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Washington State Wine Commission Awarded Grant to Expand Trade Education and Drive Domestic Wine Sales

Specialty Crop Block Grant awards $249K over three-year period

SEATTLE (October 22, 2026)—The Washington State Wine Commission (WSWC) has been awarded a $249,000 Specialty Crop Block Grant to expand its signature immersive wine education experience known as Road Trip Washington Wine, designed to boost domestic sales.

Funded through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Specialty Crop Block Grant Program and administered through the Washington State Department of Agriculture, the three-year grant will support educational visits for more than 60 influential U.S. wine trade professionals, including key on-premises and retail outlets. Through firsthand experiences in Washington's vineyards and wineries, participants will gain a deeper understanding of the state's wines, growing regions, and the people behind them.

"Research shows that 80 percent of wine sales are influenced by recommendations from a trusted source," said Kristina Kelley, Executive Director of the Washington State Wine Commission. "By bringing influential wine professionals directly to our state, we are creating meaningful connections that translate into greater awareness, stronger advocacy, and ultimately more sales of Washington wine."

As the Washington wine industry navigates a challenging economic environment, the WSWC continues to seek alternative funding sources and strategic partnerships to sustain key programs and maximize the impact of industry assessment dollars. This grant represents an important investment in trade education and the long-term growth of Washington wine.

"Finding alternative funding sources is an important part of our strategy to maximize resources while continuing to deliver programs that benefit Washington wineries and growers," Kelley added. "When we bring wine professionals to Washington, they leave with a lasting connection to our state and the people who make our wines. Our goal is for every participant to return home inspired by our industry's stories and equipped with the knowledge, confidence, and relationships to recommend and sell more Washington wine."

The grant funds programming over a three-year period beginning in October 2026, strengthening the WSWC's efforts to build relationships with key decision makers in domestic markets.

About the Washington State Wine Commission:
The Washington State Wine Commission (WSWC) represents every licensed winery and wine grape grower in Washington State. Guided by an appointed board, the mission of the WSWC is to drive growth of Washington Wine through Marketing, Communications, and Viticulture & Enology Research. Funded almost entirely by the industry through assessments based on grape and wine sales, WSWC is a state government agency, established by the legislature in 1987. To learn more, visit www.washingtonwine.org.

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