Pivot, I think, is a good resource. You can log in with your Columbia ID.
And so you don't even have to create an account, you just log into an institutional login. They have a ton of opportunities. I would just say it can be very overwhelming. So, if you do look at Pivot, then you'll want to reduce your searches as much as possible. Otherwise, you'll get like 5,000 funding opportunities and you'll have no idea what you're doing. But Pivot is good once you know how to get search terms. And you can also set up email alerts. If you just want to see what's available.
NSF has an economics program if you're interested in applying to, that's a five-year economics program.

And then just in general, talking to classmates and peers about who's done what grants, how that went.
That's a good resource. And then I have our office, because we're administering all of the grants, I have a full list of every grant that we've ever had. So if you want to talk to me, we could just go through what were recently successful and what grants that students have requested.

So the solicitation is the call or the call for proposals and the description that the funder puts out. So like I said, it's eligibility requirements and especially with the smaller the funder, the more restricted the eligibility program is going to be. I'll talk about [inaudible] for example later. So always check to make sure that you are eligible, that Columbia is an institution that is eligible.

You might see something called a letter of intent. That is just a letter to the funder saying that you intend to apply. It's usually not required, but if you see any mention of a letter of intent, you should make sure that it's not a required letter of intent because if we missed that deadline, we wouldn't be viable. So usually it's just because they want to know how many applications they're expecting. And then they'd have the proposal later. In some cases, there might be a letter of intent and then they invite proposals off of the letter of intent or poll proposal. So if you see that, just make sure that you understand what they're actually asking for if they are asking for a letter.

If there's a description of the review process, that's always really useful, so you know who is reviewing: If it's going to be people within your subfield, or it's going to be other social scientists. If you can find a dissertation review process, they've been really helpful to understand how you should be writing your proposal.

Budget restrictions are restrictions on your budget. So what you can spend, how much you spend and sometimes specifically, what areas you'd be spending in. Not everybody has a timeline for funding release. The smaller the funder, it might be faster. But something like NSF is going to be at least six months from when you apply to when you hear about it. So you'll want to make sure that when you write your proposal that you're not trying to put in your timeline that you want to be spending the money in two months. If your project is dependent on a timeline, they'd be much less willing to award you the funds as you're asking to spend them too soon. So you'd love to start a date within a reasonable time of when you can expect to actually hear back. So that you know when you can actually do this funding. But NSF would likely be the longest wait time.

Formatting requirements, definitely want to make sure that you're following those. It would be a really silly way to end up not getting funding because you didn't follow the requirements and that would be something I check very carefully with you. And then again, the submission process and that's just who's doing the submitting, when, you want to make sure you know exactly when the actual deadline is, at midnight or 5 p.m.

So I'll go a little bit more in depth about eligibility. It can apply to the institution, it can apply to the student investigator, or it can apply to the advisor. So just make sure you're reading all those carefully. A lot of opportunities for students have eligibility requirements based on candidacy so they might want you to have advanced candidacy or possibly pass any exams or not, they may want to increase pre-candidacy. So just make sure that you're aware of that

Again, in terms of your timeline, when you're applying. Make sure that you're meeting those requirements. So specifically with the PI, so specifically Columbia does not recognize a student as the PI. A PI at Columbia has to be a full-time tenure track faculty member. There's some exceptions but, essentially, it should be your advisor. You have to have the faculty sponsor for any project, and that's regardless of how the wording is with the funder. So even if the funder is referring to the student programs composing as a PI. Columbia will only have a professor as the PI.

And everybody knows it's your project, don't worry. You can put it on your CV as your project. You know, we know that she didn't put it together and you wrote it. But we just can't have it, as students, students just can't be PIs. You have to have your advisor as a PI. And then just depending on how the funder is set up, that requirement might actually be applying. If there's like an investigator eligibility that might be applying to your advisor if they have set it up that way, or maybe applying to you because you just have to read it.

So for example, NSF, The NSF fellowship, graduate student fellowship, is restricted to American systems or permanent residents. And then the way that the grant is worded is similar, **but** that restriction actually only refers to the PI, the student is not the PI on that project. So that restriction does not apply. So if you're an international student, you would not be eligible for the scholarship, but you would still be eligible for a dissertation grant. And so it's actually good that you're not the PI in that case because it opens up eligibility.

So with developing a budget, there might be restrictions on costs and what types of costs you are allowed to put into your budget. So for example, most grants are not going to allow general living costs. So if you are doing your research on campus, you're not traveling to be a research college field site. Then you would be restricted from using grant funds on a normal basis. So things like that. It could only apply to research costs. So anything that you'd have to have to live anyway, you would not be able to spend your grant money on that.

But if you are traveling for your research, as soon as you have to travel for your research, then you're allowed to use those funds on living expenses, so then you'd be able to use them on transportation, or food. Or things like hotels or Airbnbs. If you had to travel even within NYC, you can still put that on your grant as long as it's associated with your research activities. And then some funders might have records.

If you do any research with human subjects, and I just put this in because it can get really confusing. Just be mindful of how the grant would want you to pay incentives. So that includes getting food for the people that you were interviewing, if you're running surveys and want to pay people for surveys.

We just need to be careful exactly how we put that into the budget. So you just have to figure out how the funder is using the words [terms] and wants you to use those words when you're justifying the expectations.

Some grants want a more detailed budget than other grants. But even if you don't need a detailed budget, every once in a while it'll be a small grant and it's still a grant, but they just kind of want a project description and then they're going to reward you $3,000 or $5,000 no matter what, they're not actually looking for a detailed budget. They just want to learn about your project.

Even if they don't require a detailed budget, you'll always need to provide the budget for sponsored projects.

Because you would get the money into Columbia and then it would be dispersed based on the budget that you provided.

So just being aware of that, if you were working on a proposal.And when you're putting together your proposal, we're of course aiming to create as accurate a budget as possible, but it's not something that's completely set in stone. There's an understanding from everybody involved from the university, from the funder, that things might change because it could be six months from now when you are actually spending.

So we just want to be as accurate as possible but if you are finding that things are changing between when you submitted and you're realizing that this might be a little bit different, that's okay.

There might be some hoops to jump through but generally, as we might like shifting money around, you wouldn't get more money than you asked for. It'd be really unlikely for you to be able to argue more money than you're given. But in terms of moving money around a little bit, that's okay.

And on that note, a smaller budget is not necessarily an advantage. I get this question a lot. if it's going to be more likely to be funded if everything is cheaper. That's not really the case. It's just important to have a realistic budget while staying within the requirements, obviously. But trying to reduce everything is not really going to help you. Your budget is still part of yYour proposal, right? So when you're putting together your budget, you're putting together justification, the reviewers are still going to look at your budget.

So what they want to see is that they want to see that this makes sense, that you understand as a researcher what it takes to do the project that you're proposing. So you really want your budget to match that, and that's the most important thing.

A lot of times you'll have the cap and then you're just trying to get as close to the cap as possible. You're not going to be more likely to be in place if you have it slightly better. Remember they're giving a lot of these away. Some of them are giving it by hundreds of thousands of dollars, so being $500 over is not going to make or break.

The other things that you'll see in a solicitation. And you don't have to know all of this. I just want to explain it so that when you see it, you understand what these things mean. There are direct costs and indirect costs. So direct costs are the costs that are associated with the reasons. So those are the things that you actually are going to be spending money on. So it's travel supplies, paying people, paying a research assistant, anything like that. Anything that you're actually putting into your budget is what is the direct cause.

And then indirect costs are the administrative basics. They can be called overhead, or sometimes they're called. They're just the additional costs that the university just then takes on to support research.

So it's things that can't get budgeted directly into every single project. That's all the little things that you use, the printer, and the graduate student office, etc.,, those are things that you need, but you're not going to put in cartridges and the sort. So we add in on top of grants.

Then this might depend on if it's on-campus or off-campus research, some solicitations might have the indirect costs listed in there. So it depends on if it's federal, or not federal, if they capture costs lower. This is something that helps you to think about when you're putting it all together properly.

The thing I want to mention specifically is that the total budget is the direct cost plus the indirect cost. Sometimes you'll see a cap that will be the "total budget cap". So that will be the direct cost plus the indirect cost. So it's important to know what that is, because if there's a cap it becomes a little budget and then if there are indirect costs. Then the budget cap will say like $20,000 direct costs, and then 10%, (and then you just apply the indirect cost), and that's really easy. But if the budget cap is the total cost, then we kind of have to do the math backwards and figure out how much your budget actually is.
So everyone will come to me and they'll be like, I have my budget. And then they've actually put together a budget that's the total cost and we have to push it and take some things out because their direct prospects are lower. Again, this is something that we help you with. We don't want to be experts on this. But I want you to know what it is when you read it.

In terms of developing a proposal. Ideally, you want to write to the solicitation. If you're applying to lots of different places, you're not going to be able to change your project description too much and you're not changing what you're doing. You might want to change a little bit of how you're presenting it depending on who the founder is. So that would be best practice to write the solicitation.

For a lot of the smaller funders, like a foundation funder, they'll have their own mission and objectives. So if you can, obviously you're trying to apply to a fund that's already going to be interested in the project that you're doing.

But if you're able to, you can tailor your proposal to highlight the aspects that are already there that the funder will be interested in.

Being aware of the review process it’s helpful to know who's going to be reviewing it, if it's going to be experts or non-experts. How specific can you be? How much jargon can be used? Because if it's not comprehensible to the people reviewing it.

Student question: I have a question. If it's a grant that has something that is close to what your project is, but it's not exactly
the right fit. Can you email the place and ask, would you be interested in funding this type of work?

Yeah, absolutely. That's a good question. Yes, I mentioned a lot of intent, so sometimes it'd be something like a letter of intent that they already asked for. But it's a great idea to reach out. And especially if you have a deadline, if you're taking enough time, make sure that they can get back to you.

Yes, absolutely. And even something as big as NSf, they often ask that you do that first. They might even say, actually, this isn't a great fit, but I would suggest applying to this. You can also have your advisor reach out or you can do it yourself. Yeah, absolutely.

Student question: In terms of indirect costs, what's an average percentage?

With federal funders, for you all, would mostly be NSF. All universities have an agreement with the federal government for what our costs are. So they are very high. They’re very, very high so-on campus recruits, research is 64.5% right now. And then off-campus is 30%, I think. But they would usually have a cap for the direct costs so that everybody has the same direct costs, no matter what the indirect costs really are. But if it's a smaller funder, sometimes, especially with student grants. Sometimes we'll just say, no IDC at all. Or it'll be something like 10% or 15%. 10 to 15 is the most common for foundation grants.

And then one thing to mention.
So if it is one of these, with a foundation, when it's lower than what our on-campus rate is, then we do need a waiver. It would never be turned down, as long as the funder says we don't give one. Then I just ask for a waiver. But that is just like one little step that has to happen. But they would never say no.

So some questions to ask yourself when you're thinking of your proposal. So obviously, why is your research important? Convince the reviewers and the funder to give you the money. Go through the current state of knowledge about your research topic. Address any gaps and how you're filling those gaps. Know what methods best serve your research question, if you're implementing any novel approaches. Then with this last one, how will our society benefit from your research?

So a lot of those foundations have their own agendas. So they're going to really want to see that. They fund research for specific types of projects because they want to see specific types of outcomes. So you want to be able to apply your research outside of academia. So saying, we'll produce articles or conference presentations, that’s not usually enough. You want to be able to demonstrate that this is something that has application outside of acting to other people who are not just in academic leagues.

And then this is aligned with the funding agency. So even with NSFs. You have a whole section that you have to write with for broader impact. You don't want to sort of just push that statement in. That's getting more and more important with NSF. And you can see in the news people questioning, do my tax dollars go to NSF? I've launched all these research projects, what is the point of this? So that whole section, broader impact section, that's what you're defending. Why are normal citizens taxed? Why do they care about your research?

So some general advice for proposal writing is it’s great to get feedback. And if you can get feedback from specialists and then also the non-specialists, just so you know that it can be read to a whole broader audience.As always, review the typos and any writing errors. If you're able to find successful proposals, it's always a good resource. And like I said, I have all our records. I have all our proposals. And whenever I've checked with people if they're okay with sharing a proposal, I never have them say no, so I can always check for you and give you examples of successful proposals with different vendors. Sometimes the funding website has the proposals there too. And they'll almost always have at least an abstract. And we can see announcements from past winners, and read those so you can see what kind of projects have gotten funded.

So with NSF, they have definitely been the most difficult proposal. Proposal foundations are usually smaller and they're not going to have the proposal process.

So I would suggest that with NSF, to give as much time as possible. As soon as you know that you're interested in applying, you'll want to start that process. I'd say at least three months in advance, to at least start the conversation. You don't have to start writing everything that early, but at least start to get the ball rolling on that.

So with NSF, the proposal has to be initiated in research.gov and this has to be done by your advisor. So like I said, your advisor is a PI, and student investigator or the co-investigator on the project.

And so this proposal would involve your advisor the most out of any other type of proposal because they have to go into research.gov, they have to initiate it. They have to provide their personal documents as well. So anything that you see in the instructions for NSF and it says PI, that does include your advisor. So all those personal documents with their cv, their prior research, all of that has to also be in your proposal.

So, and depending on how your advisor is, sometimes that can take a little bit of time to get those things done. And very importantly, the NSF proposal cannot be submitted without review from the SPA. So this, again, is not me or Isaac. This is the central office.

And with other funders, foundation funders -and I don't want you to do this, but - we can kind of push the timeline a little bit. If we don't have time, we can go back and do some of those things..

But NSF says that it's not possible at all. So they're extremely strict and everything has to be done in order. Everything has to be done before the proposal goes in. Because otherwise it just won't do it. So it has to be reviewed by sponsored projects, and has to be approved by sponsored projects.

So it's really important to make sure that you're starting that process correctly. There are a lot of people involved with it. And additionally, it doesn't actually even get submitted by anyone except for our SPA officer so even if you wanted to go in and submit it, nobody else can submit it. It has to be an authorized official within sponsor projects who actually logs in to research.gov. And they won't do that if anything is happening. Okay?

And just a note on the NSF economics program. I emailed them recently. There's supposed to be a deadline in January. But they have not actually confirmed that they're doing the dissertation. So if you are interested in that let me know. I don't know if it's coming in. I don't know what's happening with the economics program, they are supposed to give at least 90 days, if they decide to have the dissertation, the DBRIG. There's supposed to be 90 days between the announcement and the deadline.

So January 25th, that will not be the deadline because they have not confirmed it yet. So if you are interested in that, at some point let me know so that we're keeping an eye on it.

It's been a mystery to me last year, what they're doing and why they haven't been doing the disability grant. When they got back to me, they told me that they were still writing the sensation and they're not allowed to say whether or not it hasn't been approved yet so, I don't know if that suggests interest or not.

So besides NSF, there are some other grant opportunities for economics, and of course, If you find any other ones, you can also.

Student question: Are the first three available for, sorry, the two and three are available for international students?

Definitely. I think so. So I'd have to check with Russell Sage. I'd have to look at the eligibility requirements. I can't remember at the moment. But we can talk.

Student question: What happens if you apply for grants with a co-authored project that's with another graduate student?

That's fine. As long as it's allowed by the funder.

Student question: Related to that question, if you're applying as a co-author for a grant that is for only us citizens. Does that mean that one author needs to be a US citizen or a green card holder or is it fine?

It would depend on how it's worth it and the eligibility requirements. But again, that's something else that you could contact the funder about. if it wasn't clear in the guidelines, that would be a totally reasonable thing to do. But usually there are fewer restrictions. But the International Growth Center is for sure open, or it's not even restricted to the United States.

I'm not sure about this.

And the Weiss Fund, I wanted to talk a little bit specifically about the Weiss Fund, because that is the University of Chicago, and so restricted to a select number of universities, like Columbia is a university. It’s a good thing to apply for, just because it's a smaller pool, and they have multiple deadlines throughout the year. The travel grant, I think, has a deadline for like two or three months. And specifically for economics, I think it has to be outside the United States. But if you do qualify for that, that's a great research resource, I suggest looking into that. It also includes pilot travel grants. So like a nice trajectory if you do international research, to get the Weiss pilot grant, and then you can do your pilot research and then you have results and you can use it to apply to another grant.

And then Weiss has a larger grant as well. So if you start with the travel grant, then you already have a little bit of money to get started and then you could in the next cycle apply for more.

And then the rest of these, like I said, they all have their different agendas and things that they're interested in. J-PAL, they're not all active, but for example J-PAL has 25 to 33 initiatives that came onto the website, you can look at all their different initiatives. Some of them are active, currently, some of them are not. So then you'd like to see which ones that are similar within specific priority areas. If you want to go to their website you can find their priority list. Make sure that you fall within those.

Student question: Do we have any USAID grants? Can we apply to USA grants?

To USAID? Yes, we are definitely administering some right now. I haven't had a student apply, so I'd have to look at what's available with them. But we do have some faculty. Any other questions?

Ok so for IRB, I wanted to talk about it briefly. But it is not something that ISERP handles. So there's an IRB office. But it is relevant to the proposal. If you come and talk to me about IRB, I'll probably send you away.

But, if you're connecting human subjects research, you should make sure that you check the funder's requirements for IRB approval. It is usually not required at the proposal period. But you may, depending on what your timeline is, you may want to start the IRB after you apply, but you can take some time.

If you do get an award and it does have human subjects research involved, then your funding will be tied up until you get IRB approval. You won't be able to start spending money until you show that you are the top of the higher approval.

Student question: If you're traveling or, if you're just using a travel grant, do you need IRB approval in order to travel?

No, only if it involves any kind of data. And importantly, if it involves human data in any way, you have to go through the IRB in some capacity. So one thing that students often get confused about is that if you look at the IRB website, it will describe exempt research, and then it sounds like, oh, I'm exempt. But you don't get to make the exemption. So you still, if there's any human data in any way - if you’re using, you're talking to people in any way in your project, if you're collecting data, even if you didn't collect it. Still, human subjects, data? You still need to get a letter from the IRB that says it's exempt.

Student question: I guess though on that point, with travel grants, if I go somewhere, I'm going to talk to somebody. Is that IRB?

Data for your research, then yes. But if it's not, if you're just working with somebody, but you're not collecting data from them, if it's somebody who is in an office, that is helping you with something, then that's not. It's only if you're collecting the data, and that data from a person, about that person, and if that data is included in your research. Okay.

That’s my email. If you have any questions or if you want to talk about possible funding sources, I'm always happy to. meet over zoom or in person. And like I said, even if you're just thinking about it, it makes my life easier if I know what's going on. So it's never a bad thing to reach out.

Could you ask Amy to send these slides around? I'm not sure if they've already been distributed.
Oh, yeah, you guys want to get some swag.