

# The Frank-Ratchye Further Fund

A nighttime photograph of the Carnegie Mellon University campus. In the foreground, a large, white, illuminated dome structure sits on a grassy lawn. The background shows various university buildings, some lit up, and a city skyline with a prominent skyscraper under a dark night sky.

A grant program to support creative arts-research at Carnegie Mellon University — administered by the Frank-Ratchye STUDIO for Creative Inquiry

September 6th, 2023 [studioforcreativeinquiry.org](http://studioforcreativeinquiry.org)

Nica Ross (Director)

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# What is the **STUDIO**?

The **Frank-Ratchye STUDIO for Creative Inquiry** at Carnegie Mellon University is the central research laboratory of the CMU College of Fine Arts — dedicated since 1989 to the support of atypical, anti-disciplinary, and inter-institutional research at the intersections of the arts, science, technology and culture.

The **Frank-Ratchye Further Fund**, endowed in 2013 and administered by the STUDIO, is named in honor of the generosity of our benefactors, Sarah Ratchye (A'83) and Edward Frank (CS'85).



# What is the **FRFF**?

The **Frank-Ratchye Further Fund (FRFF)** is an endowment to encourage the creation of innovative arts-research by the faculty, staff and students of Carnegie Mellon University. With this fund, the STUDIO seeks to support **innovative projects created at CMU** — works that can be described as “thinking at the edges” of the intersection of disciplines.

*The FRFF supports approximately 50 grants per year, totaling ~\$50K annually.*

# Who is Eligible?

- Primary Investigators (PIs) must be **actively affiliated** with CMU
- **Faculty PIs** may be of any type: tenure-track, teaching-track, adjunct or instructional faculty, special faculty, visiting faculty, etc.
- **Student PIs** must be **currently enrolled** in a degree-granting program at CMU, and in good academic standing (not on probation, leave of absence, or suspension)
- **Staff are eligible.** So are project scientists, research staff, visiting scholars, postdoctoral researchers, etc., from any CMU department
- **More unusual entities** are also eligible: collaborations, teams, clubs, student organizations, faculty on behalf of a class, entire departments, visiting artists
- **Alumni cannot be PIs** (...unless they're **actively affiliated** with CMU)
- Must have completed documentation of any previous FRFF awards...

# What is Eligible?

The FRFF aims to be the **most flexible source of project support at CMU**. It can be used to help realize (a non-exhaustive list):

- Independent arts-research and investigations
- Arts-research and investigations that have additional sources of funding
- Arts-research projects with CMU or outside collaborators
- Undergraduate and graduate thesis projects
- Classwork, class projects, final projects
- Less commonly: Equipment for the sake of equipment
- Ambitious, impractical and improbable projects
- Startup Funding for independent collaboratives

The FRFF has supported the creation of performances, installations, books, software, films, games, product designs, community projects, interventions, workshops, exhibitions, and more. Documentation of funded projects can be found online:

<https://studioforcreativeinquiry.org/frfaf-projects>

# FRFF Microgrants

- Awards of **\$500 or under**
- Spent down in 6 months
- Decided by the Director of the STUDIO
- Granted on a **rolling basis** within each semester **while funding remains**
- *Not just for students!* Microgrants are available to **any person** who is actively affiliated with CMU—whether **student, faculty, or staff**
- Are made available to assist projects that require **modest support**, or which arise between scheduled cycles for major funding
- Exist to spur arts-research investigations at their earliest and most fragile state, enabling **rapid-response research**
- Great for **getting started**. The smallest Microgrant ever was \$10!

# FRFF “Full” Grants

- For 2023-24: The program is offering award amounts of **\$501–\$5000**
- Available to **any person actively affiliated with CMU**,  
Whether they are **student, faculty, or staff**
- Selected in **two rounds** (Fall and Spring) per academic year
- Spent down in 12 months!
- Selected by a **5-member Advisory Jury**
  - Comprised of the STUDIO Director(s); the Head of the School of Art; a CFA faculty not from Art; a CMU faculty member not from the CFA; and a non-CMU Pittsburgh arts professional
- The next deadline is Sunday **Sept 24th, 2023**, at 11:59pm
  - Spring deadline is Sunday Feb 11th, 2024
- Application is online at <https://studioforcreativeinquiry.org/frfaf-overview>

# How are Awards Selected?

FRFF Proposals are competitively evaluated based on:

- The vision, originality, quality, and potential impact of the proposed project
- The professional, artistic, and/or technical capabilities of the applicant(s)
- The feasibility of the project - Note the importance of a clear budget!
- The proximity of need (timeline)
- The potential impact of our support on the project and for the artist(s)
- **The extent to which the proposed work “pushes the envelope” — fulfilling the specific mission of the FRFF grant program, to support innovative, interdisciplinary art(s) that challenge conventions.**



# How Competitive is FRFF?

The FRFF is an endowed grant program within an educational institution. For many, FRFF will be the very first award on their CV. It's meant to be accessible, but also model the challenges of outside grant programs. Because we aim to support as many people as possible, **larger grants are more difficult to secure.**

- It's comparatively easy to secure a \$500 Microgrant.
- It requires good diligence to secure a \$1000 award.
- It's **twice as difficult as that** to secure a \$2000 award.
- It's **twice as difficult again** to secure a \$3000 award.
- It's **twice as difficult again** to secure a \$4000 award.
- You need a **remarkably compelling, impactful and feasible** proposal to receive a \$5000 award  
—which could otherwise be used to support 10 (or more) Micrograntees.

# How Can FRFF Awards be Spent?

- Purchasing supplies (tax-free)
- Purchasing equipment (which the awardee keeps)
- Paying outside services, contractors, consultants and collaborators
  - Plan ahead! Contracts and paperwork take TIME
- Hiring student assistants
- Taxable “activity payments” to other CMU staff/faculty
- Bringing guests/collaborators to CMU (but check out the Steiner!)
- Business meals for teams, workshop food, exhibition hors d'oeuvres
- Expenses for travel, when it is required to *realize the project*.

**Not permitted: conference travel.**

# How Can FRFF Awards be **Directly Disbursed**?

Grants may be **directly disbursed** in any of the following three ways (including in combinations):

- **By direct purchases** through the university's accounting system — in which the STUDIO or another departmental business administrator makes tax-exempt purchases of supplies or equipment (etc.) on the awardee's behalf;
- As **reimbursements for expenses**, upon submission of valid receipts and justifications; *link to template on our website*
- **For students only**, the option also exists to **receive a direct deposit**. Students who elect to receive all or part of their award in cash will receive a “**non-qualified scholarship**” in the form of an electronic bank transfer for the specified grant amount. *Note: this may be taxable income.*

# How Else Does the STUDIO Support FRFF Projects?

The STUDIO provides a very wide range of **custom support** to grantees, assisting **on a case-by-case basis** with things like:

- Business management (purchasing, payroll, travel arrangements)
- Creation of business **contracts** (e.g. including rights management)
- **Compliance** w/ CMU processes
- **Assistance in your project's next steps**: consultation for additional grants & fundraising, marketing and public relations advice
- Introductions to local and remote **expertise**
- Providing or reserving **space**, and loans of special **equipment**
- Other assistance (e.g. **program coordinator, staff videographer**)

# What's the FRFF Grant Process?

1. Make an **appointment** to speak with the STUDIO's Associate Director Harrison Apple.
2. Students should secure a faculty advisor
  - Advisor fills out a Statement of Support
  - STUDIO staff do not have the bandwidth to be primary advisor on every project - find an advisor!
3. **Submit** the online application; Jury meets within 3 - 4 weeks
4. If awarded, **sign the FRFF Award Agreement**
  - "I agree to **provide documentation** of the supported project"
  - "I agree to **acknowledge the support** of this Fund wherever the work is presented"
5. **Confer** with the STUDIO's Business Manager Linda Hager to buy stuff & pay people
6. Notify the Associate Director of significant changes to your proposed project that impact timeline, budget or outcomes
7. When completed, **submit** your project documentation (online)
  - At a **minimum**: 250 words of narrative description, some images, and a video if possible.  
These will be presented on the STUDIO's website, image/video archives, and publications.
8. If you do not start spending your grant within a year (6 months for micros) you must receive approval from the Director to continue working with the grant.
  - At times an extension is granted when forces beyond the control of the artist-researcher create impossible situations and delay the project.

# Minimum and Maximum Requested Funding

The FRFF application asks you to specify a *range* of funding. These numbers give the Jury **flexibility**, to better serve more people. Specify:

- The **bare minimum** you need for your project to succeed
- Your **maximum** request, and what you would do with it

Be clear with your justifications.

Minimum Amount Requested from FRFF (\$): \*

What amount of funding will you need to complete the smallest scale version of your project?

Short answer text

Maximum Amount Requested from FRFF (\$): \*

What amount of funding would make this project ideal? You are especially encouraged to complete this field for 'Full' grant requests (requests over \$500).

Short answer text

Maximum Amount Justification:

Please describe how your project would benefit from the additional funds, if the maximum amount were awarded.

Short answer text

# What if My Application is **Rejected**?

- Please **apply again!** Sometimes our Jury actually really likes your project, but simply chose to prioritize other applications that had more pressing schedules and urgent deadlines.
- **Make an appointment!** Our Associate Director will discuss feedback from the Jury to help you understand why your project wasn't selected.
- **Typical problems** with proposals:
  - The project is not **well-explained**. It's not clear what your project *is*, or how it would take shape.
  - The project is not obviously **research**. It's not clear how it is new, compelling, curiosity-driven, etc.
  - There's a **logistical issue** you haven't considered. What you've proposed isn't clearly possible, legal, etc.
  - You requested funds in a more competitive bracket than necessary. Make sure your budget is reflective of your needs. A reminder that \$5000 is VERY competitive and therefore rare to receive.

# Repeat Funding: Policies (I)

- **A project can be funded by a maximum of two full awards:**
  - However in some cases you can receive 3 awards if starting with a micro
    - Example: Micro + Full + Full
- **You can't be the lead applicant (PI) on two active FRFF projects.**
  - But you can be a (secondary) collaborator on someone else's active FRFF project.
- **Documentation for prior projects** must be officially submitted through our online form before any new applications will be considered.
- **The Jury may evaluate the documentation** of your prior project(s) in making decisions about your new applications.
  - *Make sure you have credited FRFF on your website, exhibition materials, etc.. as you contractually agreed upon receiving the award.*



# What **Other Sources** of Funding Are Available? (I)

## The STUDIO's **Steiner Visitor Invitation Grants**

- The STUDIO's **Sylvia and David Steiner Speaker Series** brings creative individuals who push boundaries, defy definition, and demonstrate excellence in the arts, to our campus for deep engagement with our students and faculty. This grant program provides support to CMU faculty, staff and students who wish to organize a Steiner visitor for their courses, departments, degree cohorts, or student clubs.

## The STUDIO's **Director's Fund Sponsorships**

- The STUDIO's **Director's Fund** is used to support projects in need that fall outside of the intentions of the FRFF & Steiner. This funding is non-solicitation based.

# What **Other Sources** of Funding Are Available? (II)

- **XRTC Creative Research Grant**
- **SURG** (for undergraduate students)
- **SURG/Crosswalk** (for interdisciplinary undergraduate projects)
- **ISURG** (for undergraduate research projects while studying abroad)
- **The Henry Armero BXA Award for Inclusive Creativity** (for undergraduates)
- **GuSH & GuSH/Crosswalk** (for graduate students)
- **CFA Fund for Research and Creativity** (for full-time CFA faculty)
- **Simon Initiative Grants** (Eberly, for faculty)
- **Mellon Foundation Seed Grants** (Eberly, for faculty)
- **OLR/Arts Supply** (Committee on Academic Affairs - Undergrads only)
  - Email [senate-aa@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:senate-aa@andrew.cmu.edu)
- **Sponsored Projects Office**

# Find Out More

- **Apply!** Due September 24th, 2023:  
<https://studioforcreativeinquiry.org/frfaf-overview>
- **Submit documentation!**  
<https://studioforcreativeinquiry.org/submit-documentation>
- **Come speak with us!**
  - Harrison Apple, Associate Director <happle@andrew.cmu.edu>
  - Nica Ross, Director <nross@andrew.cmu.edu>

Thank You!

Hear from an awardee!

Q & A?