



# Foundation fund raising for medical and public health researchers

David Gillerman

Director, Foundation Relations

BU Medical Campus

# Foundation grants for academic research

- Just as hard to get as federal grants, and often not as large,
- but frequently easier to ask for and more flexible in how they can be used
- often designed to meet needs not met by federal grants, e.g., early stage, high risk
- almost always intended for projects not programs

# Identifying potential supporters

- Foundation Directory Online, accessible via a BU computer @ [www.bu.edu/foundations/](http://www.bu.edu/foundations/) (username and password: “corpfound”)
- Assoc. Provost’s monthly bulletin of funding opportunities:  
[www.bumc.bu.edu/research/fundingops/](http://www.bumc.bu.edu/research/fundingops/)
- Pivot: search tool sponsored by the Community of Science: [http://pivot.cos.com/funding\\_main](http://pivot.cos.com/funding_main)
- Supporters of peers’ research, water cooler
- Office of Foundation Relations

# Understanding foundation funders

Foundations want desperately to be understood. Study funders' websites thoroughly before approaching them

- Mission statement
- Program descriptions, white papers, etc.
- Application guidelines
- Grant lists
- Press releases

# Approaching foundations

- Give yourself plenty of lead time.
- Try to contact foundations before submitting a funding request.
- Don't be shy. Foundations are sustained by their grantees and always looking for new and better ideas. They need to hear from you.
- But they are also under siege by grant seekers, so you must be patient and persistent

# Contacting foundations

- a. Identify the right contact person and find her contact info
- b. Identify the aspect of the funder's mission and the example(s) of its recent giving that lead you to think they'll be interested in your work
- c. Use this as the lead-in to a **brief** written description of your project.

# Following up

- Foundation program officers are busy; it's all about follow up
- Persistent, periodic reminders will get you a response
- An expression of interest should lead to an offer of further discussion
- Make the most of “no.” E.g., maintain contact with the program officer

# Communicating with foundations

Increasingly, foundations are run by content experts who speak your language, but be prepared to:

- provide the 30,000' perspective
- defend the importance and timeliness of your topic, and the originality of your approach, skill set, and resources
- describe evaluation methods and measurable outcomes



# Submitting requests for funding

- Contact Office of Foundation Relations
- Contact OSP
- Follow guidelines plus any advice received from your contact at the foundation