



PENDLE HILL
A Quaker Study, Retreat, and Conference Center

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Friends Foundation for the Aging Report & Reapplication Proposal

March 14, 2025

Organization: Pendle Hill

EIN & Formal organization name: 23-1352255 Pendle Hill School

Contact name, phone, email: Frances Kreimer, 610-566-4507 x160

Amount requested: \$40,000

Project title: Experiments in Spiritual Learning Community

With gratitude, Pendle Hill looks forward to a continued partnership with Friends Foundation for the Aging (FFA) in collaboration with other Friends organizations to further engage older adults in spiritual learning community through free online programming and resources.

What is the problem you identified? Has it changed?

In a time of instability and anxiety, isolation and despair, Pendle Hill seeks to open a spiritual lifeline for Friends to continuing revelation and to ground in Pendle Hill's core educational themes of faith and practice, prophetic witness, and creative exploration. As Friends continue to age, and navigate the urgent, disorienting crises that threaten to fragment our society, the need for connection, grounding, and spiritual community building feels ever more pressing.

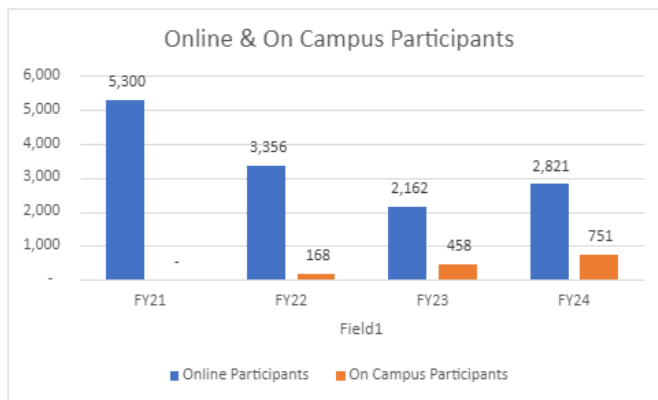
What actions did you take to address the problem?

Building upon ongoing efforts to remove barriers in accessibility, Pendle Hill continued to provide older adults with the tools they need to engage with us through a range of modalities.

Thanks to FFA's investment, we are on the verge of launching our new ADA-accessible website. We have also increased our online programming, and outreach so Friends who have physical obstacles geographically, financially, and medically have equal and easy access to spiritual and social resources. Our programming continues to focus on our core themes of faith and practice, prophetic witness, and creative exploration. FFA's generous support allowed us to focus on accessible, free online resources, specifically: (1) free online programming including the First

Monday Lecture Series (both live and recorded), our Pendle Hill Pamphlets reading group, and a series of Pendle Hill Pamphlet author interviews; (2) collaboratively lifting up online programming offered by other Friends around the world including through our new online learning webpage; and (3) sharing these resources through publicity and active outreach. This work was complimented by the QVS Fellow, separately funded by FFA.

FFA has made these opportunities meaningfully accessible to aging Friends by supporting our free and subsidized online static and synchronous learning resources. In fact, although our online attendance started to decline in Fiscal Year 2023 as the COVID-19 Pandemic waned, it grew again last year, welcoming 2,821 participants to our programs. The substantial majority of participants in our online programs are older adults.



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

A major component of the 2024 grant was a plan to create a new website, to make it easily navigable, especially for older adults, focusing on ADA guidelines and other accessibility guides. We completed user and stakeholder feedback surveys, contracted with a vendor based on our needs, used feedback to inform the website design/build process with the vendor, established functionality needs like event filtering, accessibility, blog, and calendar features, etc., and worked with the vendor to build out the entire newly designed website. The vendor finished building major landing pages and design templates and turned the site over to Pendle Hill to complete content migration and interior page design. We are currently in the process of manually importing pages, posts, and events, and rebuilding and reorganizing content in the new website.

In our educational programming, we learned of a continued appetite for both free and paid online programming, especially around themes of interest to older adults. We were fortunate to engage this year in an intensive strategic planning process, which offered invaluable opportunities for focus groups and other feedback, during which we consistently heard appreciation for the online learning opportunities we provide. The next steps in our work will be guided by Pendle Hill's

new strategic plan, which is currently in the final stages of development. We expect our work in the coming year will be building on our ongoing online programming, including our free First Monday Lectures and other offerings, continuing to develop the audio-book library, and promoting the web resources to more people particularly in underserved communities. This work will be completed by the education department. FFA's support continues to be essential in securing the staff support to implement this work, either with a QVS fellow if a suitable match can be found, or through other additional staff support. We are requesting continuing funding in the amount of \$40,000 to make this work a reality

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

Collaboration is at the heart of this project. Pendle Hill deeply values our relationship with Quaker Voluntary Service (QVS) as an opportunity to foster the next generation of leadership in Friends' organizations. We have learned that spirituality at the end of life is a need for many. This coming year, we are excited about planning specific collaborations with Baltimore Yearly Meeting's *A Tender Time* Quaker end-of-life resources, including a September 2025 online learning series. 2025-26 funded programming would include reading groups, lectures, and multi-session programming like *A Tender Time*. We also continually discern how we can best support each other and share resources to support the Religious Society of Friends and believe the sustainability of our online learning initiatives will be grounded in these ongoing collaborations. Pendle Hill looks forward to continuing the broader conversation of how to best serve the aging Friends population, and we have focused particularly on our First Monday Lectures as opportunities to build partnerships with other organizations

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

Overwhelming gratitude and support for our online offerings continues to resonate through the community and shape our enthusiasm for the program. First Monday Lectures are robustly attended with an average of 100 Zoom registrants. Over 500 Friends and seekers from around the world registered for the Black History Month First Monday Lecture with the BlackQuaker Project. Reading group evaluations provide encouraging feedback and many Friends return for subsequent sessions.

Through the work that Pendle Hill and FFA have accomplished over the past several years, we regularly receive feedback from Friends who utilize the services offered because they are "150 miles from the nearest Meeting," and do not have "spiritual and social connections with other Friends," and who view these funded programs as a "lifeline." One example is a senior Friend who said, "Online worship and social worship-sharing started as a benefit during the Pandemic, and now it is a necessity. We count on Wednesdays and Saturdays for the time it gives us to interact spiritually and socially with Friends from around the world. We do not have this resource

otherwise.” Another senior Friend says, “We so look forward to the First Monday lectures online, and we just joined the online Reading Group. I don’t know what we would do without these programs, because we are so far away, and it is increasingly difficult for us to travel.”

Since we launched the Online Learning page in January of 2024, it has been viewed nearly 3,500 times by about 2,500 users. Though this traffic only accounts for about 1% of PendleHill.org traffic during the reporting period, it shows that without much advertising, this page is being visited and returned to by repeat users, indicating that it’s a helpful tool for those who navigate there. We are very excited as the new website continues to develop, and we look forward to the anticipated launch. Through improved accessibility of our online offerings, we plan to increase publicity and through solicited feedback will make further improvements.

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

An ongoing identified need is for Pendle Hill to continue to have the support to implement this work. We are again partnering with QVS and hope to find that support from a QVS Fellow for 2025-2026. Lucas Meyer-Lee has been a tremendous asset to the Education program; trying to encourage leadership or continuation in the field of aging services is another strategic reason to engage a QVS Fellow for 2025-26 on this project, if possible. Pendle Hill is very intent on continued partnership with FFA to develop new and more specific online engagement through programs such as reading-groups designed for seniors.

Feedback on your interaction with FFA would be helpful. Are there ways we can help beyond the grant?

Susan has been an engaged and supporting partner, and her insight and wisdom has been a reliable source of collaboration as we set direction and goals for future programming.

Pendle Hill’s 501c3 status has not changed.