

# Tips for Researching Funding Opportunities



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## Start Early

Give yourself plenty of time to research sponsors and to plan and write your proposal. Don't get closed out of good opportunities by waiting too late.

## Plan Ahead

Think about your funding needs for the long-term—not just for next year, but also for future activities.

## Take advantage of the resources available

The GrantSource Library provides services to UNC-Chapel Hill faculty, staff, postdoctoral scholars and graduate students for locating funding opportunities. We offer web-based access to funding databases, a collection of reference materials on grantmaking, and individualized instruction and consultation on the best use of our resources.

## Use your network of colleagues to stay aware of trends

Experienced researchers often have advance knowledge of upcoming funding opportunities. Federal government request for proposals (RFPs) are frequently announced with very short turn-around times, and having advance knowledge of them would allow you extra time to prepare your proposal. Stay connected with people who know what is coming up.

## Be aware of the motivations of grantmakers

While all grantmakers want to fund proposals that are relevant to their interests, they have varied reasons why they want to give away money. Some are very issue-oriented and want to fund projects that advance their issue. Some will fund only those projects that impact their local community or relate to their core business. As you research funding opportunities, pay attention to information that highlights the motivations of the grantmaker and use it when contacting the agency and preparing your proposal.

## Try different search terms and combinations of search terms

Don't settle for just one search. The terms you use to describe an idea may not be the same ones chosen by the person who wrote the abstract or the person who indexed the announcement. So, to find grants on the history of jazz performances, try a variety of subjects (music, jazz, history, arts, etc.), then mix and match in different combinations ("music and history", "history and jazz").

## Broaden your search

Your research area may be very specific, but grantmakers' funding interests are often described in very broad terms, such as "humanities" or "health". This is especially true of foundation and corporate giving programs. So, if your research area is breast cancer, you will need to search broadly under "cancer" or "health" or "women's issues". Your search will not be comprehensive if you search only for the specific subject of "breast cancer".

## Be creative in your approach

There are multiple sources of funding information and different ways to use the information. You can do a straightforward search for funding announcements, or you can look through grants previously awarded in your area of interest to identify target agencies, or you can find other researchers working on similar projects and ask them about their funding sources. Ask for advice on creative approaches from the staff at the GrantSource Library.