

A large background image showing a modern building with a blue and orange facade, a city street with a tram, and a blue sky with white clouds. A dark grey rectangular box is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing the title text.

Foundation Relations:

Securing funding for research across Boston University

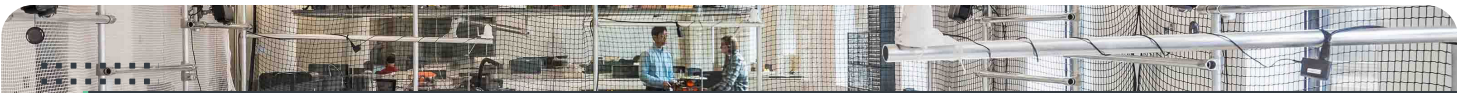
The Boston University Foundation Relations team, part of BU's Advancement office, helps faculty identify, apply for, secure, and steward charitable gifts and grants from private institutional funders.

We match faculty research and programs with foundations' priorities, which are often to support high-risk research and pilot projects that are of less interest to traditional funders such as the National Institutes of Health and the National Science Foundation. Our team works closely with groups across the University, from deans to faculty and senior leadership to Sponsored Programs.



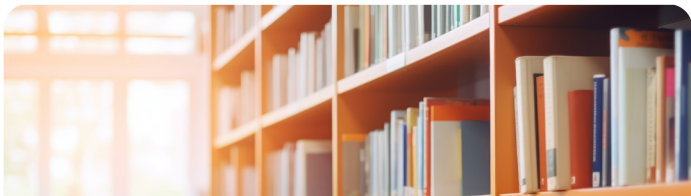
Without the help of Foundation Relations, none of these projects would have happened. They tirelessly sought out funding opportunities. Once a grant was secured, they made it their personal mission to make sure that we kept in good standing with the foundation and continued to receive funding year after year."

—Casey Taft, Professor, Psychiatry



Innovations & Results

The Foundation Relations team identifies funding opportunities, connects faculty with funders, and assists in the development of competitive funding requests. In addition, the team has built and maintains a number of resources to increase success in securing funding. These resources are rare or nonexistent at other universities, but at BU, they have led to higher funding levels and a greater sense of support for faculty members.



Proposal Library

Our curated library of proposals includes **more than 143 successful letters of intent, proposals, and related materials** submitted to foundations and shared by BU faculty. Prospective applicants can browse the library for insights on format, technical detail, and writing style for a range of foundations. The site is viewed by ~100 unique visitors each month.

“The proposal library is a chance for new or even seasoned faculty to review past successful proposals to a foundation they are considering applying to. This is a terrific resource”

—Kenneth R. Lutchen, Dean Emeritus,
College of Engineering

“It wasn't until I attended one of these presentations by the Alzheimer's Association that I realized I was eligible for a research grant and decided to apply. I ultimately secured funding that has been invaluable as I've established my research program.”

—J.P. Roussarie, Assistant Professor of
Anatomy & Neurobiology



Meet the Funder Events

Throughout the academic year, Foundation Relations hosts **hour-long workshops with foundation leaders**, who present their organization's priorities, programs, and tips for successful proposals. Meetings provide faculty members an opportunity to better understand key funding programs, ask questions of foundation leaders, and hear from previous BU grantees. In the last three years, more than 600 faculty members have attended 39 Meet the Funder events.



Red Team Reviews

For faculty members whose proposals have been invited to the final stage of review for high-value and highly competitive funding programs, the Foundation Relations team coordinates **mock interviews and “red team reviews,” providing submitters with detailed verbal and written feedback** from recent awardees and colleagues familiar with the PI’s work.

Of the 20 proposals that have gone through the red team review process and decisions, nine have received awards. This 45% success rate is significantly higher than the usual rate of less than 10% for highly competitive funding programs.



Thank you for all you did to help us prep for the meeting. The mock meeting was a game changer. Great to have had a chance to practice, get feedback, and revise before the real thing. I do think it all helped and let us put our best foot forward.”

—Davida Pines, Associate Dean for Faculty Research and Development, College of General Studies



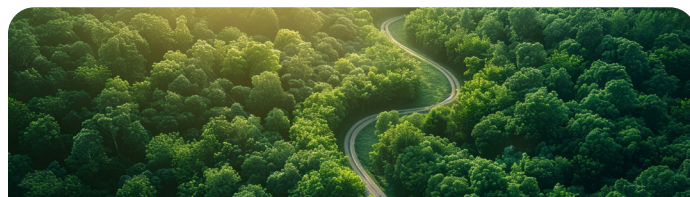
The red team review provided feedback on my proposal from every angle. I’m so grateful to have this kind of collaboration.”

—Julia TCW, Assistant Professor, Pharmacology, Physiology & Biophysics



Thank you very much for creating this roadmap for me. This is absolutely phenomenal!”

—Sanne Verschuren, Assistant Professor of International Security



Early-Career Roadmaps

From a master list of several hundred early-career opportunities, Foundation Relations develops comprehensive lists of **private and federal funding programs customized to early-career faculty members’ fields of research and years of eligibility**. These tables allow faculty to plan which programs to apply to and when. To date, 200 faculty members in over 70 disciplines and across the spectrum of BU research have received roadmaps. Since 2020, there has been a 25% increase in the number of applications to the most popular early-career funding programs.

Academic Analytics

To help identify the best aligned and most competitive faculty for prestigious and high-value funding programs, the Foundation Relations team partnered with the BU Office of Research to create data visualization reports for 20 select programs. These **interactive reports are based on rich data about previous awardees**. They feature graphs and tables pertaining to academic field, years since PhD, publications, and geography.

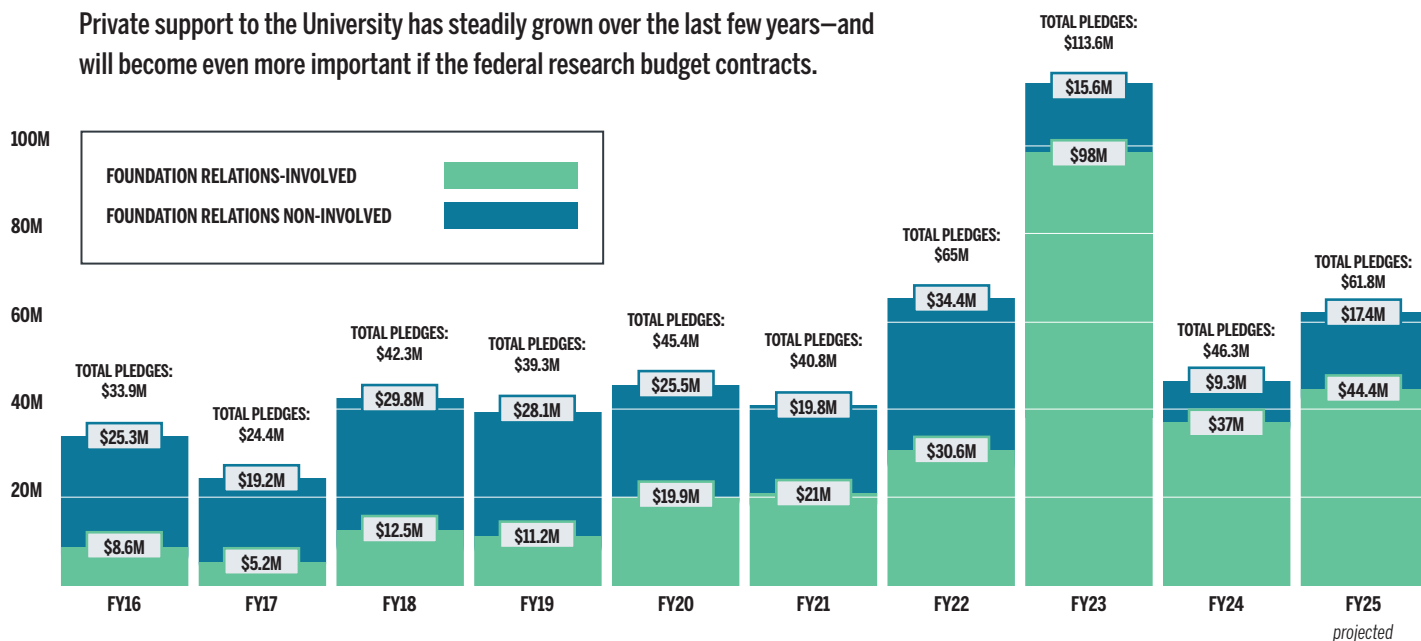


These analytics provide really valuable information about the types of people who win (academic age, previous awards, etc.). I usually merely skim a list of previous winners and their institutions yet don't find this level of detail about individual awardees."

—Vivek Goyal, Professor, Electrical and Computer Engineering

By The Numbers

Private support to the University has steadily grown over the last few years—and will become even more important if the federal research budget contracts.



Contact Us

For more information about these innovations and other resources and contact information for the Foundation Relations team member connected to your academic unit, visit our relaunched website at bu.edu/foundations, scan the QR code at right, or contact Tristan Barako, Associate Vice President, Foundation Relations, at tbarako@bu.edu.

