Finding and soliciting funds from a foundation, corporation, or government agency is a multistep process. Institutional research helps you identify funding opportunities and prioritize where your project may best align, and therefore be the most competitive.

STEP ONE:

Create a spreadsheet to keep track of available institutional prospects. Include columns for name and contact info as well as for grant deadlines, application links, and grant program officer name.

STEP TWO:

If you find a grant with a deadline you can meet, review the grant to determine parameters, requirements, etc. Often, you must be a 501(c)3 to be considered for the grant.

STEP THREE:

To apply for funds from a granter like an arts council, foundation, or agency you must:
- Have a project planned and ready to execute
- Understand the institutions funding guidelines
- Be sure your project falls within their funding guidelines
- Understand the funding application requirements and review process, such as whether they require a letter of intent (LOI), an online application, or a mailed/emailed/faxed form
- Be sure your project can meet the requirements and deadlines
- Familiarize yourself with past grant awards to understand funding priorities

STEP FOUR:

Be sure you have enough time before your project begins to complete the application, to be reviewed by the agency/institution, and be awarded. Most grants do not offer funding for projects already in progress.

STEP FIVE:

Check out these databases—free and fee-based—to round out your research:

- Foundation Center Directory Online (often public libraries have a license for this)
- FoundationSearch America
- Guidestar
- GrantStation
- Chronicle Guide to Grants
- American City Business Journals
- Hoovers
- Yahoo! Finance
- Lexis-Nexis
- The Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance
- The Federal Register

STEP SIX:

Subscribe to newsletters from a variety of government agencies and foundations, along with the Foundation Center's *Philanthropy News Digest* to receive regular updates of funding opportunities in your inbox.