

2. Identify a Funding Source

1. **To determine what broad category of sponsors might suit your grant, ask:**
 - How much money will I be requesting?
 - How much red tape am I willing and able to deal with?
 - How much time and what resources do I have to invest in completing the grant application?
 - How much technical assistance from the sponsor will I need?
 - Where does my project fit best in terms of interests and priorities?

Funding Source Comparison

Federal Government	State Government	Private (foundations, individuals)
Has a lot of money and makes many grants, but Congressional priorities and trends determine programs for which funding is available.	Limited money, very competitive, funding volatile and focused on Texas priorities	Smaller grant size, less money available, funding priorities very specific to the entity
Red tape	Red tape	Limited red tape
Indirect costs (for contract administration, for example) may be included in the project budget	Indirect costs sometimes may not be included in the project budget.	Indirect costs rarely may be included in the budget.
Proposal requirements and forms are complex	Proposal requirements can be very specific and detailed.	Proposal requirements often relatively simple
Technical support provided to help you submit your application	Variable technical support depends on the funding agency	Technical support rarely available
Online submission through Grants.gov or NSF's Fastlane system	Hard copy submission likely to be required (allow extra time for express delivery)	Submission may be online or hard copy.
Applications reviewed by your peers	Department/agency staff review applications	Foundation staff and/or board members review applications.

2. **Target a potential sponsor.** Funding Sources, under Research Resources, lists the major sources of information about funding availability. Other possibilities for finding potential funding sources include contacts with your colleagues, memberships within your academic discipline and journals related to your area of interest.
3. **Review information about sponsors and grant opportunities, asking:**
 - What kinds of funding (grant, contract, stipend, fellowship, cooperative agreement, etc.) are available?
 - Does my project concept match the sponsor's stated funding priorities?
 - Does the sponsor typically provide funding at the level I will be requesting?
 - As a condition of awarding funding, does the sponsor have any requirements and/or conditions I will not be able to meet?
 - Can I meet the sponsor's deadlines?
4. **Check with the Office of Sponsored Projects to identify other projects being considered by your potential sponsor.**
5. **Contact potential grant sponsors' staff to discuss your concept.**
For federal and state programs, and increasing for many private foundations, contact with sponsor staff is encouraged prior to preparing a grants proposal. The advantage of contacting a sponsor's program officer about your concept is that you receive direct input before you invest a significant amount of time and effort writing the proposal. Program staff also are very much aware of other related projects and can provide guidance for locating potential consultants and collaborators, avoiding duplication of effort, and determining the need to revise your concept.

Before contacting program/sponsor staff:

- Carefully review all printed materials from the sponsor.
- Prepare a list of questions to ask the program person.
- Prepare a written summary of your concept that demonstrates it is well conceived, carefully developed, and presentable.

6. **Select a target funding source for your project.** Before you select a potential funding source for your project, you should be able to answer YES to these questions:

- Is this the best choice based on an exhaustive search of all potential sources of funding?
- Is the information you obtained about the source current?
- Have you spoken to someone familiar with the funding source to validate your project's chance of success?
- Have you spoken to at least one representative of the sponsor to validate your project's chance of success?

7. **Notify the Office of Sponsored Projects of your intent to develop a proposal to submit your concept for possible funding by the sponsor you've targeted.**