

# FY26-27 Ohio Grape Industries' Viticulture Extension Request for Proposal

**Contact:** Christy Eckstein, Executive Director, Ohio Grape Industries Committee

**Date of Issue:** Thursday, March 13, 2025

**Deadline:** Friday, April 18, 2025, by 4:30 p.m.

## **Proposal Submissions:**

All proposals should be submitted to the OGIC, Attn: Christy Eckstein, 8995 E. Main Street, Reynoldsburg, OH 43068 or [christy.eckstein@agri.ohio.gov](mailto:christy.eckstein@agri.ohio.gov), no later than 4:30 p.m. on Friday, April 18, 2025.

## **Background**

The Ohio Grape Industries Committee is a quasi-state agency housed within the Ohio Department of Agriculture. The mission of the Ohio Grape Industries Committee (OGIC), as mandated by the General Assembly in 1981, is to create viable, income-producing grape enterprises in the State of Ohio by providing marketing and promotion efforts, research and extension to improve the quality of grape products and profitability of grape growing as an agri-business.

Wines produced in Ohio are made from Ohio-grown grapes and outsourced grapes from around the world. Ohio produces wines from vitis vinifera, hybrid and labrusca grapes, as well as fruit and mead.

The Ohio grape and wine industry is comprised of nearly 400+ licensed wine manufacturers and 170+ vineyards. This Ohio industry, ranked 7<sup>th</sup> in the country, has seen tremendous growth in the number of wineries and vineyards in the past five years with the industry, nearly doubling in the number of wineries since 2012. The rapid growth in the number of new wineries and vineyards has led to the establishment of many wine and grape enterprises with limited skills and experience in winemaking and grape growing.

For Ohio's grape and wine industry to remain competitive regionally, nationally and internationally, these limited skills need to be addressed by research, production and extension in the areas of enology and viticulture including entomology, plant pathology, virology and weed science.

## **Overview**

The purpose of this RFP is to partner with a dynamic viticulture extension specialist that will:

- A. Provide viticulture extension services to enhance and improve the production of high-quality Ohio-grown grapes, including both wine grapes and table grapes.
- B. Support growth and profitability of the Ohio grape industry.

## **Mandatory Requirements:**

Offeror shall provide a Project Manager who has a minimum of five (5) years of experience in coordinating and implementing extension and outreach programs for grape growers.

## **Requirements:**

1. **Cover Letter.** The cover letter must be in the form of a standard business letter and must be signed by an individual authorized to legally bind the Offeror. The cover letter will provide an executive summary of the solution the Offeror plans to provide. The letter must also have the following:
  - a. A statement regarding the Offeror's legal structure (e.g., an Ohio corporation), Federal tax identification number, and principal place of business.
  - b. A list of the people who prepared the proposal, including their titles.
  - c. The name, phone number, fax number, e-mail address, and mailing address of a contact person who has authority to answer questions regarding the proposal.
2. **Offeror's Candidates and Staffing Plan.** The Offeror provides a detailed staffing plan which demonstrates the Offeror's ability to provide adequate staff with necessary skills to complete the Scope of Work within the project timeline. The plan must include Personnel Profiles for each key member of the work team as well as candidates' education, training, qualifications, and proposed work assignments.

The Offeror must provide a staffing plan that identifies all key personnel required to do the project and their responsibilities on the project. The OGIC is seeking a staffing plan that matches the proposed Project personnel and qualifications to the activities and tasks that will be completed on the project. In addition, the plan must have the following information:

- a. A matrix matching each key team member to the staffing requirements in this RFP.

- b. A contingency plan that shows the ability to add more staff if needed to ensure meeting the project's due date(s).
- c. A discussion of the Offeror's ability to provide qualified replacement personnel, for which a minimum of two candidates must be provided.
- d. The Offeror must submit a statement and chart that clearly indicates the time commitment of the proposed work team, including the Project Manager. The Offeror must also include a statement indicating to what extent, if any, the Project Manager may be used on other projects during the term of the Contract. The evaluation committee may reject any proposal that commits the proposed Project Manager to other work during the term of the Contract if the evaluation committee believes that doing so will be detrimental to the Offeror's performance.

**Objectives:** OGIC has the following objectives that it wants this Work to fulfill, and it will be the Contractor's obligation to ensure that the personnel the Contractor provides are qualified to perform their portions of the Work.

All of the following sections of the RFP must be addressed for an Offeror's proposal to be considered:

- A. Conduct site visits to Ohio vineyards.
- B. Communicate industry knowledge and research findings.
- C. Create and disseminate new producer information for grape growers.
- D. Attend related meetings.
- E. Assist in organization of Ohio Grape and Wine Conference (OGWC).
- F. Supply reports.

## **I. Scope of Work**

In March 2023, the Ohio Grape Industries Committee (OGIC) conducted a statewide survey to identify research and outreach priorities of the grape and wine industry. Survey responses are attached.

### **A. Communication and Outreach**

Supplier to develop communication plan addressing fundamental viticulture/grape growing knowledge and production principles and practices as highlighted in the attached FY24-30 Ohio Grape Industries' Extension, Production and Research Prioritization Survey, including dissemination of research findings. Including, but not limited to the following:

1. Communication to be achieved by supplier scheduling events such as workshops and industry field days covering various industry-driven topics.
    - a) Supplier is responsible for securing event facilities.
    - b) Supplier is responsible for presenting materials and/or finding suitable presenters for the specific topic.
  2. Maintain and update grape grower/winemaker interface (i.e., web page, app, etc.) to allow grape growers and winemakers to be up to date on current enology and viticulture industry news.
    - a) Supplier is responsible for updating and maintaining industry news content.
  3. Develop and disseminate annual Ohio wine grape pricing report.
  4. Site Visits
    - a) Site visits to both new and existing vineyards.
    - b) Minimum of 50 different vineyards annually.
  5. Propose methods and frequency of reaching grape growers (i.e. newsletter, site visits, phone/email consultations, workshops, videos, web site, etc.).
  6. In-state travel will be reimbursed up to Travel Allowance at the State's per mile rate at that time, which is set by Ohio's Office of Budget and Management.
    - a) Travel above estimated amount is only permitted with prior approval from the Ohio Department of Agriculture.
    - b) Out of state travel will not be reimbursed.
- B. Co-organize Ohio Grape and Wine Conference (OGWC) for 2026 and 2027.** All indications and recommendations are that the OGWC should be an annual event. This is one of the longest-running meetings of its kind in the country. The 2025 OGWC had more than 200 wine makers and grape growers and 32 trade show exhibitors. The networking

with other producers and education from experts from around the globe make this event extremely important to present new ideas and technologies to our wine producers.

1. Supplier is required to assist in coordinating the OGWC including the technical agenda, selection and invitation of featured speakers, presenting at conference, as well as helping determine wine pairings with food menu.
2. Coordination is done through 2-3 in person meetings per year.
3. OGIC will pay for conference facilities and out-of-state speakers.

C. Quarterly Reports

1. Supplier will submit quarterly reports on extension activities to OGIC.
2. Quarterly reports should provide an update on the projects contained within the scope of work, e.g. number and location of site visits, workshops, etc.

D. Supplier will be required to collaborate with suppliers of the Ohio Grape Industries Enology Consultant Program, Enology Research Program, Ohio Grape Industries Enology Extension Program, and Ohio Grape Industries Viticulture Research Program in order to effectively share research findings via extension to grape growers and winemakers

E. All information collected and materials created in the scope of this contract becomes property of OGIC and can be disseminated to industry stakeholders or to other vendors working on projects related to this industry.

II. Deliverables

A. Reports

1. Quarterly reports  
Due by the 30<sup>th</sup> of the month following quarter end
2. Annual Ohio wine grape pricing report

B. Grape grower/winemaker interface updates

As needed basis

C. Outreach

1. Site visits
2. Workshops
3. Co-organization of Ohio Grape and Wine Conference

**Offeror Responsibilities:**

The Contractor must meet all RFP requirements and perform Work as defined in the Scope of Work.

**Work Plan:**

Offeror must fully describe its current capacity, approach, methods, and specific work steps for completing the Scope of Work on this project. The OGIC encourages responses that demonstrate a thorough understanding of the nature of the project and what the Offeror must do to complete the project satisfactorily. To this end, the Offeror must submit for this section of the proposal the project plan that will be used to create a consistent, coherent management plan of action that will be used to guide the project. The project plan should include detail sufficient to give the OGIC an understanding of the Offeror's knowledge and approach.

The Work Plan must demonstrate an understanding of the requirements of the project as described in the Scope of Work. Describe the methodologies, processes and procedures it will utilize in the implementation and production of the Scope of Work. Provide a comprehensive Work Plan that gives ample description and detail as to how it proposes to accomplish this project and what resources are necessary to meet the deliverables.

The OGIC seeks insightful responses that describe proven state-of-the-art methods. Recommended solutions should demonstrate that the Offeror would be prepared to immediately undertake and successfully complete the required tasks. The Offeror's Work Plan should clearly and specifically identify key personnel assignments. (NOTE: The staffing plan should be consistent with the Work Plans).

Additionally, the Offeror should address potential problem areas, recommended solutions to the problem areas, and any assumptions used in developing those solutions.

**Cost Summary Form**

Ohio Grape Industries Viticulture Extension Program

BUDGET: Up to \$140,000.00 per fiscal year

DESCRIPTION	ESTIMATED ANNUAL USAGE	UNIT OF MEASURE	COST
Quarterly Reports	4	Each	\$
Site Visit	50	Each	\$
Workshops	6	Each	\$
Travel Allowance *will be reimbursed based on the Office of Budget and Management's per mile rate	1	Annual	\$
Co-organization of Ohio Grape and Wine Conference	1	Each	\$
Maintain and update grape grower/winemaker interface - OGEN	1	Each	\$
Develop and disseminate annual Ohio wine grape pricing report	1	Each	\$
Materials and Supplies *reimbursement will be based on actual materials and supplies purchased	1	Annual	\$

All costs must be in U.S. Dollars.

The State will not be responsible for any costs not identified.

There will be no additional reimbursement for travel or other related expenses.

**Narrative:**

In addition to the cost summary form, Offerors shall include a narrative explanation of their costs or assumptions behind those costs provided in their Cost Proposals. The narrative should not exceed 1 page.