

# Finding Funding

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## Introduction

Extramural funding is central to our core mission of developing cutting edge scholarship that can improve the health of the public. BU SPH provides numerous resources to help you navigate this (often confusing) process. An understanding of the mechanics and requirements for federal, non-federal, foundation, and private funding opportunities is a *si ne qua non* for success in finding funding. This section is divided into four sections, listed below, and discussed sequentially.

Four key elements to successfully securing research funding:

1. Searching available resources
2. Reviewing opportunities
3. Pre-Proposal Requirements
4. Developing a Timeline



## Helpful Links

[Boston University Research Funding Information](#)

# Finding Funding

## 1. Searching Available Resources

There is a wide range of funding opportunities for BU SPH researchers within the US federal government, as well as through foundations, other foreign governments, multilateral and non-profit institutions, and corporations.

Navigating funding announcements and opportunities and identifying which represent the best match can be challenging. These websites (in the Links below) provide comprehensive information on internal and external funding sources and allow you to search for funding opportunities using keywords to identify most relevant prospects.

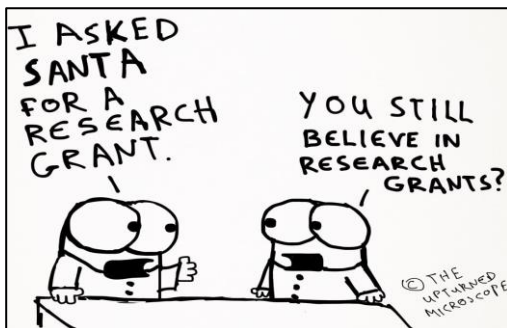
### Helpful Links

[Grants.gov](#) Central storehouse for information on over 1,000 grant programs and provides access to approximately \$500 billion in annual awards. Click to learn more about funding resources from: [The National Institutes of Health](#); [The National Science Foundation](#); and [The US Department of Education](#).

[Pivot](#) is a curated database of funding opportunities available to faculty or staff with an @BU email address. The unique database contains over 3 million pre-populated sponsor profiles.

[Proposal Central](#) is a grant-making website shared by many government, non-profit, and private grant-making organizations.

A comprehensive list of BU's internal and external funding sources is accessible [here](#).



**TIP:** You can always get in contact with the sponsor; in fact, it is thoroughly recommended. Funding announcements will have an email address for you to get in touch. That way, any questions you have about the suitability of your idea can be answered.

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## 2. Reviewing Opportunities

Once you have identified an opportunity for funding, you will need to carefully review it for eligibility, fit, and planning for a timely submission. Sponsor's eligibility criteria are set forth in a Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA). BU's eligibility criteria are set forth in our [PI eligibility policy](#) as well as through [limited submission requirements](#). The proposal deadline and the method of proposal submission are other critical pieces of information in an Announcement.

- A. Notify appropriate administrators of the intention to submit the proposal. Early communication can significantly and positively impact proposal preparation and submission. Note that some FOAs contain terms that BU OSP would find problematic, or objectionable (such as cost sharing requirements, or publication restrictions. Early communication provides all relevant parties time to develop a proposal submission strategy, including preparation for internal and external deadlines.
- B. Evaluate whether BU intends to be the Prime or Subawardee on the proposal. Note that if BU intends to be a subcontractor to another organization submitting a proposal under an FOA, the submission deadline for the subcontract proposal is often earlier than the deadline published in the FOA. The organization directly submitting the proposal to the sponsor should provide appropriate guidance to BU in the preparation and submission of its subcontract materials.
- C. Identify key element in the proposal. In reviewing the scope of work, budget and the corresponding FOA, key elements of the proposed project should be identified, particularly those elements that may require additional support, review or approval. For example, does the proposed project involve other institutions? Animal subjects and/or human research participants?



## Helpful Links

This [resource](#) has information comparing R01, R03, R21, & R15 Mechanisms; guides for choosing the correct grant; and investigator resources.

**TIP:** NIH R01 grants are the most common research funding mechanism for independent investigators and can provide a long period of support with a large amount of funding support. R03 and R21 grants provide smaller amounts of support and are designed for smaller, feasibility projects that do not require as much time or funding. All three of these award mechanisms fund approximately the same percentage of the applications received, so none of them are “easier” to successfully receive funding from.

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## 3. Pre-Proposal Requirements

Some sponsors require pre-proposal materials in advance. A pre-proposal (depending on the sponsor, this may also be called a preliminary proposal, white paper, letter of intent (LOI) or concept paper) is a short description of a project that does not involve a binding commitment of university resources. A pre-proposal may include a total cost estimate but does not typically include a line-item budget, and is not expected to result directly in an award. Typically, the purpose of a pre-proposal is to inform and interest the potential sponsor so that the sponsor requests a formal proposal including full technical and budget information.

**TIP:** Many foundations ask for a letter of intent (LOI) before requesting a full grant proposal to weed out organizations that are not appropriate for the award. The LOI also helps funders assess how many staff are needed in order to review the upcoming proposals. More so, the LOI places you on their mailing list for all future addendums and modifications for that particular grant, including deadline changes.

NIH Prior Notification Required for \$500,000+ Direct Costs: NIH has a longstanding policy that states any applicant requesting \$500,000 or more in direct costs (excluding consortium F&A costs) in any one budget period within a competitive segment is required to contact the NIH Institute or Center (IC) Program Official (PO), in writing or by telephone, as early as possible during development of the application but no later than 6 weeks before submission for prior approval. Since NIH supports projects with large budgets, the purpose of this policy is for fiscal planning and therefore it provides NIH ICs the appropriate amount of time to consider the possibility of such awards as early as possible in the budget and program planning process. Here is the most recent version of the [policy](#) and here is some [additional information](#).

Note: There are very specific opportunities and/or RFAs that either do not require this notification/permission OR some that have built in more elaborate procedures requiring further advance notice and pre-proposal materials. Always check the Announcement for these requirements.

## Helpful Links

[Sample Letters of Intent](#)



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## 4. Developing a Timeline

Prior to preparing the documents that will be submitted to the sponsor, planning the process to allow for the myriad of requirements will serve you and your application well. It is helpful if you are familiar with BU policies so that the focus can be on planning an effective proposal and meeting the requirements of the sponsor.



Plan backward from the deadline allowing time for SPH Departmental and OSP reviews. For a standard NIH proposal, it is wise to allow three months from initial plan to submit to final deadline date. Depending on the complexity of the proposal, it is reasonable for the Grants Manager/Department Administrator to review and finalize the proposal ONE WEEK prior to the OSP deadline date.

The following Roles and Responsibilities have been defined with regard to proposal review and submission process:

- A. Principal Investigator (PI): The PI is ultimately responsible for the entirety of the proposal, including all documents and forms, the budget, any sub-award materials, and any other materials requested by the solicitation guidelines or required internally, as well as compliance with all internal and external deadlines.
- B. Department Administrator/Grants Manager (DA/GM): The DA/GM is responsible for all administrative components of the proposal including but not limited to: the budget, required internal forms, forms and documents required by the solicitation guidelines. The DA/GM is also responsible for gathering the required departmental/dean/other signatures on the Proposal Summary Form (PSF) and forwarding (or ensuring the proposal is forwarded) to the appropriate RA (OSP Research Administrator) in compliance with all internal and external deadlines.
- C. OSP Research Administrators (RA): The RA is responsible for complete review of the proposal, including all required internal forms, the budget, all documents and forms required by the solicitation guidelines, and compliance with all sponsor and institutional guidelines. In the cases where the sponsor requires submission of the proposal be done by the institutional official, the RA will ensure that the proposal has been successfully submitted and accepted by the sponsor.

## Helpful Links

[BU OSP Proposal Submission Policy](#)

**TIP:** Don't underestimate the time needed for you/your SPH department to develop the budget, revise as necessary, and fine-tune all information PRIOR TO delivery for OSP submission.