# Selection of Intriguing Nontraditional Funding Opportunities
Compiled by Logan Thrasher Collins

During my pursuits, I've come across an increasing number of exciting nontraditional routes for funding scientific research. The efforts of Adam Marblestone and Benjamin Reinhardt have been particularly instrumental in stimulating this ecosystem, but many other great people have contributed as well. These new funding routes are a welcome relief since many of the most innovative and far-reaching projects are not especially suited for receiving governmental NIH, NSF, etc. funding. If you would like to find a more comprehensive list of such alternative funding sources, you should check out https://arbesman.net/overedge/. My own list (below) consists of funding sources that stand out to me as particularly promising. I hope you find this useful and feel free to reach out if you have any questions!

**Amaranthe Foundation https://amaranth.foundation/bottlenecks-of-aging**
"We outline initiatives which, if executed, could meaningfully accelerate the advancement of aging science and other life-extending technologies. The resulting document is a philanthropic menu, for which Amaranth is seeking both talent to execute on and co-funders. If you are a founder, researcher, or philanthropist interested in executing or co-sponsoring one or several of the projects or proposals below, please reach out to us".

**Arc Institute https://arcinstitute.org/**
"Headquartered in Palo Alto, California, Arc is a nonprofit research organization founded on the belief that many important scientific programs can be enabled by new organizational models. Arc operates in partnership with Stanford University, UCSF, and UC Berkeley. Arc gives scientists no-strings-attached, multi-year funding, so that they don't have to apply for external grants and invests in the rapid development of experimental and computational technological tools. As individuals, Arc researchers collaborate across diverse disciplines to study complex diseases, including cancer, neurodegeneration, and immune dysfunction. As an organization, Arc strives to enable ambitious, long-term research agendas. Arc's mission is to accelerate scientific progress, understand the root causes of disease, and narrow the gap between discoveries and impact on patients."

**ARIA (Advanced Research + Invention Agency) https://www.aria.org.uk/**
"ARIA empowers scientists to pursue breakthroughs at the edge of the possible. We have a big mission, and getting there won't be easy. That's why we're building a new kind of research agency that does things differently. Created by an Act of Parliament, and sponsored by the Department for Science, Innovation, and Technology, ARIA will fund projects across the full spectrum of R&D disciplines, approaches, and institutions. ARIA's programmes and projects are directed by our Programme Directors, scientific and technical leaders with deep expertise and a focused, creative vision for how technology can enable a better future. While Programme Directors are tasked with deeply exploring a topic and designing funding opportunities, they won't get to breakthroughs alone. To maximise their chance at success, they'll develop their thinking through direct calls for feedback, source projects through open solicitations, and have their programmes reviewed by experts against a clear set of evaluation criteria."

**Astera Institute https://astera.org/**
"We empower visionary, high-leverage science and technology projects with the capacity to create transformative progress for human civilization. We target programs in Artificial General Intelligence, Science, and Climate that currently lack a natural home in the existing innovation ecosystem."

**Brains https://spec.tech/brains**

"Brains is a training program to provide the skills and opportunities to translate ambitious research visions that aren't a good fit for a company but are too big for a single academic lab into impact. These visions could be anything from upending the way we make carbon-based products to how we understand the brain or build air- breathing fusion engines. Think YCombinator for coordinated research programs."

**Convergent Research** [https://www.convergentresearch.org/](https://www.convergentresearch.org/)
"New types of organization are needed to accelerate scientific progress. Academic research groups and startup companies are essential to science and technology development. But there are some projects they just aren't suited for. A university astronomy lab couldn't have launched the Hubble Space Telescope on its own, nor would a venture-backed startup have built the Large Hadron Collider at CERN. Hubble and CERN illustrate a common pattern in science: a need for projects that are bigger than an academic lab can undertake, more coordinated than a loose consortium or themed department, and not directly profitable enough to be a venture-backed startup or industrial R&D project. Focused Research Organizations (FROs) are a new type of scientific institution designed to fill this gap."

**Emergent Ventures Grant/Fellowship** [https://www.mercatus.org/emergent-ventures](https://www.mercatus.org/emergent-ventures)
"We want to jumpstart high-reward ideas—moonshots in many cases—that advance prosperity, opportunity, liberty, and well-being. We welcome the unusual and the unorthodox. Our goal is positive social change, but we do not mind if you make a profit from your project. (Indeed, a quick path to revenue self-sufficiency is a feature not a bug!) Projects will either be fellowships or grants: fellowships involve time in residence at the Mercatus Center in Northern Virginia; grants are one-time or slightly staggered payments to support a project. We encourage you to think big, but we also will consider very small grants or short fellowships if they might change the trajectory of your life. We encourage applications from all ages and all parts of the world."

**Flux Capacitor** [https://1517.substack.com/p/the-flux-capacitor-time-funds-and](https://1517.substack.com/p/the-flux-capacitor-time-funds-and)
"Flux Capacitor is a 3-month break away from academia to pursue out-there ideas to build into a startup OR moonshot science… You want to hit pause on the academic rat race and spend 3 months on first-principles exploration of either applied, practical problems that can be commercialized within a VC-funded startup in the near-medium term (5 years) or moonshot fundamental science. To help you do this, we'll give you up to $100k in funding."

**Foresight AI Safety Grant Program** [https://foresight.org/ai-safety/](https://foresight.org/ai-safety/)
"This grant program seeks to support projects working to make progress on three areas we consider underexplored when it comes to AI Safety... 1. Neurotechnology, Whole Brain Emulation and lo-fi Uploading for AI safety; 2. Security, Cryptography, and Auxiliary Approaches for Infosec and AI Security; and 3. Safe and Beneficial Multipolar AI Scenarios… Projects will be evaluated by a mix of Foresight staff and external advisors. We aim to focus on projects that have a chance of being successful within short AI timelines. Rather than funding many projects with the potential of making a small difference in the long-run, we may be more inclined to fund projects that are high-risk high-reward, in the sense that they are more speculative but would make a big difference if successful. Generally, we are interested in proposals for scoping/mapping opportunities in this area, especially from a differential technology development perspective."

**Hypothesis Fund** [https://www.hypothesisfund.org/](https://www.hypothesisfund.org/)
"The Hypothesis Fund advances scientific knowledge by supporting early stage, innovative research that increases our adaptability against systemic risks to the health of people and the planet. We make seed grants to fund research projects at their earliest stages, typically before there is any preliminary data. Our funding is intended to be catalytic — a fast path to enable a scientist to 'turn over the card' and see what's there.  And we focus on bold new ideas in basic research, not continuations of existing research. The Hypothesis Fund approach is different.  We empower a world-class and diverse network

of scientist Scouts to identify the high-risk, high-reward ideas at the edge of the network that would otherwise be un-pursued or underfunded."

**Long-Term Future Fund** https://funds.effectivealtruism.org/funds/far-future
"The Long-Term Future Fund aims to positively influence the long-term trajectory of civilization by making grants that address global catastrophic risks, especially potential risks from advanced artificial intelligence and pandemics. In addition, we seek to promote, implement, and advocate for longtermist ideas, and to otherwise increase the likelihood that future generations will flourish."

**OpenResearch** https://www.openresearchlab.org/
"OpenResearch is a nonprofit research lab. We fund work that requires a very long time horizon, seeks to answer open-ended questions, or develops technology that shouldn't be owned by any one company."

**Renaissance Philanthropy** https://renaissancephilanthropy.org/
"Renaissance Philanthropy's mission is to fuel a 21st century renaissance by increasing the ambition of philanthropists, scientists, and innovators. We do this by advising philanthropists, surfacing breakthrough ideas, and incubating ambitious initiatives. Our aim is to activate a virtuous loop of increasing ambition and impact between philanthropists and innovators: by identifying frontier experts both in science and in new ways of solving problems; by tapping into the growing number of emerging philanthropists; and by building multi-sector initiatives that can harness the power of philanthropy, markets, and governments."

**Survival and Flourishing Fund** https://survivalandflourishing.fund/speculation-grants.html
"SFF Speculation Grants are expedited grants organized by SFF outside of our biannual grant-recommendation process (the S-process). "Speculation Grantors" are volunteers with budgets to make these grants. Each Speculation Grantor's budget grows or increases with the settlement of budget adjustments that we call "impact futures" (explained further below). Currently, we have a total of ~20 Speculation Grantors, with a combined budget of approximately $10MM (up from $4MM initially). Our process and software infrastructure for funding these grants were co-designed by Andrew Critch and Oliver Habryka."

**1517 Fund** https://www.1517fund.com/
"1517 is a venture capital fund and community supporting college dropouts, renegade students, and deep tech scientists with investment at the earliest stages of their companies. Founded by the cofounders of the Thiel Fellowship, it supports founders across software, hardware, and deep tech verticals and also provides a community to hackers, makers, and scientists from across the world."