1. Identify as clearly and completely as possible:
a. The *subjects or issues* addressed by your proposed project or activity (*education; at-risk youth;* etc.); and
b. The *type* of funding you'll be seeking (*project support; capital/building;* etc.)

2. Using appropriate resources, search for funders who match the criteria in item 1, *and* who make grants in your geographic area.
a. On-line funder information services
b. Print resources

3. Develop a profile of potential funders you find through step 2, including:
a. Contact information
b. Their funding interests, priorities and restrictions
c. Application guidelines, procedures, review processes, deadlines, etc.

4. Use supplemental resources to learn more about the prospective grantmakers' areas of interest, history of giving, recent activity, etc.
a. The grantmaker's own website
b. IRS Form 990-PF via GuideStar (www.guidestar.org)

5. Contact prospective funders with a very brief letter or phone call to request the most current information available about their funding programs. Ask for copies of:
a. Grant guidelines
b. Application materials
c. Annual giving or community reports
d. Newsletters, program bulletins, etc.
e. Lists of sample grants awarded

TIP: Many grantmakers – especially the larger ones – welcome the opportunity to "preview" your grant idea, either through a brief phone conversation or via a one- or two-page *letter of inquiry.* They are then able to tell you whether your project is in fact a good "fit" for their current funding practices; offer feedback to strengthen your project concept; and even refer you to other, perhaps more appropriate funders.

6. Look for "people" connections between your organization and the funders on your "A" list.

7. Based on your careful review of the materials you receive, decide which funders should receive a proposal, how each proposal should be targeted, and how much money to request.