Private funding

Private funds can help projects in many ways:

- Provides additional funding over and above institution support and federal /state grants
- Can be used to match or provide cost sharing for federal and state grants.
- Can fund project activities not directly related to editing (publicity, educational services)
- Provides a great way for your audience to participate!
Finding Private Support

- First stop is your institution!
- Help with proposal submission and management
- Internal grant opportunities
  - Equipment, student help, digitization grants
- Access to alumni connections and individual donors
- Publicity
- Competition and Clearance
Finding Private Support

- **Foundation Center**
  - Check to see if your institution is already a member
- **Local Historical Organizations**
- **American Philosophical Society**
- **American Council of Learned Societies**
- **Andrew Mellon Foundation**
- **Alfred Sloan Foundation**
Finding Private Support

Pitching your project

- What problem does your project address?
- What kinds of people can your scholarship affect?
- How does your project contribute to the history of a place or a topic?
- How can your project help students and/or teachers?
- Will your project enable more people to access unique resources? to understand them better?
Appealing to Foundations

- Familiarize yourself with the categories that foundations use.
Appealing to Foundations

- Look at what they **don’t** fund -- “academic research,” “publications.”
- Look for their geographic focus. Some foundations will make exceptions, but many won’t.
- Look at the grants they have made.
  - Who funds other editing projects?
  - Who funds projects on the same topic as yours?
- Look for people related to your topic or whom you might know. As in life, connections are everything.
Appealing to Foundations

● Many foundations “do not accept unsolicited proposals” or “Only contributes to pre-selected organizations.”

Read their guidelines carefully-- they might accept letters but not unsolicited proposals.

Find another way to get on their radar-- newsletters, contacting board members, whatever it takes.
Organize Your Prospects

- If they have due dates, make sure to organize your work so that you have a month or so to prepare the proposal.
- Clump similar kinds of appeals together so that you can draft them once and send to several places. Always make sure to customize the appeal.
- Use the major proposals you write for NEH and NHPRC as the basis of other, shorter proposals.
- It is well worth it to spend one day a month looking for prospects and sending out requests.
Making the Approach

- Read guidelines carefully; check websites for the latest information.
- LOI - Letter of intent - 1-2 page proposal, often with a rough budget. Some foundations will provide grants after reading a LOI, others use it as a first cut, and then invite a full proposal.
- Generic proposal - 5-10 page, more detailed, including staffing, work plan basics. Tailor it to the specific program you are applying to.
Individuals and Corporations

- Foundation Center also lists corporate funders
- How to build a potential donor list
  - Alumni
  - Political contributions
  - Google News Searches
  - Website signups
  - Relations of your topic
  - Historians/Scholars working on your topic
- Communicate!
  - Blogs, newsletters, e-mails, social media
CrowdFunding

Sites that allow you to put out a pitch to fund your work. Usually need to set a goal and if you do not reach it, none of the donors have to pay. Try to come up with a snappy graphic, video, or plan for a specific bit of work. Then you need to advertise it on all your social media platforms

- Kickstarter.com
- Gofundme.com
- Indiegogo.com
- Patreon.com
Beware of Mission Creep!

Many times the foundation guidelines do not mesh neatly with your goals. You could start a new program at your project that would meet their goals, but should you?

- To accomplish more, you need more people. Don’t attempt to do more with the same amount of staffing.
- Can a new project bring attention to the editing project?
- Be cautious--there are a lot of great ideas and you don’t have to do them all at once.
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