Frequently Asked Questions

**Our Mission:** On behalf of the State of Washington and its wineries and growers, the mission of Washington State Wine is to raise awareness and demand for wines and wineries through marketing and education while supporting viticulture and enology research to drive industry growth.

**Our Marketing Strategy:**
Washington State Wine has helped advance the awareness of Washington State wine for 27 years. In 2012, we launched a new five-year strategic plan (2013-2017), which shifted our primary target audience from consumers to trade and media. This bold approach focuses primarily on influencers in the industry.

**Frequently Asked Questions:**

**Q:** Explain the funding you collect each month from the Washington State Liquor Control Board (WSLCB). What part of my check goes to Washington State Wine?

**A:** Washington State Wine collects $0.08/gallon (or $0.016/bottle) on wine sold; $0.02/gallon (or $0.004/bottle) is allocated to the Wine Science Center project. In addition to that funding source, the Commission also collects $12/ton on wine grapes; $2/ton is allocated to the Wine Science Center project. International programs are funded primarily by USDA grants.

**Q:** What do assessment fees pay for?

**A:** Assessments support the implementation of Washington State Wine’s five-year strategic plan. The plan has four key strategic pillars: Increase Trade and Media Awareness, Strengthen Industry Unity, actively support Wine Tourism Development and Support Education and Research.

**Q:** I’m a small winery and don’t participate in most Washington State Wine events; can you give me a specific example of how the assessments I pay benefit me?

**A:** A 1,000-case winery pays approximately $190 per year to Washington State Wine. From that amount, approximately $142 is allocated to Washington State Wine’s general budget and approximately $48 is allocated to the Wine Science Center project. Assuming the winery doesn’t participate in any Washington State Wine events (Taste Washington, 20something, etc.) The winery can benefit from a listing on the Commission’s website and tour guide, as well as our public relations program, which focuses on getting Washington State wines featured in local and national publications. Also, 110,000 copies of our Washington State Wine tour guide are distributed annually, and our website, www.washingtonwine.org, receives more than 200,000 sessions per year (approximately 13,000 unique visitors per month). Additionally, Washington State Wine sends out weekly and monthly newsletters with industry updates and opportunities, mails targeted e-blasts with upcoming event information and manages the industry section of our website; all are valuable resources available to all wineries and growers.

**Q:** Can you explain the funding that is going toward the Washington State University Wine Science Center project?

**A:** Cutting-edge viticultural and enological research is essential to build a world-class reputation for Washington State wines and to sustain the growth of our industry over the long term. In 2011, the Washington State Wine board voted to pledge $7.4 million over 10 years to the Wine Science Center project; or $0.004/bottle and $2/ton of grapes sold. Education and research are key components of our mission and our five-year strategic plan. Washington State has unique viticulture characteristics and challenges, which require us to strategically invest for the long-term viability of all wineries in the state.
Q: Why is Washington State Wine focused primarily on trade and media?
A: Focusing efforts on trade and media leverages assessment dollars to get the best return on marketing investment by focusing on the most influential people (influence the influencers). Trade and media-focused programs will strengthen advocacy of Washington State wines and positively influence the consumer buying process. For our target audience, trade and media, our vision is for those influencers to recognize that Washington State wine has a reputation for premium wines with superior quality across a range of varietals, and a distinctive character exhibiting a unique balance of old world and new world.

Q: Does Washington State Wine only support large wineries?
A: Washington State Wine supports and works on behalf of all wineries in Washington State, regardless of size or business plan. All of our programs are designed to increase the awareness of and demand for the Washington State Wine “brand.” To ensure we fairly represent all wineries, the Washington State Wine Board is composed of wine producers and grape growers, both large and small, representing both Western and Eastern Washington.

Q: Why is Washington State Wine focusing on expanding awareness of Washington State wines in other states around the U.S. and overseas?
A: We all want the Washington State wine industry to be recognized locally, nationally and internationally for superior quality; this recognition benefits all wineries and growers in Washington State and is essential for the future of our industry. As a marketing agency, Washington State Wine is tasked with increasing awareness of the Washington State Wine “brand.” To be successful in the long term, we must take our message beyond the borders of Washington State.

Q: Explain your Target Market campaigns. Why do you target certain markets and not others? Why don’t you target more or fewer markets?
A: There are several factors that play into our target market selection, including demographics, regulatory environment, trade receptivity and industry feedback. Our budget (and staff size) requires us to be disciplined in selecting each market. As such, we generally conduct programs in one national target market at a time. We are constantly and proactively seeking out our next target markets as well as following up and revisiting prior markets we have been to in the past. A prolonged commitment to a market has proven to be very effective time and time again.

Q: Can you tell me more about the funds allocated to the national budget?
A: The national budget not only includes our Target Market campaigns and trade tastings in other states, but it also accounts for our inbound trade and media trips held in Washington, such as Road Trip Washington Wine and national media hosting. It’s extremely important that our target audience discovers and experiences Washington State, our wineries, our vineyards and the passionate people in our industry firsthand. We also conduct local trade and media outreach and support local programs and events put on by regional/AVA associations and local tourism organizations (convention and visitor bureaus, for example).

Q: How does Washington State Wine promote cider makers since they also pay into the assessment?
A: Cider makers are featured on our website and tour guide, and can participate in our programs just like any winery. While we do not have any programs focused primarily on cider makers, we do include a special section in our tour guide, as well as on the floor of Taste Washington, dedicated solely to cider makers to help promote that beverage category. The Wine Advisory Committee (WAC), of Washington State Wine also funds research projects that support cider production.