

Funding for Research Projects

Funding for voluntary sector research projects can come from two kinds of funders:

- those interested in the content of your research/those you hope to benefit
- those interested in research generally

Funders interested in the content of your work

There are likely to be more in this first category than the second – most funders are motivated by the chance to benefit, eg, elderly people, rather than to fund research workers. It's then down to you to convince them that this piece of research is the best way to benefit that group, rather than direct service provision. The reasons for this could include: this group's needs haven't been properly assessed, so it's impossible to design appropriate services without more information on the current situation [or 'baseline'] and/or the aspirations of the target group the process of the research itself will have a community development dimension, by, eg, involving local people in designing, commissioning, carrying out the project and analysing the results traditional approaches to meeting these needs have not been effective, so more work is needed on exploring innovative solutions

The numbers of potential funders for certain kinds of work are legion – for instance, if you plan to research issues around tackling unemployment you might be eligible for funding from:

- the European Union central Government – notably, initiatives from within the Department for Education and Employment
- a local Single Regeneration Budget partnership
- your local Learning and Skills Council
- the Big Lottery Fund
- charitable trusts interested in this issue

On the other hand, if you want to do a piece of health needs analysis aimed at homeless people, you might approach:

- your Health Authority
- your local Primary Care Trust
- Central Government – particularly initiatives from the Department of Health and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, which sometimes cover home-less people
- your local Social Services Department
- trusts interested in housing and homelessness
- trusts interested in health issues

Funders interested in research generally

These funders are more likely to specialise in financing research projects, often through universities, so they may have more demanding requirements in terms of:

- a rigorous approach to methodology
- plans for evaluation
- plans to disseminate the findings

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However, this is not always the case, and some funders recognise that less formal community-based research can be more valuable than research conducted by academics with less personal knowledge of the issues.

Examples of these funders include:-

The Big Lottery Fund will fund Health and Social Research

Website: www.biglotteryfund.org.uk

Joseph Rowntree Foundation (interested in research into housing, social care and social policy; Tel: 01904 629241 for their guidelines)

Website: www.jrf.org.uk

Nuffield Foundation (interested in child protection, family law, access to justice, education, older people and mental health; grants only to 'charitable organisations', Tel: 0181 346 2600 for their guidelines)

Website: www.nuffieldfoundation.org

Esmee Fairbairn Foundation (interested in social and economic research; registered charities only; send an SAE for their guidelines to: Judith Dunworth, Secretary, The Esmee Fairbairn Charitable Trust, 7 Cowley Street, London SW1P 3NB)

Website: www.esmeefairbairn.org.uk

Lyndhurst Settlement (interested in research to help safeguard civil liberties, maintain the rights of minorities and/or protect the environment; grants to registered charities only. Write [either for further information or to request a grant] to: Michael Isaacs, c/o Bowker Orford & Co, 15-19 Cavendish Place, London W1M 0DD; enclose an SAE if you need an acknowledgement. No deadlines.)

Sir Halley Stewart Trust (interests: medicine, social issues, education, the advancement of religion, especially small innovative projects & those which bridge cultural & racial divides; preliminary enquiries welcome, Tel 01954 260707)

Website: www.sirhalleystewart.org

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Sources of further information

The funders listed above represent only a few of the possible funders for each research project. Further information is available from:

the funders themselves; there are now websites for many statutory funders, including:

- the Department of Health (www.dh.gov.uk)
- the Office for the Third Sector (formerly Active Community Directorate of Home Office) (www.homeoffice.gov.uk/about-us/organisation/directorate-search/cg/acd/?version=1)
- the Department for Communities and Local Government (www.communities.gov.uk)
- Learning and Skills Councils (www.lsc.gov.uk)
- The Big Lottery Fund (www.biglotteryfund.org.uk)

Government funding schemes can be found on website www.governmentfunding.org.uk