

2025 Friends Foundation for the Aging Year-end Report & Reapplication Proposal Form

September 2024

ARCH (Aging Resources Consultation Help)

New York Yearly Meeting

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Amount requested: \$64,000

1. What is the problem you identified? Has it changed?

New York Yearly Meeting (NYYM) has a large and geographically dispersed population of aging Friends across New York, northern New Jersey, and western Connecticut. NYYM's ARCH Program addresses the challenges of aging by offering support, care, and connection locally and across distance. The ARCH thesis on the role of community support in aging and change can be found in our [2024 grant application](#).

The ARCH Program of NYYM staff consists of six part-time regional coordinators and one full-time director to serve as touchstones for support around issues of aging and disability, and provide opportunities for Friends to connect around concern or interest. The NYYM ARCH staff of experienced therapists, teachers, pastors, activists, chaplains, caregivers, and facilitators partner with NYYM's ARCH Coordinator, an end of life doula.

The ARCH Program is built around a model of support, care, and connection we call "mutual accompaniment." This model shifts the expectation that support only flows one way—from trained 'service providers'—toward a model where mutually supportive spiritual communities are created. In these communities, Friends accompany one another as peers through the experiences of disability and aging.

2. What actions did you take to address the problem?

The actions that ARCH takes to work within the framework of mutual support are multifaceted, responsive, and continually developing. Current ARCH offerings include workshops, support groups, consultation, intra-regional connections, monthly/quarterly meeting visits, and access to resources within and outside of the yearly meeting. Up-to-date offerings can be found on the [NYYM ARCH webpage](#).

In 2024 the NYYM program is running seven **ARCH Groups**: *Caregivers and Caretaking, Aging Without Children, Advance Planning Drop-in, Tiny Meetings Meetup, Seasons of Life 60-80, Seasons of Life 80+*, and *ARCH Night Out*. These drop-in style groups meet monthly on Zoom and are facilitated by ARCH Coordinators, individually or in pairs. These groups are open and ongoing; 73 Friends have registered for at least one NYYM ARCH Group thus far. These groups serve as stand-alone entities in themselves, and provide continuation for other programming. For example, the *Advance Planning Drop-In Group* provided ongoing follow-up and sustained accountability to attendees of an ARCH Advance Directive Workshop given at Brooklyn Monthly Meeting, alongside other Friends. ARCH group work also includes the **Inside Outside Letter Writing Collective** and the **Query Cohort Project**, facilitated by the ARCH Coordinator for Prisons, Judy Meikle. This work aims to connect incarcerated Friends with outside Friends for mutual accompaniment in the material, emotional, and spiritual dimensions of aging. The *Inside Outside Collective* currently has 50 pairs writing to one another, the *Query Cohort Project* includes 16 Friends, 8 who are incarcerated and 8

on the outside, all engaging with the same query in an open 'chain letter' format where writing can be read and responded to.

NYYM ARCH's cornerstone **Foundations Workshop** ran in Spring of 2024 and will run again in the Fall. This four-part Zoom workshop provides opportunities for Friends to explore and communicate about their own experience of aging in a mutually supportive setting. Challenging the barriers to supporting one another in aging, including cultural notions of individualism and ageism, we practice being vulnerable, identifying our needs, asking for help, looking at our own boundaries when offering help, and strategizing ways to care for ourselves as we care for others. The workshop covers methods of community support, from 'buddy systems' to 'share the care' teams. The Foundations Workshop uses group discussion, worship sharing, didactic teaching, break out room sharing, journaling, somatic and creative activities to engage varied learning styles. The Fall 2023 Foundations Workshop had 19 registrants; 17 Friends registered for Spring 2024. The Fall 2024 Foundations Workshop, running in October, is [currently registering](#).

NYYM ARCH was thrilled to release the revised **Quaker Values and End of Life Decision-Making Workbook** in January 2024. This workbook invites the reader into practical and spiritual considerations about the end of life, incorporating Quaker principles to offer guidance. The revised Quaker Values and End of Life Decision-Making Workbook includes updated information and uses a series of 'reality checks' to look at where norms about end of life decision making often uphold bias and systemic racism. These workbooks are available in both paperback and fillable-pdf versions [here](#); a suggested donation of \$15 helps to cover the expense of future printings. 240 copies of the workbook were printed in January and sold out by July, when we printed 100 additional workbooks.

3. What did you learn? Will you make any changes in the coming year?

NYYM's ARCH program received two main streams of constructive suggestions in 2024: for some, there has been a desire for deepening of the spiritual tenets of the program. Others have expressed wishes that the program engage more explicitly with 'practical' information and resources.

In terms of the spiritual dimension, we have observed from ARCH work at Sessions that Friends are often more likely to participate in 'worship sharing' groups than in 'support' groups. Thus, as we continue to develop and run ARCH Groups, we may explicitly shift the structure of some of the groups to a 'worship sharing' format, with the understanding that the outcomes of community building and peer support will be fostered in a spiritually grounded place. A monthly Zoom worship sharing group for grief and grieving is being discerned.

In terms of increased practical information, we are planning to expand the Foundations Workshop structure. In addition to the Foundations Workshop, we are workshopping 'ARCH Building Blocks'. A 'Building Block' is imagined as a shorter program or workshop based on specific matters, offered over Zoom. For example, a '*Housing Block*', '*Decluttering Block*', or '*Prison Visitation Block*' will engage with those seeking specific information and resources around these topics. As we develop these stand-alone pieces, speakers with specialized expertise might be invited to collaborate. These 'ARCH Building Blocks' workshops will continue the underlying ARCH work of community building, normalizing conversations, sharing resources, and creating networks of support amongst Friends.

4. How have you engaged any partners/collaborators in implementation or funding? Have you considered how to sustain the program?

Collaboration with NEYM's ARCH Coordinator, Patti Muldoon, continues to be a great benefit to the NYYM program. Patti brings deep insight to the work, especially around matters of end of life. Patti meets with the 6 NYYM Coordinators and director monthly in staff meetings and regularly consults with the ARCH director. Patti's deep belief in the importance of ARCH and her excellent ability to frame and communicate information make her an incredible asset to Quaker aging work. In 2024, the NYYM and NEYM ARCH staff received a three-hour training in facilitation from Margaret Halpin, a facilitation trainer at CASA. This training was offered to help the Coordinators, who are now all running groups, gain a level of skill and ease in their facilitation roles.

5. How do you know your actions had an impact? Please describe those who participated, outputs and outcomes. Stories or photos are welcome.

Our participants generally range in age from their early 60s to 100, some younger caregivers often participate. Participant numbers for ARCH Groups and Foundations are provided in Section 2 of this reapplication. We use evaluative surveys to gather feedback on the Foundations Workshop, and have received these reflective responses:

- *There are resources I did not know about prior to this that I plan to bring to my meeting, but also, access in anticipation of my own aging.*
- *As a meeting, we can be more intentional about mutually accompanying each other — developing a caregiving team for those in need that is nurturing, practical, and doesn't burn anyone out.*
- *Enhanced my desire to engage with more people along the way. My tank is evolving and ARCH contributes to that.*
- *It's encouraging to talk with folks of all ages who honestly and openly share their own concerns about aging, illness, dying, grief, and caregiving. I liked connecting with other people and I learned a lot. Very rich.*

Responses from Inside/Outside participants include

- *"I've been a member of the inside outside program since its inception back in 2020. Since then it has been a genuine source of spiritual strength and mutual accompaniment."*
- *"You have a impact in my life. I am a 66 year old man doing 30 years to life...I found hope though corresponding with outside friends. It's giving me hope to hold on and feel human, sharing my thoughts and keeping me informed."*
- *I currently correspond with two incarcerated persons. I am finding it to be a thought provoking and spiritually nourishing experience thus far. My 'Inside' people have shared openly about their struggles, hopes and vision of life after release. I am very grateful for the opportunity to write and form this type of relationship.*

6. Is there anything else you would like FFA to know about this project?

NYYM's ARCH is a year into having a new director, Kevin Lovelady, MDiv. In 2024 we hired a new Coordinator for Farmington-Scipio Region, Julie Rudd, MDiv, a co-pastor of Farmington Meeting, who is integrating well with the region.

7. Feedback on your interaction with FFA would be helpful. Are there ways we can help beyond the grant? Communication with and support from Susan Hoskins has been very helpful in 2024, and the Quaker Convening on Aging gatherings foster sharing and mutuality. NYYM ARCH is very grateful for the time, effort, and support of the Foundation.

8. Include a simple program budget/actual with income and expenses (eg. staff, program supplies, travel, etc) for both last year and next. Three columns: last budget, last actual, next budget

	2025 Budget	2024 Budget	2023 Actual
Funding Source			
Grants (FFA, Other)	64,000	64,000	65,841
Contributions Aging Concerns	20,000	20,000	29,725
Products and Services Contributions	2,500	2,500	3,175
Total	86,500	86,500	98,741
Expense			
Staff Salary and Hourly Wages	95,426	91,890	89,912
Other Wage Expenses	9,540	7,444	7,284
Health Benefit	11,000	11,111	11,194
Pension	3,889	4,595	3,300
Travel and Administration	6,525	6,525	3,811
Workshops & Network Support	500	500	305
Total	126,880	122,065	115,806
Funds			
Aging Concerns Invested Fund	5,800	5,600	5,706
Balance From NYYM Operations	34,580	29,965	11,359