



The Freedom of Form Foundation (FFF) is interested in extending the accessibility of safe and customizable physical alteration to as many people as possible. Enabling true morphological freedom, to let people outwardly express their sense of identity, has the potential to improve the lives and happiness of tens of thousands of people.

And this is where you come in - thanks for your interest in applying for research funding! This document explains everything you need to do for your application, and all the benefits you can expect if your application is accepted.

We know that you may just now be beginning in your current research laboratory, or that you might even be applying in advance of beginning work (such as matriculating into graduate school, or applying as a senior graduate student before beginning postdoctoral work). If those match your situation, don't worry – we've been there too. Just be honest and convince us you're likely to succeed as you're in the process of that career transition.

Deadline:

We must receive your complete application by March 1, July 1, or November 1 to be considered for that respective application period.

Areas of research:

The FFF is interested in the following areas, though this list is not intended to be exclusive:

- Neuroprosthetic demonstrations
 - Limb neuroprosthetics, including tails and/or wings
 - Soft neuroprosthetics, e.g. craniofacial and/or emotive
- Biological demonstrations
 - Tails and/or wings achieved in a model, such as organotypic tissue culture
 - Craniofacial and/or dermal changes achieved in a model, such as organotypic tissue culture
- Neuroprosthetic components and platforms
 - Multipurpose neural interface strategies for recording and/or stimulation
 - Electrical engineering and low-level software/firmware design for these components

- Biological components and platforms
 - High-content, efficient gene therapy vectors and production tools
 - Stem cell and tissue engineering, including bioprinting
- Software tools
 - Development of software, e.g. simulators and CAD environments, supporting the above
 - Usage or extension of existing software towards the same goals

The process:

The application process, which is similar for graduate student or postdoc applicants, will go as follows:

1. You send an **application package** to freedom.of.form.foundation@gmail.com containing:
 - Your **answers to the question prompts**
 - Your **CV**
 - Your **specific aims** that outline your research proposal. Please keep this to 1 page or less, formatted as an outline. Incomplete or brief sentences are encouraged.
 - Your **research proposal**. Please provide 3 to 7 pages of content, single-spaced. We suggest an approximately standard format of abstract, background, preliminary results (if any), experimental approach (divided by specific aim), interim conclusions, and outlook/impact. Include any figures you like. Append your references to this document – this won't count towards your page count. We will not accept auxiliary documents for your proposal.
 - Your most recent **unofficial school transcript**.
2. Your **letters of recommendation** must be emailed to freedom.of.form.foundation@gmail.com directly by your references. We require at least 2, and prefer 3 letters. One letter must come from your principal investigator, professor, or manager, who is in charge of the lab where the work will be performed. All letters must indicate familiarity with, and support for, your research interests, in addition to speaking to your personal and investigative qualities.
3. **We respond**, indicating that your application is complete including letters of recommendation, and has been received by the deadline. This is not a sign of acceptance.
4. Within four weeks after the deadline, **we return our decision**.
5. If you are accepted, then **we'll additionally require the following** sent to freedom.of.form.foundation@gmail.com before we can provide actual funding:
 - A requested timeline for your start of funding
 - Contact information for your institution's financial officer.
 - Letter of employment, support, or good standing from your research institution.
 - **Official approval by your institutional regulatory bodies** for all protocols involving laboratory work, animal models, clinical or psychological research, etc, that your research proposal uses. We take regulatory approvals seriously, and will not provide any funding if we have concerns that your research does not have institutional approval. Furthermore, **we will not allow the usage of non-human primate models or newly extracted NHP tissues**. Tissues that are purely for histological purposes and derived from an existing tissue bio-bank of deceased animals will be permitted.

6. **If your research involves human volunteers for any reason**, we additionally impose these restrictions:
- We require that your Institutional Review Board emails freedom.of.form.foundation@gmail.com directly to indicate your approval, and fully describe all procedures that have been approved.
 - Any discrepancies between your IRB approval, and your funding application, will cause immediate and irrevocable cancelation of your application.
 - Severe IRB protocol discrepancies that indicate negligence or intentional misrepresentation of approved procedures will result in a lifetime ban of the applicant from any future relationship with the FFF.
 - We reserve the right to conduct a site visit as a condition before initializing your funding.
 - We will maintain contact with your Institutional Review Board to ensure that your regulatory approval remains in good standing
 - We may request an unannounced inspection of your laboratory for any reason.

Your benefits will be:

1. A full stipend or salary.
 - a. If you're already getting that from your school or institution, we'll cover that expense at the same level, as appropriate for your position as graduate student or postdoc, etc.
 - b. If you're not being given a stipend already, we'll use the NIH NRSA guidelines as a starting point: around \$25,000 per year for a predoctoral student, or around \$45,000 to \$55,000 per year for a postdoc.
2. A bonus of \$5,000 per year on top of guidelines or your existing stipend.
3. Travel expenses of \$1,000 per year, allowed to carry over year-to-year.
4. The possibility of flexible additional expenses. We may be able to help defray costs of publishing, of purchasing technology and software, of laboratory equipment and reagents, etc.
5. Access to popularizing your research to increase measures of impact, such as Altmetric scores, through a passionate community of active social media users.
6. Negligible administrative overhead once you're approved for funding – no quarterly progress reports, no formal class or educational requirements, no explicit performance thresholds.

Your requirements:

1. You'll renew yearly with *brief* checkups. We'll contact you a few months in advance of the renewal date to check in. You can renew up to 4 times, for a total of a 5 year fellowship.
2. You must acknowledge us as a funding source, in any publications, posters, or presentations, and reference your fellowship number.
3. You cannot accept any other fellowship at the same time.
4. All 'big data' or other non-commercial digital assets arising from your research must be uploaded to public repositories, such as the Gene Expression Omnibus, GitHub, etc, as appropriate.
5. You'll let us know as soon as you present a talk or a poster, or publish a paper – we'd love to know! Our funders will love it, too.

6. You'll let us know as soon as you start going through a patent application or invention disclosure. We don't need to know the details, we just want to hear the good news! We don't make any claims to your intellectual property – we leave that to your research institution's existing policies.

Additional suggested activities:

1. You're urged to attend a scientific conference the first 12 months of your fellowship. It's important to get calibrated with the work of your peers.
2. You'll share your findings via a poster or presentation at a scientific conference (not necessarily during the first year of your fellowship).
3. You will present to laypersons for at least one public outreach event (not necessarily during the first year of your fellowship).
4. You'll publish in open-access journals, or ensure that your publications are free-to-read if they are accepted by a paid-access journal.