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Sources of Research Support

"Can you please tell me where I can get a grant for a research project on . . . ?" In one form or another this request comes fairly frequently to the AAAS office, as it does to the offices of other scientific associations and agencies. We should like to help the authors of these requests, but our judgment of the merits of a proposal is not really relevant, and our advice on possible sources of support is likely to be poorer, and certain to be slower, than information the authors can get for themselves from easily available sources.

These requests seem to indicate a failure of communication. The prospective grantee may not know it, but he has access to considerably fuller information than we or any other remote adviser can give him. As a start, he can consult *America's Foundations and Their Fields* [American Foundation Information Service, 860 Broadway, New York]. This useful volume describes the objectives and programs of 4162 foundations, indicates the fields supported by each, and contains an index of fields that will help anyone to select the foundations that *might* be interested in his particular proposal. A prospective grantee will find it both useful and interesting to spend a couple of hours studying this reference source.

The American Foundation Information Service also publishes *American Foundation News*, a periodical report of foundation grants and policies.

More detailed information can be found in the reports—usually published annually—that most of the major foundations distribute widely to university and large public libraries. These reports list the grants that a foundation has made during the preceding year, name the recipient of each, give a brief description or the title of the project or study, and usually state the amount of money granted. The National Science Foundation publishes a similar report, and comparable information is available from some of the other research-supporting agencies of the Federal Government. A list of studies currently being supported by a foundation can give a prospective grantee a fairly clear idea of whether or not that foundation is likely to give consideration to his proposal. If a foundation changes or extends its area of activity, an announcement of the change can be expected in its annual report.

Foundation officials are always searching for good studies to support. Only through their wisdom, imagination, and hard work has the business of giving money away become the successful and constructive affair that it is. Through their published reports they do their share and perhaps more than their share of trying to communicate with prospective grantees. As a further aid to good communication, the Carnegie Corporation has underwritten the recently established Foundation Library Center at 588 Fifth Avenue, New York. While the center cannot tell those in search of funds where to apply, it will become a major new source of information about foundations and their activities. The center plans to publish periodically a directory of foundation information.

If a prospective grantee does not know about the sources of information, perhaps this editorial will be helpful. If he does know of the available sources, he should use them. Better than anyone else, he knows what he wants to do; with the information about foundations that is available to him, he and his research colleagues are likely to be their own best advisers about appropriate sources of support.—D. W.