



## **Vineyard Expansion Assistance Program**

### **Overview**

The Vineyard Expansion Assistance Program (VEAP) is an incentive program created and funded by the Ohio Grape Industries Committee (OGIC), to encourage the establishment of new or expansion of existing vineyards in Ohio.

### **Purpose**

Due to the small amount of grapes produced in Ohio, many wineries, farmers markets', and retailers are forced to purchase grapes of several different varieties from other states in order to meet production needs. The VEAP is designed to provide a more stable source of high-quality, high-value grapes for Ohio's wineries, farmers' markets, and retail outlets. This program will also allow more Ohio wines to qualify for the Ohio Quality Wine (OQW) program and increase consumer awareness of Ohio's premier wines made from Ohio-grown grapes.

### **Grant Funding**

The program funding will cover only the cost of the grape vines planted. Each grower may apply for **up to** \$3,000 per acre with a maximum of three acres or \$9,000. There is a limited amount of money currently available for this assistance program and the VEAP Working Group will use discretion in order to stimulate as many acres of viable vineyards as possible.

Successful applicants will not be reimbursed under this program until all requirements have been met. Failure to complete all of the requirements set forth in the guidelines will disqualify an applicant from receiving any VEAP funding.

The VEAP Working Group, made up of OGIC members, OGIC Research Subcommittee members, OSU researchers/extension specialists, and other industry stakeholders, will review the applications and make recommendations regarding which growers receive funding under this program to the OGIC. The OGIC will make the final funding decisions.

### **Application Coordinator**

The OGIC will be responsible for distributing the grant application to the prospective applicants. All questions regarding the application should be directed to the OGIC Executive Director, Christy Eckstein.

### **Guidelines**

This program is intended to provide support for those individuals who are serious about making a long-term commitment to grape production. Each grower will have to meet important vineyard management guidelines to qualify for any program funding. This is intended to assure that the grape vines established under this program have the best possible conditions to reach and maintain full production.

To be eligible for funding through the Vineyard Expansion Assistance Program growers must meet the following guidelines:

1. Only growers located in Ohio may apply for the assistance.
2. It is **mandatory** for an applicant to have a business plan with a clear plan for the grapes to be put into the production chain (e.g. have an established winery or pick-your-own table grape operation, a written contract between grower and existing Ohio licensed winery, or business plan for establishing a winery in the future.)
3. Vineyard site selection will be evaluated by the OSU viticulture staff in conjunction with the grower (Appendix C – Pre-Planting Evaluation), after the Vineyard Site Evaluation Requirements checklist is completed (Appendix A.) Each vineyard shall be established in a location conducive to growing grapes.
4. For variety selection, applicants are encouraged to utilize the recommended list of grape varieties (Appendix B), and consult with OSU viticulture staff.
5. At least one acre of vines (minimum of 200 vines per variety) must be planted to be eligible for reimbursement.
6. The planting must occur in spring 2021.
7. The grower must agree to a subsequent vineyard assessment by an OSU viticulture staff during the initial growing season (Appendix D – Post-Planting Evaluation). Growers may request reimbursement at this point.
8. All applications must be **completed and received** by the OGIC by **Wednesday, September 23, 2020**. Late applications will not be considered. You can receive a copy of the application by contacting Christy Eckstein at [christy.eckstein@agri.ohio.gov](mailto:christy.eckstein@agri.ohio.gov)

### **2020-2021 VEAP Timeline**

VEAP applications mailed to prospective growers	August 26, 2020
VEAP applications postmarked and sent to OGIC	September 23, 2020
Initial site visit complete and site visit form sent to OGIC	October 28, 2020
Review of VEAP applications by Working Group	November 4, 2020
OGIC approval of recommended applications	November 11, 2020
Notification to applicants	November 12, 2020

