

## Washington State Grape and Wine Research Program

### 2026-27 Request for Proposals

All applications will be submitted and uploaded through the [Washington Wine Research Grant Portal](#). You will need to create a profile before submitting.

All new proposals must go through a preproposal process – **deadline is November 7, 2025.**

Continuing proposals – **deadline is January 23, 2026.**

Contact [mhansen@washingtonwine.org](mailto:mhansen@washingtonwine.org) with questions.

Washington State Grape and Wine Research Program	
<b>About</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Competitive grant program administered by Washington State University.</li> <li>Supported by funding from WSU, State taxes collected on all wine sold, Auction of WA Wines, Washington State Wine Commission.</li> <li>New proposals must apply as Preproposal. Preproposal deadline: <b>November 7, 2025.</b> Preproposals will be invited for full application submittal.</li> <li>Continuing and full new proposal deadline: <b>January 23, 2026.</b></li> <li>Proposals are reviewed by the Wine Research Advisory Committee, a subcommittee of the Washington State Wine Commission; Committee funding recommendations approved by Washington State Wine Commission Board of Directors.</li> <li>Principal investigator (or Co-PI) must have connection/collaboration with WSU as funds are administered by WSU.</li> </ul>
<b>Eligible Projects</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grants will be awarded to research relevant to Washington viticulture and enology, with overall goal of improving Washington wine quality. <i>See the 2025-26 Washington State Research Priorities at the end of this RFA.</i></li> <li>Collaborative, multi-disciplinary projects are encouraged.</li> <li>Proposals will be confidentially held in the Research Portal and will not be returned.</li> <li>No limit to number of proposals submitted by each PI.</li> </ul>
<b>Review Process</b>	<p>All proposals (new and continuing) will be presented at annual Research Review on <b>February 24-25, 2026.</b> Teleconferencing available for those unable to attend. Industry members attending Review will rank proposals for importance; Wine Research Advisory Committee will make funding recommendations for approval by Wine Commission Board.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All proposals will be held confidential.</li> <li>Funding announcement will be made in April.</li> </ul>
<b>Grant Criteria</b>	<p>The Wine Research Advisory Committee will review pre-proposals and invite for full submittal based on the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relevance and importance to Washington wine industry (See Research Priorities at end of RFP).</li> <li>Budget appropriate to meet objectives.</li> <li>Potential for success.</li> </ul> <p>Consideration of continuing proposals will be contingent on receipt of mid-year and annual/progress reports from investigators funded the previous year(s) and based on progress documented, as well as the continuing merit and promise of accomplishment.</p>

<b>Washington State Grape and Wine Research Program</b>	
<b>Funding</b>	<p>WSU-Ag Research Center Grants Coordinator is program administrator and handles grant accounting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funds are annually deposited in WSU research accounts and are available after July 1.</li> <li>• Availability of future funding is contingent upon receipt of satisfactory progress report and final report.</li> </ul> <p>Funds for multi-year projects are approved year by year, based on progress reports, and can be up to four years in length if a PhD. candidate is justified. Funding support for research vineyard maintenance and research winemaking can be up to five years.</p>
<b>Budget Request</b>	<p>Continuation of projects must be justified annually. Prepare sufficiently detailed budget that reflects request for first year and projection for entire project.</p> <p>Indicate budget allocation (percentage) for each proposed objective.</p> <p>For projects that include winemaking, refer to the Research Winemaking Guidelines at the end of this RFA.</p>
<b>Length</b>	<p>Project length can be from one to five years, depending on project type. A project can be four years if a PhD. student is justified. Research Winemaking and Research Vineyard support projects can be five years. Generally, projects are two to three years in length.</p>
<b>Budget Limitations</b>	<p>Indirect costs/overhead charges are not paid. Awards cannot be used for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tuition for graduate students who qualify for WSU’s ABD Waiver.</li> <li>• Travel not pertaining to the project or travel to Research Review. Travel for students to scientific conferences is not covered the first year of the project, but can be in later years if student is presenting or displaying poster. International conference travel for student presentations is negotiable but must be included in budget.</li> </ul>
<b>Reporting</b>	<p>Wine Research Advisory Committee members assigned as Lead for each funded project will serve as industry liaison for the PI. Mid-year updates should be shared with the WRAC Lead and uploaded in the research portal.</p> <p>Key reporting dates are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For continued funding of ongoing projects, annual reports are due <b>January 23, 2026</b>, and must be submitted with the continuing proposal.</li> <li>• Mid-year interim update (paragraph summary of progress) due to Lead and research portal on <b>October 1</b>.</li> <li>• Final report due <b>June 30</b> of the project’s last year.</li> </ul> <p>Submit mid-year, continuing and final reports to the Research Grant Portal.</p>
<b>Outreach</b>	<p>Industry outreach and education plan should include presentation by PI (or designee), conducted in person or remotely, for the Washington wine industry at events including WAVE research seminar and or WineVit (Washington Winegrape Growers annual convention). Research posters and student attendance of projects in their second or final year may be required for WAVE events.</p> <p>The annual progress and final report will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approximately 500-word-summary (in lay terms) of the project (overview, key findings, specific accomplishments, how results may be used in the vineyard or winery, etc.). Final summary due with final report deadline.</li> <li>• Summary will be used to communicate progress with shareholders and may be posted on the Wine Commission’s website, newsletters or WSU newsletters.</li> <li>• Annual or final report must use report template. Final report will be posted on Wine Commission’s website.</li> </ul>

<b>Washington State Grape and Wine Research Program</b>	
<b>Publicity</b>	<p>All publicity/media/posters, etc. produced related to this project must acknowledge the funding sources:</p> <p><i>This research project of the Washington State Grape and Wine Research Program was funded by Washington State University, Auction of Washington Wines and all Washington State wine grape growers and wineries through the Washington State Wine Commission.</i></p>
<b>Submissions</b>	<p>Preproposal applications must be submitted through the Research Grant Portal by November 7, 2025.</p> <p>Invited full applications or continuing applications must be submitted through the Research Grant Portal by January 23, 2026.</p> <p>No exceptions made for late applications.</p> <p>Questions: <a href="mailto:mhansen@washingtonwine.org">mhansen@washingtonwine.org</a></p>



## Washington State Viticulture and Enology

### Research Priorities July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026

#### Enology

- **Winery Sustainability** – Reduce winery energy usage. Develop methods for large and small wineries to recycle, reuse, reduce, repurpose harvest biomass, winery wastewater and winerywaste, including glass wine bottles.
- **Fermentation Management** – Yeast and bacteria impacts on fermentation, sensory properties; control of microbiological spoilage; nutrient management practices; management at winery of diseased/disordered fruit; fermentation monitoring practices (cap extraction, process control, real-time monitoring methods), phenolic management, rapid analysis of juice, must, wine chemistries.
- **Wine Aroma and Flavor Compounds** – Optimize sensory compounds in wine; management of environmental issues impacting wine quality (smoke exposure, frost exposure); management of vineyard derived sulfur off aromas.
- **Wine Maturation and Stabilization** – Improve protein and cold stabilization to minimize flavor scalping, color loss and reduce energy usage; microbial stabilization, impact of filtration options on wine sensory qualities, fining methods, calcium instability, sulfur dioxide minimalization and management.

#### Viticulture

- **Vineyard Sustainability** - Improved vineyard floor management practices; soil fertility and carbon sequestration in vineyard soils, nutrient management, biochar for optimal vine and soil health; grafting and rootstock management and selection.
- **Vineyard Production, Efficiency and Profitability** – Improve water use efficiency/water savings and water quality to optimize wine quality; canopy management for mechanization; management of berry/sour shrivel.
- **Pest Management** – Detect and manage grapevine viruses and vectors; sustainable management strategies for all pests of economic importance (grape mealybug, spider mites, phylloxera, fungal diseases, nematodes, crown gall, weeds, vertebrate); management of trunk diseases.
- **Climate Impacts on Site/Viticulture** – Develop optimum guidelines for light and heat exposure on fruit; understand impact of climate variability on viticulture (phenology, ripening, pest and diseases); winter trunk injury and secondary infections (crown gall); develop decision support system for inversion, frost protection.
- **Mechanization/Precision** – Develop, evaluate mechanized/precision tools that reduce reliance on hand labor in vineyard or winery (crop estimation tool, canopy and crop management, pest management, sorting, MOG removal, cellar tasks).

#### Emerging Issues

- Unforeseen viticulture and enology threats, problems or research opportunities
- Industry education needs (extension bulletins, etc.)
- Comparative analysis of Washington State viticulture practices to other regions (e.g., sustainable pest and disease management systems)

## Research Winemaking and Harvest Guidelines

The Washington wine industry had a major role in helping construct the Ste. Michelle Wine Estates WSU Wine Science Center (WSC) in Richland, a state-of-the-art research facility. The WSC is a catalyst for cooperation, communication, and synergy among all disciplines of research. **All research wines will be made at the WSC.**

The following guidelines have been developed for research projects with a winemaking component.

Dr. James Harbertson, Associate Professor of Enology, WSU (509) 372-7506, [jfharbertson@wsu.edu](mailto:jfharbertson@wsu.edu), is responsible for making research wines at the WSC in Richland. Sam Keirse is research winemaker: [lskeirse@wsu.edu](mailto:lskeirse@wsu.edu). Please contact Jim to discuss winemaking objectives, volume, costs, coordination and scheduling.

Please contact Jim or Sam to schedule delivery of grapes to the WSC. Morning delivery—when grapes are cool—is encouraged to avoid having to refrigerate fruit overnight.

Please use bins that are designed for use with a forklift rotator for ease of transferring fruit into crush equipment.

### **Winemaking Fees**

Costs for making research wine at the WSC should be included in Jim Harbertson's research winemaking budget and as a line item in the proposed research project. This will help the review committee understand the total cost of a proposed project, while still being able to keep all winemaking expenditures in Jim Harbertson's account.

Fees are determined based on analytics and type of winemaking requested but generally cost: \$500 per lot or replicate.

Researcher will receive approximately 2-3 cases of wine approximately 12 to 18 months after crush for red wine, less than 12 months for white wine.

Data provided from winemaking include information on TA (total acidity), pH, EtoH (ethanol), RS (residual sugar), and malic acid. For red wine, color and tannin measurements can be provided if requested. We are working to have a means to collect sensory data in the future.

Data can be provided in Dropbox as it is generated and will be provided prior to the researcher's need for progress or final reporting purposes.

### **Grape Harvest Protocols:**

A set of industry targets below are shared to encourage harvest and winemaking practices that most closely follow commercial practices. Please use the following as targets when picking grapes for winemaking:

- Whites

- Brix from 21-23, with target of 22.5 (23 for Chardonnay)
  - pH below 3.6
  - Winemaker will water back lots when greater than 22.5-23 Brix.
- Reds
    - Brix from 23-26, with target of 23.5 to 24.5 Brix
    - pH should be below 3.8
    - Winemaker will water back lots greater than 23.5-24.5 Brix.

**Volume Needed for Winemaking:**

Research fermentation tanks at the WSC are designed to handle the equivalent of 300 pounds per lot (replicate). 300 pounds of fruit equate to around 40 liters of wine, which is about 30 liters after racking. *Research trials should be designed with that in mind so that enough fruit is generated for winemaking.*

It is recognized that not all trials can accommodate such volume. Each project will be considered individually and there may be special circumstances that allow deviation from the 300-pound per replicate requirement but discussion with Jim to explore other options must take place before the project is approved.

An option for projects that don't need full scale winemaking is analysis of juice for basic grape quality components (Brix, pH, TA, and other) by a commercial laboratory.

Please discuss your plans with the WSU winemaking team and outline your winemaking needs in your research proposal.

**Washington State Wine Commission Research Grant Program  
ANNUAL PROGRESS/FINAL REPORT FORMAT  
2026-27 FUNDING CYCLE**

*Annual progress reports are limited to 20 pages, including graphs, tables, and figures. Please do not exceed this limit. There are no limitations on the length of final reports. Use 12-point Times New Roman, 1" margins left, right and top and a 1.5" margin at the bottom that includes page numbers.*

*The proposal should include 9 sections. Indicate each section with bold titles as shown below and include the requested details. Please delete instructional text from your report.*

1. **Summary:** On a separate page and in approximately 500 words, provide a concise summary in lay terms of the specific accomplishments for the past year funded. (For final reports, the summary should speak to the project.) The summary should include the project title and principal investigator's name listed at the top. **This summary is an essential part of any research project and will be used to communicate progress to stakeholders.** Summaries for may be posted on the Washington State Wine Commission web site and included in research newsletters.
2. **Annual or Final Report:** Clearly indicate whether this is an annual progress report for a continuing project or final report. The final report should summarize all years of the project.
3. **Project Title:**
4. **Principal Investigator/Cooperator(s):** Name, institutional affiliation, address, phone number and e-mail.
5. **Objective(s) and Experiments Conducted to Meet Stated Objective(s):** The report objectives should match the objectives in the original proposal.
6. **Summary of Major Research Accomplishments and Results by Objective**
7. **Outreach and Education Efforts - Presentations of Research:** List of journals, publications, reports, speeches, posters and other presentations developed for this research. Describe your strategy for communicating research results to end-users and stakeholders.
8. **Research Success Statements:** In a few sentences, describe in detail how your research program benefits the viticulture industry. For example, "This research has provided vintners/growers with the essential tools to control..." *These statements are different from the project summary in that they specifically indicate how the research benefits industry rather than summarizing progress.*
9. **Funds Status:** Include a general summary of how funds were spent. (Copy of budget tables is acceptable if accurate.)

Submit your annual report (if appropriate) to the [Washington Wine Research Portal](#) by **January 23, 2026**.

Final reports are due on **June 30** of the project's final year and should be upload to the portal.

Questions? Contact Melissa Hansen, Research Program Director of the Washington State Wine Commission at [mhansen@washingtonwine.org](mailto:mhansen@washingtonwine.org) .

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## WINE

**Washington State Grape and Wine Research Grant Program (WSU)  
Washington State Wine Commission Research Grant Program**

NEW AND CONTINUING PROPOSAL  
FY 2026-27

Upload to the [Washington Wine Research Grant Portal](#) by January 23, 2026

*The proposal text (sections 1-9) is limited to 8 pages. This limit does not include the budget support summary, budget page, and literature cited (sections 10-12). Use 12-point Times New Roman, 1" margins left, right and top and a 1.5" margin at the bottom that includes page numbers. The proposal should include 12 sections. Indicate each section with bold titles as shown below and include the requested details. Please delete instructional text.*

**1. Project Title:**

**2. Principal Investigator(s):** Name, institutional affiliation, address, phone number and e-mail.

**3. Cooperator(s):** Include the role of each cooperator; ensure they know of their proposed participation.

**4. Objective(s) of Proposed Research or Outreach Project:** Logically arrange and prioritize the objectives.

**5. Justification and Importance of Proposed Research or Outreach Project:** Describe the previous work that has been done to date and the importance of the proposed research and/or outreach effort to the grape and wine industry, or any other industry where grapes could be utilized.

**6. Procedures to Accomplish Objective(s):** For each objective, discuss the procedures you propose to employ. For research projects, be specific enough to discuss plot design, anticipated statistical analyses, methods used in the experiment, and parameters of data collection. For outreach projects, clearly explain your plans to get information to end-users.

**7. Timetable for Project:** Construct a timetable showing when the research to accomplish objectives will be initiated and completed.

**8. Present Outlook and Estimated Success in Accomplishing Objective(s):**

**9. Outreach and Education:** Please explain your strategy for communicating research results to end-users and stakeholders.

**10. Budget Support Summary by Objective(s):** It is critical to prepare a sufficiently detailed budget narrative for all categories, i.e., personnel, benefits, supplies, etc. The proposed budget narrative should have headings that match the respective budget categories. Be specific: materials and supplies would include a list of anticipated purchases, their uses and individual costs; travel must include who, where, how long, costs for lodging/per diem, etc. Failure to provide details on each budget item may

seriously delay or reduce funding.

Along with the budget narrative, list grant program to which this proposal is being submitted (Northwest Small Fruit Research, American Vineyard Foundation, Oregon Wine Board, etc.).

**11. Total Budget Request:** Prepare a budget that reflects your needs for the length of the proposed project for up to four years. If the project requires a PhD. student, funding may be approved for up to four years. Funding is granted on a year-to-year basis, and continuation of projects must be justified annually. Use the following budget page format:

	% Time on Project	Year 1 FY 27 Request 2026-2027	Year 2 FY 28 Request 2027-2028	Year 3 FY 29 Request 2028-2029	Year 4 FY 30 Request 2029-2030
Personnel					
Salaries					
Benefits					
Wages					
Benefits					
Equipment (itemize over \$1,000)					
Supplies and Expenses					
Travel					
Trips/Purpose/Costs					
Plot Fees					
Miscellaneous					
Winemaking/Other					
Total (include all costs)					
<b>TOTAL REQUESTED</b>					

\* Please provide annual salary amount.

Indirect costs (including overhead) cannot be covered by WSWC.

**12. Literature Cited:** Include pertinent references. References are not included in the 8-page limit for proposals but should follow the body of the proposal as a separate section. Since the proposal process is conducted online, hyperlinks allow the review committee direct access to cited literature. Please check to make sure they work before submitting a proposal.

**Institutional Signatures:** Acceptable institutional signatures are those of the department chair, Office of Research, or other person who reviews your research budget. The signature page is not included in the 8-page limit for proposals.

Submit proposals by **January 23, 2026** to the [Washington Wine Research Portal](#). Questions? Contact the Washington State Wine Commission’s Research Program Director, Melissa Hansen: [mhansen@washingtonwine.org](mailto:mhansen@washingtonwine.org).