

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

Date: September 12, 2025

Organization: New England Yearly Meeting of Friends (NEYM) **Tax ID:** 05-6002914

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Amount Requested: \$19,837.78

Project Name: New England Yearly Meeting ARCH Project

What is the problem you identified? Has it changed?

The opportunity we identified—for Friends and Friends Meeting to be gathered into intentional, informative, and spiritually life-giving accompaniment regarding their experiences of aging and end of life—has not changed. We continue to discover new aspects of this ministry; more resources to develop, draw upon, and share; new conversations and connections to be cultivated.

What actions did you take to address the problem?

Despite our ARCH Coordinator managing some health challenges and a major move (from the Boston suburbs to small town New Hampshire) this year, we were successful in taking the steps we committed to in last year's proposal:

- Patti partnered with Yearly Meeting Secretary Noah Merrill to facilitate a day-long pastoral care workshop at our annual [Meeting Care Day](#), sharing aging-support models from local meetings of all sizes.
- Since our last report, there have been 55 new registrants participating in one or more sessions of the **monthly End of Life Reflection Group**. This is an online opportunity for Friends to share their diminishments and deepenings, received with attentive, prayerful listening. The group alternates between open sharing focused on personal experiences of living with aging or disabilities with reflections on topical readings. This year the group reflected on a book authored by one of the group's members, *The Light of Evening: Meditations on Growing in Old Age* by Gunilla Norris (Westerly, RI Meeting).
- Patti refined her three-part Advance Planning workshop gearing it not only to individuals but to participants attending with a loved one and encouraging Monthly Meetings to attend in small groups.
- Patti has cultivated connections with New England Friends with a more depth of experience in areas related to this ministry including experiences with disability, personal

discernment practices grounded in the Friends tradition, and support for meetings regarding end of life, memorial meetings, and burial.

- **Visits with local meetings** upon request continue including to additional geographic areas in our Yearly Meeting. Patti customizes what is offered at local meetings depending on the particular needs and leadings of the meeting and visits in the spirit of a traveling minister rather than “expert” outsider, offering not only structured workshops but also focused fellowship for the purposes of relationship building, worship sharing, and accompaniment. We are excited to see meeting visits result in deeper, continued relationship. For example, one meeting Patti spent a weekend with this year invited her and her spouse back for their annual celebration ([a very large historic clambake](#)) and now have invited Patti to facilitate another weekend of programming for them, inviting Friends across their Quarter to join, too.
- **Workshops at NEYM’s Annual Sessions** this year were *Imaginative Play around Life’s Endings* and *Building Belonging: Embracing Abilities and Disabilities*.

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

We’ve learned that mixing structured facilitation and presentation with wider presence at Yearly Meeting events outside of a “front of the room” role has allowed the ARCH Coordinator to connect meaningfully with a wider array of Friends. We’ve learned that while progress was made this year in moving the Advance Planning Workshop from a typical workshop for individual participants to a workshop that for pairs and small groups of Friends and loved ones to support each other, there is more work to be done in this area as it diverges from the individual mindset that is the norm in our wider culture. We have also learned that visits to Quarters (rather than individual meetings) requires additional advance planning and coordination. We’ve learned that the presence of elders are especially helpful during disability focused programming and that it often makes sense for Patti to co-facilitate with someone with visible disabilities who is active in the disability rights community. While Friends with life-long disability and Friends experiencing disabilities related to aging have much to offer each other, their experiences are distinct. Related to this, Patti has been strengthening her approach to group agreements including around touch as some of her workshops include interactive movement.

Additional changes in the coming year include continuing to orient advance planning programming towards fostering mutually supportive relationships between Friends in the same regional area, rather than simply sharing helpful information. We also have begun work which will continue gathering information around meetings’ practices and needs regarding burial grounds and deathcare including facilitated opportunities for wisdom sharing. Patti has begun conversations with the ARCH Director about developing resources to contribute to the next

version of the *Quaker Values and End of Life Workbook*. Finally, prompted in part by moving to a more rural area, Patti is pursuing a leading to visit our most rural and remote quarter, Vassalboro, consisting of meetings in central, northern, and downeast Maine.

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

Patti actively seeks Friends to serve as co-facilitators. In addition to the partners listed above, this year Patti co-facilitated with one of the ARCH Coordinators from NYYM who holds a background in theatre (Yana) and has co-facilitated a Friend with a depth of experience regarding life review exercises to workshop with the End of Life Reflection Group. Patti is also partnering with a New England Friend who has established her meeting's protocols regarding green burial to better support Friends Meetings in implementing sustainable and reliable deathcare practices and potentially expand community access to green burial via Friends burial grounds.

An additional growing edge in terms of partnership within NEYM is the Yearly Meeting's current focus on the health of Quarterly Meetings including a more robust flow of dialogue and collaborative partnerships on programming between Quarters and the Yearly Meeting. Via this focus across our efforts, we see a way for the Yearly Meeting's ministries to impact more Friends (as only about 10% of active Friends participate in our Annual Sessions) and grow in a way that reflects the particular context and needs of the varied communities within New England.

In terms of funding, NEYM has recently approved increased staff, consultant, and volunteer time committed to longer-term development initiatives including endowments to carry forward ministries in a more sustainable way. We also continue to be hopeful that FFA will continue to invite us to reapply for continued funding for this specific project while servant leaders in New England work hard to ensure the overall long-term financial health of the Yearly Meeting, the container for ministries specifically geared towards New England Friends.

How do you know your actions had an impact?

Since last fall, 245 individuals have participated in a NEYM-sponsored event for the first time, an indicator that our communication channels and word of mouth reputation are strong. Participation levels in many ARCH workshops have increased and the number of meetings touched by this ministry also continues to increase. While the majority of participants are from New England, we have also been blessed with an abundance of participants from across the country, in great part due to broader promotional efforts fostered by FFA's convenings.

In the most recent offering of the advance planning workshop series, evaluation respondents universally rated as “5 stars” (exceptional). Because one of our goals is to use our programs to not only feed individuals during the workshops but also to feed their families and meetings following the workshop, an additional indicator of success was the presence of participants attending with a partner or healthcare proxy. Additionally, we celebrate success in seeing returning participants share topic ideas and take on facilitation roles bringing in new perspectives, approaches, and practices.

Beyond new workshop and reflection group participants, we see this work growing in its impact as new meetings extend invitations for the ARCH Coordinator to visit. These initial connections are made both through regular reminders in our monthly newsletter and on our monthly calls for Friends in leadership roles within their meeting but also via the ARCH Coordinator’s steady presence and mealtime conversation at larger Friends gatherings throughout the year. This June brought the joy of an impromptu and lively visit with Hartford Friends directly flowing out of Patti’s presence at our annual Meeting for Listening, a day for Friends to share about the spiritual life in their meetings.

We continue to use local meetings’ State of Society reports as an important instrument for evaluating impact as felt within meeting communities. In our most recent cycle, seven meetings explicitly discussed aging membership (an increase over recent years), lifting up both the challenges, anxieties, and grief associated with aging membership as well as affirmation of the blessings and spiritual and relational possibilities aging membership has brought these faith communities. In addition, multiple meetings discussed worship sharing, mutual support, and adult religious education opportunities they offered for conversations related to aging, end of life decisions, and loss. We see this increase in reflection and Spirit-infused conversation about aging as a sign of health—that Friends are growing in their understanding of later life as a spiritual rich time where Quaker practice and Quaker community offer abundant gifts. While a number of meetings in New England are currently experiencing renewal in the form of increased attendance and membership, we see an overall increase in the capacity of meetings regardless of size and demographic composition to hold both loss and newness simultaneously, trusting the Spirit is at work in all the changes we face.

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

Patti continues to find her time with the ARCH Coordinators from NYYM a highly valuable source of encouragement, ideas, connections, and support for what otherwise might be a lonely and daunting ministry.

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

Patti has found the FFA Convenings extremely helpful. Beyond the person connections she has made and the one-on-one individual conversations that flow out of the convenings, the practice of coordinating about the development and publishing of resources as well as “wheelsharing” (not leaving it to each organization or Yearly Meeting to “reinvent the wheel” in terms of practices, programs, and resources regarding aging) has allowed us to offer more to Friends in our region and beyond.

Project Budget and Financial Report

Expenses

Item	Notes & Commentary	Last Cycle Budget	Actuals¹	This Cycle Budget
New England ARCH Coordinator wages	<p>Pay for 30 hours per month for 12 months at a rate of \$29 per hour (360 hours total)</p> <p>As of September 8th, wages and payroll tax has been \$11,324.51 and to this we added an estimated 6 hours to be logged which includes fall program outreach and a meeting of the End of Life interest group.</p> <p>Pay for 35 hours per month for 12 months at a rate of \$29 per hour (396 hours total=\$12,180) plus payroll tax estimate (\$931.77)</p>	\$10,440	\$11,324.51	\$13,111.77
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	\$1,500	\$1,500
Coordinator travel	<p>Travel and meal reimbursement</p> <p>Patti's travel reimbursed at IRS employee rate (\$0.67 per mile in 2025; \$0.70 in 2025) plus NEYM Sessions fees</p>	\$2,000	\$1819.80	\$2,400

¹ Actuals include funds that are in process at time of writing

	This cycle, we anticipate Patti's travel (including to Maine) will increase slightly			
Materials	<p>Postage & printing (letter to meetings; handwritten notes; 25 Coordinator's copies of <i>Quaker Values and End of Life Decision Making</i> workbook)</p> <p>Instead of mailing workbooks to participants directly, we opted to have participants order the paper or electronic version through NYYM directly.</p>	\$450	\$0	\$0
Direct NEYM staff support	<p>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.</p> <p>As of September 11, 2025, best estimate based on hours logged and anticipated by September 15, 2025 (58 hours).</p> <p>This year, we are asking for 65 hours, less than we budgeted for last year but more than 2024 actuals because of the role Nia will play in supporting the potential survey projects. Rate increase from \$50 per hour to \$52.50 to reflect cost of living and health benefit cost increases.</p>	\$3,750	\$2,900	\$3,412.50
Wider Presence	Conferences and other networking/partnership building/professional development opportunities	\$500	\$0	\$500

	<p>After attending planned conferences this year, Patti determined that they were more directly related to her other work as a death doula rather than this ministry specifically.</p> <p>This year Patti hopes to attend the FGC gathering as it is in New England to make connections. We hope FFA is able to cover a portion of the estimated fees.</p>			
Program Income	<p>Advance Planning Workshop series which was offered on a pay-as-led scale.</p> <p>Patti will begin asking meetings she visits if they are led to donate a small honoraria towards supporting this ministry.</p>	\$850	\$240	\$600
Totals:			\$17,790	\$20,924.27

Total requested amount last year: \$17,790 minus actuals this year (\$17,303.51) = \$486.49 remaining funds

**Total amount sought from FFA (project expenses minus remaining funds and expected income):
\$19,837.78**



Friends at an ARCH workshop at NEYM Sessions 2025



Friends at an ARCH workshop at NEYM Sessions 2025; co-facilitating with Yana from NYYM



Patti (right) with her workshop elder and co-facilitator at Sessions 2025

Appendix: Impact of the End of Life Reflection Group

When asked in September 2025, “Why do you participate in the End of Life Reflection Group,” this is what participants shared:

- *I come because I want to bring the wisdom of aging to my Meeting.*
- *As a longtime attendee I find this group to be a wonderful opportunity to land with people that are concerned with the same issues as we get older and older.*
- *I'm drawn to listening and learning others' experiences. This is such a beautiful time of life, despite the challenges that come with aging.*
- *I'm called to listen to Spirit and to absorb what I'm given at any time, which is very solitary. I like this group because all of you are so present. I'm with very worthy companions along the way.*
- *I started to attend following a major stroke because I was frightened and trying to grapple with a whole new existence. Coming here has been really helpful. The support from this group has been important.*
- *The reason I come to this group is it's nice to be around people of the same age and see how others are experiencing this time of life.*
- *I'm always interested in what other peoples' experiences are. Recently my spouse had a small stroke. It led to both of us realizing that horizons are closer than we expected. I'm trying to come to terms with it.*
- *After a long illness while I took care of him, my husband died at home - it was quite an experience. I'm now navigating the next part of my life alone. I'm finding a new gift of loneliness.*