Grant Funded Research: Strategies to Address the Myth of “They Don’t Fund Qualitative Research”

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Agenda

• Introduction
• Examples of Qualitative Projects
• Finding Funding
• “Personalities” of Funders
• Qualitative Options
• Discussion
Examples from NSF

2019
*CAREER Award* for a mixed-methods study of how society adapts to evolving mobility technologies

2017
*Collaborative research* investigating how legal exclusion is socially constructed in legally recognized vs. non-recognized slum settlements

2017
Methods innovation by combining Big Data and qualitative comparative analysis to study media coverage of social movements

2017
2-week *Institute for Qualitative and Mixed-Methods Research* with a 2-day authors’ workshop, now in the 13th year of funding

2017
Qualitative investigation of the challenges, barriers, and hurdles Hispanics face in engineering and computer science undergrad programs

2019
Ethnographic investigation of trust and distrust and the expansion of the language of fraud
Examples from NIH

2014
Action Ethnography of community reintegration for veterans with traumatic brain injury

2019
A mixed-methods study of the relationship between social determinants of health and self-care in community dwelling patients with heart failure

2017
Mixed-Methods study to gain understanding of the relationships between religion/spirituality and cardiovascular disease, focusing on African Americans

2019
Qualitative study of recruitment and retention into the All of Us Research Program, with the goal of advancing diverse participation in precision medical research

2015 K-award
Mixed-methods study of living alone in older age with cognitive impairment. Data will include personal narrative gained through ethnographic interviews

2019
Identifying and reducing disparities in outcomes among economically vulnerable and minority young adults with Type 1 Diabetes
Examples from IES

2018
*Interviews and single-case design studies* will be conducted to evaluate the feasibility, usability, and preliminary promise of the Para-Impact intervention.

2019
*Sequential mixed-methods* study of community college students and pathways to the Bachelor’s Degree.

2019
An empirical analysis of problem-solving teams to improve team functioning and student outcomes using data from classroom and meeting room observation.

2014
*Mixed-methods* were used to develop, examine, and refine a classroom-based training program of attention and emotion regulation.

2016
*Focus groups* were used to inform the development of a curriculum for a web-based Health Literacy Transition Curriculum for youth with high-incidence disabilities.

2015
More than 500 hours of classroom observation data were used to develop a special education teacher observation measure.
Examples from Spencer

2017
A critical diversity framework responding to shifting contexts of colorblind racism and white innocence in higher education

2019
Investigation of high-leverage early literacy teaching practices in urban schools using critical theory and ethnographic methods

2016
A grounded theory study of parent constructions of “choice sets” of schools for their children

2015
A grounded theory study of the use of video in teacher education and professional development

2018
An exploration of microaggressions in the lived experiences of Black, Female school leaders using critical theory

2018
An examination of translanguaging as resistance in a bilingual community writing program
Finding Funding

EHE Funding Opportunities Database – go.osu.edu/fundingopps
  • Search by keyword, sponsor type, program type, and topic

InfoEd SPIN – go.osu.edu/funding
  • OSU pays the license for the tool so it is free for everyone to use
  • More than 10,000 sponsors (feds, professional organizations, foundations) are covered with 40,000+ opportunities that include grants, fellowships, awards and training opportunities
  • Create your own personalized, email alerts
“Personalities” of Foundation Funders: A Conversation
“Personalities” of Funders - Spencer

• The Spencer Foundation invests in education research that cultivates learning and transforms lives. They support high-quality, innovative research on education, broadly conceived (from preK-gray).

• Multiple programs including research (Lyle Spencer, Large, Small, Research-Practice Partnerships), training (Dissertation, Postdoc) and field-building (Conference) grants (https://www.spencer.org/why-we-grant)

• Recent “equity” grants

• Most programs have one or two submission dates per year

• A PI can’t hold more than one award at a time

• Reviewers include external and internal staff

• Program officers will provide guidance on whether an idea fits within their scope

• Don’t get reviewer comments all of the time

• Awards Search – no search but a list in each program section of recent awards
Interview with a Spencer Program Officer

• Q: After five years of reading and judging grant applications, what advice do you have for scholars seeking funding for their work?

• A: One of the things I tell people, because they think I have some secret sauce, which I do not, is to really step back for a moment before they submit and think about whether they have made the case for the significance of their work and also the urgency surrounding their particular topic. Most people can convince you of the “so what,” they’re trained to do that. But conveying the real importance and urgency of why this particular topic must be explored right now, that’s sometimes missing in the proposals we see, I think because people are so close to the topic, they just don’t think to spell it out. Communicating the importance of my research—that’s a skill I picked up at Spencer, and I think I maybe I otherwise wouldn’t have gotten until much later in my career.

• Another challenge I see is people lack detail in sharing their methods, and their proposals suffer in the review process as a result. It’s so important to communicate the very specific details of your research design to help reviewers fully assess your proposal.

From Interview with Former Spencer Program Officer Rhoda Freelon posted on 02/25/20
“Personalities” of Funders - Lumina

• Lumina’s overarching goal is by 2025, 60 percent of the population in the United States will hold a high-quality, post-high school degree or credential. Their goal is to prepare people for informed citizenship and for success in a global economy. A list of what they DON’T fund is found in the FAQ section.

• Asks potential partners to fill out a survey and if they are interested they will reach out - https://www.luminafoundation.org/resources/grants/

• Welcomes unsolicited inquires all year-round

• Internal review panel reads LOIs and requests full proposals on those that meet the criteria

• Don’t provide guidance before submitting the LOI

• Grants Database - https://luminafoundation.org/resources/grants/grant-database/
“Personalities” of Funders – William T. Grant

• Funds research focused on reducing inequality in youth outcomes and improving the use of research evidence

• Multiple programs: Major Grants, Officer Research Grants, Scholar Grants, Institutional Challenge Grants, Youth Service Improvement Grants

• The Foundation does not have a preference for a particular research design or method. They begin application reviews by looking at the research questions or hypotheses.

• Some programs have multiple deadlines each year

• Can email with questions

• Awards search - http://wtgrantfoundation.org/browse-grants
OSU Resources to Support Foundation Submissions

Foundation Relations is a specialized central service team within Ohio State Advancement focused on increasing private foundation support to advance Ohio State’s educational and research mission. A partner and resource within Ohio State’s research enterprise, Foundation Relations complements the work of other central offices and grants teams engaged in grant seeking and grants administration. Resources include

• developing your proposal;
• finding funding opportunities;
• grants education and training resources; and
• managing your grant.

https://foundationrelations.osu.edu/get-funding

Kristina Markel, markel.8@osu.edu, is the EHE contact person – Contact her when you are contemplating submitting to a foundation to see if you can submit to the foundation
“Personalities” of Federal Funders
“Personalities” of Funders - NSF

- Multiple programs across a variety of disciplines (fund basic and applied research – hard sciences, education, behavior, economics, politics and law but not health)
- Most programs have one or two submission dates per year
- Fund graduate students, early career researchers, international collaborations, workforce development, economic progress of society, conferences, preK through gray
- Peer review process is anonymous; program officers are part of the process
- Program officers are willing to read one page and provide feedback
- Awards search - [https://nsf.gov/awardsearch/](https://nsf.gov/awardsearch/)
Example of NSF Funding Opportunity

EHR Core Research (ECR): Building Capacity in STEM Education Research (ECR: BCSER)

Sponsor: Directorate for Education and Human Resources/NSF 20-521

Deadline: 02/25/22

ECR: BCSER supports activities that enable early and mid-career researchers to acquire the requisite expertise and skills to conduct rigorous fundamental research in STEM education. ECR: BCSER seeks to fund research career development activities on topics that are relevant to qualitative and quantitative research methods and design, including the collection and analysis of new qualitative or quantitative data, secondary analyses using extant datasets, or meta-analyses. This career development may be accomplished through investigator-initiated projects or through professional development institutes that enable researchers to integrate methodological strategies with theoretical and practical substantive issues in STEM education. Early and mid-career faculty new to STEM education research, particularly underrepresented minority faculty and faculty at minority-serving and two-year institutions, are encouraged to submit proposals.
“Personalities” of Funders - NIH

• Has 27 institutes and centers, 24 fund awards through Funding Opportunity Announcements (FOA)
• Each institute/center (IC) has a distinct mission that focuses on a specific disease area, organ system, or stage of life
• NIH has standard submission dates for most programs – 3 times/year
• Fund research grants (R series), training and career development (K series), center grants (P series), conference grants
• Peer review process is not anonymous – you know who is on each study section (review panel); program officers are not part of the “review” process
• Recommend to talk to program officers – which program (FOA)?; which study section?
• Awards search - [https://report.nih.gov/](https://report.nih.gov/)
“Personalities” of Funders - IES

• Funds research to improve educational outcomes for all learners (particularly for those whose education prospects are hindered by inadequate education services and conditions associated with poverty, race/ethnicity, limited English proficiency, disability, and family circumstance)
• One submission date per year (usually in August)
• Program Types: education/special education, training programs, centers, statistical/research methodology programs, networks, replication research
• Peer review process is not anonymous – you know who is on each review panel
• Program officers are willing to read multiple pages of a proposal and provide feedback
• Awards search - https://ies.ed.gov/funding/grantsearch/
Alignment between Problem and Methodology is Key

- “Rigorous” qualitative research is vital!
- Qualitative methods are more than interviews or focus groups.
- The methodology must be congruent with the questions you are asking, methods you take up, and problems you are trying to solve (From Spencer: *We are open to whatever qualitative and quantitative methods make sense for answering the questions at hand.* )
- QualLab can help the team think about the arch of an interview, the in-depth analysis, the congruency, etc.
- Email QualLab@osu.edu to set up a consulting appointment or go to the QualLab website at https://u.osu.edu/quallab/ to see all services.