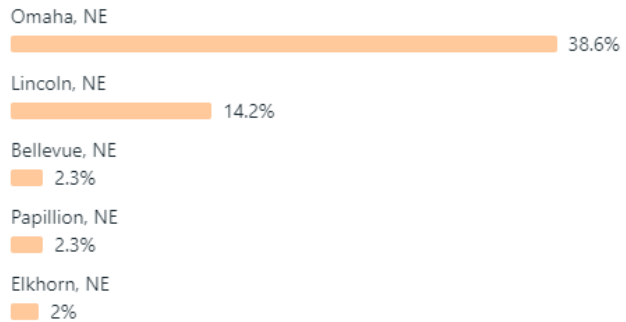
Age & gender ⓘ



Top cities



Top cities



Financials

Marketing	Description
\$90,000.00	<i>Grant Amount</i>
\$7,515.84	Wine Bucks/OWH/402Ink
\$11,035.27	TOAST Marketing: Copies & Postage/Vimeo/RAAM Marketing
\$102.34	Marketing Lunch
\$13,234.77	NE Tourism, Uline, Bandwango, Passport Shirts
NDA Pending Payments	
\$2,650.34	Marketing Q4 Submissions
\$29,402.86	402 INK; RAAM; Facebook (CK#3572/3574)
\$63,941.42	<i>Total Submitted for reimbursement as of 6.4.24</i>
\$11,035.27	<i>Will be submitted shortly. RAAM Marketing, Event copies & postage, Vimeo Pro.</i>
\$52,906.15	<i>NWGGA expects to expend the full grant amount by June 30th on ongoing projects.</i>
\$0.00	<i>Estimated Expenses Left Over After Grant Funds</i>