



December 1, 2025

To: Deans, Directors and Interested Grape and Wine Researchers

From: Paul Dray - Program Manager, American Vineyard Foundation

Subject: Request for Research Project Proposals (RFP)

The American Vineyard Foundation (AVF) is soliciting research proposals for FY 2026-2027.

The AVF is also working cooperatively with the following commodity groups and funding agencies to maximize the available research funds: the California Table Grape Commission (CTGC), the California Grape Rootstock Improvement Commission (CGRIC), California Grape Rootstock Research Foundation (CGRRF), the CDFA Pierce's Disease and Glassy-winged Sharpshooter Board (PD/GWSS), the Oregon Wine Board (OWB), and the Washington Winegrape Commission (WWC). While we continue to collaborate with all the named groups concerning coordinated research funding, the AVF, CGRIC, CGRRF, OWB, and PD/GWSS will be using the Unified Grant Management for Viticulture & Enology, (UGMVE) website for the 2026-2027 funding cycle, and the remaining agencies will use other websites to post their RFP's. The AVF accepts all wine industry related research grant proposals regardless of region but does not fund PD/GWSS related work. (*see specifics below under Research on Pierce's Disease heading*)

For AVF, you can access this RFP and accompanying attachments via the web at:

<http://fps.ucdavis.edu/vit>

The deadline for 2026-27 project proposals and annual progress reports is January 31st, 2026.

Documents must be submitted online at: <http://fps.ucdavis.edu/vit>

Funding announcements will be made in May 2026.

AVF Research Priorities and 2024 Survey

The AVF is fully committed to addressing the industry's top research priorities. The AVF's 2024 Research Priority Survey identified the following key areas for focus:

- Viruses – Red Blotch, Leafroll, Pierce's Disease, and their vectors
- Changing Environment – reduce the impact of heat events and water stress on vine yield and quality
- Vineyard Sustainability – reduced water use while maintaining yield and quality; improved input efficiency – nutrients; reduction of labor requirements and chemicals
- Wine sensory to chemistry relationships – identifying & managing impact compounds
- Improved winemaking practices – meeting evolving wine style trends
- Winery sustainability – reduction of wastewater, chemicals, & environmental impact

We encourage researchers to develop proposals that address these priorities. To examine the detailed results of this year's survey, please go to www.avf.org and click the link to "Survey Results".

The AVF is committed to employing the recommendations of its review committees to fund research projects that attempt to solve viticulture and enological problems, improve grape and wine quality, focus on sustainable strategies and provide pathways for dissemination of research results to the grape and wine community.

The research priority themes are broad, interdisciplinary, and oriented toward fostering the development of industry 'deliverables' from the research effort. At the same time, AVF recognizes that many proposals will likely be narrower in scope or focus due to logistical and funding constraints.

Format for Proposals & Reports:

All participating funding agencies require the same format for both proposals & reports. This facilitates the use of the Unified Grant Management for Viticulture & Enology (UGMVE) website for researchers, reviewers, and stakeholders. Please find the guidelines for these formats on the UGMVE website when you log-in to <http://fps.ucdavis.edu/vit>. The current version for the FY 2026-27 cycle will be posted December 1, 2025. Please follow these guidelines carefully – page limits for proposals and reports should be closely followed.

Special Requirements:

- Proposals must include a description of how the research would address industry priorities.
- Proposals should include an explanation of how information developed during the study will be communicated to end users through outreach & education programs.
- For continuing project proposals, progress reports must include a listing of education and outreach activities engaged in during the annual cycle of the project. (*see section of education & outreach guidelines below*).
- Proposals shall not exceed 8 pages in length. Reviewers will be instructed not to read beyond page 8 of each proposal.
- Principal Investigators should be aware that proposal information and progress reports are widely disseminated and should therefore avoid including any confidential or proprietary information not intended to be available to a broad audience of industry professionals who review AVF proposals.

Education & Outreach Guidelines:

Regular education and outreach efforts are highly valued to keep the industry well informed with research progress and results. These efforts may include but are not limited to: articles in trade publications, presentations at venues such as Unified Symposium, ASEV, the UCD Wine & Wine Grape Research Seminar, Wine Business Monthly Trade Shows, “Research On the Road Seminars,” webinars and other online communications. The level of PI education and outreach activity will be taken into consideration when AVF Review Committees are evaluating proposals for continuing projects and research in progress.

Review Process:

Each proposal received by the AVF will be evaluated by a mix of industry and scientific reviewers in one of the following disciplines: 1) Breeding & Genetics; 2) Cultural Practices; 3) Disease & Pest Mgmt.; 4) Enology; 5) Outreach & Education. The AVF will use these five review panels to examine and evaluate the proposals and annual reports. Each of these committees will be comprised of a diverse set of industry and academic reviewers with technical expertise from various regions of the country and grape industry sectors (juice, wine, table grapes, etc.).

Evaluation criteria for research proposals include the importance of the proposed work with respect to industry & AVF priorities, scientific merit, validity of project experimental design, adequacy of personnel expertise and facilities to ensure successful completion of stated objectives, and compliance with the proposal format instructions including length and completeness.

Education & Outreach projects will be reviewed for merit and industry priority by a panel consisting of industry stakeholders using criteria including applicability, relevance and utility of the project to multiple users, appropriateness of budget to meet stated objectives, adequacy of personnel and facilities to ensure successful completion of stated objectives, and compliance with the proposal format instructions.

Research on Pierce’s Disease:

With the creation of the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) Pierce’s Disease Control Board and the anticipated continuation of the University of California Pierce’s Disease Research Program, the AVF will not accept proposals dealing with research on Pierce’s Disease and Glassy-winged Sharpshooter for the 2026-2027 funding cycle.

AVF Proposal, Progress Report, & Final Report Specifics:

Please adhere to the guidelines found at the Unified Grant Management website when submitting your proposal(s), annual progress report(s), and project conclusion final reports. An annual progress report is required for projects funded during the 2025-2026 cycle which are being resubmitted for continued funding. The report must detail the experiments undertaken during 2025-2026 research funding year and the major findings or accomplishments emerging from the work. The progress report must be attached to the continuing project proposal submission. *Please note: the AVF does not pay overhead costs sometimes also referred to as indirect costs or facilities & administrative costs.* As stated, the due date for annual progress report(s) and proposal(s) is January 31, 2026. Upon completion of the study, a final report must be submitted prior to distribution of final project funding.

AVF Equipment Purchase Policy:

The American Vineyard Foundation has established a policy, subject to revision in future research proposal requests (RFP's), addressing the use of AVF funds for the purchase of analytical equipment valued at \$5,000 or more based on the following criteria:

- The request for the purchase of equipment must be directly linked with research proposals or priorities supported by the AVF.
- The equipment must be available to multiple users and said equipment users must be identified and their use of the equipment explained in accompanying letters of support.
- Should the AVF approve one or more proposals requesting the purchase of equipment, the AVF will match funds contributed by a researcher or institution up to \$25,000 pursuant to the documentation of available matching funds by the requesting entity. Should the AVF approve an equipment purchase and the matching researcher or institutional funds are subsequently not available, the AVF's funding of said purchase shall be withdrawn.
- Should the researcher desire to purchase a specific piece of equipment required for a research proposal also submitted to the AVF for funding, the request for the purchase of said equipment shall be submitted as a separate and stand-alone project.
- Equipment acquisition matching funds shall be approved by the AVF Board of Directors.

Submitting Proposals to Multiple Agencies:

Each funding agency has its own RFP which states its funding priorities. Researchers are strongly advised to obtain current RFPs from each agency or from the UGMVE website, and apply to as many agencies as appropriate for their project. Funding agencies will work together to coordinate multiple agency funding when appropriate. **Please also note that the AVF will not accept proposals from researchers who have outstanding progress and / or final reports.**

Proposal deadline for submission is January 31, 2026.

Proposals must be submitted online by January 31, 2026 at the Unified Grant Management for Viticulture and Enology website, <http://fps.ucdavis.edu/vit> - submission site opens December 1, 2025. ***Hard copy submission of proposals to the AVF is not required.***

Please forward this information to those in your organization who may be interested. Thank you again for your interest in working with the American Vineyard Foundation!

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