

Private Foundations that Fund Academic Research: A Quick Guide

Funding Agency and Funding Links	What They Currently Fund	Comments
Alfred P. Sloan Foundation	Funds STEM research , Science of STEM learning , Data and computational research , Economics , Energy & Environment , and other select issues .	Also funds Public Understanding of Science, Technology & Economics , (including books, TV, films, etc.), as well as research fellowships for early-career scientists and scholars. Tips for writing a successful grant proposal to Sloan here.
Andrew W. Mellon Foundation	Funds scholarship in the humanities , arts and cultural heritage , and scholarship in other countries	Also funds Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowships , dissertation, postdoc and early career faculty grants focusing on the humanities to support diversity, HBCUs and tribal colleges, and higher education in the US and other countries, and projects to digitize scholarly communications (research libraries, archives, etc.).
Beckman Foundation	Funds basic research in chemistry, biochemistry and medicine. Includes Beckman Young Investigators , Beckman Scholars , Beckman-Argyros Award in Vision Research , Beckman Postdoctoral Fellows .	Invitations to apply to Beckman Scholars sent to a relatively large number of major universities and scholars. Must be at an invited institution to be eligible.
Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation	Projects to improve: global health and development (especially preventing disease in children and empowering women and girls), and education of underprivileged US students. Also fund special projects in Washington state.	Grand Challenges opportunities announced here . Awarded grants database here . FAQs here . While much of the funding is focused on interventions, they do fund basic research (especially related to disease prevention).
Burroughs Wellcome Fund	Supports basic research to advance medical sciences. Fund career awards for medical scientists and travel grants, career award at the scientific interface , postdoctoral enrichment grants , investigators in pathogenesis of infectious disease , research in regulatory science , and preterm birth initiative .	Also fund and other scientific and educational activities. Special emphasis on North Carolina.
Dana Foundation	Supports programs in science, health and education, including clinical neuroscience research and neuroimaging .	Grant Guidelines are here . Funded grants search here .
David & Lucile Packard Foundation	Projects to improve the lives of children, families and communities, and restore and protect the environment. Current	Fund “use-inspired” research as well as communication of science to decision-makers. Also fund Packard Fellowships

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	<p>program areas are: Conservation and Science; Population and Reproductive Health; Children, Families and Communities; and local grants for projects in northern California and Pueblo, Colorado.</p>	<p>Science and Engineering for early-career researchers (nominated by presidents of 50 invited institutions). Grants database here. FAQs here. Not all programs accept unsolicited proposals. Check each program page for info.</p>
<p>Ewing Marion Kauffman</p>	<p>Supports research on entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education and the intersection of technology, public policy, and the economics of education.</p>	<p>Most external funding for intervention and support projects in education, entrepreneurship and rather than research. Supports entrepreneurship.org. Special focus on Kansas City.</p>
<p>Ford Foundation</p>	<p>Funds projects that challenge inequality, including civil engagement and government, free expression and creativity, equitable development, inclusive economies and gender, racial and ethnic justice, internet freedom and youth opportunity and learning. Funds large fellowship programs for underrepresented grad students who aspire to careers in academia. Also funds films and new media projects</p>	<p>BUILD grants focus on building institutions and networks.</p>
<p>Henry Luce Foundation</p>	<p>Projects in American Art, East Asia, Luce Scholars to advance understanding of Asia (among those who are not Asia scholars), Theology, Religion in International Affairs, Public Policy and the Environment,</p>	<p>Also funds capacity building in Higher Education and scholarships, graduate fellowship and professorships for women in science, mathematics and engineering (through Clare Boothe Luce program).</p>
<p>Howard Hughes Medical Institute</p>	<p>Projects to advance biomedical research and science education. Includes HHMI Investigator Program and Faculty Scholars Program</p>	<p>Check eligible institutions list before applying.</p>
<p>John Templeton Foundation</p>	<p>Funds programs on Science and the Big Questions, Character Virtue Development, Genetics, and Individual Freedom & Free Markets, and Exceptional Cognitive Talent and Genius.</p>	<p>Includes research on philosophy and theology. Especially interested in bold ideas that cross disciplinary boundaries to engage the Big Questions. Funded grants here.</p>
<p>McKnight Foundation</p>	<p>Neuroscience research, early literacy research, clean and resilient power and energy action for the midwest, and international research in southeast Asia and on collaborative crop systems. Special emphasis on Minneapolis area.</p>	<p>Grants database here. Funding FAQ here.</p>
<p>Robert Wood Johnson Foundation</p>	<p>Projects to improve health and health care of Americans.</p>	<p>Awarded grants here. FAQs here. Emphasis on public health, life style factors, communication, etc. rather than pharmaceutical therapies.</p>

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Spencer Foundation	Research on education and improvement of its practice. Includes Small Research Grants , Lyle Spencer Research Award , Strategic Initiatives , Research-Practice Partnership Grants , and Midcareer grants .	Also fund dissertation and postdoc fellowships ,
W.K. Kellogg Foundation	Projects to promote educated kids , healthy kids , and secure families . Focus on early childhood (prenatal to age 8), within the context of their families and community. Committed to racial equity and community & civic engagement . Special interest in Michigan.	Applications accepted throughout the year; no set deadlines. Most grants that include research combine interventions with research. Awarded grants database here . Submission tips . Required application information . Sign up for email updates here .
W. M. Keck Foundation	Supports research in science, engineering and medical research. Funds a Research Program , Undergraduate Education Program , and Southern California Program .	Encourages high-risk, potentially transformative projects from early career and senior investigators. FAQ here . Funded grant abstracts for the Research Program are here .
William and Flora Hewlett Foundation	Projects to help people build measurably better lives, including improving education , protecting the environment , addressing global development and population , and supporting performing arts in California . Special emphasis on California and the Bay Area.	Interactive tool to explore awarded grants . Most of their funding goes to non-research focused grants and support. Letters of inquiry accepted only for certain programs (see program pages).