

Prospect Research Information Sources

A. Informal Information Sources

Begin close to home- your database. If your organization has a history of receiving grants and donations, look in your own donor database and paper files. Often the best prospect is a grantor that has already given to your group.

Be sure that you know the details of the previous relationship before re-approaching the funder:

1. Did the project work well?
2. Who was your contact?
3. Did your organization deliver what it proposed?
4. How long ago did you receive funding?
5. What efforts have been made to maintain the relationship?

Brainstorm. Gather together people from your own organization, volunteers, and community members, for example, and think about any possible funders who might be interested in your project and your nonprofit.

Check your network. Find out from colleagues in a similar field, or from their annual reports or public donor recognition programs, who their grantors are. This doesn't necessarily place you in competition, as you may have a different type of project to offer, or the funder's rules may prohibit your colleague's organization from reapplying for several years.

Go Googling. Or use any other Internet search engine to punch in some general parameters that might yield some good prospective funders. What do you find when you search for: *foundations, Medicine Hat, Alberta, Canada?*

Go directly there. Of course, you can also use Internet search engines to look up specific foundations or other funders, whose names you already know. Many now have websites that include such important information as granting interests, funding guidelines, grant awards and application process.

Be media wise. On an ongoing basis you should scan print, radio, TV, magazines articles and advertising to find suitable funding sources that might have given to an organization just like yours.

B. Formal Prospect Research

People used to spend hours in the library doing prospect research. Now, thanks to the Internet, most major listings of funders are found in online databases.

Freebies

Obviously it is ideal if you can find some of this information for free. These are some examples of places where you can get free information.

Charity Village. At the risk of tooting our own horn, we suggest you begin with Charity Village's free listing of Foundations and other funders. (<http://www.charityvillage.com/cv/ires/fund.asp>). The listing also leads you to other databases.

Libraries. Many libraries give you free access to all kinds of databases that can lead you to grantors. For example, the Toronto Public Library has a database on International Development. (http://vrl.torontopubliclibrary.ca/?startingCatNo=5793&topParentName=Government+and+Politics%3AInternational+Development&_nfpb=true&click=catDisp)

Government websites. The Government of Canada (<http://canada.gc.ca>), has many links to funding programs within various ministries, and even some resources on grantseeking and proposal writing.

The same is true for the U.S. government (<http://www.firstgov.gov/>), state and provincial governments, and even city and regional governments.

Paid Subscription Databases of Funders

Here is a list of a few such databases:

The Foundation Center (www.fdncenter.org) is a U.S.-based online searchable database of Foundations and other funders. Not all of its data is American. Available by subscription, smaller nonprofits can buy as little as a one-month subscription. It also has many resources for grant seekers, both individuals and organizations.

Big Online. (www.bigdatabase.com) Also a subscription database out of Canada, but contains thousands of American entries which can be searched separately.

Imagine Canada Foundation Directory:

(http://www.imaginecanada.ca/page.asp?foundation_directory)

IWave: (<http://www.iwave.com/>)

Charity Village Marketplace. List of links to paid subscription funding source databases in our Marketplace section at:

(<http://www.charityvillage.com/cv/marketplace/fr/grantsdb.html>)