

## Finding the Foundation-Fundable “Project” in an “Idea”

There are two issues to consider when thinking about foundation funding for your program:

- 1) Are they the right funding source?
- 2) Is your work a “project?”

When looking for appropriate funding, it is important to match your idea with the right funding source. Some projects/research will attract corporate funders. Other projects will fit in well with governmental programs. And some projects will be highly appealing to foundations. Some may be of interest to more than one source.

Just as it is difficult to narrow a topic when writing a book, article or paper, so is conceiving and designing a foundation-fundable project. Be careful of ideas larger than you can possibly manage. To give you a sense of the difference between a good “idea” and a foundation-fundable “project,” consider the following example:

*Eradicating world hunger is a good “idea,” but it is not a foundation-fundable “project.”  
Operating a food bank, a soup kitchen, or a meals-on-wheels program are examples of fundable “projects.”*

Getting even more specific is best, i.e., conceiving of a more effective and efficient way to deliver your anti-hunger program, perhaps even to a new constituency or region, makes it even more of a “project.”

To determine if your project is foundation fundable, ask yourself these questions:

- Is it doable?
- Does it have a beginning, middle and an end?
- Does it have a focused goal?
- Can you answer the question “So what?”
- Can you identify who benefits? Is this an appropriate population to benefit?
- Does it have measurable objectives?
- How will you know when you’ve met your goal?

The following will give your “project” even greater impact:

- Demonstrated institutional support
- Ability to leverage support from other places
- Community involvement
- Involvement of those most affected
- Novel approach – what sets you apart?
- Ability to replicate the results

Once you have answered the above questions satisfactorily, you are ready to explore the world of corporate and foundation funding. The Corporate & Foundation Relations office can help you determine strategy and provide advice on suitable foundation and/or corporate prospects for your project.