**Nebraska Grape and Winery Board**

**Request for Proposal Application Instructions**

**2025 - 2026 Fiscal Year**

Applications Due by U.S. Mail: **May 1, 2025**

Applications must be postmarked on or before the above date.

Submit applications by U.S. mail or email to:

Casey Foster

Nebraska Department of Agriculture

P.O. Box 94947

Lincoln, NE 68509

(402) 471-6857

casey.foster@nebraska.gov

Applications Due Electronically: **May 1, 2025**

Applications are due on or before the above date.

Questions regarding this grant should be directed to Casey Foster at casey.foster@nebraska.gov .

**Introduction**

The Nebraska Grape and Winery Board was created to (a) establish a public forum whereby any producer of wine, grapes, or other wine-producing agricultural products has the opportunity, at least once annually, to discuss with the Board its policy and procedures; (b) keep minutes of its meetings and other books and records which clearly reflect all of the acts and transactions of the Board and to make these records available for examination upon request by members of the public; (c) authorize and approve the Department of Agriculture’s expenditure of funds collected pursuant to §53-304; (d) serve as an advisory panel to the Nebraska Liquor Control Commission in all matters pertaining to the wine industry; and (e) adopt and promulgate rules and regulations to carry out §§53-301 to 53-305 of the Nebraska Grape and Winery Board Statute.

The Nebraska Grape and Winery Board’s revenue originates from a variety of different sources, which primarily include shipper license fees, grape excise taxes, and crushed grape fees. The Nebraska Grape and Winery Board has the power to utilize their revenue to fund projects that are designed to improve and promote Nebraska’s grape and wine industry. The Board is seeking to fund proposals that will aid in the betterment of Nebraska’s grape and wine industry.

Interested parties wishing to receive funds must submit a detailed proposal for review and approval by the Nebraska Grape and Winery Board. Proposals must clearly explain how the money will be used, and how it will enhance the competitiveness of Nebraska’s grape and wine industry. This RFP is for the next fiscal year, July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026. All projects approved must be completed by the end of the next fiscal year.

The Board has developed this grant proposal process in order to provide all interested parties an opportunity to access these funds. The Board’s goal is to fund meaningful projects that will have the highest likelihood of significant, positive impact on the grape and wine production in Nebraska.

**Funding Cap**

The maximum grant award will be $50,000. The Board reserves the right to consider larger requests for projects with exceptional merit.

**Grant Eligibility**

Proposals should be initiated by individual growers, farm wineries, organizations, industry groups or academic institutions, or should involve collaboration or partnerships between producers, industry groups, academics, or other organizations. **Projects must benefit the entire grape and/or wine industry and not a particular business venture.** Applicants may cooperate with any public or private organization involving agricultural development, research, and/or marketing to enhance Nebraska’s grape and wine industry. If two or more individuals or organizations propose a joint project, they may submit one application as co-applicants. Applicants proposing joint projects are not required to form a legal entity but must show in their application how the project potentially impacts and produces measurable outcomes for the grape and wine industry and/or the public. **Any and all outcomes and records, resulting from a funded project, must be available for examination upon request by members of the public.** Two – five year project proposals will be considered, subject to annual review and re-authorization.

Examples of enhancing the competitiveness of Nebraska’s grapes and wines include, but are not limited to: research, promotion, marketing, nutrition, trade enhancement, food safety, food security, education, “buy local” programs, increased consumption, increased innovation, environmental and conservation concerns, improved efficiency and reduced costs of distribution systems, product development, and developing cooperatives.

**Program Policies**

The Nebraska Grape and Winery Board reserves the right to:

* Reject any or all proposals received;
* Request additional information on project proposals;
* Recommend partial funding for a proposal that may be less than the full amount requested in the grant application;
* Tie the release of project funds to completion of necessary, timely progress reports.

**Funding Allocation**

Projects funded during this next fiscal year will be valid upon the respective party’s signature to an agreement with the Nebraska Department of Agriculture and the party incurring an obligation of funds for the project on or after July 1, 2024, and prior to June 30, 2026. Invoices shall be presented to the Department of Agriculture from which payment shall be made. A final report of the project will be provided to the Board and the Department of Agriculture. There will be no funding match requirement of applicants, although priority may be given to those projects that show in-kind and additional cash commitment to supplement the funding request. **Please note that funding for projects are subject to legislative appropriations and funding being available.**

***Proposals will NOT fund the following expenses:***

* *Paying off existing debt;*
* *Purchase of equipment, land, or buildings;*
* *Business entertainment or business gifts; and*
* *Lobbying or political efforts.*

**Grant Proposal Review and Selection**

Grant applications will be reviewed and decided upon by the Nebraska Grape and Winery Board.

**Questions and Scoring Criteria**

There will be 100 points possible, which is outlined below.

**Application Instructions**

All applications should include the information listed on pages 4 through 6.

**A. Cover Page**

1. Name of applicant whose name should be used on all correspondence. Include contact information (address, phone, and e-mail) for one individual. This person should also be the one who will appear on a grant agreement and who will be responsible for tracking and accounting for project funds and ensuring the completion of the project.
2. Abstract of 200 words or less for the proposed project.
3. Listing of all other individuals, entities, organizations, or businesses involved with the project.

**B. Project Purpose (5 points)**

In one or two paragraphs, clearly state the specific issue, problem, interest, or need to be addressed. Explain why your project is important and timely. Indicate the amount of time needed to complete the project. The project must benefit the entire grape and/or wine industry and not a particular business venture.

**C. Potential Impact (10 points)**

In one page or less, discuss the number of people or operations affected, the intended beneficiaries of the project, and/or potential economic impact, if data from the project are available.

**D. Goals (5 points)**

Describe the overall goal(s) of the project in one or two sentences.

**E. Work Plan (45 points)**

On three pages or less, describe your proposal and its expected benefit to the Nebraska grape and wine industry. Explain how each goal and measurable outcome will be accomplished. The measurable outcomes must list the elements that will be monitored or evaluated, by whom, how often and for how long. Expected measurable outcomes may be long term and exceed the grant period

The major considerations here are:

* *Does the project benefit the entire grape and/or wine industry and not a particular business venture?*
* *Can project benefits be measured, reported, and tracked over time?*
* *Does the project provide an overall economic benefit to Nebraska’s grape and wine industry?*
* *Does the project make good business sense, and does it have a high likelihood of success?*
* *Are the expected benefits of the proposal commensurate with total investment?*

Other considerations will be given to:

* *Does the project contribute to a positive image of Nebraska grape and wine products?*
* *Does the project provide educational benefits to the public about Nebraska grape and wine products?*

**F. Project Commitment (10 points)**

On one page or less, describe the partnerships, alliances, networks, or other collaborative efforts that will be created to implement this project. List all parties involved and describe what each contributes in skills and abilities to make this proposal succeed and work toward the goals and outcomes, as well as the commitments for each party (in-kind, monetary, labor, etc.

Major consideration will be given to whether:

* *The project involves collaboration and enables the grape and wine industry to achieve collective results that benefits the entire industry, not a particular business venture;*
* *The applicant demonstrates commitment by way of in-kind time, resources, or other means.*

**G. Financial Feasibility (25 points)**

This question requires a one page or less standard budget outline. How do you intend to use the grant funds? Provide a breakdown of the components of the proposal and where the grant funds fit into the overall project financing. Prioritize funding needs, if possible. Provide budget estimates for the total project cost. List the source and amount of funds to use for the project. This information will provide assurance that you will have sufficient resources to meet project goals. Page 6 provides a budget example from which to refer to and use when creating a budget.

Major consideration may be given to whether:

* *The project makes good business sense according to the proposed expenses and activities noted in the budget;*
* *The budget supports the anticipated benefits and whether the benefits are commensurate with the total project financing;*
* *The project coordinating entity has a process in place to track and account for grant fund expenditures;*
* *Budget line item expenses could include costs associated with personnel, travel, equipment, supplies, and/or contracted work; and*
* *Accounting and project records can be readily retrieved and reported.*

**Budget Example**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Type** | **Nebraska Grape and Winery Board Funds** | **Applicant Contributions** **(In-Kind or Cash)** | **Total** | **Purpose** |
| Personnel | $1,000 | $500 | $1,500 | 75 hours @ $20 per hour by Principal Investigator |
| Fringe Benefits | $320 | $0 | $320 | 32% of personnel expenses |
| Travel | $547 | $0 | $547 | 200 miles @ $0.67/mile and 7 days at $59/day for meals |
| Supplies | $700 | $0 | $700 | Laboratory supplies for use by Research Assistant |
| Consultant | $2,000 | $1,000 | $3,000 | Consultant flat rate fee |
| Other | $1,500 | $0 | $1,500 | Conference space, publication, and data collection expenses |
| **Totals** | **$6,067** | **$1,500** | **$7,567** |  |

**H. Signed Agreements Page**

**Agreement:**

I/we the undersigned applicants *(name/names) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

of *(city)*\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, Nebraska, hereby make an application for Nebraska Grape and Winery Board funds, under the terms and conditions of the Nebraska Department of Agriculture, in the amount of *(amount requested)* $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. The total cost of the project is (*total project amount).* $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

The undersigned hereby warrant to the Nebraska Grape and Winery Board that, to the best of my/our knowledge, all information presented in this grant application is factual and true; that I/we understand that if this proposal is funded, I/we will be required to sign a grant agreement and other necessary documentation containing terms and conditions upon which funds will be released; and that I/we understand that I/we will be required to submit a final report at the completion of the project as a condition to receiving grant funds.

Federal Tax ID Number of Applicant:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Name of Applicant:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signed:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Title:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_