

## COVER LETTER TEXT

Dear Susan and Friends Foundation for the Aging Board:

It is with joy that after a long period of discernment, New England Yearly Meeting is now able to share with you our grant proposal (attached). If questions arise for you, please do let us know. Please note: Although I (Nia) will be the primary point of contact about this project, I will be on vacation and away from email March 16-26. If you need a response in that time period, please email Yearly Meeting Secretary Noah Merrill ([ymsec@neym.org](mailto:ymsec@neym.org)).

Gratefully,  
Nia Thomas

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### **Executive Summary**

New England Yearly Meeting (NEYM) seeks funding to support an initial year of part-time service for a New England based Aging Resources Coordinator. This coordinator would work in partnership with New York Yearly Meeting's (NYYM) thriving Aging Resources Consultation and Help (ARCH) Program, receiving direction and support from the ARCH Coordinator as they develop a New England wing of the ARCH network.

Through the facilitation of learning opportunities, workshops, and forums, the curation of resources, as well as direct visitation, accompaniment and referrals, this coordinator will foster and equip a community of practice of Quakers in New England responding to both spiritual and logistical aging-related concerns in their local meetings and families.

### **Brief statement of the organization's history and competence**

New England Yearly Meeting provides programs and services to liberate ministry and strengthen the Quaker Movement in our region. New England Quakers include over 5,000 individuals from more than 90 local Quaker meetings across the six New England states, spanning across countless divides.

NEYM is a "shepherd of the shepherds", focused on providing curated resources, opportunities for critical connections, the nurturance of gifts, and inclusive leadership development to Friends serving their local meeting. Quaker meetings and Friends of all ages in our region see us as a singular and trustworthy resource for congregational care, skill-building, spiritual encouragement, and pastoral support.

### **Project details- Maximum 5 pages.**

1. What problem are you addressing? Evidence of needs, why this solution chosen/evidence, description of community and people to be served.

Many Quaker Meetings in our region struggle to know how to respond to their aging membership, and to the collective and individual impacts of aging. Without renewed clarity of their role and without an understanding of what resources may be available to them, local meeting leadership and pastoral caregivers often find themselves overwhelmed and overextended and at the same time distressed that they may not be able to make a meaningful difference. For Quaker meetings and families in this situation, aging can feel both scary and stressful rather than what it is: a natural part of the human lifespan, with unique spiritual opportunities for individuals, families, and faith communities. We find this can be especially true for our meetings in rural areas with less wealth and scarcer community resources.

## 2. What action(s) will you do? 3. What other organizations will you partner with on this project?

Friends serving in leadership from both NEYM and NYYM have explored how the benefits of [NYYM's ARCH Program](#) could be shared with New England Quakers via a regional coordinator working about 15-20 hours per month and supported by NYYM's ARCH Director (Callie Janoff). We believe this partnership between two neighboring Yearly Meetings would require a relatively modest amount of resources and would offer Quaker meetings, families, and individuals something there is a pressing need for—resources, learning opportunities, and care along the challenging stretches of the aging journey. We aim to equip Quaker meetings, pastoral caregivers, and families in responding to aging related concerns by creating opportunities to become part of a continually learning community of practice, providing guidance on best practices and available resources, and being available for direct visitation when needed.

NEYM believes this partnership with NYYM will be fruitful not only because of our adjacent geography, similar demographics, and common faith, but also because ARCH's approach to this work is so well aligned with our own understanding of best practice: inviting communities as a whole (rather than a few individuals) into the service of mutual accompaniment and better understanding of aging-related concerns, lifting up the powerful ways God continues to work through us as we age and as we more fully live into multigenerational community.

Because our vision is to build upon the solid foundation of NYYM's existing ARCH program, we believe this partnership makes good sense in practical terms; a relatively "light lift" compared to the consequential impact it will have for New England Friends who are grappling mightily with the needs of aging members.

We proceed with the understanding that NEYM and NYYM are united in our Spirit-led and grounded work of supporting our constituent meeting communities. Both of our yearly meetings share concerns for our growing older together in community, and for our many local meetings where the median age exceeds 60 years old. Though our yearly meetings are particular and distinctive, this unity is the basis of our plans for collaboration.

NYYM is confident in the strength and durability of its ARCH program, and seeks to share it more broadly beyond their yearly meeting. The proximity of NYYM and NEYM make the two a natural fit for collaboration on concerns related to growing older. NYYM could include a NEYM Local Coordinator in the supportive structure that already exists for NYYM ARCH staff Coordinators. Building on the support of the existing structure of learning opportunities (offered online via Zoom) and support strategies, the ARCH Network can extend to include Friends from NEYM. This kind of ongoing staff support is crucial to maintaining a vibrant program where Friends with gifts for caregiving are effectively leveraged to meet needs where they exist while fending off two very real threats to caregivers everywhere: burnout and isolation.

#### 4. What outputs (measurable, specific) do you expect?

We expect that the New England Aging Resources Coordinator will grow a network of Friends willing and able to support Friends in their area with aging related concerns. To do this, the New England Aging Resources Coordinator will work with other ARCH staff and NEYM staff to organize, promote, and facilitate at least two ARCH foundations workshops, plus additional workshops, and “peer circle” facilitated connection opportunities..

The coordinator will serve as the primary support and contact for the volunteer ARCH network in New England, preparing for and participating in meetings related to aging related concerns among Friends as called upon by local meetings or NEYM leadership, and serving as a conduit for referrals between those with aging related concerns and resources within and beyond the ARCH network.

The coordinator will also “tell the story” about how New England Friends and Friends Meetings skillfully respond to aging related concerns as well as to the spiritual condition of older adults. The coordinator will do this by regularly contributing to NEYM’s website, newsletter, social media channels, and monthly calls for local meeting leaders through the curation of resources and the offering of spiritual encouragement that speaks to New England Friends’ condition.

The coordinator will also advise NEYM leadership, event planners, and those serving in pastoral care roles on behalf of the Yearly Meeting on aging related concerns.

#### 5. What outcomes do you expect? What change will occur, what impact will it have?

For local meetings, we expect the following outcomes:

- Workshop participants report increased skills and motivation related to addressing aging related concerns within the context of their Quaker community
- Workshop participants report that they are bringing what they learned in ARCH workshops and from direct communication with the coordinator back to their local meeting and that they recommend future workshops as well as ARCH’s resources to others from their meeting
- Increased understanding among New England Friends that ARCH is a valuable resource for guidance on aging related concerns

- Friends responding to aging related concerns report feeling less alone and more purposeful and effective in their service

For NEYM (the organization), we expect the following outcomes:

- Improved clarity on what level of financial support and staff time NEYM would need to sustain such this endeavor for the longer-term
- Increased understanding (for NEYM leaders, event leaders, and those serving in pastoral care roles on behalf of NEYM) on:
  - The current needs and condition of local meetings
  - Best practices in inclusive event design
  - Suggested ways our programs, resources, response structures, and events can strengthen local meetings and foster spiritual development across the lifespan

#### 6. How will you measure outputs and outcomes? Both quantitative and qualitative.

We plan to evaluate the success of this project via surveys supplemented by follow up conversation (at the beginning and one-year mark) to both individuals directly engaged in the program and local meeting Ministry & Counsel and/or Pastoral Care Committees.

#### 7. How will you sustain the project after the grant period?

We hope that after success during our initial year of experimentation and fine-tuning, Friends Foundation for the Aging will be able to continue to support this initiative. Reports on this program will also be shared as part of the programmatic review which is part of our annual funding priorities process, which provides the basis for our operating budget. We will also invite participating Friends and meetings to make financial contributions, as led and able, in gratitude for the services or materials provided.

#### 8. How will your results be shared and replicated?

At the end of this initial year, a report will be written to share key findings about what worked and suggested changes with all stakeholders including NEYM's Permanent Board. This report will be a guiding document in creating the work plan and "Areas of Focus" used to anchor the second year of Aging Resources Coordinator's service.

#### 9. How does this project fit with Friends Foundation values?

This project embodies Friends Foundations' values.

In 2019, NEYM committed to many concrete next steps to further [our vision of inclusive leadership development](#), of a Religious Society where everyone's gifts are nurtured, regardless of economic background, age, race, gender, sexuality, or disability. At this time, we also committed to growing our practice of [noticing patterns of faithfulness and oppression](#) in our business and service together so that we are continually reflecting on the impacts of our words and decisions. As a continuation of these commitments, in 2021 we committed to working with outside consultants to identify ways New England Friends can grow in our ability to be an actively anti-

racist faith community as well as implementing a BIPOC Opportunities Coordinator and Elders to host programs especially supporting Friends of Color.

One of our guiding priorities is to be wise and accountable stewards of our shared resources. As we nurture a living network of relationships between Friends and Friends meetings in New England, we regularly review our use of resources to ensure that we are investing our attention and finances in that which is essential.

We share Friends Foundation for the Aging’s belief that important work is grounded in relationship and therefore is collaborative, continually evolving, and long-term. On-going dialogue that FFA could provide as this project proceeds, helping us to connect with other potential partners and learn from other’s experiments, would greatly benefit this endeavor.

**10. Attach project budget and timeline, including other sources of support, budget narrative.**

**Timeline**

May-July 2022	Coordinator job description is finalized and posted; Search for New England Coordinator begins; Search Committee is formed
September 2022	Hire & orient New England Coordinator; introduce Coordinator to Friends in New England
October 2022	Conduct initial survey; plan, promote, and recruit for NEYM ARCH learning opportunities
Nov./Dec. 2022	Offer NEYM ARCH foundations workshop (possibly jointly with NYYM)
January 2023	Evaluate effectiveness of initial launch, retool
February 2023	Plan, promote, and recruit for NEYM ARCH foundations workshop
March 2023	Offer NEYM ARCH foundations workshop (possibly jointly with NYYM)
April 2023	Design and offer NEYM workshops/learning opportunities based on emerging understanding of unmet needs
May 2023	Consider ongoing support structure in NEYM
June 2023	Prepare preliminary budgets and FFA grant application(s) for next cycle
July 2023	Seek any needed organizational approvals for grant application
Ongoing	“Telling the story” to New England Friends; Building the network of Visitors; Visits and one-on-one connections as available

### Budget Narrative

As you will see detailed in our draft budget below, we estimate we would need about \$6,707 on top of the funds we already possess and the donation of time and resources we are able to make, in order to make a one year experiment with this model possible.

### Budget

Item	Notes	Amount
New England Coordinator wages	Pay for 20 hours per month for 12 months at a rate of \$24 per hour  NEYM already has \$3,853 remaining from a previous FFA grant which would be put towards this	\$5,760
ARCH Director wages	Pay for time spent on training and monthly supervision and coordinating meetings with ARCH Director (approximately 20 hours over the course of 12 months at \$75/hour)	\$1,500
Coordinator travel	Travel and meal reimbursement	\$1500
Materials	Postage & printing (letter to meetings; hand written notes)	\$400
Direct NEYM staff support	Onboarding to NEYM's email/internal communication systems and payroll/time tracking; periodic meetings with NEYM staff to identify points of integration with other NEYM events, to connect with intended audiences via NEYM communications channels, and to coordinate wider pastoral care efforts/local meeting relationships as needed. Approximately 40 hours at \$35 per hour	\$1,400
Indirect NEYM support (in kind donation)	Administrative staff time, as needed support and on-going overhead for NEYM systems (estimate based on 10% of overall project budget)	\$1056

**Total project cost: \$11,616**

**Less funds already held by NEYM from previous FFA grant: \$3,853**

**Less NEYM in-kind donation \$1056**

**Total amount sought: \$6,707**

