



How Denver Health Grew Grant Engagement 800% with Atom Grants

Overview

Denver Health, one of the nation's largest safety-net health systems, had an expensive grant discovery tool its researchers had quietly stopped using — just 13 active investigators across a research community in the hundreds. After switching to Atom, close to a thousand researchers are now set up on the platform, grant email clicks have risen 800%, and the number of opportunities researchers view has quadrupled — with foundation funding surfacing alongside the usual federal grants.

The Challenge

As Amanda Breeden, CRA, Associate Chief of Research, explains:

“We previously used a competitive product, but had a real challenge with uptake.”



Amanda Breeden, CRA
Associate Chief of Research

Denver Health faced several key obstacles:

- A keyword discovery tool that surfaced non-applicable opportunities
- Only about 13 investigators active on the old system
- Frustration and low buy-in across research teams
- Forecasted grants that meant constantly re-checking agency sites
- Manual searching that leaned on federal funding — or returned irrelevant results

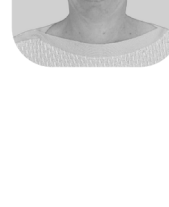
Why Atom?

With no dedicated research-development department, the team needed a platform that would earn adoption on its own. The decision came down to three things.

1. Intuitive User Experience

The platform's low barrier to entry was decisive. Researchers could be enrolled and productive in seconds, and the weekly email did the work of getting them back in.

“Anyone considering an alternative to what they have — this is the lowest-barrier platform for investigators I’ve seen on the market.”



Amanda Breeden, CRA
Associate Chief of Research

2. Personalized, Research-First Discovery

Instead of a portal to search, each researcher gets a weekly readout matched to their interests — set per division, so clinical care, community engagement, and systems-change work all get surfaced, not just traditional research.

“I’ve entered a research interest for every division I work with — HIV, hepatitis, community engagement, testing, outreach, training — and grants pop up that are a good fit for each one.”

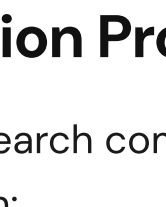


Kim Findley
Project Manager, Public Health Institute

3. Forecast Tracking That Never Misses a Deadline

Many opportunities are forecasted long before the real solicitation drops. Atom watches the calendar so the team doesn't have to, flagging the moment a favored grant changes status.

“I keep a favorited list of forecasted opportunities, and when the status changes I get a notification. Now I know I can share it and apply — instead of finding out a grant is due in a week.”



Kim Findley
Project Manager, Public Health Institute

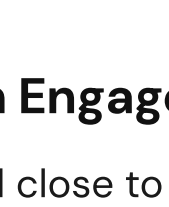
Implementation Process

Denver Health's research community leans cautious about new tools, so the team took a measured approach:

1. **Pilot first:** Amanda used herself as the guinea pig and applied for two grants through the platform
2. **Gradual rollout:** two to three months to fully implement across a change-cautious community
3. **Back-end onboarding:** researchers added in 30 seconds, turning a hallway conversation into an active user

Value showed up well before full adoption. Once seasoned investigators realized the weekly email was not spam but something they could actually act on, they dug in within the first two to three weeks.

“I can be on a call with someone, add them on the back end, and 30 seconds later their research interests are there and they have an email in their inbox.”



Amanda Breeden, CRA
Associate Chief of Research

Results & Impact

Dramatic Increase in Engagement

Because the matches land close to each person's real interests, the once-ignored weekly email became something researchers open and act on.

“Based on the last six months, we’ve had about an 800% increase in email clicks — almost 400 in April alone, which is incredible for such a small organization.”



Amanda Breeden, CRA
Associate Chief of Research

- From 13 to nearly 1,000 researchers set up on the platform
- 800% increase in grant email clicks — nearly 400 in April alone
- 4x increase in the number of grant opportunities researchers view
- More questions asked directly in the platform — a behavior that didn't exist before

Funding Beyond the Federal Government

Early on, nearly every recommendation was federal and forecasted, with long turnarounds. Over time, more foundation funding has surfaced — options a public-health team can't always wait on a federal cycle to get.

“Now I’m seeing more foundation grants come in, like the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and Gilead. Those are really helpful, because the federal ones can take a long time.”



Kim Findley
Project Manager, Public Health Institute

What It Changed Day to Day

For the people doing the searching, Atom quietly became the only place they look. The comprehensiveness of the matches removed the reflex to double-check three other sources.

“I now only rely on Atom for searching, because I haven’t identified a need to go anywhere else.”



Laura Podewils
Associate Director,
Learning Health Systems & Evaluation

Advice for Other Institutions

Asked what they'd tell a peer evaluating Atom or standing up grant discovery for the first time, the team kept returning to what it does for the people behind the work.

“It comes down to employee satisfaction — my team knowing they have that support behind them, and that the organization is willing to invest in them.”



Sarah Haley
Grants Manager

“I should probably be on your payroll, because I’ve sent so many people your direction. Your team listens and implements quickly — that can’t be said for every product out there.”



Amanda Breeden, CRA
Associate Chief of Research

Key Success Factors

Denver Health's turnaround with Atom can be attributed to several factors:

1. **Relevance that earns the click** — matches close enough to real interests to rebuild trust
2. **Personalized delivery** — a weekly inbox digest instead of a portal and a listserv blast
3. **Frictionless onboarding** — researchers added on the back end in seconds
4. **Forecast tracking** — status alerts that remove the risk of a missed deadline
5. **Mission fit** — interests set per division, from clinical care to community engagement

Looking Forward

Denver Health continues to expand Atom across its Office of Research and Public Health Institute, from individual funding strategy to institutional planning. With adoption now the norm rather than the exception, the platform has become the default first stop for finding funding across the system.

About Denver Health

Denver Health is one of the nation's largest and most comprehensive safety-net health systems, serving the Denver community since 1860. Its research enterprise spans a central Office of Research and a Public Health Institute, together supporting hundreds of investigators and public-health programs — without a dedicated research-development department.

About the Interviewees

Amanda Breeden, CRA serves as Associate Chief of Research at Denver Health, where she has spent 13 years. She led the move off the system's previous discovery tool and tracks the engagement metrics behind the rollout.

Sarah Haley is Grants Manager at Denver Health, leading a team of six grant analysts who use Atom day to day.

Kim Findley is a Project Manager with Denver Health's Public Health Institute, managing funding discovery across divisions from clinical care to community engagement and systems change.

Laura Podewils is Associate Director of Learning Health Systems & Evaluation at Denver Health, and now relies on Atom as her single source for finding funding.

Ready to transform your institution's research development? Schedule a demo to see how Atom can help your faculty discover and win more funding opportunities.