

DORIS DUKE FELLOWSHIPS TIP SHEET

–advice from fellows to the field–

ISSUE 1

LOCAL AND NATIONAL FUNDING OPTIONS

Foundations differ in how they set priorities, their range of giving, and their willingness to speak with potential grantees. In approaching any foundation, it is important to keep the following in mind.



Relationships

There is no magic formula for receiving grant funding. It is all about building and maintaining relationships over time. Securing funding is a marathon not a sprint.

Relationship building with any potential funder is critical. Set aside time to talk with potential funders and local funders. Learn about their interests and priorities and what research questions most interest them. Some foundations have a broad interest in supporting work to strengthen services for children while others focus more narrowly on one aspect of the child well-being service continuum. For example, Casey Family Services specifically focuses on solving child welfare agency challenges. Understanding the interests of local agencies and potential funders and having them know your interests and skills will better position you to identify a strong match. It also allows you to move quickly when a RFP is issued for something that both you and a local partner have an interest in pursuing.



Research

Make sure you visit the foundation website and look at their priorities, previous recipients of funding, their average grant amount, and seniority of individuals they commonly fund. Some foundations are less inclined to support emerging scholars. If you observe a tendency to support seasoned PIs, don't be discouraged—just know that you may have a steeper road ahead of you.

Check if the foundation takes unsolicited proposals. If not, you will need to set up an appointment with a Foundation Project Officer and start building your relationship. Start by working with the Project Officer to explore ways in which your idea can be framed as complementary to the foundation's core interests. Also, use these conversations to identify foundations that may be better aligned with your interests. Foundation staff talk among themselves and are excellent sources of information on emerging themes within the broader philanthropic community.

Stay current with the topics and geographical areas covered by national, state, and local foundations as these can change over time. There are pros and cons to exploring national vs. local funding options.

- » National Funders typically have more money to grant and often are open to funding more creative ideas; however, there are more applicants and, therefore, more competition.
- » Local Funders typically have fewer applicants; however, their interests, scope of projects and available funding may be limited.



Experience

Be a true "partner" with every project you undertake. Funders pay attention to how researchers conduct their work, not just the end product. They are more likely to reach out to you for another project if they felt you were responsive and attentive to generating research that informs practice.

Start off small. It's often useful to build up a record of grant funding before going after larger pots of funds. Foundations, like the Russell Sage Foundation, often offer smaller grants or presidential awards for emerging scholars.

Think about trying to become a co-PI or co-I on a grant to build your record and master the grant application process.

Consider building interdisciplinary partnerships and incorporating implementation science frameworks into your research. This can maximize the interest of funders and the ability of your work to solve salient problems.

A list of foundations that focus their investments on the promotion of child health and well-being was compiled by fellows and fellowships staff. It is divided into two parts: national and local foundation options. If you would like a copy of the list, or have ideas to expand the list, please reach out to ddfellowships@chapinhall.org.

The following Doris Duke Fellows contributed to this tip sheet: Kerrie Ocasio, Cohort One; and William Schneider, Cohort Two.

Doris Duke Fellowships
for the Promotion of Child Well-Being
Seeking innovations to prevent child abuse and neglect

