Of the options I reviewed, Finnhub.io standed out. Finnhub has s free plan that supports real-time price updates through WebSocket for U.S. equities, forex, and cryptocurrencies. It enables you to get live trade and quote updates with small latency, which is essential for intraday price move reaction strategies. On top of real-time data, Finnhub also offers up to one year of intraday 1-minute candle data and more than two decades of daily historical OHLCV, which makes it viable for both short-term and long-term strategy backtesting.

Another strength of Finnhub is the support for Level 2 order book snapshots, which are available through their REST API. Although it doesn't stream complete order book changes in real time, this still allows for fundamental order flow analysis and visualization of market depth, which from what I know does was not found in other free APIs. Finnhub also has support for technical indicators, financial reports, news headlines, and sentiment analysis, allowing developers to create more advanced or hybrid trading systems without requiring other data vendors.

All the above made it an ideal choice for building web-client application to download our data automatically online on the run.