

Virginia Wine Board Grant Report Template

PROPOSAL

231.0 INSTRUCTIONS

Use this grant report template to communicate progress on your project objectives to the Virginia Wine Board and its administrative agents.

This simplified form focuses attention on the intended and achieved results of the project, including how project results are separately shared with their intended beneficiaries. This report is not the place for a detailed technical discussion of research methodology or results.

- During the proposal stage, applicants complete the first (WHITE) sections to summarize the project's objectives, deliverables, and intended impact plus planned communication to stakeholders.
- At the midpoint of the project (December 1, due December 15), Research and Education grantees complete the center (GRAY) sections to note progress as well as expenditures to date.
- Finally, upon project conclusion (May 31, due June 30), all grantees complete the final (BLUE) sections to describe the project's results and communication, as well as final expenditures.

2.0 GRANTEE INFORMATION

Project Title	Developing a Sustainable Vineyard Certification Program				
Organization	Sustainable Virginia Vineyards				
VWB Proposal #	26-23	Proposal # (if needed)		Award # (if needed)	
Project Lead		Mailing Address		Research	X
Name	Natalie Brinkley	P.O. Box 591		Education	◊
Title	Director	Floyd, VA 24091		Marketing	◊
Email	natalie@sustainablevirginia.org			Recurring?	◊
Phone	(434) 665-8397			Continuing?	X
				Year	1 of 3

3.0 PROJECT OBJECTIVE, PROGRESS, AND IMPACT

3.1 PROPOSAL (February)

Identify the specific deliverable or result that the project will produce. (1-2 sentences or bullets; Narrative section I.b.)

This project will develop a sustainable vineyard certification pilot program.

Summarize the project objective the result serves, including expected impact. (1-3 sentences or bullets; Narrative section I.a and II.a.)

The pilot program we develop will yield a sustainable vineyard certification program which will:

- help Virginia vineyards grow healthy productive vines for long-term profitability
- provide Virginia wineries with marketing benefits and appeal to younger demographics
- elevate Virginia's global prestige

Summarize the project's workplan. (1-5 sentences or bullets; Narrative section III.b.)

Program director Natalie Brinkley will work with ten local vineyards to develop the pilot program.

- Farm visits to learn about each vineyard's own sustainability program
- Compilation of farm visit data and further development of a sustainability workbook
- Establish sustainability standards, including definitions and thresholds.
- Plan the pilot roll-out, expansion, and eventual transition to a full certification program

List the indicators that will show the project has a) made progress on its workplan, b) achieved its objective, and c) reached its audience. (1-5 sentences or bullets; Narrative section III.c.)

The 2025 workplan is divided into discrete sections: summer vineyard visits; late-summer research and data compilation; and post-harvest meetings to formalize pilot structure and standards. Pilot development success indicators include:

- 100% of 2025 pilot development participants re-enlisting to participate in 2026 pilot
- High-satisfaction ratings by development participants in post-season survey
- Broad industry interest in pilot
- Communication plan implemented to promote program both inside and outside industry

3.2 Mid-Year Report (December)—Research and Education Grants only

Provide project indicator status information. Describe project/workplan progress. Include any obstacles the project has encountered and the plan to overcome them.

Project's workplan was executed as outlined above: farm visits occurred in June and July; workbook edits thereafter; and a November in-person meeting of pilot development participants to discuss workbook edits and establish sustainability standards. After an all-day meeting on November 7, a second in-person meeting is scheduled for December 11 to finish the work. Discussion and debate at November meeting were detailed, insightful, and productive.

Because 2025 work is not yet complete, a post-season survey requesting feedback and re-enlistment has not been sent yet.

No obstacles encountered, apart from the inherent complexity of the work. Fortunately, meeting attendees deliberated patiently with each issue until resolution and requested a second meeting to complete the work under the same conditions.

3.3 Final Report (June)

Compare the project to the objective, workplan, and project indicators. Provide (as a link or attachment) the project deliverable or result. Describe the realized or expected impact of the project.

2025 and 2026 farm visits successfully occurred on schedule and within the projected budget. Pilot participants provided sustainability workbook edit suggestions and provided feedback on definitions and standards. Four lengthy in-person meetings and two virtual meetings were conducted to discuss the edit suggestions and feedback. By the end of the grant cycle, the workbook was heavily edited, amended, and reformatted. As it is used through the pilot program, this new, revised workbook will continue to receive edits, updates, and polish.

Decision-making and implementation of standards in the workbook proved more complex than anticipated and took nearly four times as long to accomplish. While work on the communication plan did begin (with a one-pager to circulate to the tasting rooms of participating wineries) further attention to messaging and marketing was paused to preserve our focus for more core priorities. Our group intends to restart development of the comms plan during the pilot's first year with the involvement of outside expertise. The VWMO has expressed interest in assisting us with this task.

Along the same vein, the present urgency of properly beginning the pilot program has supplanted finalizing the schedule of future tasks. The cascade of tasks, decisions, and benchmarks that will

conclude with the 2028 statewide rollout is an ever-present topic at SVV board meetings, and the group has wisely deferred finalizing the schedule for now. Once work begins in earnest during the 2026-27 grant cycle, the group intends to create a roadmap to follow through to 2028.

100% of the pilot development vineyards agreed to re-enlist for the first pilot year. This retention demonstrates the program's perceived value to the participants and its potential industry impact. Pilot participants have all reported interest communicated from growers throughout Virginia, as well as excited interest from trade and media. Although this broad enthusiasm for the sustainability program has not been quantified, anecdotally the ground appears to be quite fertile.

The current draft version of our sustainability workbook and our current draft definition of sustainability will be attached to this report as promised deliverables.

4.0 COMMUNICATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS

4.1 PROPOSAL (February)

Identify the specific audience/s for this project. (1-2 sentences or bullets; Narrative section II.b.)

Vineyards, wineries, wholesalers, retailers, and marketing professionals will all benefit from a Virginia vineyard sustainability certification program. As consumer preferences evolve and sustainability becomes a larger factor in wine buying decisions, sustainability certification will yield marketing advantages to all levels of the Virginia wine industry.

Summarize how you will share project information or results with this audience. For example, will you submit for publication in a peer reviewed journal? Present at a technical conference? Conduct a training? Post on a site?. (1-3 sentences or bullets; Narrative section II.b.)

Initially, presentations may be made at VVA and VWA meetings to announce the pilot kick-off and discuss future plans. Later when the pilot participant pool expands, association presentations would serve to announce the expansion and recruit additional participants. During the pilot development, media attention is not anticipated, but an information packet will be available upon request.

4.2 Mid-Year Report (December)—Research and Education Grants Only

Describe communication with stakeholders to date. Note dates and locations of events or publications, as available/relevant, and cite or estimate the number reached.

Announcement of our pilot program will occur at the next VVA Winter Technical Meeting (Feb 25-26 in Harrisonburg, VA) and the next VWA Annual Conference (March 24-26 in Richmond, VA). During a 15-minute presentation at each meeting, we will outline the goals and timeline of the project and invite interested parties to contact us for more information. Attendance for the VVA meeting is historically 250 persons, and attendance for the VWA meeting is historically 125 persons.

4.3 Final Report (June)

Describe how the technical or material content of the project was or is planned to be shared with stakeholders or beneficiaries, and cite or estimate the number reached. List title, date, type (article,

brochure, presentation, or other), purpose, and estimated audience reached. Provide a copy or link if (when) available for inclusion on the virginiawine.org site.

The SVV project was presented to approximately 250 industry stakeholders at the VVA Annual Meeting in Harrisonburg on February 25, 2026 by SVV President Damien Blanchon, and to approximately 125 industry stakeholders at the VVA Annual Meeting in Richmond on March 24, 2026 by SVV Vice-President Matthieu Finot. Both presentations were received well and generated follow-up communication from several stakeholders.

In addition to these formal presentations, SVV pilot development participants are consistently evangelizing the core messages of the sustainability program, seeding interest throughout the industry.

5.0 BUDGET

Budget Summary			Mid-Year Research/Education only		Final	
Expense Category	5.1 Request	5.2 Awarded	5.3 Spent	5.4 Remaining	5.5 Spent	5.6 Remaining
Personnel						
Fringe Benefits						
Contractual	\$9500.00	\$9500.00	\$5322.50	\$4177.50	\$9135.00	\$365.00
Travel	\$2500.00	\$2500.00	\$2132.00	\$368.00	\$2408.28	\$91.72
Supplies						
Equipment (Rental)						
Other						
Total	\$12000.00	\$12000.00	\$7454.50	\$4545.50	\$11543.28	\$456.72