IRDF 50+ YEARS
INDEPENDENT RESIDENCE DEVELOPMENT FUND

What is the IRDF?

The IRDF is a special MIT fund that offers targeted grants and low interest loans to help fraternities, sororities and independent living groups (FSILGs) improve their residences, make their houses accessible to students with disabilities, and enhance the safety and educational spaces of their residences.

How was the IRDF founded?

The IRDF was established in 1964 by the MIT Corporation to assist in the "acquisition, maintenance, improvement or expansion" of independent living group facilities. Initial funding was provided by generous alumni, in particular D. Reid Weedon '41, MIT Corporation Life Member Emeritus and a member of Phi Beta Epsilon.

How is the IRDF governed?

The fund is governed by three alum volunteer boards appointed by the MIT Treasurer:

- Board of Allocation - oversees loans
- Grant Advisory Board - oversees grant programs
- Architectural Review Board - oversees approvals for historic preservation elements

The IRDF receives administrative and legal support from the Office of the Vice President for Finance, and the MIT Division of Student Life maintains a representative on the Grant Advisory Board. Loan and grant applications are administered through the FSILG Cooperative, Inc. (FCI). The MIT Treasurer has final approval authority for all terms related to IRDF loans and grants.

What programs does the IRDF provide?

The IRDF supports two major programs:

- Low interest loans
- Grant programs

How do IRDF loans work?

IRDF loans are available for capital improvements and renovations to FSILG residences.
There are three types of IRDF loans:

- Micro-Loans: Up to $100K with a term of 5 years or less
- Mini-Loans: Up to $250K with a term of 10 years or less
- Standard IRDF Loans: More than $250K with a maximum term of 30 years

There is no giving requirement to secure an IRDF loan, but the Board of Allocation considers several factors, including availability of funds, servicing capability, and terms of the loan. Every MIT FSILG has benefited from an IRDF loan, with more that 100 loans issued since 1964; currently, 75% of FSILGs maintain an IRDF loan balance.

How do IRDF grant programs work?
IRDF grants use a reimbursement model. FSILG projects must be completed before a grant application can be submitted. For larger projects, preliminary advice on scope of work may be provided. IRDF grants can only reimburse for *eligible expenses*.

What are <u>eligible expenses</u>?
Expenses must be eligible for reimbursement according to IRS guidelines and as reviewed by the MIT legal team. The four IRDF-eligible expenses are:
- Educational space and equipment
- Safety improvements
- Accessibility improvements
- Historic preservation

What are the different IRDF grant programs?
The IRDF grant programs are:
- Educational Operating Grants
- Minor Project Grants
- Major Project Grants

How do IRDF Educational Operating Grants (EOGs) work?
This annual grant program reimburses operating and safety expenses related to residential education. Each FSILG house has a specific percentage of qualified educational space that has been previously calculated in consultation with the MIT legal team using IRS guidelines. "Qualified educational space" is space used exclusively for educational purposes (for example, study rooms, computer rooms, makerspaces). Approximately $400K per year is available for this program. FSILGs must apply for the reimbursement: typically, every FSILG receives an educational operating grant annually and the average grant amount is $14,000. This program is supported through the IRDF Community Fund.

How do IRDF Minor Project Grants work?
Minor Project Grants are available for projects with a grant application request of less than $50K. These grants can provide 75% reimbursement for renovation and improvement projects that meet the eligible expenses criteria (see above). The Grant Advisory Board establishes the level of annual funding that will be available for Minor Project Grants, typically $200K per year. This program is supported through the IRDF Community Fund.

How do IRDF Major Project Grants work?
Major Project Grants are available for projects with a grant application request of more than $50K. Major Project Grants are linked to an FSILG's capital campaign, and reimbursement is dependent upon the amount of alum donations over a five-year period. Major Project Grants can provide 100% reimbursement for eligible expenses (see above), but require significant planning, fundraising, and documentation. IRDF policies clarify that alums can contribute directly to the IRDF for an FSILG capital campaign and 90% the donation will go the FSILG and 10% to the IRDF Community Fund. Major Project Grants are often coupled with an IRDF loan: the FSILG takes out an IRDF construction loan and after construction is complete the FSILG receives a grant covering eligible expenditures. The Major Project Grant is typically applied to the loan balance. An FSILG receiving a Major Project Grant must submit an Annual Certification form attesting that the house continues provide residential education to MIT students for 20 years.

What is the IRDF Community Fund?
The _IRDF Community Fund_ is the portion of IRDF capacity that is considered "unrestricted" and not reserved for chapters with Major Project Grants. The Community Fund is supported primarily by the donations of generous alums and by 10% of the donations of alums who are designating their donations toward a Major Project Grant. _Support for the IRDF Community Fund is critical to ensure the ongoing health and preservation of all FSILG organizations_, especially chapters without a deep donor base or younger additions to the MIT FSILG experience, such as the sororities.

What are IRDF Community-Wide Programs?
The IRDF has been instrumental in the implementation and funding of several community-wide programs. Recent projects have utilized IRDF grant policy to incentivize participation and ensure cost-sharing from organizations. The FSILG Facilities Assessment program was funded by the IRDF, MIT Division of Student Life (DSL), and individual FSILGs. The Community Network Upgrade Program was a collaboration between the Association of Independent Living Groups (AILG,) DSL and MIT IS&T to ensure that all FSILG students have access to high speed networks. Currently, the IRDF is supporting a multi-year FSILG Facilities Renewal Program for safety upgrades in FSILG residences.

How is the IRDF supported?
The IRDF receives income from three major sources: alum donations, interest on loans, and investment income. Every year, donors from all of MIT's FSILGs, along with spouses, parents, and other supporters, contribute to the IRDF. Contributions to the IRDF are tax-deductible and count toward Class Reunion and MIT giving totals. IRDF donations also qualify for most corporate matching gift programs. The IRDF receives interest income from outstanding IRDF loans and investment income.

Why should I donate to the IRDF?
The IRDF supports quality housing for current and future generations of MIT students by helping FSILG house corporations keep FSILG residences welcoming, accessible, up-to-date, and safe. A guiding principle of the IRDF is to "pay it forward" with FSILG alums empowering financial capacity for the entire FSILG community. The IRDF depends on the generosity of alums and friends who believe that the FSILG experience is impactful to its members and alums and integral to MIT as a whole.

Where can I find more information?
IRDF information and policies are posted at irdf.mit.edu and ailg.mit.edu/resources/irdf. Please note that the IRDF web site is in the process of being updated; for the most current information, contact Pamela Gannon '84, Director of FSILG Alumni Programs at pmgannon@mit.edu.

Abbreviations
AILG   Association of Independent Living Groups, an MIT alum organization (ailg.mit.edu)
DSL   Division of Student Life
EOG   Educational Operating Grant
FCI   FSILG Cooperative, Inc
FSILGs Fraternities, Sororities and Independent Living Groups
IRDF   Independent Residence Development Fund
IS&T   Information Systems and Technology

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