

# Introduction to Foundation Relations and funding opportunities for the Neuroscience Institute

Thursday, January 23, 2025

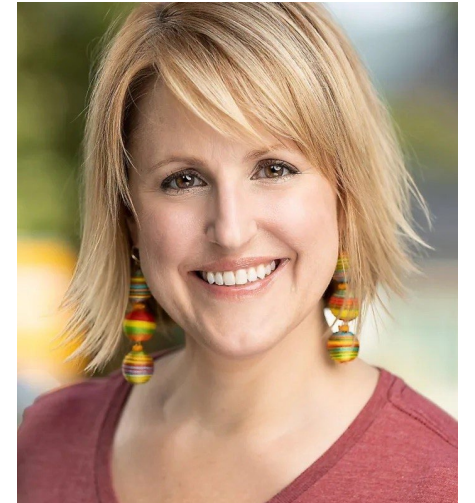


# Housekeeping items

- There will be 15 mins at the end for Q&A
- PowerPoint slides and FAQs will be provided after the session
- Feel free to email Maria (Medicine/PS Health) or Karen (University Park/ Commonwealth campus) afterwards with more questions/comments



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Foundation Relations  
[kuk195@psu.edu](mailto:kuk195@psu.edu)



**Maria Petrilak**  
Assistant Director of  
Foundation Relations  
[mep6096@psu.edu](mailto:mep6096@psu.edu)



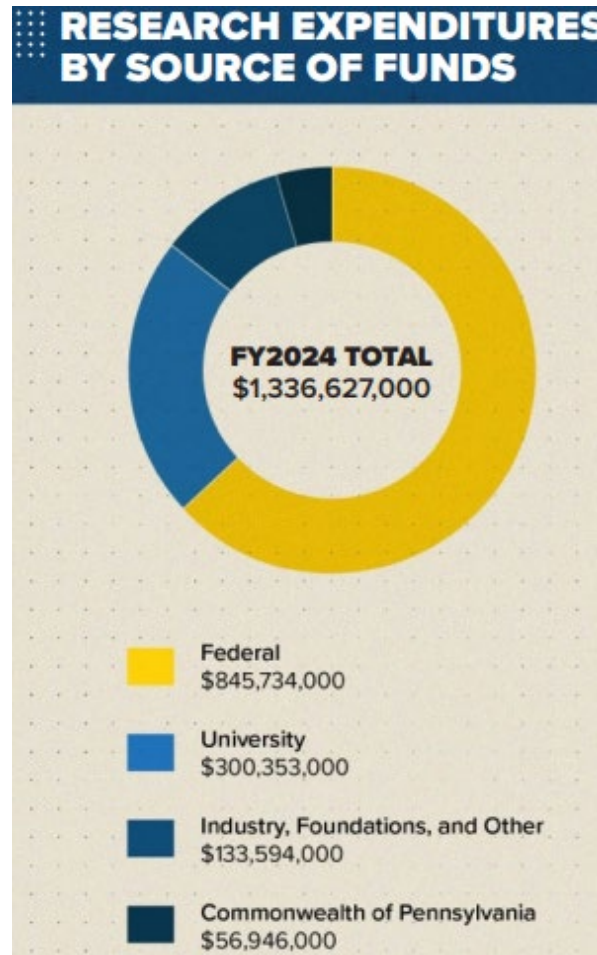
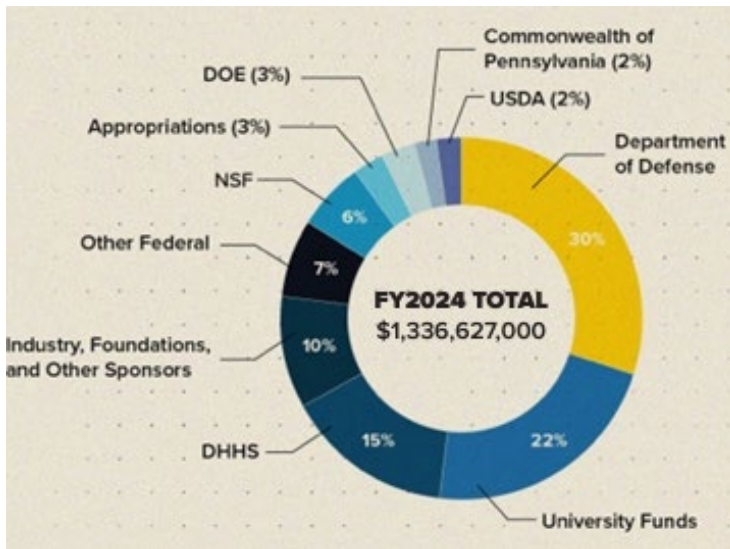
# Presentation Goals

- 1) To learn what Foundations are
- 2) To understand the structure, role and resources of the Penn State Office of Foundation Relations (OFR)
- 3) To discuss potential Neuroscience Institute Foundation funding opportunities



# What are Foundations?

As defined by the IRS, a private foundation is a tax-exempt charitable organization, created by an individual/s or business, that falls outside of specially designated groups such as hospitals and universities. It must pay out **at least 5 percent of its assets** each year in the form of grants towards charitable activities including research.



Informal designations to help understand their structures, funding priorities, and operations include:

- Independent Foundations
- Family Foundations
- Corporate Foundations
- International Foundations

*\*Misnomers e.g. 1) Geospatial Intelligence Foundation and National Science Foundation **are not** true foundations. 2) Research Corporation for Scientific Advancement, Pivotal Ventures and Carnegie Corporation of New York **are** foundations.*

[2024 Annual research report](#)

# Non-profit funding sources are of increasing importance as an alternative/ supplement to federal funds

## Trends in Basic and Applied Research Expenditures at Universities and Nonprofit Organizations, by Source (1953-2021)

Source: NSF National Patterns 2021 data update (NCSES NSF 23-321, 2023)

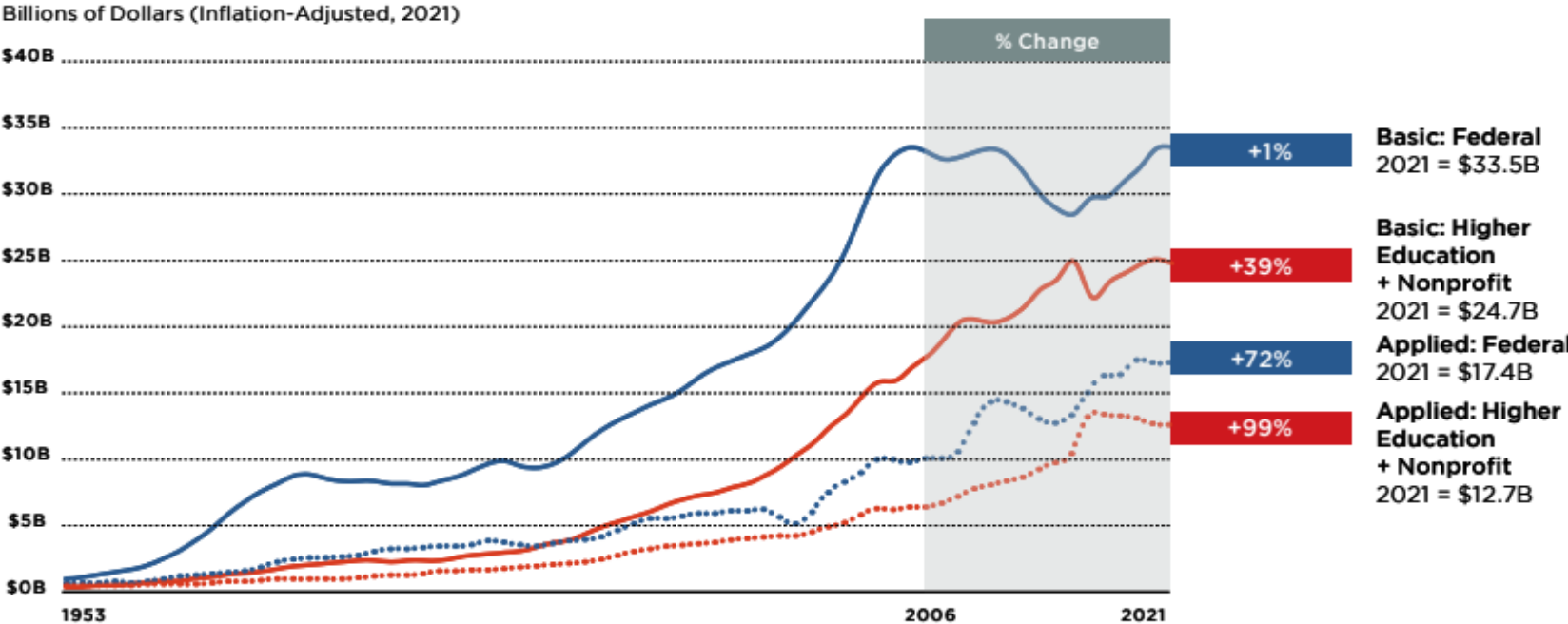


Figure 3. Federal investment in basic research has not kept pace with inflation. Blue lines show inflation-adjusted federal funding for basic (solid) and applied (dotted) research expenditures at universities and nonprofit research institutes. Red lines estimate philanthropy’s contribution, combining the higher education and nonprofit funding sources. State/local and business sources are not shown. The overlay shows the change in support from 2006 to 2021.



# Examples of Foundation funders



# What Foundations Fund

While every Foundation is different, keeping in mind these broad funding trends are useful in determining if your project is a good fit for Foundation funding.

Targeted research on individual Foundations with the assigned OFR staff member is the key to success.



## Mission

Programs and projects that fall within their mission.



## Research/ Programs

Projects that help the Foundation achieve their goals.



## Seed

New, exciting ventures at start-up phase or seeking to scale.



## Impact

Programs/ projects that have a clear societal benefit.



Awards  
Grand Challenges  
Competitions



# What Foundations Don't Fund



**Operations/  
Capital grants**  
Operating costs for unspecified and ongoing projects/ buildings



**F&A**  
Many foundations will not pay F&A costs or will limit the amount to 0-25%



**Individuals**  
OFR does not manage RFPs where the funding goes directly to the PI



**Unclear Impact**  
Foundations often look for a clear, specific impact in some cases on specific groups or areas



**Outside Scope**  
Projects that fall outside of the scope of the foundation's mission

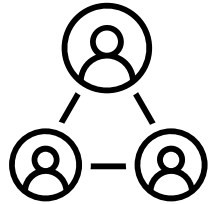




# Key differences in Government versus Foundation funding



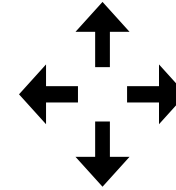
- **Federal grants are more labor intensive** versus brief Letter of Intent
- **Quick turnaround**
- **Delayed resubmission** period for some Foundations



- **Relationships matter** for Foundations. Some Foundation grants are non-competitive (require cultivation)
- Not all Foundation program officers are open to pre-solicitation communication



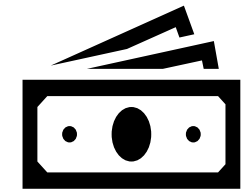
- Foundation proposal **reviewers may not be experts** in the field
- Often no **feedback** when declined



- **Changing priorities** by research topic without warning
- **geographical location** eligibility
- **types of recipient organization:** university vs local nonprofit etc



- Must show **societal impact**
- **Incremental research or publications not enough**



- **Federal grant \$'s are much larger** on average than foundation grants

# Pros/ Cons of Foundation Funding

## Pros

- Pilot/ seed funding: collect preliminary data before federal funds
- ROI: Phase I is often a 1-2 page letter of intent
- Early career grants: Asst. Professors can show diverse funding pools
- Prestige e.g \$75K for Sloan Research Fellowship - Neuroscience
- Many do not have citizenship requirements
- Success rate can be high (>30%) once invited to full proposal stage

## Cons

- Short timeline from RFP announcement to deadline; long wait for award notification
- PSU is geographically disadvantaged
- Varied terms and conditions
- Constantly changing priorities
- Low amounts compared to federal grants
- Subjective proposal review/ no feedback

***President Bendapudi helps lead new higher ed council on public-impact research***

*New Presidents and Chancellors Council on Public Impact Research brings together higher education leaders, Pew Charitable Trusts and key stakeholders to advance impactful scholarship*



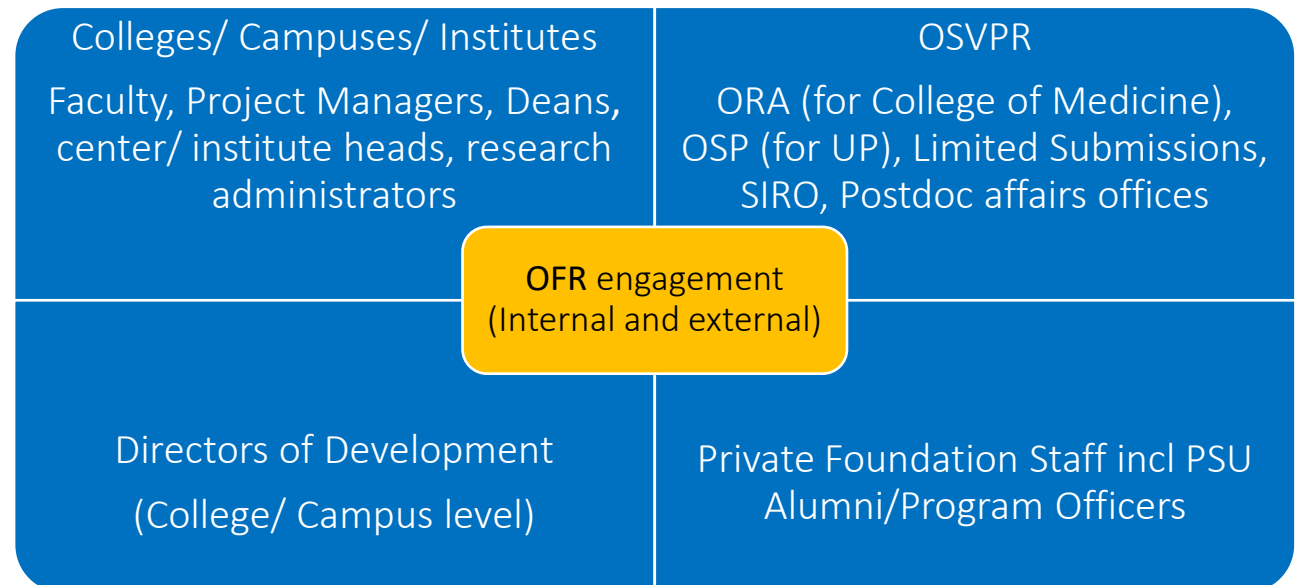
# Office of Foundation Relations (OFR)



MISSION: Connecting Penn State faculty and staff with private Foundations to advance the University's research and programmatic strengths and priorities

[foundations.psu.edu](https://foundations.psu.edu)

VISION: To generate transformative independent Foundation support for Penn State by developing mutually beneficial, long-term, collaborative relationships with internal partners and private Foundation leadership



# Staff assignments are by both unit and individual Foundation

Email: [foundations@psu.edu](mailto:foundations@psu.edu)

## **JARA DORSEY-LASH**, *Executive Director*

Colleges of Agriculture, Arts & Architecture, Communications & Education, Schreyer, Central PA Campuses, SSRI

## **KATE TOTINO**, *Associate Director*

College of HHD, Liberal Arts, Law School, Libraries, Eastern PA Campuses, SSRI, CSUA, Pollock Center, DEI

## **KAREN KEMIREMBE**, *Assistant Director*

Colleges of EMS, Eberly and Nursing. One Health Microbiome Center, Huck Institutes of the Life Sciences, EESI

## **ANDREW KUHN**, *Assistant Director*

Colleges of Engineering and IST. ICDS, MRI, IEE, Outreach, proposals related to Climate, Energy, Water

## **MARIA PETRILAK**, *Assistant Director*

**FROWN FELTER** – *Administrative Support Coordinator*

(supported by **KELLY**)

College of Medicine and Penn State Health System

**Vacant**, *Stewardship Coordinator*

**GAGE SMITH**, *Administrative Assistant*



# OFR Managed Prospects (MP)

- OFR manages Foundation relationships on behalf of Penn State. These are designated as Managed Prospects [MP].
- One OFR staff member is assigned as Staff Principal (SP) for each of our 309 centrally managed Foundations. There are 660+ total managed Foundations across different units at Penn State.
- The SP is responsible for keeping track of current and future Foundation priorities, developing relationships with Program Officers if possible
- RFP posting, dissemination and proposal assistance, understanding Foundation priorities and any special requirements, site visit planning, developing funding strategy at university level, stewardship, impact reporting etc.



## Penn State - SIMS Sponsor Fact Sheet

### Charles E. Kaufman Foundation [MP]

Hierarchy:

#### Primary Address:

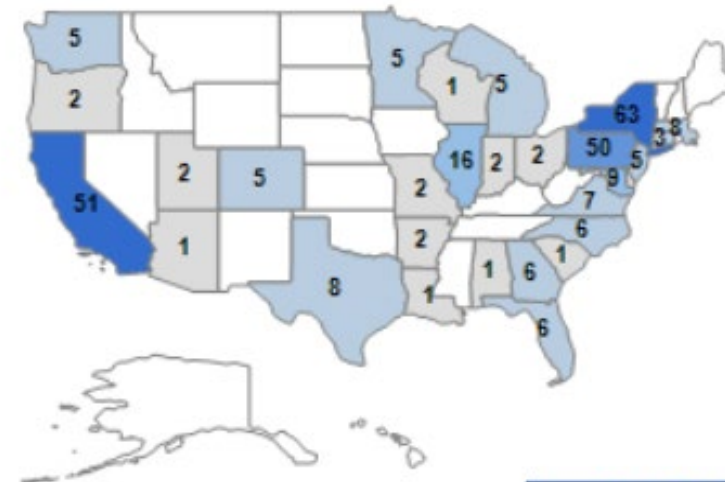
Five PPG Place, Suite 250  
Pittsburgh PA 15222-5401  
[pittsburghfoundation.org/Charles\\_Kaufman](http://pittsburghfoundation.org/Charles_Kaufman)

Sponsor Type: Nonprofit Foundations  
PA Based: Yes  
Foreign: No  
Active: Yes  
Entered: 01/14/2013

### Assigned Prospects Geographical Distribution

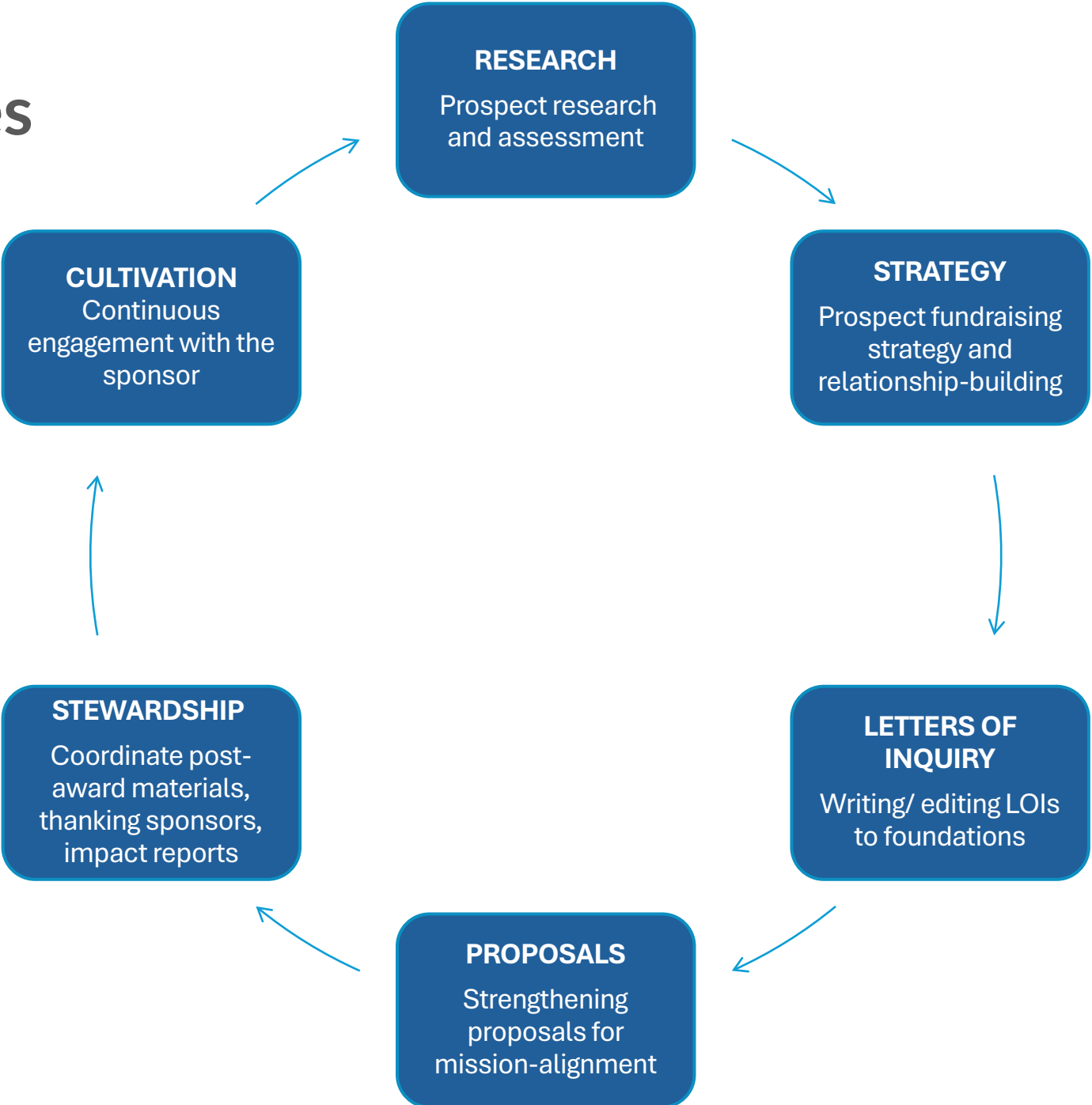
Location Overview of Assigned Prospects by preferred address

309



Assigned Prospects

# What OFR Does



# OFR resources for grant seekers

## Funding Opportunities

Opt in to L-FundingOpps email [listserv](#)

### [Infoready](#)

PSU site listing funding opportunities from various sources. Updated frequently.

### [Limited Submissions](#)

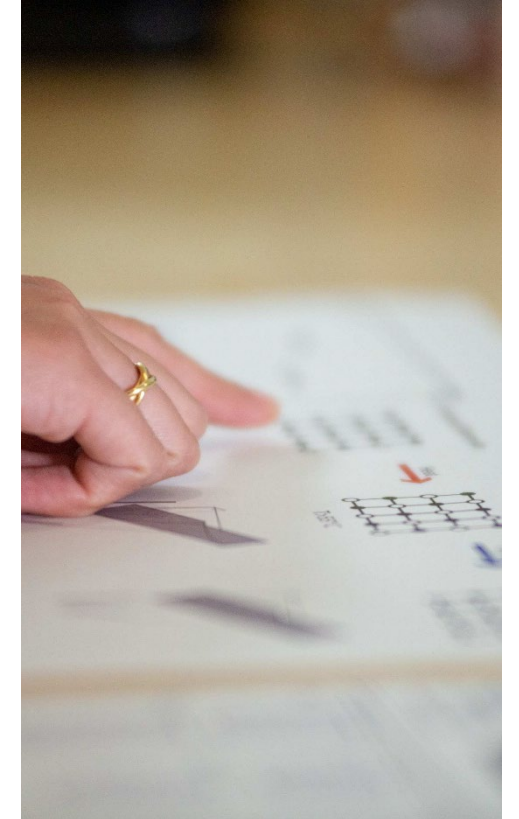
Manages research funding opportunities for which a limited number of submissions are permitted from Penn State.

## Grant Writing Resources

The [OFR website](#) has resources for grant seekers across the university and information about grant writing and submitting grant applications.

## Managed Foundations

OFR manages relationships with 300+ foundations. [Contact us](#) to discuss opportunities with these foundations. A list of managed prospects (MP) can be found [here](#). These have an MP designation in SIMS.



# Pre-award considerations for Foundation Funding

- PSU Philanthropic Fund if 501c3 status required
- Terms and Conditions: Office of Sponsored Programs
- Geographic restrictions: local, state, national, international
- Scope: Basic/ fundamental/ theoretical vs applied or clinical research. Preferences e.g. Sloan Foundation: no biomedical research

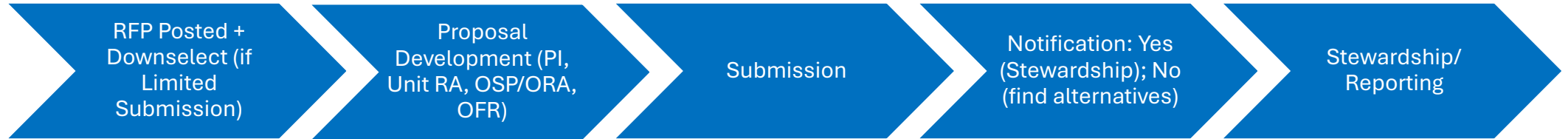


# Continuation of Pre-award considerations

- Funding philosophy (institutions): spread wealth/ blind reviews/ e.g Macy Foundation: past successful institutions can't apply
- Funding philosophy (applicant): Person vs science e.g Searle Scholars, Pew, HHMI fund a successful person and their overall research program, NOT a research project
- 1 Institutional contact/ 1 login e.g Blavatnik or Moore Foundations, Searle Scholars
- Past awardees: single PI/dept or collaboration/ interdisciplinary/ Multiple institutions
- No website? Scan 990 PF tax forms , section XV

# Timeline/ Expectations

RFP-based:  
3mths-1 year



Cultivation  
(relationship-  
building)-based:  
3-24+ mths



- Unit Research administrators handle internal approvals, budgeting and submission.
- Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) and Office of Research Affairs (ORA) process and negotiates contracts, all other agreements, ensures compliance

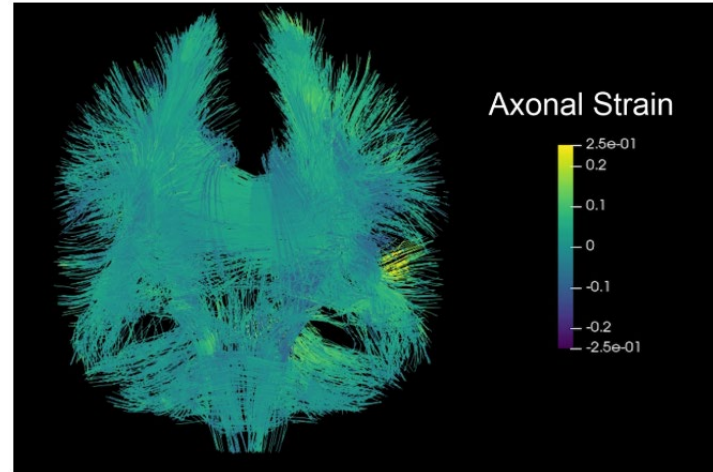
# Recent PSU Foundation funding success stories

## Biology professor receives McKnight Brain Research Foundation Innovation Award



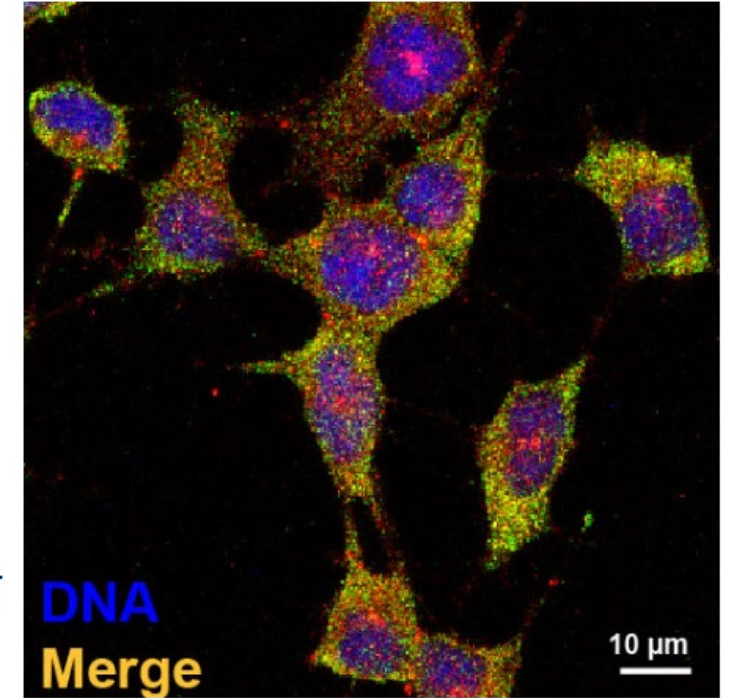
Janine Kwapis Credit: Penn State. [Creative Commons](#)

## Research team aims to better understand traumatic brain injuries



Reuben Kraft, professor of mechanical engineering in the Penn State College of Engineering, is using computational tools – such as mouthguard sensors – to model and predict injury in the human brain. Here, a 3D visualization shows deformation in the brain caused by physical impact during a game of football. Credit: Kraft Lab. All Rights Reserved.

## Gene associated with schizophrenia risk regulates neurodevelopment



The ZNF804A protein and ribosomal protein RPSA, co-localized in mouse nerve cells, were stained with fluorescent dyes and merged into a single image. Both are involved in the translation of proteins from RNA. A new study demonstrates the role of ZNF804A during proliferation and migration of neurons in the brain as well as its contribution to psychiatric disorders like schizophrenia. Credit: Penn State. [Creative Commons](#)

## Three Penn State researchers awarded scientific grants from Kaufman Foundation



## A toxin that travels from stomach to brain may trigger Parkinsonism



"This study gives solid evidence that lectins, while in the presence of certain toxins, may be one potential culprit for the cause of Parkinsonism," Subramanian said. Credit: © GettyImages / KatarzynaBialasiewicz. All Rights Reserved.

## Crowley receives NARSAD Young Investigator Award

AUGUST 15, 2018

By Nikki Crowley



UNIVERSITY PARK, Pa. – Nikki Crowley, assistant research professor of biobehavioral health at Penn State, has received the NARSAD Young Investigator Award from the Brain and Behavior Research [Foundation](#). This award will support her work on the neurobiological underpinnings of alcohol misuse and comorbid neuropsychiatric disorders.



# Charles E. Kaufman Foundation

Charles E. Kaufman  
*Foundation*

A SUPPORTING ORGANIZATION OF THE PITTSBURGH FOUNDATION

ABOUT HOW TO APPLY



INSPIRING NOVEL SCIENTIFIC EXPLORATION

## Five Penn State researchers awarded grants by Kaufman Foundation

AUGUST 29, 2019

By Gail McCormick



UNIVERSITY PARK, Pa. — The Charles E. Kaufman Foundation — a supporting organization of The Pittsburgh Foundation, which works to improve the quality of life in the Pittsburgh region — has selected two projects led by Penn State researchers to receive New Initiatives grants.

Past PSU giving: \$3.8m

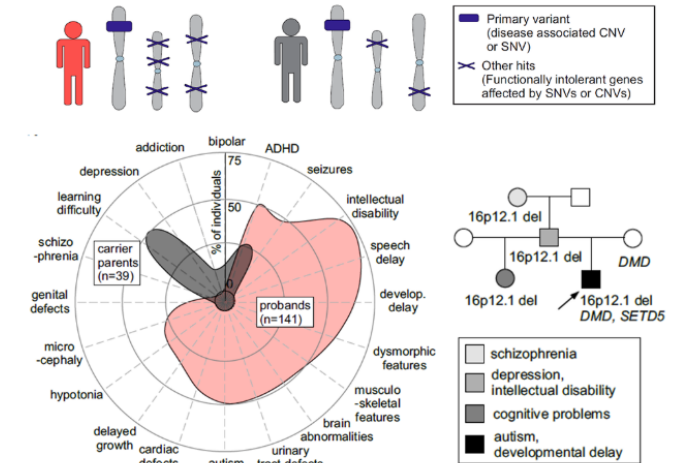
Pennsylvania-only focused foundation supporting early career (New Investigator Grant) and established faculty (New Initiative Grant) in basic biology, physics and chemistry. Letters of Intent due in [March](#) every year



# Simons Foundation



## Family genetics vital for understanding autism progression



Clinical variability of disease-associated mutations can be explained by other variants in the genetic background. Credit: Girirajan Lab, Penn State. All Rights Reserved.

Dr. Santhosh Girirajan  
SFARI fellow

Simons Foundation Announces 2024 Class of Neuroscience Undergraduate Research Fellows

Simons Foundation Accepting Applications for Fellows-to-Faculty Award

- **Simons Autism Research Initiative (SFARI)**'s mission is to advance the basic science of autism and related neurodevelopmental disorders. Various funding opportunities from undergrad onwards can be found [here](#).
- Through its collaboration with the Simons Foundation, the **Klingenstein-Simons Fellowship Awards in Neuroscience** supports early career investigators engaged in basic or clinical research that may lead to a better understanding of neurological and psychiatric disorders. [Link](#)

# American Federation for Aging Research (AFAR)

[Homepage - American Federation for Aging Research](#)



- [Glenn Foundation for Medical Research and AFAR Grants for Junior Faculty](#)
- [Glenn Foundation for Medical Research Postdoctoral Fellowships in Aging Research](#)
- [Glenn Foundation Discovery Awards](#)
- [Hevolution/AFAR New Investigator Awards in Aging Biology and Geroscience Research](#)
- [Diana Jacobs Kalman/AFAR Scholarships for Research in the Biology of Aging](#)
- [McKnight Brain Research Foundation Innovator Awards in Cognitive Aging and Memory Loss](#)
- [The Sagol Network GerOmic Award for Junior Faculty](#)

PSU current funding: \$1.1M

Multiple opportunities annually – ranging from post-doc, early investigator, to established career professionals. Deadlines vary by opportunity. Focus on scientist.

# Upcoming opportunities to consider

## 1) For Grant Seekers - Dana Foundation

- March 14, 2025 deadline
- \$5k - \$15k
- Grad students and post-docs
- Neuroscience and society intersectionality

## 2) McKnight Innovator Award - American Federation for Aging Research

- August deadline
- \$750k
- Asst Prof & Recent Assoc Prof appointments
- one award on clinical-translational research and one award basic biological mechanisms underlying aging and neurodegeneration

## 3) Hevolution/AFAR New Investigator Awards in Aging Biology and Geroscience Research - American Federation for Aging Research

- July Deadline
- \$375k
- Junior Investigators
- Basic biology of aging and geroscience

## 4) Glenn Foundation Discovery Award - American Federation for Aging Research

- LOI February 18, 2025
- \$525k
- Asst Prof or higher with established R01 funding (or equivalent)
- *This funding program specifically seeks to include principal investigators who may not have previously worked in the area of aging, but whose research and expertise are applicable to understanding the biological mechanisms of normal aging and its relevance to age-associated health decline.*

# How can faculty increase their Foundation opportunities?

- 1) Contact OFR for relevant upcoming opportunities/RFPs. Our office can play matchmaker for collaborative grants, provide historical data
- 2) Engage with program officers at conferences + look at poster sponsors under acknowledgments
- 3) Network: e.g nominate yourself for a [Scialog](#)
- 4) Increase PI visibility: SEO/ keywords on website/ social media/ PSU news
- 5) Funding opportunities: Foundation newsletters/ email listservs/ [infoready](#)
- 6) Internal funding: apply to interdisciplinary seed grants via PSU's institutes
- 7) Be an institute affiliate e.g. PSNI for collaborative opportunities



# Take home messages

- 1) **Office of Foundation Relations is here to help support you!** [foundations@psu.edu](mailto:foundations@psu.edu)
- 2) There are many types of Foundations. It is our job to help you determine the best opportunities that align with your goals and provide greatest chance of success.
- 3) Research Administrators handle internal approvals, budgeting and submission; OFR provides context, research, and support.
- 4) Engagement with foundations is relationship-driven, i.e we treat nonprofits like individual sponsors/ alumnae, not like organizations.
- 5) If there are Foundation RFPs, they will be posted on [PSU infoready](#).
- 6) The [Limited Submissions](#) office (under OSVPR) handles any opportunities that have an institutional applicant quota.

Website: Penn State [Foundation Relations](#)

522 James M. Elliott Building | 120 S. Burrowes Street  
University Park, PA 16802 | 814-863-4304

## Thank You For Attending

Questions or if you would like to discuss funding opportunities, feel free to email [foundations@psu.edu](mailto:foundations@psu.edu)

Foundation RFPs: Posted on [Infoready](#). Usually a Foundation Relations contact person listed for proposal support

Opt in to L-FundingOpps email listserv [here](#)



**PennState**  
University Development



# Thank you

Nikki Crowley, Yingwei Mao, Sonia Cavigelli, Gage Smith

## Q&A

