Tips for Using the Foundation Directory Online

In 2008 PATH Intl. introduced an amazing benefit—the Foundation Directory Online—a database of over 98,000 grantmakers, to help centers find funding for programs and operating costs.

Since it’s such a massive resource, using the Foundation Directory might be intimidating at first glance. However, with a little guidance and a few insider tips, using the directory can be easy, informative and incredibly beneficial.

Step-By-Step Guide

1. You will most likely be using the “Search Grants” or “Search Grantmakers” functions. When you search grants, you are searching for grant recipients (that is, by a particular organization or cause) and seeing which grants these organizations received. When you search grantmakers, you are looking for available grants that you can apply for as a potential source of funding.

Searching grants (searching by recipient) can point you toward grantmakers who fund organizations or causes similar to yours. However, a majority of the time you will probably be searching the grantmakers.

When you choose the “Search Grantmakers” tab, you will come to a screen giving you a lot of potential criteria on which to base your search. Your goal here is to find grantmakers that fund projects or causes similar to yours, in your area, and in the capacity you’re seeking. Note that under each data field it says “view index” in blue text. By clicking this option, a second screen view will open on the left-hand side of your screen. In this window you can view and click on all the available options for that data field. You can enter more than one selection in each field; and using this feature is particularly helpful in searching large fields like interests or types of support.

2. “Grantmaker name” is self-explanatory—if you know which foundation or organization you want to look up, just fill in this field.

3. “Grantmaker Location” is where the organization itself is located, not necessarily where it gives money. For instance, an organization based in New York, might fund programs all over New England. To find a grantmaker that gives funding to your state or region, you’ll want to fill in the “Geographic Focus” field, which will bring up grantmakers that fund your given area regardless of where they’re located.

4. “Fields of Interest” means the types of programs, projects and causes the grantmakers fund. Keep in mind these categories are chosen and defined by the grantmakers themselves, so you’ll want to think broadly about what types of subjects might include your organization. For example, if you’re looking to fund a new EAAT program, you might include “human services,” “physically disabled,” “youth” or “nonprofit management” in your “Field of Interest” criteria from the “view index” options. You can also get a good idea of the types of interests that are applicable to your program by searching grants awarded to similar organizations or other PATH Intl. centers.

5. “Types of Support” is somewhat self-explanatory—it tells you the ways in which grantmakers awarded their grants. For instance, you might be seeking money, services, land or equipment; and you can use this field to narrow your search to the types of support you need.

6. “Trustees, Officers and Donors” allows you to search grantmakers by name. For instance, if you know someone who serves on the board of a grantmaking organization,
you can search for them and use this option as a networking tool. This is also useful if a
grantmaker doesn't accept applications, but you want to get in touch with someone at the
organization. This is a more advanced and less common search feature, as are “Type of
Grantmaker” and “Total Giving.”

7. Finally, “Keyword Search” allows you to find grants that might be more closely related
to your particular project or area of focus. Unlike the “Fields of Interest” option, keywords
aren't necessarily defined by the grantmakers themselves. You can therefore refine your
search criteria by terms more specific to your project or focus. For example, a grantmaker
may not specifically advertise that they fund hippotherapy programs, but you might use
this as a keyword and find organizations that have awarded hippotherapy grants in the
past.

Search Tips

- **You don't need to fill in every field to conduct a search.** You might want to start with
  a very broad search and refine it as you get a better idea of what you’re looking for or the
types of grants normally awarded to organizations like yours.

- **When you find grantmakers you want to look into, email the information to yourself**
  using the “email” function on the grantmaker’s page instead of the “tag” function. All
tagged pages are saved to the same Foundation Directory homepage for PATH Intl.,
which means your search will be tagged among any other searches performed by our
8,000 PATH Intl. members.

- **When conducting a search, check the “Exclude grantmakers not accepting**
  applications” box at the bottom of the search page, as this will allow you to only pull up
organizations that are considering projects and requests.

- **Note that the search index doesn't register misspellings** or variations on words.
Select options directly from the field’s search index, or, if you would like to search
variations on a word, use an asterisk and question marks:
  - **Asterisks:** allow you to search for any version of the root of a word, for example
    “art*” will produce searches for art, arts, artistic, artful, etc.
  - **Question marks:** allow you to search for different versions of a word; “wom?n”
    will produce searches for woman or women.

- **Use quotations** around your search terms to look only for that exact phrase.

- Use the conjunction “or” to search for either or both of your keywords or terms. **Use**
“and” to search for things containing both of your terms. **Use “not”** to search for only
one of your terms and not the other.

- If you want to alter your search criteria without having to repopulate all of your search
fields, click on the “Modify Search” option at the top right of your results page to go
back to your search criteria. Similarly, when you are on the search page you can click
the “Last Search” button to repopulate your fields with your most recent search
criteria—useful if you click the “back” button on your browser, which will return you to a
blank search page.

- Grant requests can—and often do—take six months or more to be reviewed and awarded.
  Grants are not short-term financial solutions; and the process can be time-consuming—
  but well worth it! Just be diligent and patient; and be aware of the time that a grant
  process takes. For more tips on grantwriting and applications, please visit the PATH Intl.
  website.