

3

Finding and Applying for Funding

Chapter Topics

1. Finding Funding
 2. The Federal Government
 3. The State and Local Government
 4. The Foundations and Corporations
 5. Crowdsourced Funding
 6. Search and Review
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Finding Funding

There are public and private funders offering grants. In 2002, in an effort to streamline access to and the submission of grants to the federal government, a portal called Grants.gov was established as a central storehouse for information on over 1,000 grant programs. Approximately \$500 billion in annual awards are offered by 26 federal grant-making agencies in 21 categories, as shown in Table 3.1.

Most funding sources have missions or mandates to follow. In the case of governmental entities, the mandates are developed through legislative

Table 3.1 21 Categories of Federal Grant-Making

Agriculture	Arts	Business & Commerce	Community Development
Disaster Prevention & Relief	Education	Employment	Labor & Training
	Transportation		
Energy	Environmental Quality	Information & Statistics	Health
Housing	Humanities	Food & Nutrition	Law, Justice, & Legal Services
National Resources Recovery Act	Regional Development	Science & Technology	Social Services & Income Security

process and administered by the governmental agency; the resultant funding is allocated to address the identified need. Corporations and foundations may exist to meet certain needs, such as health foundations that were developed out of the transition from nonprofit status to for-profit structures. Other corporations may target particular issue areas that their board members or staff members want to address, such as afterschool services, day care services, job training and education, or domestic violence.

In addition to helping the community, most funders also look for positive returns from their giving. In some cases, this may be increased visibility and goodwill in a local community; in others, giving programs can lead to increased revenue. An example of this type of strategy can be seen in credit card use linked to charitable giving. If you use X card, the charity will receive a percent of your total purchase, thereby adding income to the charity. And, individuals who want to support the charity obtain the credit card, thereby adding income to the card issuer. Corporations are likely to view proposals favorably if they meet their own internal needs or promote the corporate image in the community. When writing these proposals, be aware of the WIFM rule—*What's in it for me?*—and seek to design a program having clear benefits to your target population as well as recognition for the funder.

The Federal Government

The federal government usually provides the most generous funding and the longest duration of any grants or contracts available, in fact, some government

contracts have a three to five year term. Plus, unused funds in a government contract may be moved into the next year in a process known as *no-cost extension*. Federal funds are highly desirable and fiercely fought after. When a governmental agency has available funds they usually issue a *funding announcement* which provides the information needed to obtain a *request for proposals*, abbreviated as RFP. (We will use the term RFP in this book knowing that a funder may issue a request for applications (RFA), a request for quotes (RFQ), a request for bids (RFB), etc.) The RFP is the application packet containing the rationale for funding, full instructions, and required forms. Funding announcements (or sometimes called NOFA-notice of funding announcements) for the federal government can be found on Grants.gov or in publications such as the *Federal Register* at federalregister.gov or at the homepage sites for particular governmental agencies. If you know the federal division you want to apply to, you might go directly to its website and search.

For example, you might know that you want a grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), which distributes the largest amount of grant funding of any federal agency (<http://www.hhs.gov/grants/grants/get-ready/index.html>, 2015), letting a total of 32,000 grants in all. The web page will direct you to look at HHS grant opportunities listed under Grants.gov, to search at HHS GrantsForecast, and to subscribe to their *Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships Grant Information Newsletter* via e-mail. (See Appendix B for Funding Resource Information.)

Federal government applications are generally prepared online through Grants.gov, which requires the agency be pre-registered on the site, as shown in Table 3.2. Registration is a project that can take four weeks or more depending on the agency's familiarity with the necessary components.

Table 3.2 Registering to Submit Federal Applications at Grants.gov

In order to use the federal government's grants management system the agency must do three things:

1. Register with Dun and Bradstreet to obtain a D-U-N-S: D-U-N-S stands for Data Universal Numbering system that identifies a business on a location-specific basis. It is the standard business identifier for federal electronic commerce. It can take 4 or more weeks to obtain this number.
2. Register at SAM or the System Award Management section of the federal government to designate an e-business point of contact (E-Biz POC) and authorized organization representatives (AORs)
3. Register with Grants.gov where the registration application can be completed by the end of the session when D-U-N-S and SAM numbers are available for use. It may take a week or two to complete this process.

Once this pre-registration is complete, the agency can apply for as many grants as they want without having to resubmit this information.

Once the registration is complete you can explore the online application. You will be able to cut and paste word document sections into the application. You can also upload agency documents like organization charts, a list of the board of directors, a yearly form 990, and other information requested by the funder. You can save your work on the site, edit when you need to, print and review, and, when you are ready, print your final copy and send it electronically.

Many RFPs are being issued as an online document. Whenever possible, save the entire document to your computer, give it a new working name, and fill it in. Save an extra copy as backup in case you have a problem with the first. Once the proposal is completed, save it again as its original name, print out a hard copy to review, and, if you are satisfied, send it back to the funder. Request an electronic receipt verification through your e-mail software if possible and/or directly from the funder once transmitted.

In other cases, online applications do not allow you to download and are challenging to navigate, so take some time to click on all the tabs and understand the structure before you begin. Most often, the budget pages of these documents are linked to other pages, so a numerical entry on page 15 for example, may change an entry on page 2. The best strategy we have found is read the form carefully, put in some test numbers (note the page you enter the numbers on) to see how formulas are set and how numbers move around in the proposal. Once you understand the logic of the budget section, delete all the test numbers you entered and start fresh in the proposal. If the document must be filled in online then perhaps you can print out the blank document first, prepare your answers, and then complete the document. Remember to check spelling and be sure to print the document before sending so that you have a hard copy of what was sent, date it, and file it.

The State and Local Government

State and local governments get their money in the form of state and local taxes paid by residents and businesses, from investment income, and from the federal government. When the state has successfully obtained federal funding for particular issues (the state often has to write a grant proposal to the federal government for the funding), the state may make the funding available to counties and cities. This kind of funding is called pass-through funding as the money comes from the federal government, to the state or local government, and, finally, to the nonprofit agencies. Some examples of

pass-through funding include Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program, and Medicaid funding. (Medicaid funding comes from the federal government to the state and consists of the amount the federal government will pay and the state will match. So, let's say, in California, the federal government pays 50 cents on the dollar with the county providing the other 50 cents of match to the state. In order to manage this, the county most often will require a grant application from the agencies who seek to provide Medicaid-reimbursed services in their jurisdiction, and they will develop a contract between the county and the successful applicant agency stating the services they are purchasing and the total amount available to the agency.)

Both state and city governments develop RFPs to enable competition for the funds; however, finding announcements of these available funds at the state, county, or city government website can be difficult. For example, you might want to start at your state or county website. For example, the state of California has a CA.gov/Grants website with some potential funding information but not all. Another resource that offers a more thorough listing of grants is GrantWatch.com (this is a subscription-based service) and, for example, libraries may have grant making resources such as the UC Berkeley library's list of grantors at www.lib.berkeley.edu/PUBL/grants.html.

In general, you need to work harder to find the state and local funding opportunities. You will need to go to the departments of interest at the state level—you can find a list of all of your state agencies at your state website. For example, let's say you want a grant for your high school mathematics and science students. You search the website of the California Department of Education and you find an announcement to develop a partnership between high schools and colleges and universities. You believe your school might qualify and you read the application. You think it looks like your school and project are a good fit. Then, you call the program contact person listed in the application and discuss the program you want to propose to see if it is a suitable match. You come off the phone knowing the funder's goals better and believe you can submit a competitive application.

You might also search by topical issue and location and see what is listed, such as, *HIV/AIDS Sacramento County*, or *block grant funding Oakland CA*. Each city involved in distributing community block grant funds will list the types of funding available and the application process on their city website. If you want to access county funding for specific services, it is best to call the county department offering those services and ask how you can learn about funding opportunities and to be placed on their notification list for new RFP's. For example, if you want to provide drug treatment services, contact the county department of alcohol and drugs. You might also want

to contact other agencies in the areas that provide the types of services you want to fund and ask what grant opportunities they are aware of or can point you toward.

The Foundations and Corporations

Guidelines for the submission of foundation and corporate applications are typically found on the respective foundation or corporate homepages or through a variety of organizations such as the “FoundationCenterOnline” offered by subscription through the Foundation Center (New York), the United Way, or through searches online using keywords like, *corporate giving after-school programs* or *community giving AIDS*. Foundations and corporations are usually open to receive proposals early in the year until funds run out. Other foundations set fixed schedules to receive proposals, usually on a quarterly calendar.

Some foundations and corporations focus their giving on a local or regional level (e.g., Southern California), while others are national in scope. You will want to develop a list of the corporations and foundations funding your issues and serving your area, and visit each website to view their corporate giving or grants information. Looking at corporate websites will also help you assess the needs of the corporation in relation to their giving. For example, does the corporation appear to fund highly visible projects in which there is media attention giving a high public profile or does the company tend to give quietly to the community in which it is located? Does its giving tend toward opportunities to involve its employees through volunteerism? Does it have a specific list of possible interest areas? Look for a section on the corporate page to direct you to *Community Giving* or to the corporate foundation for more information about their giving. (If you are unable to find a link to the corporate giving program use the *Contact Us* link and make an email request for more information.)

While you are at the site, take the time to learn about the corporation or foundation and what it does. How is the business structured? How many facilities does it have? What type of product or service does it offer? Who are its customers? Having a familiarity with the company will help you to better target the proposal and help you to make an in-person presentation to the company if asked. You may also find it has a simple online application for small grants up to \$5,000.

You may also find a fairly thorough listing of local corporations and foundations at your local United Way. Some agencies become a member of United Way to obtain funding for programs with United Way serving as a

clearing house (it approves its members) and broker (it helps raise funds and supervise services for a percentage of the gross fundraising). An agency will go through an extensive vetting process to become a member agency and will also contribute to the fundraising efforts of the United Way organization.

Crowdsourced Funding

Much like a for-profit business would seek venture capital to develop a new product, the nonprofit sector is turning to the general public to support programs or even individuals in need through crowdfunding sites. Some of the crowd funding sites are Razoo, Kickstarter, Indiegogo, CauseVox, and RocketHub.com. Crowdfunding came into being as a way for individuals to gather support for specific needs in their personal lives or their communities. An individual may post a request asking for help to deal with an unexpected medical need or trauma and strangers will reply and donate money to the cause. You may be able to identify a particular aspect of your program that lends itself to crowdsourced funding—for example, providing scholarships for needy clients, purchasing computers or other technology for clients, or providing seed money for particular projects.

Search and Review

Yahoo!, Google, Bing . . . these are but a few of the search engines available on the Internet today. As you enter a few keywords (the main words in your topic), thousands of references containing those words pop up on the page. (These results may be different on each search engine used, so check several main search engines in your search.) Learning to search the Internet for relevant and reliable information requires a willingness to learn the language of search engines as well as the language of classification for the issue you seek information on. For example, you might enter *teen pregnancy* into a search engine only to find limited resources, while entering *adolescent pregnancy* yields an abundance of quality references. Experiment with a variety of keywords until you find the most salient information. Search engines usually have information on the page to help you use their search protocol most effectively and are worth reading.

The ability to access thousands of references in a single search will help you to find new treasures in the form of current data or new funding opportunities. We recommend that you create files on your “Favorites” menu to store the address of these websites for your future use—files named, for example, “Fundings,” “Demographic Data on X,” and “Research Articles,”

as it is all too easy to suffer from information overload when conducting searches. For a more detailed description of search engines and using the Internet for research, we recommend an excellent book written by Susan Peterson: *The Grantwriter's Internet Companion* (Corwin Press, 2001).

As you compile information through the Internet, you will certainly find that some of it appears to be based in scientific fact and some is just opinion, or worse! This wealth of information requires a degree of discrimination on your part. Which information is reliable? Is this a reputable source or a homemade website taking this opportunity to promote an opinion? How can you tell the difference? To begin with, you will find that most of the information that is valid and useful to you will be found on the websites of well-known nonprofit organizations (.org), universities (.edu), and state and federal government offices (.gov).

The following questions will help guide you through the process of identifying a reputable, credible source.

1. Is the article published or not? If it is published, is it in a respected journal? Are there references listed in the article? Do you recognize the author's name or affiliation? There are many opinion articles on the Internet, so beware.
2. Does the site have product advertising and other "pop-up" ads leading you to believe that the information contained on the site is most likely to promote a particular product or viewpoint?
3. Do you recognize the name of the site as a reputable, trustworthy source for information such as the Red Cross, United Way, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services?
4. Are the data referenced on the site attributed to a source? For example, does it tell you where the data come from, such as a study by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention? If there is no reference as to where the data come from, be suspicious.
5. Does the website have the appearance of a quality site? Is it easy to navigate? Does it look professional? Is there information about the organization or company posted to the site?

Once you have located a few trustworthy sources of information, consult the references within each of those publications to find additional quality resources. You might also consult with a librarian who can help you find appropriate keywords for your search efforts and assist you in identifying authoritative sources. As you look at several reputable websites, you will begin to see that there is information that can be verified, there are references to other resources, there is information on the author(s) and the affiliations of the author(s), and information on the company or organization. You see little or no personal opinion, lobbying, or sales ads.

Table 3.3 provides some reputable websites to assist you in learning how to identify a quality site:

Table 3.3 A Sample of Reputable Websites

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: www.cdc.gov
National Council on Aging's Benefits Check Up: www.benefitscheckup.org
National Institutes of Health: www.nih.gov
National Institute of Mental Health: www.nimh.nih.gov
Nutrition: www.nutrition.gov
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration: www.samhsa.gov
U.S. Department of Education: www.ed.gov
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: www.hhs.gov

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