

California Walnut Commission
Global Health and Nutrition Research Program

FAQs for the 2026 Request for Proposals (RFP)

General Questions

Can I submit more than one Letter of Intent (LOI)?

Yes. Each investigator may submit up to two LOIs.

Is it necessary for an American investigator to be part of a research proposal?

No. We welcome and support international investigators.

Do applicants need prior research experience with walnuts or other nuts to be competitive?

No. What matters most is that the research team demonstrates clear expertise related to the proposed topic. For example, if the project involves a feeding study or human trial, experience conducting randomized controlled trials (RCTs) or feeding studies is expected. Additionally, including a nutrition expert—such as a registered dietitian—strengthens applications due to the nature of the research, which might include recipe/menu development, dietary counseling, and/or dietary analysis.

Can a post-doctoral scholar submit a proposal?

Yes. Post-doctoral scholars are welcome to apply. However, proposals should demonstrate sufficient expertise and include clear faculty member involvement, such as a defined role or percentage contribution on the grant, to ensure appropriate support for the project.

Where can I learn about past projects funded by CWC?

You can find all publications at <https://walnuts.org/health-professionals/health-research/>

What is the relationship between CWC and investigators?

CWC is committed to supporting high-quality, unbiased research and ensuring transparency throughout the process. All proposals are carefully reviewed by external experts and our Scientific Advisory Board to maintain scientific integrity. Researchers have full control over study design and execution. We require that all completed studies be submitted for publication, regardless of the results, and funding is never tied to study outcomes. In addition, researchers must disclose CWC support in all publications and presentations.

Grant Priorities

What does “healthy aging” mean in this RFP?

Healthy aging research is not limited to older adults. It also focuses on identifying early

markers of aging in younger populations, such as adolescents and young adults. These markers can include metabolic changes, cognitive function, sleep quality, and other indicators that predict long-term health outcomes. Studying these factors early helps researchers understand how to prevent age-related decline before it begins, supporting lifelong health and wellness.

Do I need to address more than one topic or more than one priority population?

No. Addressing one priority topic or population is sufficient.

Can I submit a proposal for a different study population than the priority groups?

Yes. However, to be considered meritorious under this RFP, proposals should present a unique or novel angle not widely covered in existing research, such as cognitive markers, sleep quality, or mental wellness. Proposals targeting adolescents (ages 12–19), young adults (ages 20–35), or women of childbearing age will be most competitive under the 2026 RFP.

Questions About Human Trials

How has dietary compliance been monitored in past feeding studies?

Compliance has been validated using biomarkers such as blood ALA, urinary urolithins, urinary 6-sulfatoxymelatonin, and plasma oxylipins. Strategies to enhance compliance include providing products, scheduling visits or calls, offering dietary counseling, and sharing recipes. Adherence has been tracked using digital apps, check-off calendars, package counts, and weighing unused food.

How is the walnut dose usually identified for human studies?

Walnut dose is typically specified in grams (28–56 grams per day) or as a percentage of total energy intake (about 15%). The dose should be consistent with package sizes and product availability in the country and appropriate for the intended outcome.

What form of walnuts must be used in human studies?

Interventions must use whole walnuts or walnut butter to capture the synergistic effects of fiber, protein, and bioactive compounds in the whole food matrix. Therefore, using only walnut oil or walnut flour would not meet these requirements.

What kinds of control foods have been used in past walnut feeding trials?

Past studies have used usual diets without nuts, isocaloric snacks such as pretzels, crackers, popcorn, or muffins, and macronutrient-matched snacks like white chocolate pretzels. Comparisons with other nuts are not recommended because the goal is to study walnuts, not to compete with other nuts.

Budget Questions

Is there flexibility on the allowed indirect costs?

Unfortunately, no. The indirect cost limit is 10% for CWC-supported projects.

Does the cost of walnuts/walnut butter need to be in the budget?

No. The CWC will provide the product for the studies, so it will not need to be included in grant budgets.