

How To Seek Funding for Your Project Charter

The Strategic Initiative Office (SIO) at the Goddard School of Business & Economics is dedicated to supporting project charters from concept through completion to continue the college's growth and innovation. We understand that most proposals will require time and resources beyond the college's current capacity to implement fully.

The following is a guide to help you investigate opportunities and successfully apply for grants or other external funding for your project. The Office of Sponsored Projects (OSP) at Weber State is also an excellent resource for funding. Because the OSP serves the entire campus, identifying prospects, writing a one-page abstract and having a clearly defined concept upfront will help accelerate the process. Information on how to engage their office can be found online in the section "[How do I begin?](#)"

For additional information or support, contact the committee chair of the SIO. Locate the current committee chair on the [committee website](#).

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Understanding Types of Grants and Funding

There are several options to fund a project, from large federal grants to small, local corporate donations. Before embarking on your funding search, look at the types of funding and their pros and cons.

Government (Federal & State)

Twenty-six federal agencies administer over 1,000 grants annually. These grants are generally high-dollar, between \$50,000 and \$150 million and are highly competitive. Look at these grants for significant sources of funding.

- **PROS**
 - Large sources of funding
 - Reasonably easy to find; most are clearly listed in the search databases
 - Many opportunities across a broad spectrum
- **CONS**
 - Incredibly competitive
 - Time-consuming
 - Generally limited to a narrow cycle

Private Funding

Private funding can come from associations, businesses, individuals and private foundations. This sector has thousands of sponsors with established funding programs to serve various missions, interests and goals. These entities will often not be listed in traditional grant search databases and may be more challenging to find.

Banks have community reinvestment programs they are required to fulfill. Many banks use these reinvestment funds to support educational programs and research.

The funding from private entities is generally smaller, starting in the hundreds or thousands of dollars, but it can also be significant in some cases. Although the donations may be smaller, the giving is often relatively narrow, and organizations generally have established giving patterns making it difficult to enter.

- **PROS**
 - Thousands of sources
 - Varied causes
 - Less strict than federal or state funding
 - Application processes can be easier
 - Many do not follow the traditionally limited cycle
- **CONS**
 - Can be difficult to find, not always in the search databases
 - Giving may be narrowed with already established giving patterns

Internal (e.g., University Teaching Grants)

Weber State has several internal sources of funding, often specifically for teaching and innovation. Checking with the OSP for current funding projects is also a good idea.

- **PROS**
 - Locally available
 - Simple application
- **CONS**
 - Limited funding
 - Limited scope

Understanding Types of Proposals and Applications

Types of proposals and applications are as varied as the companies and organizations that fund them. Unfortunately for the applicants, no two applications are alike; however, there is a winning formula in response no matter what type of format the donor requires. Applications vary from a simple online form to a full RFP. For more information on writing a winning proposal, [jump to the writing section below](#).

Finding Funding

Finding funding can be daunting and frustrating. There are thousands of grants and not a single one has the same guidelines, time frames, applications or qualifications.

Below are a few sources and tips to help you in the process.

If you'd like directed support before your search, one of the SIO committee members will gladly walk you through the process. Locate the current committee members on the [committee website](#).

Pivot Funding Database (the University's System)

The university uses **Pivot**, a robust funding database. This database searches state and federal grants and many of the well-established corporate and private grants. Pivot does not yet include smaller, local opportunities, but it is a great place to start with thousands of options worldwide. Pivot does make frequent updates to improve searchability and opportunities.

Getting a Pivot Account

Visit <https://www.weber.edu/osp>, find the "Pivot" box and follow the directions to create your account

How to Search on Pivot

Searching through Pivot is not exactly like searching in Google. The grants are searchable based on predefined keywords that are much more limited and focused than a traditional search engine.

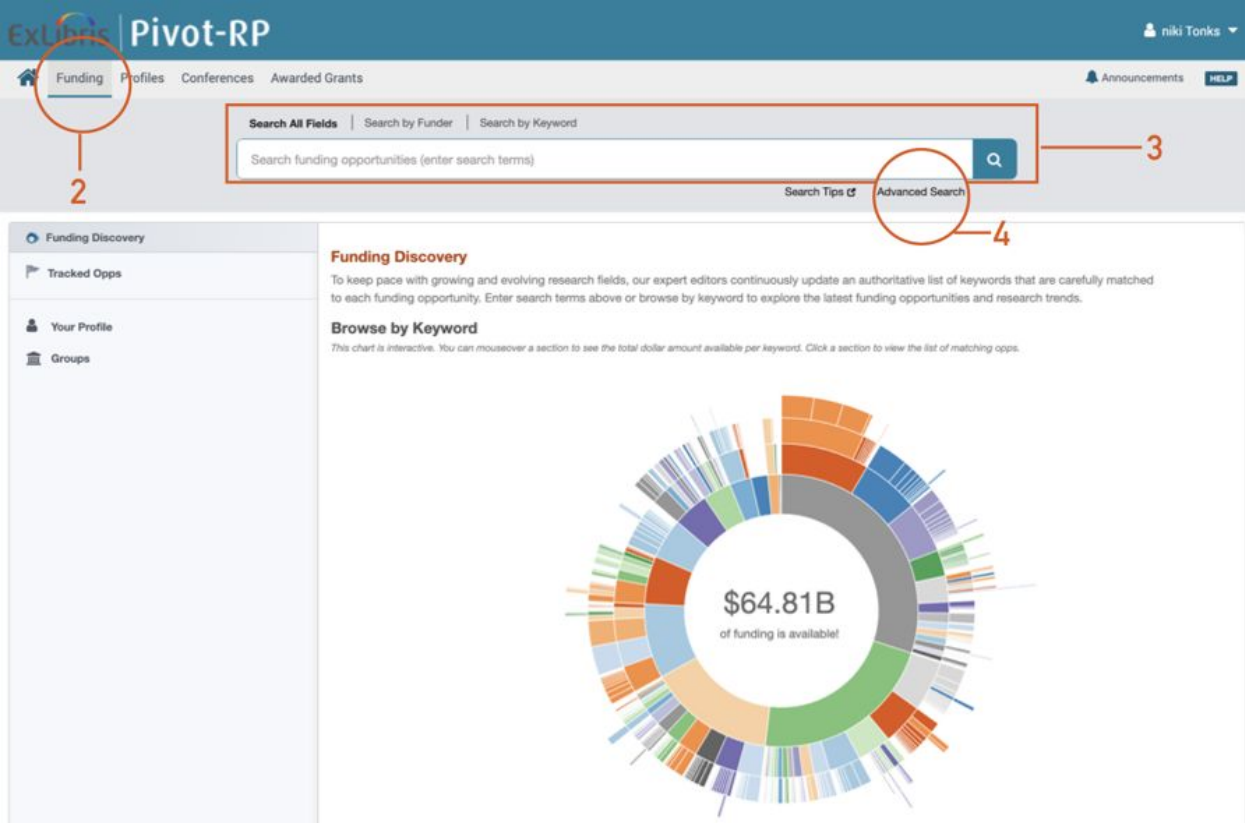
Start by thinking about the project categorically. For example, general categories such as education, environment, community development, teaching, business, management, commerce, small business,

training and development will yield better results than more specific queries such as “innovative teaching models” or “summer camp funding.”

Searching is fairly intuitive in Pivot; however, below are some simple instructions:

1. Once you have a few general categories in mind, open Pivot
2. Then, click the funding tab in the main menu
3. Next, enter one of the keywords you identified
4. Finally, click on the Advanced Search link below the search bar to narrow the scope if you have too many initial results. There are several features such as amount, deadlines, location, sponsor type, etc.

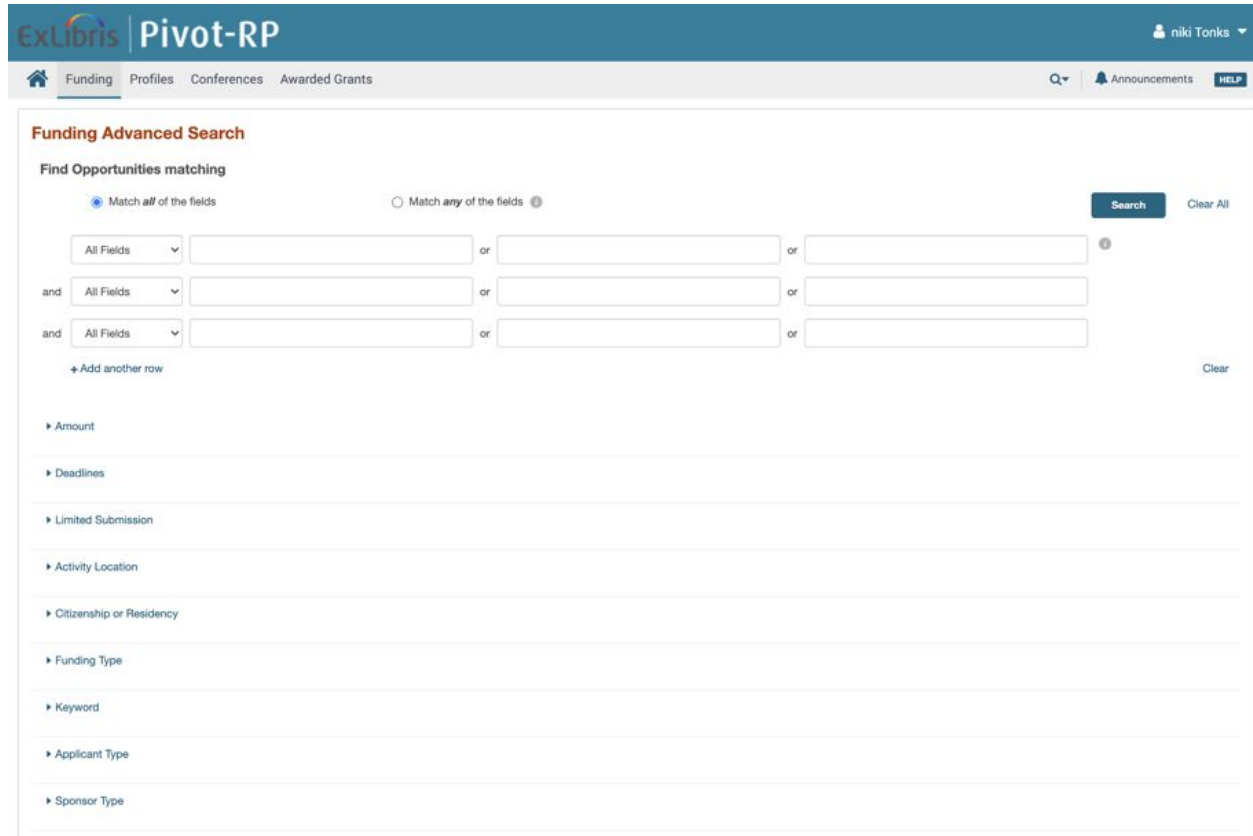
See an example of the search screen below.



The screenshot shows the Pivot-RP search interface. The navigation menu at the top includes 'Funding' (2), 'Profiles', 'Conferences', and 'Awarded Grants'. The search bar (3) contains the text 'Search funding opportunities (enter search terms)'. Below the search bar is the 'Advanced Search' link (4). The main content area displays 'Funding Discovery' with a 'Browse by Keyword' section featuring a sunburst chart showing '\$64.81B of funding is available!'.

(Pivot's main search page)

If nothing displays, reconsider your keyword(s). If you have too many options, narrow the search using the many advanced features. See the advanced search screen below for an example of the filtering capabilities.



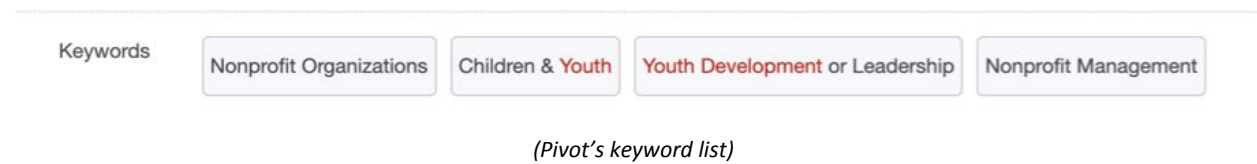
(Pivot’s advanced search page)

What’s great about this tool is that it not only provides the opportunities, but it clearly shows the amounts and deadlines on the results page, making it easy to scan. See the example below:

		Deadline	Amount
<input type="checkbox"/>	20 Results Sort ▾		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grant Program Bi-Rite Family of Businesses	28 Jul 2021 Application Anticipated	\$10,000 USD
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LIMITED Grants Honda Corporate American Honda Foundation	01 Feb 2021 Application Anticipated	\$75,000 USD
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Becky Burrows Memorial Scholarship Pilot International	15 Mar 2021 Application Anticipated	\$1,000 USD
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Community Support: Community Giving Nordstrom	01 Oct 2021 Application Anticipated	see record
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LIMITED Cultural Arts, Education, Urban Farming and Youth Development Grants Clorox Company Foundation	01 Jan 2021 Application Confirmed	see record
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Community and Social Impact RBC Foundation	continuous Application Confirmed	see record
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> JRM Community Impact Grant Program JRM Construction Management, LLC	23 Aug 2021 Proposals Anticipated	\$20,000 USD
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Marie Newton Sepia Memorial Scholarship Pilot International	15 Mar 2021 Application Anticipated	\$1,000 USD

(Pivot’s results page)

Also, when opened, the detail page has a great tool at the bottom called *Keywords*. Take a look at the list of keywords, and you may find several other like categories to search.



In addition to the pertinent details about the grant, deadlines, amounts and links, the site also has a track and share feature. The tracking feature allows you to save your narrowed search criteria, and as new grants are added that meet the identified criteria, you will be notified.

 Track

 Share

See more opps like this
Send feedback

Other Helpful Search Sites

- [Grants.gov](#) website
The robust search feature in this government-sponsored website is sortable by many categories to help you quickly narrow your search. The site also has other resources, including a blog, Twitter feed, YouTube videos and a free app for your cell phone.
- [PeakProposals.com](#) article: “The Best (Free) Places to Search for Grant Funding”
This free site provides links to 12 foundations, 26 federal agencies, 12 U.S. government grant-making agencies and 13 international groups.
- [Community Toolbox](#)
The Community Toolbox is a free service of the Center for Community Health and Development at the University of Kansas. This site includes 51 potential funders from around the world.
- Google search
To find large corporation grants, try searching on Google for “*Corporate Name Grant.*” An example might be “ExxonMobil grant,” “Patagonia grant” or “Kimberly-Clark grant.” Brainstorm organizations that align with your goals. Google searches are more tedious, but this tactic is an excellent way to find a specific company’s giving page if you have an organization in mind.

Tracking Your Prospects and their Requirements

You may identify several grants that fit your project. The [Grant Funding Matrix Worksheet](#) from Learngrantwriting.org is a helpful resource to track and compare your prospects.

Note: This is a *view-only* Google Sheet. Go up to file, then make a copy to save it as a fillable form.

This form includes seven categories with examples for each. Using this form will help you ensure the grant you've found both meets your needs and satisfies the donor's philosophy, program interests and criteria. It will also help you keep track of the many prospects.

Understanding Timing and Grant Cycles

Most grants from large federal and state organizations are cyclical. These cycles start with a narrow application period followed by a proposal review process where the committee will meet to review all applicants. The approval, award and post-award phases generally run in cycles as well.

Private foundations and corporations may have similar cycles if they are large or well-established. Otherwise, the organization may have an open process year-round.

Some funding sources do not accept unsolicited proposals, and all funding is distributed by an invitation to apply.

When searching for funding, understanding the grant cycle and timing is critical to determining whether to proceed with a proposal. *It is also important to understand the payout cycle as it may not align with your project.*

In terms of preparing the response, depending on the project's complexity and the requirements of the grant, proposals can take several hundred hours to complete. **The point is, when identifying a great opportunity with a ridiculously short delivery schedule, it's probably not the best option unless personnel resources are available.**

Creating a "Skeleton" Framework

Grants and funding applications are notorious for pages of tedious submission details, including incredibly specific formatting requirements. These requirements, including one particular typeface, font size, margin and word count, serve two functions. The first function is to ensure document readability and length. The second is to weed out applicants who don't follow instructions.

To make sure you don't miss any minor formatting technicalities or major content requirements, start with a detailed framework or "skeleton" outline. This framework will ensure you have identified and included all the details.

NOTE: OSP can also help create skeleton frameworks for larger, or more complex projects. If you need their help, reach out on their [website](#).

Follow the guidelines below to help you create a skeleton framework.

- Copy each segment of the requirements from the original request. Whether you are working from an online form, a PDF, or a printed document, start by creating a new Google Document to build your skeleton framework. Having this file in the cloud is helpful for collaboration and revision control.
- Next, create a header section with the formatting requirements and include font size, margins, typeface and so on.
- Then, list each header and sub-header in an outline format, leaving space for your response. As you break the document apart, watch out for bullets and questions that may require a response as well. Include these in your outline. You may choose to highlight the original requirements in yellow to make it easier to scan. Follow the original document precisely and include every element that requires a response. If a section has multiple questions or requirements, split the details into a bulleted list, so you don't miss anything.
- Finally, create a table to track the required forms and referrals. Add a column to check once complete.
- Save everything in an easy-to-find folder. Creating clear document control to begin with will be critical as the documents pile up.
- For a more detailed explanation, watch this six-minute [step-by-step guide](#).

Conducting Literature Reviews and Community Research

Once you decide to pursue a funding opportunity, start with a literature review. Identify past and current research on the subject as well as any previous projects attempting a solution. Research previous awards from the funding organization. Ensure your concept is unique.

Next, identify problems and goals within the project community and any key people to partner with. Collaborate with both internal and external stakeholders to fully inform the current situation.

Information from the initial research and stakeholder input will be the basis of your problem statement and strengthen your solution's innovation.

Writing the Grant

Clarity, style and precision in writing are just as or more important than the idea itself. There are areas where academic and technical terminology is necessary. If your proposal cannot be understood by a non-academic first, it may not pass the abstract or review phase.

Don't underestimate the value of good grammar, punctuation, spelling and completeness. People awarding grants are looking for reasons to *thin the herd*.

Below are a few guidelines to help with the writing process and persuasive style required to present a winning proposal.

Writing a One-pager

Writing succinctly and clearly is a challenge but creating a one-page summary will help guide you through the remainder of the project. Additionally, it will be a great tool to send to grant administrators when determining if your project is a match. This document also helps define your abstract.

Follow the quick tips below to craft a persuasive one-pager.

Katharine French-Fuller, WSU's grant expert, suggests answering the following three questions as a guide to creating a compelling one-pager:

1. What is the problem, and why should anyone care?

When writing a one-pager, your initial instinct might be to jump right in with a project description; however, grant administrators need to clearly understand the problem's scope and magnitude before being presented with a solution.

Do these four things in your opening paragraph:

- Get the reviewer interested in the outset
- Identify the importance and stress the need
- Summarize the "state of the art" and its limitations
- Describe the challenges to solving the problems and potential benefits

2. What is your solution, and why is it unique from the thousands of other solutions?

Now that you have set the stage and caught the reader's attention, introduce your concept and establish its credibility. This is where you will describe your new idea with as much clarity and vivid detail as possible while remaining concise.

3. What is your vision, and how will it make the world a better place? This is the "so what" moment.

You have set the stage, established credibility and described your project with clarity. Now show how this work will advance the field and solve the problem. Don't let the reader draw his or her own conclusions. Help your reader envision the world with the problem solved. That is your "so what."

Using Persuasive Writing Techniques

Grant writing is persuasive. In the game of winning grants, style is almost as important as content. Make sure to start the style with a catchy header and keep the theme and tone throughout.

Persuasive writing is energetic, direct and concise. Avoid passive voice and wordiness. Do not use academic or research style writing.

Your objective is to tell a story and convince the approver that your project closely aligns with their proposed goals. Show them you understand the requirements clearly, and selecting your project will result in the best use of their money. Describe your team, highlighting what makes this group special and capable. Specify why your solution is original. Illustrate how your project will provide the most impactful and successful outcome.

Reviewers look for answers to these key questions (provided by Katharine French-Fuller from the OSP):

- Why does this matter?
- How is this new?
- How will it be done?
- In what context will it be done?
- What is special about the people involved?
- What is the return on investment?
- How effectively will the financial resources be managed?
- How will success be determined?

For a more detailed description of persuasive writing for proposals, watch this [7-minute video](#).

Proofreaders, Revisions and External Feedback

Every grant must be proofread by a secondary source prior to submission. Third party proofreaders and editors will provide valuable feedback, check for consistency and request clarifications.

A Comprehensive Guide to Grant Writing

The Community Tool Box is a free website offered by the University of Kansas providing practical, step-by-step guidance in community-building skills. [Chapter 42](#) in this resource details the application and grant writing process. Use "[Section 5. Writing a Grant](#)" to answer the following questions:

- What is a grant?
- Why is it worthwhile to write a grant?

- Who can write a grant proposal?
- What are the standard components of a grant proposal?
- How do you prepare a winning grant proposal?

The Community Tool Box also includes 16 “toolkits” that dive deeper into each of the offered skills. [Toolkit 14 “Applying for Grants” Part II](#) dissects each section of the grant writing process. Look to this page for comprehensive support while preparing the grant proposal.

Formulating the Budget

The best advice in formulating a budget is to start early, involve the OSP, be precise and use a [budget tracking form](#). Be consistent and accurate; grant reviewers know general project pricing. Because the OSP has the latest pricing details, it is imperative that you include them in the budget process early.

Note: This is a *view-only* Google Sheet. Go up to file, then make a copy to save it as a fillable form.

Submitting the Grant

All grants must be signed and submitted by the Office of Sponsored Projects. If you aren’t sure whether your funding source falls within their guidelines, please contact their [office](#).

Helpful Forms and Other Resources at a Glance

1. Three Forms from LearnGrantWriting.org
 - [Budget Tracking Form](#)
 - [Grant Funding Matrix Worksheet](#)
 - [Letters of Support Spreadsheet](#)

Note: These forms open in a *view-only* Google Sheet. Go up to file, then make a copy to save it as a fillable form.

2. A [Final Review Checklist](#) from Community Tool Box
3. A Comprehensive Planning and Writing Resource from [Community Tool Box](#)

This site is a comprehensive two-part guide to applying for grants. The first part provides an in-depth, step-by-step overview of the grant process. The second part details the writing process

and application completion. This site also includes real-world examples for each phase of the process, including [awarded grants](#).

5 Tips & Tricks from a Grant Expert

Dave Matty, geoscience professor at Weber State University, and former grant program manager for the National Science Foundation (NSF), provided five tips to help guide new grant seekers. During his two-year term at the NSF, Matty awarded over a half a billion dollars of requests: the smallest grant was \$150,000, the largest was \$10 million.

1. Contact the grant administrator before submitting a proposal to make sure your project meets the grant's requirements. Saves everyone time! Sometimes contacting the grant administrator is forbidden and can disqualify your application, so check the requirements in advance.
2. Ensure your evaluation plan is concrete, both at the conclusion of the project and at critical checkpoints during the project. Approvers like to see you are ready for changes and are flexible enough to adapt.
3. Make sure your budget is concrete. Do not generalize, guess or estimate. Grant administrators know approximate costs. If you do not take the time to prepare a quality budget, it shows a lack of preparation and can be an easy way to cut your proposal.
4. Follow the grant application instructions precisely. Few grants even make it to the review phase; most are cut immediately due to non-conformance.
5. Present an original or improved solution. Make sure in your research to discuss previous projects and clearly identify the differences in your proposal.