

Innovation, Scientists, Experiments, and Pilot Projects...Oh My! Fundraising for Research

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Meet Our Presenters



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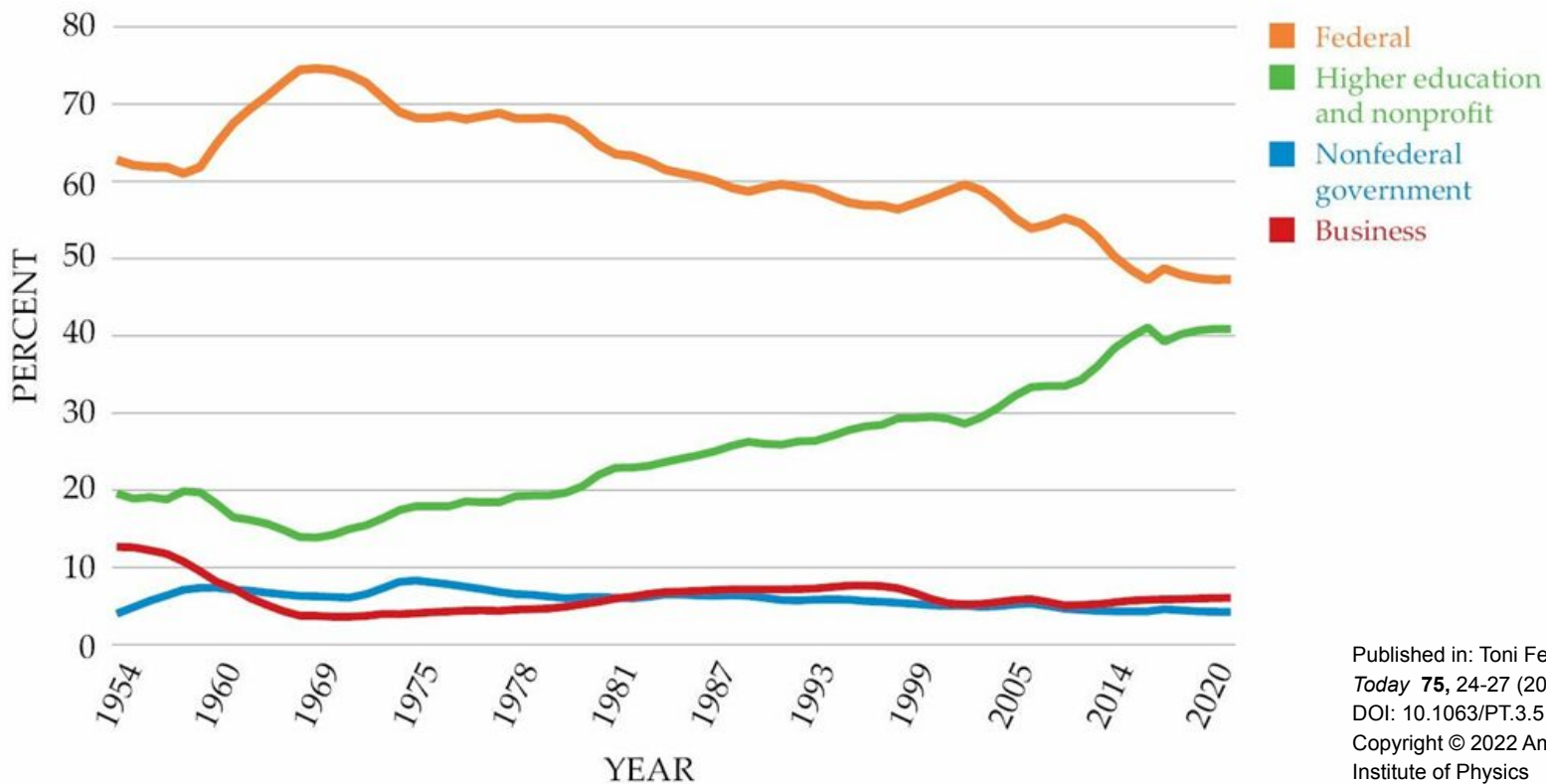
Lauren Cooler

Tell Us About You

- What do you hope to gain today?
- What are your biggest challenges in research fundraising?



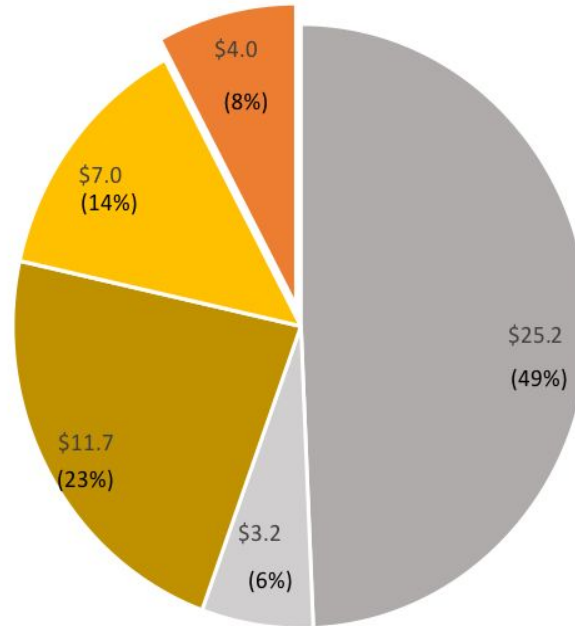
Philanthropy's Increasing Role in Funding Basic Science



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Funding Sources for Basic Science Research Expenditures at Universities and Research Institutes, 2016
(in USD billions)

Philanthropists contribute funding to 44% of basic science expenditures at universities and research institutes, but direct less than 8%



- Federal government
- Business
- Higher education (mostly endowments)*
- Nonprofit sources of funding at research institutes (mostly endowments)*
- Nonprofit sources of funding at universities (directed use grants)

Why Fund Research?

- Research can be **transformative**, this is a donor's opportunity to **be part of something life changing**.
- Philanthropy for research is **undersupplied**, so there are many **unrealized opportunities** and even **low-hanging fruit**.
- Spending money on research, or improving the research process, is one of the **most powerful force multipliers** that philanthropy can leverage and can inspire a much **better set of investments for all donors**.



Science Philanthropists Play a Different Role Than Government

- Philanthropy plays a critical role in funding science, one that is **distinct from, yet complementary to, the government's role.**
 - As budgets become constrained, the government has increasingly tended to fund applied rather than basic science, yet the discovery science that lays the foundation for applied science is receiving less and less support.
 - Many organizations use funds from their endowments to support the research of young scientists with bold ideas, but who do not yet have the track record needed to compete for federal funds.
- Funding from donors also play a **special risk-taking role.**
 - Science philanthropists place bets on scientific research which may be riskier than the science that the government funds.
 - Payoff is not financial gain but for all of society's benefit.

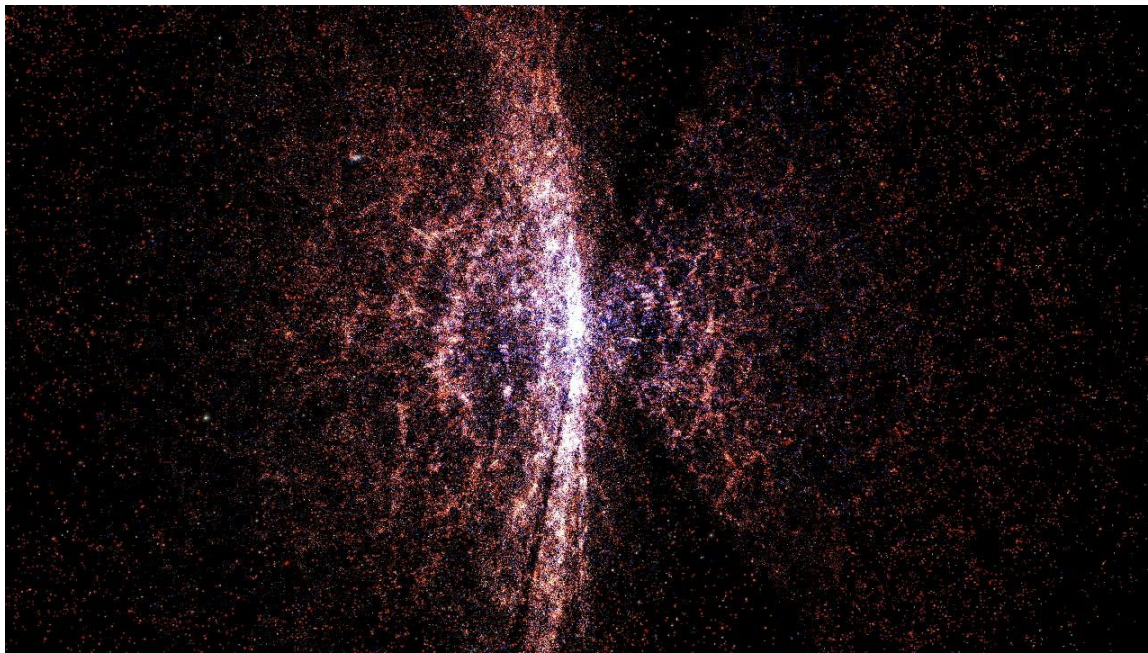
Case #1: Large Synoptic Survey Telescope Project

- Telescope to detect dark matter and dark energy.
- In its early stages, too risky for the National Science Foundation (NSF).
- Private donors, led by the Charles and Lisa Simonyi Fund for Arts and Sciences, stepped up for the initial funding.
- After its initial proof-of-concept stage, subsequently received funding from the NSF, the Department of Energy, as well as private sources.



Case #2: Sloan Digital Sky Survey (SDSS)

Alfred P. Sloan Foundation's support enabled building one of the most ambitious and influential surveys in the history of astronomy; its cutting-edge data technology obtained deep, multi-color images covering more than a quarter of the sky and created 3-dimensional maps containing more than 930,000 galaxies and more than 120,000 quasars.



Foundations should be making long-time-horizon, risky experiments in social innovation that the government won't do, and the marketplace is unlikely to do.



Steps to and Best Practices for Fundraising for Research

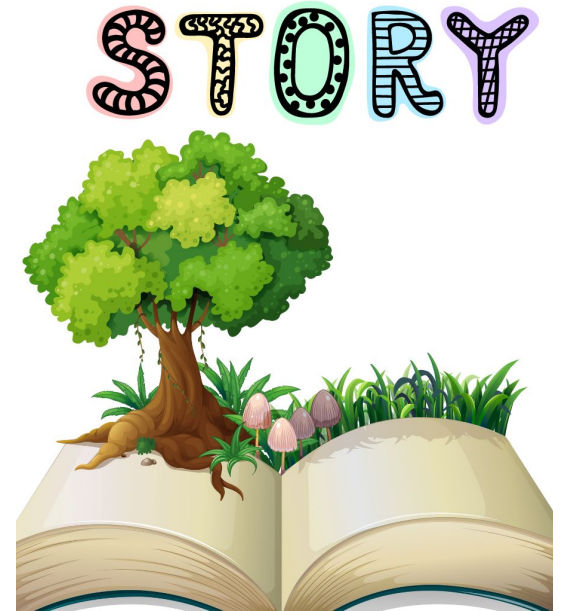
Be Well Prepared



- **Know your stuff!**
- **Be able to talk** about research effectively and **in lay terms**
- Articulate why the research matters, **what is its impact?**
- Make sure your **researchers can do the same**...be ready with the assist
- **Donors won't understand the work sufficiently if you don't either!**
- Be authentic and purposeful

Tell Compelling Stories Of Impact

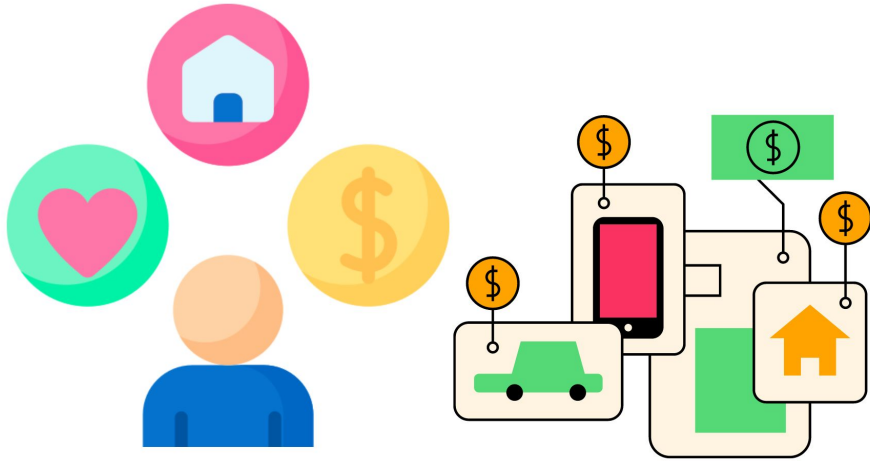
- **Identify stories telling** how research funding led to discoveries and societal improvements
- **Be prepared with anecdotes**
- Stay away from broad statistics or beakers and microscopes only
- Level of **detail wanted may vary** between audiences



Case #3: NYU Langone Health and the Irma T. Hirsch Trust

- Supports talented **biomedical scientists** committed to careers in academic research at six health-related universities in NYC.
- Has supported exceptional early-career biomedical scientists for **more than 45 years**.
- To create a compelling story, staff researched and calculated subsequent government funding for all researchers funded over the past 45 years (where data was available).
- Found that through investment of \$10M+ by the Trust, researchers who received these awards went on to secure **\$200M in government funding**.
- **Now that's a story!**

Identify Clear Needs



- What specifically is needed for success?
- **Articulate this need clearly and in lay terms**
- What is needed for the research to **become a game changer**?
- Think about potential to **leverage** support from **other sources**
- **Know your donor audience** (psychology of the ask)
 - What is their motivation?
 - Do they have FOMO?
- Have a **contingency plan**

Utilize a Variety of Gift Options to Engage Donors

- Outright gifts
- Endowment gifts dedicated to research
- Portfolio approach: Jim Simons, of the Simons Foundation encourages donors to allocate at least 10% of their philanthropic portfolio to **higher-risk, higher-reward projects**
- Long-term and multi-year commitments
 - Much research is long-term
 - Explain how it **benefits** physicians to have **funding lined up in advance**
 - Makes a donor realize the **bigger picture** and view **themselves as a major gift donor**



Its a Delicate Balance



- Research activities and needs **can be complex**, requiring more time to close a gift
 - **BE PATIENT**
 - Particularly if the research involves risks or the donor is unknown
- A donor's first gift is rarely their largest...same for you as the fundraiser
 - **Research your donor** to estimate capacity accurately
 - **Consider the next ask**
 - Work closely to **align the ask with the research and its milestones**

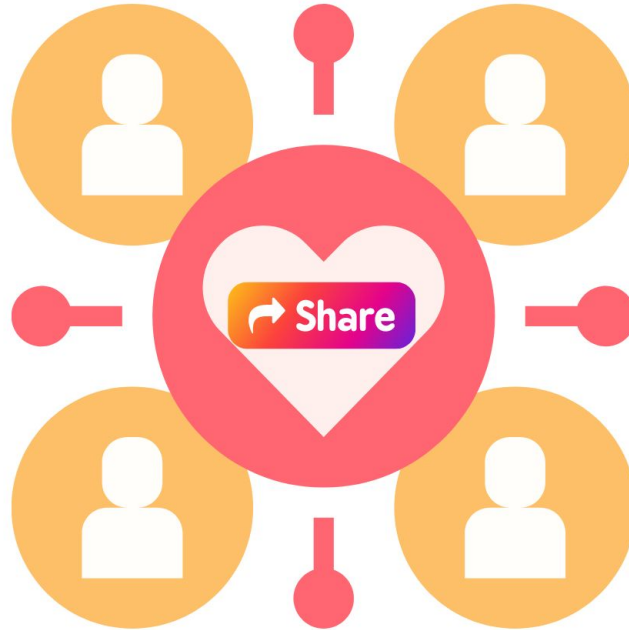
Take Donors On A Journey Of Discovery: Stewardship is Critical

HAVE A PLAN

SHARE
PROGRESS



BE CREATIVE



SHARE
'BAD NEWS'



CONSIDER
METERING
OUT GOOD NEWS

Leverage Fundraising Across Staff and Donor Populations

- **Integrate** major/principal gift staff with CFR fundraisers
- Create strategies together to help **maximize the effectiveness of philanthropy** from all donor sources
- **Leverage major and foundation gifts** with additional philanthropy and/or government support
- Consider a **pooled research fund or giving circle** devoted to research and innovation

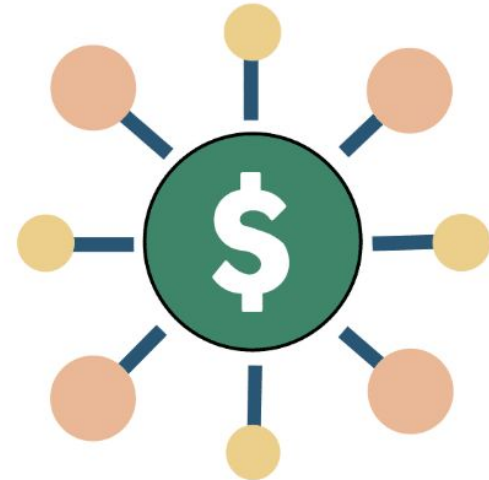
Explore Crowdfunding to Jump Start Fundraising

- Can turn an **idea into reality**
- Garner **excitement**
- Turn **friends and advocates into donors**



Common Objections You Hear When Asking For Research Funding

- Don't you **need a lot more money to make an impact** (e.g. my gift won't make a dent)?
- Doesn't the Federal government fund this work?
- What about indirect costs?



Common Challenges for Fundraisers

- **Understanding the need** and **how to communicate it to donors**
- Is this research a **priority** within your institution?
- Getting **researchers on board**
- Create an engaging content strategy
- What if the gift is only **partial funding?**



Consider the Power of Collaborations

- Don't be afraid to **collaborate** with other organizations on **joint fundraising**
- Consider **corporate collaborations** as well as individuals, foundations, and other nonprofits
- Corporations are understanding of long-term projects, tolerant to risk, and enjoy the high-risk, high-reward element to research



Case #4: Memorial Sloan-Kettering Medical Center and the Thompson Family Foundation

- Donor's priority is funding collaborative research across multiple organizations.
- Donor was supporting basic science research at a partner, Weizmann Institute of Science in Israel.
- Needed a partner for the clinical research piece:
 - MSK offered more access to clinical research than all of the hospitals in Israel combined.
- Win-win outcome: eight years and tens of millions of dollars in funding
- **Now that's a story!**

Wrap-Up: Key Takeaways

- Know your stuff
- Find donors who are excited by risk-taking and innovation
- Develop compelling stories about impact
- Identify specific needs
- Focus on securing the first gift for the project
- Take donors on the journey of discovery
- Be flexible
- Collaborations are key
- Embrace failure



Thank You

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