As many of you know first-hand, the current funding environment has become exceptionally competitive. This high degree of selectivity is not only true of grants from the National Institute of Health (NIH), but from all funding sources, including the Department of Defense and private foundations. Even well-established organizations like Komen and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation are becoming increasingly strict with grant criteria, pre-applications, and deadlines.

This challenge makes it critical to seek out funding avenues, including those which we may not otherwise consider. We have a responsibility as investigators to support our work as bridge funding is not a long-term solution.

Over the next few weeks, you will receive several emails from me outlining how to sign up for the alerts from various agencies including NIH, COS, and The Foundation Center. You will continue to receive periodic announcements regarding specific funding opportunities, particularly those for which we may only submit a limited number of proposals.

For those of you less familiar with the NIH Guide, I would like to remind you how to subscribe to NIH Guide Announcements. The NIH website states that, “the NIH Guide for Grants and Contracts is the official publication for NIH medical and behavioral research Grant Policies, Guidelines and Funding Opportunities. NIH Guide announcements (PAs, RFAs and Notices) are published daily. At the end of each work week (usually on Friday afternoon), NIH transmits an e-mail to NIH Guide LISTSERV subscribers with the Current Weekly Table of Contents (TOC), including links to announcements published during the week. An up-to-date listing of new announcements published during the week may be checked anytime on the Current Weekly TOC.”

The Guide contains a lot of useful information, not just listings of grant and contract solicitations. NOTs (notifications) report changes in open solicitations that may affect your ability to respond or alter how you might respond. NOTs may also include requests for information in a subject area, often an early indication of where NIH may solicit future RFAs (grants) or RFPs (contracts). Notices of intent to issue a specific RFA or RFP can be included that may also buy you additional time to begin preparing a response to a specific solicitation. Notifications of findings of scientific misconduct are reported and these can be helpful in understanding how NIH approaches these issues and the sanctions often imposed.

All principal investigators and researchers are strongly encouraged to subscribe to the NIH Guide LISTSERV by sending an e-mail to listserv@list.nih.gov with the following text in the message body (not the "Subject" line): subscribe NIHTOC-L your name (Example: subscribe NIHTOC-L John Doe). Your e-mail address will be automatically obtained from the e-mail message and add you to the LISTSERV. Additional information about using the NIH LISTSERV can be found on the NIH LISTSERV FAQ page.