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Laura Sefton on Searching for Grant Funding Opportunities

Hi! My name is Laura Sefton. I'm a Research Coordinator in the University of Massachusetts Medical School's Center for Health Policy and Research. Funding for many of our research and evaluation projects comes from many sources, including state, federal, and foundation grants and contracts. Part of my role is to assist staff in finding the grant funding that supports their research and evaluation interests. I perform a variety of searches and follow several guidelines to ensure successful results.

Hot Tip: Before starting your search, establish the parameters of what you are looking to fund. Identify topics of interest and determine keywords to be used in your search. Determine what the project will entail, who will be involved, and how big the budget might be.

Rad Resources: Identify funders and/or open funding opportunities using three online databases.

1. [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) - The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services manages this free database of funding opportunities for 1,000 federal grant programs. Users can search using keywords and/or by agency and sign up to receive emails of new funding opportunities related to your interests.
2. [Foundation Directory Online](https://www.foundationdirectory.com) - FDO is a database developed by the national non-profit Foundation Center. A basic monthly or annual subscription provides access to profiles in their database of over 10,000 foundations. Free or fee-based training about the grant-seeking process is offered by the Foundation Center and comes in many formats, including webinars, interactive self-paced online courses, and part or full-day classroom training.
3. [COS.com](https://www.cos.com) - COS.com is a database of over 400,000 funding opportunities from foundations, companies, or government agencies. An institutional subscription allows users to create accounts through which searches can be saved and tracked. Their robust search interface allows users to specify parameters such as activity location, funding type, and multiple search terms, and to create email alerts about new opportunities.

Hot Tip: Evaluate potential funders or funding opportunities against your project's criteria. Look for limitations to their funding, such as requirements that the Principal Investigator have less than 5 years of research experience or that funding cannot be used for evaluation projects.

Hot tip: If you feel that the funder or the opportunity is a good match for your interests, talk to the contact person at the funding organization. They can advise whether your idea is in fact a good match and provide helpful information for your application. This may allow you to develop a relationship with the organization for the future.