

Date: January 30, 2026
To: Faculty and Senior Researchers
From: USHBC Health Research Advisory Board
Re: Letter of Intent

The U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council (USHBC) is a national research and promotion organization which represents the highbush blueberry industry and operates with oversight from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Its members include producers, importers, and processors, and it is supported by production assessments from both domestic and imported highbush blueberry producers.

The Health Research Advisory Board of the USHBC plans to fund a research study that explores the effect of blueberry consumption on cognitive health. The study should be an acute feeding design, enrolling adults 48-65 years old who meet criteria for subjective cognitive decline, a condition involving mild cognitive changes but generally unimpaired functional capability. The acute feeding period can be a short-term intervention or a single feeding of blueberries, with pre- and post-prandial measurements.

The study should be designed to assess the impact of blueberry consumption on primary cognitive outcomes related to executive functions such as memory, focus, and attention. Secondary cognitive outcomes, such as mood, may also be included if desired.

In addition, the study should assess one or more mechanistic factors observed in association with cognitive changes including fMRI regional activation, anthocyanin metabolism and bioenergetics.

Research funds of \$300,000 are available but higher levels may be possible if a justification is provided.

Applicants are asked to submit a 2-page Letter of Intent (LOI) describing their proposed study with an estimate for the total funds required. LOIs will be accepted only through the online program ProposalCentral (<http://proposalcentral.com>) and must be submitted by **March 6, 2026 at 5pm EST.**

Enclosed are guidelines for you or others at your facility to submit a LOI. If your LOI is selected by the Board, you will be notified by April 6, 2026, and you will be asked to submit a full research proposal for funding in 2026. You will have approximately five weeks to develop a full proposal.

Please note that our preference is for human clinical studies utilizing whole blueberries rather than extracts. Freeze-dried whole blueberry powder will be made available to researchers free of charge to facilitate research efforts. A placebo similar in taste, color and calories is also available to researchers free of charge.

Letter of Intent Guidelines

The online Letter of Intent submitted to <http://proposalcentral.com> should include:

- Names of Principal investigator and co-investigators, professional titles, institution, department and email address of the principal investigator
- Title of project (150 characters limit)
- Scientific rationale (1000 characters limit)
- Specific objectives (1000 characters limit)
- Study design (include a description of the study population, methods, timeline and statistical methods to be implemented) (3500 characters limit)
- Possible outcomes and how the results would add to the existing body of evidence describing the health effects of blueberries (1000 characters limit)
- Estimated overall cost (an itemized budget is not required at this time). Overhead costs cannot be above 15% and should be based on total costs excluding equipment and consultant costs.

In addition to the Letter of Intent, please attach CVs of all investigators (max 4 pages) with a description of their roles. Please see the attached form for information requested in the CV.

Research questions should be directed to USHBC Senior Director of Nutrition and Health Research Dr. Leslie Wada at lwada@blueberry.org. All questions related to the online process should be directed to pcsupport@altum.com or (800) 875-2562 (US and Canada) or +1 703 964- 5840 (Dial Direct International)

Curriculum Vitae for Letter of Intent

Provide the following information for the Principal Investigator and other significant contributors.

Follow this format for each person. **DO NOT EXCEED FOUR PAGES.**

NAME:

POSITION TITLE:

EDUCATION/TRAINING (*Begin with baccalaureate degree*)

INSTITUTION AND LOCATION	DEGREE (<i>if applicable</i>)	Completion Date MM/YYYY	FIELD OF STUDY

A. Positions and Honors

B. Publications that are most relevant to the proposed study

C. Research Support (if you are involved in research projects with other types of fruit, please indicate those commodities)