Librarian's Shelf by Karen Connell

Finding Funding: Grants for your Nonprofit

There exist a number of databases for nonprofits to search for funders and funding in the form of grant prospects. But many nonprofits cannot afford to subscribe to such databases, however useful they may be. Columbus Public Library is here to help the nonprofit organizations in our community. In addition to providing useful physical items like meeting space, projectors for checkout, and of course books, Columbus Public Library subscribes to the Foundation Center databases. Anyone can search and download records from these excellent databases while in the library. Bring your own laptop or tablet or use ours!

Foundation Directory Online is one of the Foundation Center databases available at the Columbus Public Library. This database delivers quality funding prospects to the user through the use of data from IRS information returns (990s), individual funders reporting, funder websites, USASpending.gov, and news and press releases.

Each grantmaker has a profile summarizing the funder's work and details that fundraisers need to find and approach relevant prospects, such as names of board members, trustees, and donors. Many grantmakers do not have websites, so this database compiles their contact information that otherwise would be difficult to find. Foundation Directory Online compiles information on more than 140,000 grantmakers. Grantmakers would include private & independent foundations, corporate foundations, US Federal funders, public charities, and international foundations.

Detailed grant information gives insight into previously awarded grants with such information as recipients, descriptions, and types of support. This information can help you determine which grantmakers are most likely to fund your nonprofit organization's work. It can also help you decide how much to request and what to highlight in a grant proposal. Similarly, recipient profiles help you find grantmakers that funded projects and organizations similar to yours.

Maps and charts help users quickly identify giving trends. This will show whether a grantmaker is likely to give in your geographic area or field of interest in the upcoming year.

To get started, simply visit the library and open our catalog website, www.cplconnect.us. Click Foundation Center Databases and choose the option that fits you best. Foundation Directory Online will be most useful to nonprofit organizations, Foundation Grants to Individuals Online is more tailored toward students seeking scholarships, and Foundation Maps is helpful to find funders giving in a particular area.

Foundation Center provides an excellent Customer Support page within the databases. Read instructions and watch video tutorials that explain how to perform searches and use the databases to find grants.

If you have questions about this or any of our other resources, call 402-564-7116 or stop by the Columbus Public Library.