

Four Key Components to Obtaining Funding for your Research

Whether you're applying for funding from foundations, non-profit organizations, government agencies, or other institutions, these guiding principles will help you stay focused on building your career and obtain funding to meet your research goals. This tip sheet summarizes key takeaways from the session **Meet the Project Officers: How to Get and Maintain Funding** held at the 2021 Annual Research Meeting.

Identify aligned funders

Nurture relationships

Submit research proposals

Disseminate the work for impact



1 Identify Aligned Funders

- Identify the organizations whose mission and priorities align with your research ideas and proposals.
- Determine the program and project officers at organizations whose research priorities align with your areas of interest.
- Review past opportunities that were funded and current requests for proposals to get a better insight into what the organization is funding.



2 Nurture Relationships.

- Create a one-page summary of your research ideas/project proposals to share with people you meet in funding organizations. Emphasize the gap your work will fill or the way the project would build the field.
- Reach out directly to relevant program/project officers at funding institutions for a call.
- Keep the initial call brief 20-30 minutes, have an agenda, create one big "ask" (even if that is, asking them to keep you in mind if projects come up in the near future).
- Follow up with a thank you.



3 Submit Research Proposals

- Use storytelling to describe your work.
- Use data to communicate your potential impact.
- Make sure the proposed outcomes are realistic given the resources (budget, staff, time, etc.) you have to work with.
- Read the criteria carefully to save you time in applying for proposals you don't meet the criteria for. It saves the project officers time as well.



4 Disseminate the Work for Impact

- Funders want to see their mission come to life, meaning, they want to see the outcomes of your research implemented and successful research results in the hands of key decision makers.
- When crafting your proposal, ensure you are designing a project that meets the stated objectives, and you have a plan (ahead of time) for how the research will be distributed.
- Find out what is important to your target audience and tailor your messaging points, so your research findings resonate with them. Storytelling is an effective way to disseminate your work.

Helpful Tips to Secure Funding

- Everyone has the big names on their list, make sure that several names on your list aren't the typical funders.
- Project officers consistently mention they are willing and open to having calls with investigators, especially junior investigators. They have a vested interest in building the field, which helps you in your career advancement. So, take them up on their offer and reach out to them.
- Watch out for "mission creep" – don't drastically alter the focus of your work to fit what you THINK a funder is looking for.

What if my proposal isn't approved?

It's not a "no." It's a "not right now." Funding priorities change and if your research area is aligned with the mission of the funding organization, there may be closer alignment in the future.

What are the current research priorities?

Currently, most private health care foundations are focused on these topics:

- Access and insurance coverage
- Behavioral health (mental health & substance abuse)
- Climate change
- Health care
- Health equity
- Pandemic response & recovery
- Public health infrastructure