



## WHO WE ARE

Black Fox Philanthropy is a leading fundraising firm serving international NGOs and domestic nonprofits. As a **B Corp social enterprise**, our mission is to help worthy organizations attract significant and sustainable funding so they can effect deep and lasting social change. Profits are wholly reinvested in the company's long-term contribution to the social sector.

## FUNDER RESEARCH | BEST PRACTICES IN UNCOVERING MISSION-ALIGNED FUNDERS

This Skoll Ecosystem Event, held on March 31, 2020, focused upon uncovering and engaging new funders in the era of COVID-19 and beyond. This is designed to help build capacity within your organization so that you can more successfully weather this storm by uncovering mission-aligned funders who can join you on your journey toward greater impact.

### RESPONDING TO COVID-19

This crisis requires immediate research and outreach effort to ensure continued partnerships with current funders and successful, mutually beneficial engagement with new funders.

- Subscribe to our weekly [Black Fox Brief](#), sign up using the form in the footer of [blackfoxphilanthropy.com](http://blackfoxphilanthropy.com).
  - Special COVID editions are sent every week in addition to the Monday Brief.
  - Please send relevant content to [Leah@blackfox.globalforinclusion](mailto:Leah@blackfox.globalforinclusion).
- [CASE at Duke Capital Relief Resource](#): This comprehensive, searchable database includes grants, loans, and other cash equivalents that can help entrepreneurs, nonprofits, and businesses anywhere in the world.
- [Coronavirus and COVID-19 Vetted Funds List](#): Giving Compass and the National Center for Family Philanthropy (NCFP) are working together on a comprehensive list of vetted COVID-19 relief funds.
- [Funding Opportunities for Coronavirus](#): Candid's landing page for recently published requests for proposals, emergency resource lists, COVID-related grant news, and more. Their records show 400 funders have pledged \$4.2 billion in support and growing.

### RESEARCH ROADMAP

This session profiles how we approach funder research to deliver the most vibrant and relevant pipeline of funder candidates possible. We focus upon the lens of mission-aligned funders with reasonable-to-high likelihood of funding you in the near or long term. The content of the webinar covers the methods behind our [Painless Prospecting Service](#) so that this skill-set can be brought in-house. Consider:



## Evaluate your Points of Entry

- What angles have you found most effective in securing funding in the past?
- Get creative – what other points of entry have you not pursued yet? Look at geographic focus, fresh views on cause driven alignment, think about how to frame your impact.
  - For example: An early education program is aligned with funders who focus on getting kids into school – beyond funders for education, consider funders who are interested in alleviating poverty.
- Explore why previous grant applications were denied. Learn from every step. Guidance can be found in this blog post called [What to Do If Your NGO is Declined Funding](#).

## List of Current & Past Funders

- Maintain an up-to-date list of current funders, previous funders, current pipeline funders, grant applications previously declined, and funders you know are not a fit – in alphabetical order.
- As you research new prospects cross-reference your exclusions list.

## Peer Organization Funders

- Who funds similar peer organizations? If a grantmaker has funded an organization similar to yours, the chances are higher that they will share your vision and will fund your organization.
- How to find an NGO's list of institutional funders: look on their website for a page called "partners" or "supporters." Also, review the organization's Annual Report as they may acknowledge and thank their funders.

## Database Searches

- Free and subscription database searches can help you uncover highly aligned prospective funders.
- Some available options are covered in the next section "Research Tools."

## Google Search

- Create a master list of keywords pertaining to your organization's mission and impact. Use varied Google searches.
  - Search keywords together but "putting them in quotes."



- Search for terms in the page body text, website's title, and URL with intext: search feature.
  - Intext: "grant application" and education and foundation
- You may find pre-compiled list of funders.

### **Corporate Prospects & Corporate Foundation**

- What company does a lot of business in the region where your program operates?
- Explore their social giving program and if they have a charitable foundation.

### **RESEARCH TOOLS**

- [Grantmakers.io](http://Grantmakers.io)
- [Grants.gov](http://Grants.gov)
- [Terra Viva Grants Directory](http://Terra Viva Grants Directory)
- [Inside Philanthropy](http://Inside Philanthropy)
- [GuideStar.org](http://GuideStar.org)
- [ProPublica Nonprofit Explorer Database](http://ProPublica Nonprofit Explorer Database)

Industry-leading paid subscription databases include [Candid](http://Candid) & [GrantStation.com](http://GrantStation.com). Note there are a number of subscription-based databases in the space.

Look into accessing databases at no cost at your local public library or through an educational institution from which you graduated.

### **The 990 – Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax**

- US-based funders only. The 990 offers a wealth of information on institutional funders!
  - Application guidance – how to apply (particularly for Funder's who do not have a website).
  - List of grantees, amounts, and purpose of the grant.
    - Here you may discover funding is program specific restricted funding or general operating unrestricted funds, or a mix of both.
  - List of Board Members – connections always count!
    - Helps you search for a connection.
- The 990 is an excellent research tool to know funding capacity, previous grant amounts awarded, organizations funded, shifts over time, and if multi-year grants are awarded.



## **CROWDSOURCE RESOURCE CENTER**

The following are resources shared by registrants in the webinar Chatbox. We include these resources as they may prove value to you. Note that Black Fox Philanthropy has not fully vetted these resources; however, has explored only a few with select clients depending upon the client need.

[Global Innovation Exchange](#) for funding in low-and middle-income countries.

[Leadership Connect](#) (paid service) for finding email addresses for US foundations and corporate staff.

[European Foundation Centre](#)

Open source database in Italy: [italianonprofit.it/filantropia-istituzionale](http://italianonprofit.it/filantropia-istituzionale)

Grantnav from 360 Giving in the UK: [grantnav.threesixtygiving.org](http://grantnav.threesixtygiving.org)

Another UK based search database (paid service): [Funds  Online](#)

[Instrumentl](#)

[iCause Global Foundation \(ICGF\)](#)

## **FUNDER ANALYSIS**

Compile the basic facts for each institutional funder prospect.

- The funder's mission or overarching goal
- Their areas of interest
- The list of things they do not fund (capital campaigns, etc.)
- Which geography they fund in
- Where they are headquartered
- What their funding range is (this is sometimes explicitly stated, other times it's gathered from looking at the grants they've awarded)
- What the application process steps are
- If the funder accepts unsolicited proposals
- What the due dates are for proposals (if applicable)
- The reporting requirements for grantees, if listed



This exercise will not only prove handy later when you begin applying for grants, but should make it clear which funders are not at all a fit for your organization and its needs.

**Strategy/Approach: Why they are a fit and next steps.**

- Include a note that addresses why they are a fit & other notes on what to focus on in your LOI/Grant Application.
- List actionable next steps and any due dates so you or someone else can ensure no deadlines are missed.
- Pursue linkages you may have to funders. Consider who within your network, including board members, is linked to the funder, and can give a warm introduction.
  - Seek support from your existing funders in facilitating connections.
- Open source article: [Leading the Donor Dance □Choreography that Translates into Deeper Relationships and Increased Funding](#)

Prioritize qualified grant prospects. Once you have a robust list of funders, you will need to filter and prioritize which are actually a fit for your organization, and which of those are most worth your time and energy. Weigh the application time and reporting requirements against the amount of the potential grant and the opportunities for your organization and the funder that could arise from developing a relationship.

Fleshing out why prospective funders are a fit and analyzing who your best fit funders are should help you narrow down your large list of funders into a few top funders that deserve most of your efforts.

## CONCLUSION

The era of COVID-19 poses unique challenges to NGO development with particular impacts on how to cultivate and sustain funding sources. This Skoll Ecosystem Event, [Funder Research □Best Practices in Uncovering Mission-Aligned Funders](#), was designed to empower you to build capacity within your organization so that you can more successfully weather this storm by uncovering mission-aligned funders who can join you on your journey toward greater impact.



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A [recording of this Skoll Ecosystem Event](#) on funder research and the [Slide Deck](#) are available for download. As you navigate the altered landscape of our sector in the weeks and months to come, Black Fox Philanthropy is here to help. We are open source via [our blog](#) and the weekly [Black Fox Brief](#) and currently we are releasing content even more frequently.

Thank you for attending [Funder Research | Best Practices in Uncovering Mission-Aligned Funders](#). To learn more about our [services](#) and [Painless Prospect](#), on which this event was based, visit our [website](#) and reach out to Julie Cullings at <mailto:julie@blackfox.global> to schedule an exploration call.

Black Fox Philanthropy is proud to be a Colorado-based company that is both woman-owned and a certified B Corporation.

Learn more about how we can serve your mission at [www.BlackFoxPhilanthropy.com](http://www.BlackFoxPhilanthropy.com)

