



Foundation Relations at Michigan State University

The Office of Foundation Relations helps faculty and university partners secure support from private foundations and charitable organizations by identifying strategic funding opportunities, advising on proposal alignment, facilitating foundation relationships, and supporting long-term stewardship.

<u>Help for MSU Faculty & Staff</u> Our team can assist faculty & staff through all stages of the funding process.	<u>Current Funding Opportunities</u> A curated list of new and upcoming funding opportunities	<u>Meet With Our Team</u> We're your partners in building impactful, foundation funded initiatives
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How Can We Help?

The MSU Office of Foundation Relations supports faculty and university partners throughout the foundation funding process. From identifying potential funders and reviewing proposal materials to advising on foundation engagement and stewardship, we help position strong ideas for competitive foundation support. Our team provides strategic guidance and coordination.

Whether you are exploring an early-stage idea, preparing a concept paper or proposal, or considering outreach to a foundation program officer, we encourage you to connect with our team early. Early engagement helps us assess alignment, identify existing institutional relationships, coordinate outreach, and develop a stronger strategy for success.

How We Support You

We partner with faculty and staff through every stage of the foundation funding journey:

- **Strategic Proposal Development** – We help faculty frame project concepts, align ideas with foundation priorities, shape proposal strategy and structure, and provide feedback on clarity, competitiveness, and funder fit. Proposal content should be developed by the project team and subject matter experts.
- **Funding Identification** – We identify foundation prospects, curate open funding opportunities, and provide tailored prospect research based on a project's scope, goals, and potential alignment with foundation priorities.
- **Foundation Engagement** – We help faculty engage foundations strategically by advising on communications, preparing talking points, facilitating introductions when appropriate, and coordinating outreach to avoid duplication. We are not here to gatekeep relationships, but to help faculty build effective and informed connections with foundation partners.
- **Proposal Coordination & Stewardship Support** – We coordinate with Research Administrators and the Office of Sponsored Programs on foundation submissions, institutional requirements, stewardship, and reporting expectations. Research Administrators and OSP remain the primary resources for budgets, routing, compliance review, award negotiation, and post-award administration.
- **Resources & Training** – Access funder profiles, sample proposals, institutional data, RFP lists, and workshops on prospecting and proposal writing.

Resources for Faculty

Access tools to support your fundraising efforts, including:

- **Foundation Relations Prospect Library** – [Library of funder profiles](#), based on topical research.
- **Training & Proposal Development**– Group and individual workshops in prospecting and proposal writing. Contact us to set something up.
- **Standard Institutional Information for Proposals** – [Standard institutional information, EIN, UEL, audited financial statements, leadership information, and other commonly requested proposal details.](#)
- **Current Foundation Funding Opportunities / Open RFPs** – [Active Foundation RFP List](#) – Listings of new and upcoming funding opportunities.

- **Foundation RFP Alerts** – A weekly email highlighting new open foundation funding opportunities tailored to your specific areas of interest.

Sponsored Project Support

For budgets, routing, compliance review, institutional approvals, award negotiation, and post-award administration, faculty should work with their Research Administrator and the Office of Sponsored Programs. Foundation Relations can help coordinate foundation-specific strategy, proposal alignment, funder engagement, and stewardship. Additional proposal development support can be found through:

- [Office of Sponsored Programs](#) - Tools and guidance for proposal development.

Learning more about the step by step funding process below.



The Funding Process: Step by Step

Getting Started with Foundation Funding

Whether you're pursuing your first foundation grant or seeking support for an established initiative, MSU Foundation Relations is here to help every step of the way. Below is your step-by-step guide to the funding process.

1. Define Your Project

Clarify your project's goals, team, timeline, budget, and anticipated outcomes. Thinking strategically from the start ensures a stronger funding pathway.

2. Understand How Foundations Work

Foundations fund initiatives that reflect their missions and values. They typically support well-defined programs or research, not broad operational costs. The closer the alignment, the stronger your proposal.

3. Explore Our Resources

Leverage our Open Funding Opportunities through the curated [RFP list](#), [Prospect Library](#), [Foundation Funding Alerts \(RFP Alerts\)](#), and [Foundation Directory Online](#) (Free access through MSU Library.) These tools can help you identify promising funding matches.

4. Connect with Our Team Early

Faculty are encouraged to contact Foundation Relations as early as possible, ideally before contacting a foundation or beginning proposal development. Early engagement allows us to assess funder alignment, identify existing institutional relationships, coordinate outreach, and help develop competitive strategy.

Ready to begin? [Click here to schedule a consultation.](#)

5. Align Your Goals with the Right Funders

Dig deeper than keywords, study funder's past grants, restrictions, and true giving patterns. We'll help you "speak their language" and position your project for fit.

6. Strengthen Your Proposal

We provide targeted feedback on clarity, structure, and strategy. Our experience with past submissions – and existing foundation relationships—helps you craft a compelling case.

7. Prepare Your Application

Start early. Gather all required materials, tailor your proposal to the specific funder, and carefully follow instructions. Each foundation is unique; attention to detail makes all the difference.

8. Submit with Confidence

Allow time for your Research Administrator and OSP review when required, especially for proposals or LOIs that include budgets and other institutional commitments. Our team can help ensure the foundation-facing materials are polished, aligned, and competitive.

9. Follow Up and Stay Connected

Foundation Relations can support stewardship strategy and future engagement with foundation partners, while post-award financial and administrative requirements should be coordinated with the appropriate RA and OSP contacts.

Ready to Get Started?

Whether you're pursuing your first foundation grant or leveraging established funding, **MSU Foundation Relations is here to help.**

Together, we'll transform strong ideas into funded initiatives that advance knowledge and create lasting impact.