

Reapplication Proposal: New England Yearly Meeting ARCH Project
September 2023

Submitted by: NiaDwynwen Thomas, NEYM Program Director

Project Summary: New England Yearly Meeting (NEYM) seeks funding for a second year of part-time service for a New-England-Based Aging Resources Coordinator, working in partnership both with New York Yearly Meeting's (NYYM) Aging Resources Consultation and Help (ARCH) staff and NEYM leadership, in order to better equip New England Quakers (both individuals and meetings) to respond to aging-related challenges and opportunities.

How has the identified program changed?

The problem identified in our initial proposal¹ has not changed.

Throughout this initial year, we have gained a clearer understanding of the profound interconnection between the condition of local meetings in relation to their aging membership and the condition of individual Friends in relation to their own aging. It is vital to maintain regular dialogue between these two facets of our work, viewing them as integral parts of a unified whole.

At its essence, this ministry intertwines the experiences of aging and its associated challenges for both local meetings and individuals. It guides us in discovering how to embrace God's love and invitation even when our capacity for action out in the world may be limited. We are actively nurturing a space where Friends can contemplate, connect, and draw from the spiritual richness of our tradition, which is accessible to us at every stage of life. This endeavor creates environments of mutual support, shared wisdom, and prayerful companionship.

Through providing opportunities focused on aging—an experience that touches each of us personally—we lay the foundation for the collective spiritual work needed in our faith communities and wider world.

How have your solution or goals changed? How will your efforts/actions to impact the problem change?

Our general approach² has not changed. We are now clearer on our goals for the second year which are to:

¹ Problem summary from initial proposal: 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 Our approach, as summarized in the initial grant: Through the facilitation of learning opportunities, workshops, and forums, and 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.

- Continue to offer facilitated drop-in Reflection Groups
- In partnership with other ARCH staff, offer at least one workshop using ARCH's revised (and soon to be re-published) End of Life planning workbook
- Continue the NEYM Aging Resources Coordinator's visits to local meetings and NEYM events in order to continue to grow our awareness of both aging related needs and existing resources (including individual Friends with specific gifts, leadings, and areas of expertise)
- In partnership with individuals within our Yearly Meeting and ARCH staff, provide more opportunities for New England Friends to meaningfully connect around aging-related topics outside of our Aging Resources Coordinator's primary area of expertise (end-of-life)
- Explore what forms might best support on-going consultative and collaborative service among New England Friends with a particular concern for the aging-related topics (such as periodic hosted Zoom calls or Resource Group available to local meetings, etc).
- Explore interest among Friends to have one-on-one spiritual partnerships with others who attend NEYM ARCH reflection groups or events.

Are there changes in funding or program implementation partners?

There have been no major changes in this area. As our Aging Resources Coordinator is now more familiar to New England Friends in her role, she has been able to identify some Friends across the Yearly Meeting with contributions to make towards these efforts, such as content area expertise or co-facilitation skills. Noticing and nurturing these gifts is an important aspect of this ministry.

How will you know if your actions are having an impact? How are you measuring success? How will you sustain the program after the grant period?

For specific programmatic opportunities, such as Reflection Group sessions and workshops, we will continue to use short feedback forms which allow us to collect both qualitative and quantitative feedback on the participant experience.

More broadly, we pay attention to the ways that Friends and Friends meetings are connecting to and using what we are sharing with them; the places where our efforts and encouraging generative dialogue among Friends and meetings. These "sightings" can take many forms, such as:

- Friends invite the Aging Resources Coordinator to visit their meetings or engage in one-on-one conversations.
- Friends share about ARCH resources/opportunities with their local meeting and other Friends they know. Sometimes we learn about this sharing because we are told this has happened, or it is mentioned in conversation at our monthly calls for local meeting leaders, or because someone registered for a Reflection Group or workshop based on the recommendation of another Friend, or because we see these resources/opportunities highlighted in local meeting newsletters or on their email lists.

- Over time, we hope we may see the impact on wider meeting communities, such as through State of Society reports of local meetings beginning to not only mourn the challenges of aging membership but also describe the way God is at work in our lives throughout the lifespan of individuals and faith communities, a continuation of the conversations happening among ARCH Reflection Group and workshop participants.

We hope that after encouraging successes during our initial period of foundation laying 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 our bi-annual programmatic reviews, and a 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. NEYM is currently reviewing what program fee framework best aligns with our overall development and financial stewardship strategy.

Project Budget

Item	Notes	Amount
New England ARCH Coordinator wages	Pay for 25 hours per month for 12 months at a rate of \$29 per hour	\$8,700
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	\$1,000
Materials	Postage & printing (letter to meetings; handwritten notes; 25 Coordinator's copies of <i>Quaker Values and End of Life Decision Making</i> booklet)	\$750
Direct NEYM staff support	Regular meetings with senior NEYM staff to identify points of integration with other NEYM programs, events, and communications as well as to coordinate wider pastoral care efforts/local meeting relationships as needed. Approximately 75 hours at \$50 per hour	\$3,750
Indirect NEYM support (in kind donation)	Administrative staff time, as needed, support and ongoing overhead for NEYM systems (estimate based on 10% of overall project budget)	\$1,570

Total project cost: \$17,270

Less NEYM in-kind donation \$1,570

Total amount sought: \$15,700