

Finding Funding Workshop Transcript

Intro: Welcome to the University of West Georgia Office of Research and Sponsored Project's Online Workshop Series. I am Julie Hawk, the Research Development Coordinator. This workshop will cover some basic strategies for finding funding sources for your research or project.

Slide 1: The first place you might look is UWG's institutional resources. First, the university provides each faculty and staff member with a subscription to Grantforward, a database of federal, state, and private grants. Additionally, the ORSP website contains links to some of the most popular grants for UWG faculty.

Slide 2 (Grantforward): Grantforward is a subscription database, paid for by the university, that covers over 9,000 sponsors. Including federal grants and private, international and local, Grantforward collects these opportunities in one place. You will need to create a profile and then input your preferences. The more information you feed into Grantforward, the more useful it will be. You can also use Grantforward to find researchers who have similar interests, both within your institution and outside of it. Do note that only researchers with access to Grantforward through their institutions will pop up in this list. Also note that, as with any database, there are things that will limit its efficacy. This is a helpful tool, but it should not be the only tool you use. The following videos will provide some helpful hints at onboarding and effectively using Grantforward.

Slide 3: Videos—no transcript needed (but you do need to tweak the links)

Slide 4: The ORSP website provides helpful links to major funding sources as well as sources that are popular with UWG researchers. This is by no means an exhaustive list, but it is a good place to get started. Exploring this link will at the very least start the process of learning about the variety of opportunities available.

Slide 5: There are also many external resources you can explore to find funding. Other Institutions of Higher Education will have resources listed on their pages, so if you know of places that specialize in the kinds of research you are interested in, this can be a great resource. Some of institutions have newsletters that regularly update funding in specific areas. Additionally, think about the professional organizations in your field. Explore their websites, as they often have opportunities that are very specific to the discipline(s) they serve.

Slide 6: These two links provide examples of other institutions' resources. Harvard has a regular newsletter for grants in the arts and humanities, and Georgia Tech keeps an excellent list for grants in STEM fields. These and many other resources can be added to your list of tools.

Slide 7: Additionally, there are resources that are not affiliated with institutions that you might add to your list of things to check regularly. The first link provides resources specific to the state of Georgia. The second is simply a list of various resources, some of which are free lists and databases and others that you must register and pay for. We strongly discourage you from paying for any database access, as these will not provide you with any information that a combination of free resources and the resources UWG pays for to not already provide you. Finally, the last link provides an example of a discipline-specific site. Obviously, you will know best where to look for your own discipline in terms of disciplinary organizations that might host such information.

Slide 8: Some general strategies for conducting web and database searches are helpful so that you can quickly and efficiently access the most targeted resources for your needs. These include general search

strategies, much like you already employ in library database and google searches and also specific questions to ask regarding specific Request for Proposals, or RFPs.

Slide 9: You should think in terms of the search strategies you already use when doing web or database searches on things that pertain to your research. Standard tools apply, such as using quotation marks for exact terms, Boolean operators to help you narrow or expand searches, and using the advanced features on google or whatever search engine or database you prefer to help you narrow the search. Typically, you want to start broad with a search and then narrow down; your terms should match that strategy. Also, consider looking at what other institutions are doing in order to think through your own search terms. Perusing another institution's research page can give you ideas of ways to search that perhaps you had not yet thought of.

Slide 10: It's important to find not just an opportunity that you could spin your project to fit, but rather an opportunity for which your project is the RIGHT fit. When you find something that looks like it might be the right fit, read the RFP carefully, looking for things that might suggest otherwise. What is the sponsor really looking for? Do their motivations and goals match with the goals of your research? To find out more about this, look into what projects they have funded in the past. Often, funders will provide this information as well as a brief description or abstract of the projects funded. These can be helpful in determining whether your own research fits the larger goals the funder seems to prioritize. And, if it is the right fit, they can also be helpful in framing your own research in ways that you know have worked before. If, however, you think that you would have to stretch your project idea in order to fit the box created by the RFP, then maybe this isn't the right opportunity for you. Don't get discouraged, and keep looking!

Slide 11: Finally, I want to address some very important differentiations, namely grants vs. gifts and federal vs. foundation or corporation sources.

Slide 12: Grants differ from gifts in some very important ways, and sometimes it can be hard to tell what a funding source is. If you are in a situation where it isn't clear, first, come talk to us and we can help figure it out, but there are also a few guidelines that can help sort it out. Grants include funds that are given with expectations of particular work done in return, and this work usually must be done in a particular time frame. This almost always includes a reporting requirement as well as the requirement that unspent funds be returned. In contrast, gifts usually do not have a specific requirement for work done in return, and they rarely require reports or the return of unspent funds. Sometimes, particularly with foundation sources, you will run into something that is called a grant but that is really a gift. An example is the Walmart grant for communities, which is really just a gift. It does not require specific work, it does not require reports, and it does not ask for the return of any unspent funds.

Slide 13: Finally, there are three main types of grant funds: government (federal or state), foundations, and corporate. Each of these has slightly different requirements, typically, but our office can help with each of them. The most common source of research funding is the government, though UWG does have several foundation grants as well. Corporate funds are sometimes attached to a foundation and sometimes come directly from the corporation. Southwire is an example of a local corporation that at times offers grants for research and projects related to their overall mission. Any of these types of funding can be leveraged for research and projects at a university, so you might want to widen your search to include all of them.