



BREAKING INTO MISSION-DRIVEN FUNDERS



PRESENTATION LENGTH ~45 min + 10 min for Q&A

Q&A and WRAP-UP We will save time for questions throughout the presentation and at the end with a wrap-up discussion.

RECORDING & SLIDES All attendees will have access to the slides and corresponding recording.

GRANT ACADEMY PRESENTER



Sarah Ott

SENIOR GRANTS CONSULTANT

TOTAL WINS

\$100+
MILLION

More than \$100 million in total grant funding for clients since 2007.

SPECIALIZES IN



- M.S. in Exercise Science and Health Promotion
- M.S. in Journalism
- Joined Hanover in 2013
- Supervises Hanover's NIH Team
- Started grant writing as a graduate student

On a Personal Note...



STRENGTH ATHLETE: Competes in strongwoman and powerlifting



CHILDHOOD DREAM: Be an Olympic gymnast



MOTHER OF FOUR: 2 kids, 2 cats

OVERVIEW OF TODAY'S TOPICS



Understanding Mission - Drive Agencies: DoD, DOE, NASA



Connecting with mission-driven agencies

1. Identify what sets mission-driven agencies apart
2. Familiarize yourself with some key mission-driven funders
3. Understand how to engage mission-driven funders

WHAT SETS MISSION-DRIVEN AGENCIES APART?

Research funded by such an agency must clearly advance the agency's real-world mission.

Mission-driven agencies must respond quickly to real-world needs.

Priorities can change rapidly, as specific needs shift.

Funding priorities often evolve in conversation with researchers. To be competitive for funding, it is usually necessary to be part of these conversations.

A MISSION-DRIVEN AGENCY FUNDS RESEARCH IN SERVICE OF SPECIFIC APPLIED OBJECTIVES.

- Agency mission is usually well-defined and static.
- Specific objectives are developed by staff in order to fulfill the mission.
 - Objectives change regularly with agency needs.
- Staff fund research projects intended to advance the specific defined objectives.

EXAMPLES OF FEDERAL MISSION-DRIVEN AGENCIES

- Department of Agriculture
- Department of Commerce
- Department of Defense
- Department of Energy
- Department of Homeland Security
- Department of Interior
- Department of Labor
- Department of State
- Department of Transportation
- Department of the Treasury
- Department of Veteran's Affairs
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)
- National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)

UNDERSTANDING MISSION-DRIVEN AGENCIES

Look for patterns: how are they using research funding to fulfill their mission?

To understand a mission-driven agency, start by reading and observing.

- Websites
- Reports
- Email lists
- News releases
- Conference proceedings
- Funding solicitations
- Awards databases
- Abstracts of funded projects

LEARN MORE ABOUT AGENCIES THAT INTEREST YOU

Map out the territory of the agencies of interest to you.

- Identify trends and key players.
- Who is being funded by the agencies of interest to you?
- What trends can you identify in the types of projects funded and areas of funding?
- Who are the agency staff members working in your areas of interest? Who do they know and work with?



Mission: Provide the military forces needed to deter war and ensure our nation's security.

- DoD funds a wide variety of research projects, not just work superficially related to warfighting
- Priorities change rapidly to meet changing agency needs
- Networking and conversations with program managers are essential to success

DOD SCOPE

- The largest federal agency
- Largest U.S. employer
- ~20% of the U.S. federal budget (~\$1.4T annually)
- Largest federal funder of grants and contracts
- Multiple agencies within the Department, each with their own mission and priorities

1. Peacekeeping
2. War-fighting
3. Homeland security
4. Evacuation
5. Humanitarian causes





For sixty years, DARPA has held to a singular and enduring mission: to make pivotal investments in breakthrough technologies for national security.

Transformational change instead of incremental advances, but does not perform its engineering alchemy in isolation

“Innovation ecosystem” that includes academic, corporate, and governmental partners

Takes *portfolio approach* to ensure that collective efforts result in forward progress despite individual setbacks (high risk, high reward)



DARPA OFFICES





Drive cutting-edge and disruptive scientific discoveries that will enable crucial future Army technologies and capabilities through high-risk, high pay-off research opportunities.

- Three directorates
 1. Physical Sciences
 2. Engineering Sciences
 3. Information Sciences
- Focus on developing and exploiting innovative advances to insure the Nation's technological superiority





Coordinates, executes, and promotes the science and technology programs of the United States Navy and Marine Corps.

- Looking for innovative basic and applied research that will increase fundamental knowledge, foster opportunities for breakthroughs and provide technology options for future naval and marine capabilities and systems.
- ONR-sponsored research covers a broad spectrum of science and engineering disciplines. Read about the [technology areas](#) that ONR is pursuing.



AIR FORCE OFFICE OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH



The focus of AFOSR is on research areas that offer significant and comprehensive benefits to our national warfighting and peacekeeping capabilities. These areas are organized and managed in four scientific divisions:

- [Engineering and Complex Systems](#)
- [Information and Networks](#)
- [Physical Sciences](#)
- [Chemistry and Biological Sciences](#)



CONSULTING WITH DOD STAFF

Before the formal proposal process,

- Check in with the relevant DOD program officer (PO)—often the *Technical Point of Contact* (TPOC)
- *Before any white paper or proposal is submitted to ONR, a principal investigator, or representative from the organization, should contact the Program Officer(s) managing the program(s) that may be appropriate for funding the proposed project.*

-ONR Undersea Weapon Programs' Guidance for Preparing White Papers and Proposals

You are not likely to be funded **without** a preliminary conversation with a DoD PO.





Mission: Ensure America's security and prosperity by addressing its energy, environmental and nuclear challenges through transformative science and technology solutions.

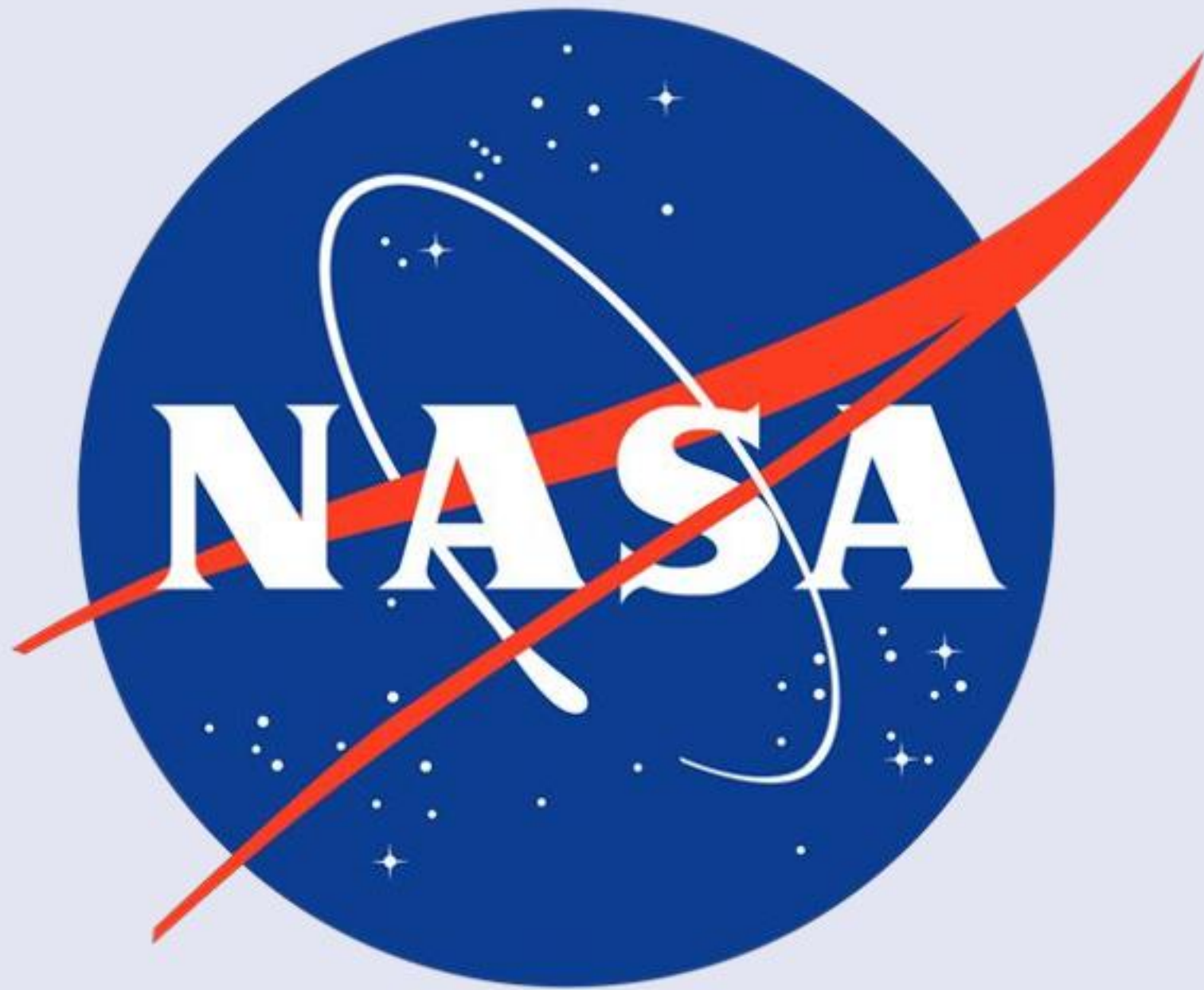
- DOE offers grants to foster energy innovations in research & development, technology testing, validation, piloting, scale-up, and commercialization

DOE SCOPE

- Several billion dollars per year in discretionary funding and mandatory funding to support nuclear security, clean energy, environmental cleanup, and science and innovation
- Funding Opportunity Announcements (FOAs) are issued by these offices on a regular basis
- Most grants come from EERE
- You can access EERE grant opportunities on the EERE Exchange at <https://eere-exchange.energy.gov/>
- You can search for all DOE initiatives using Grants.gov and by filtering the Agency to “All Department of Energy”

1. Office of Science
2. Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE)
 1. Bioenergy Technologies Office (BETO)
3. Office of Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability (OE)
4. Office of Fossil Energy and Carbon Management (FE)
5. Advanced Research Projects (ARPA-E)





Mission:

- Enable a safer, more secure, efficient, and environmentally-friendly air transportation system through aeronautics research
- Explore the Earth-Sun system, our own solar system, and the universe
- Develop crosscutting, advanced, and pioneering new technologies needed for current and future missions, benefiting the aerospace industry and other agencies, and addressing national needs

Strategic Goals

- Expand human knowledge through new scientific discoveries
- Extend human presence deeper into space and to the Moon for sustainable long-term exploration and utilization
- Address national challenges and catalyze economic growth
- Optimize capabilities and operations

NASA grants fund research related to these four goals

Through the establishment of the NASA Shared Services Center, NASA transitioned to a consolidated model for the award and administration of all Agency grants and cooperative agreements

RELATIONSHIPS WITH MISSION-DRIVEN AGENCIES

STRONG RELATIONSHIPS WITH MISSION-DRIVEN AGENCIES ARE ESSENTIAL.

Build and maintain relationships with staff (e.g., program officers) at mission-driven agencies to:

- Understand funder interests and priorities.
- Stay “in the loop” about upcoming solicitation releases and priority shifts.
- Identify opportunities for collaboration.
- Be part of the conversation around future funding priorities.
- Build your reputation.

Take the time to build relationships to stay “in the game” with mission-driven agencies.

FUNDER OUTREACH

CONNECTING WITH A PROGRAM OFFICER AT A PUBLIC FUNDER (E.G., A FEDERAL AGENCY) IS A STRAIGHTFORWARD PROCESS.

Always follow the agency's preferred practice.

A general guide:

- Reach out and introduce yourself via email first.
- Ask for a meeting, on the phone or in person.
- Note that some POs prefer not to meet in person.
- If the PO prefers to answer questions via email, go with that.

Keep your communication professional and respectful. Remember, you are building your reputation.

CONCEPT PAPERS/PREPROPOSALS/WHITE PAPERS

Tips for a successful concept paper:

- Highlight key areas that are likely to **capture an agency's attention**.
- Focus on **need and impact**.
- Include **just enough detail** that the reader knows you are serious.
- **Balance selling and telling:** the ratio of selling to telling will be higher in a concept paper than in a final grant proposal.
- **Use emphasis** (bold, underline, italic) judiciously to bring the reader's attention to key elements—funders often scan concept papers and letters of inquiry quickly!

STEPS TO CONNECT



Assess and analyze

Assess and analyze your connections and potential connections to the agency and its personnel, as well as opportunities for building additional connections.



Research

Research institutional history with the agency



Identify

Identify connections to the agency, agency personnel, or people and organizations connected to the agency



Gather

Gather intelligence and/or request introductions from connections



Connect

Identify online and in-person connection opportunities

STAY FOCUSED ON THE RELATIONSHIP

CONTINUE TO BUILD YOUR RELATIONSHIPS THROUGH INDIVIDUAL GRANT CYCLES.

- Requesting funding can be part of building a relationship.
- Know that your chances for grant success will increase as your relationship with the funder gets stronger.
- Use the grant application process to build your relationship.
 - Always reach out and “pitch” your projects before applying.
 - Always follow up on declined proposals to use them as an opportunity for connection and relationship building.

Building a relationship is a long game. Stay focused and don't let it drop.