

Quaker Voluntary Service FFA Report - Fall 2022

Quaker Voluntary Service (QVS) is grateful for the support of Friends Foundation for the Aging (FFA). In our original grant proposal in March 2021, we surmised that we needed a special investment of funds to continue expanding our site placement offerings to include organizations working with aging adults.

This past year we experimented with a new funding model for this specific grant and the organization's financial sustainability long term. Instead of only subsidizing the cost of a site placement fee, we requested that FFA support the entire cost of fellowship position at an aging site minus the investment made by the site placement. We hoped that this new funding model would provide QVS with financial security to be able to:

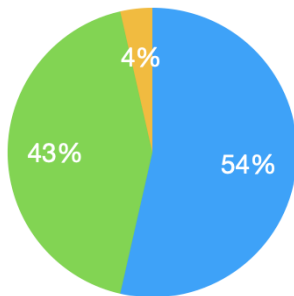
1. Offer Fellows an immersive service experience with aging adults,
2. Grow the capacity of current aging adult site placements, and
3. Develop new connections with aging adult site placements.

Immersive & Growthful Experiences

The following data comes from the QVS Director of Program's *2021-2022 Programming Report*, which summarizes responses from 28 Fellows (across the QVS national program) who completed an extensive, end-of-year feedback form. This data shows QVS is a reliable catalyst for growth in all three core aspects of our program.

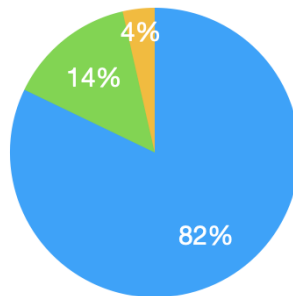
Spiritual Exploration

● Deep Growth ● Minor Growth
● No Growth ● Hindrance



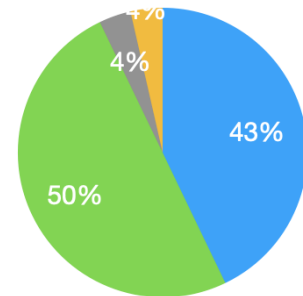
Community Life

● Deep Growth ● Minor Growth
● No Growth ● Hindrance



Social Justice

● Deep Growth ● Minor Growth
● No Growth ● Hindrance



The overwhelming majority of Fellows experienced growth in all three areas. Compared to the previous year, a greater percentage of 2021-2022 Fellows reported **deep growth** in Spiritual Exploration (up to 54% from 35%) and Community Life (up to 82% from 71%). The numbers in Social Justice are very similar to last year's.

Partnership with FriendshipWorks

In our meeting on March 8, 2022, QVS staff shared the two major challenges that occurred this past year, impacting QVS in reaching the initial goals set out for this grant:

1. An incident and pattern of transphobia and harm at the FFA-subsidized site placement.
2. A reduced applicant pool for the 2022-2023 fellowship year.

Transphobia in the Workplace

Following two years of partnership, QVS was eager to begin the 2021-2022 fellowship year and support a Fellow's placement at FriendshipWorks. However, in fall of 2021, there was an incident and pattern of transphobia and harm at FriendshipWorks. Eventually, and after multiple methods of intervention, QVS removed the Fellow from the site placement. This removal prevented the Fellow from experiencing a full year of direct service work with aging adults. Unfortunately, we are unable to assess how capacity was changed at the aging adult site placement.

In the midst of this harm, we noticed an unexpected level of commitment from the QVS Fellow to non-punitive conflict resolution, which depended on their own self-advocacy and belief in others' capacity to transform. It was moving to witness their compassion and resiliency given the context of harm.

There are layers to this incident that we are still unpacking and processing. In general, while we do not believe we can prevent Fellows from experiencing zero incidents of harm, we recognize our responsibility for their wellbeing and safety and for ensuring they have support for navigating microaggressions and/or harm. In the past, QVS staff heard of Fellows traumatic experiences with local Quakers more often than at site placements. This perhaps was too trusting of site placement partners. Moving forward we intend to be more vigilant towards the safety of trans and nonbinary Fellows (and staff), especially given the increase in dangerous rhetoric and violence towards trans and nonbinary people. Furthermore we will no longer work with FriendshipWorks until they provide evidence they are welcoming and inclusive of trans and nonbinary people.

Reduced Fellowship Applications Due to the Pandemic

This past year, applicant numbers for the fellowship year took a major hit, which we believe to be a delayed impact of the pandemic. Multiple years of off-and-on remote school and work caused our young adult applicant pool to become increasingly dispersed over time. Isolation and remote schooling frayed our most effective recruitment tool: connections between current and recent Fellows and younger applicants. Additionally, the early 2022 surge in COVID-19 cases from the Omicron variant canceled in-person opportunities during the peak recruitment season for the 2022-2023 fellowship year.

This major challenge forced a reprioritization of internal staff time to extend and carry out recruitment efforts four months past the application deadline and adapt programming for a much smaller class of incoming Fellows. Unfortunately, we are disappointed to report that this reprioritization of time (and the resulting smaller cohort for the 2022-2023 fellowship year) prevented staff from developing connections with new aging adult site placements.

QVS & FFA Partnership

At the heart of any grant funded project is experimentation. We are immensely grateful to FFA for a partnership that not only centered this value, but also valued transparency and adaptiveness throughout the multiyear partnership.

Over the arc of this particular funding period, we learned many things not anticipated in the original grant proposal. This includes:

- The level of financial *and emotional* investment from a site placement needed for a positive Fellowship experience.
- Clarity around what it costs to operate the Fellowship program (not just subsidize the site placement); and how to invite a funding partner to consider the full cost.
- Experimentation and practice with a sliding scale model for site placement fees.
- Intergenerational relationship building, tensions, and microaggressions that show up in a workplace - different from in other “locations” in QVS (Friends meetings, events, etc.).
- How to navigate harm in a QVS site placement where roles, power, and relationships might look different than a more typical workplace.

What stands out about FFA as a funding partner were your efforts to reduce burdensome reporting that can be typical to granting funds, a flexible funding schedule, and engagement with trustees/board members. Thank you for entrusting QVS throughout our partnership.

As shared last spring, we will not submit a new funding proposal for the coming year. We plan to reassess our capacity for discrete issue-focused site subsidies. Furthermore, our largest priority for the coming year is to boost application numbers, renew engagement with QVS alumni, and begin implementing our new strategic plan.