

FRESC Research Bulletin: How to Research a Company

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As advocates for economic justice and worker's rights, many of FRESC's partners and members seek to understand more about particular companies or employers. There are many publicly available resources to help investigate a particular company's record on issues including safety, labor violations, wage violations, etc. Although many resources are available on the internet, some information will require a Federal Open Records Act Request (FOIA) if it is held by a federal agency, or a Colorado Open Records Act Request (CORA) if the information is held by a state, county, or local government entity or agency within the state of Colorado. This bulletin will focus on those resources available for free, but will note other sources that may require subscription or a fee (\$).

To Research General Information on a Business Operating in Colorado:

Colorado Secretary of State – Business Records Search

<http://www.sos.state.co.us/biz/BusinessEntityCriteriaExt.do>

Many privately held companies operate under various names, so beginning with the Secretary of State's website can also help you identify these names. Often referred to as "Doing Business As" or DBA, alternative names can be found once you are inside a particular business' records by clicking on "View Trade Names." When you proceed through any of the remaining searches, you should be sure to repeat the search for every individual trade name, noting when using a different trade name brings up the same or different cases.

To Research a Company Generally:

- The company website
- Google
- Better Business Bureau (please note that the BBB only tracks companies who are members, and does not track complaints from companies that do not pay membership dues)
- Dunn and Bradstreet (\$)
- Lexis Nexis (\$) – newspaper search, business filing searches, legal case search
- Newspaper search (many free searches are available through Public Library On-Line Databases if you do not have access to Lexis Nexis)

To Research Potential Violations of Health and Safety:

OSHA – Establishment Search

<http://www.osha.gov/pls/imis/establishment.html>