



QIF Cosponsored Youth Grants: Support for Young Activists/Researchers to Pursue Leadings

In brief:

The Quaker Institute for the Future is offering grants to young people who would like to use Quaker processes to explore a call of conscience or spiritual leading to undertake some project of activism and/or research. The grants provide \$500 to support a project over a couple months during which they will take part in several clearness meetings to support the explorations as well as a workshop presentation at the end to share the results of the work with some appropriate community of Quakers or others. QIF is also looking for Quaker groups interested in nominating young people and/or serving as co-sponsors. For more information see the QIF website at: www.quakerinstitute.org/youthgrants or contact Gray Cox at: gray@coa.edu.

Further details:

The function of this program is to provide grants of money and other kinds of support to help young people (18-35) to explore and discern moral and/or spiritual leadings they have to work on projects that involve activist organizing and/or research on social, political, environmental and other issues of common concern. This support will be co-sponsored by the Quaker Institute for the Future (QIF) and any Quaker Meetings or organizations that are interested in collaborating in some way. They may do so through sharing in the recruitment, participating in the process, providing a venue for the presentation at the end, and/or providing financial support.

Initially the grants offered will be \$500 per person. These are intended to support research that draws on some of the methods of spirit-led discernment that the QIF has been experimenting with for the last two decades. These may combine some combination of participant observation, interviews, and other traditional forms of data gathering as well as scholarly reading and writing. But they also include a process of using collaborative reflection and deep listening of the kinds Quakers work to practice in Clearness Committees and in "Meetings for worship for the conduct of research". (Such methods are described in detail in *A Quaker Approach to Research: Collaborative Practice and Communal Discernment* which can be downloaded here: <https://quakerinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/QAR-QIF-web.pdf>) Besides monetary support, QIF will provide collaborative support in the research and/or action discernment process which will include two or more meetings to support the process as well as a subsequent venue for sharing the results of the initial process. The meetings will normally take a hybrid form that may allow for in person communities to connect with folks at a distance via zoom. Venues may be with members of whatever community might benefit from what the project finds or proposes and who could also further help the grant recipients in developing and pursuing their leadings. Such venues may include, for instance, workshops, business meetings, retreats or seminars at Monthly Meetings, community gatherings or QIF Sessions for Research Seminars.

The interests that recipients may pursue with these grants are open to a wide range that include any that they find involve some serious call of conscience or spiritual leading. In that sense the aim of the grants is to support what we might think of as a kind of spiritual

entrepreneurship at the beginning stages of a project. Past recipients have, for instance, focused on work in feminism, anti-racism, Quaker institutions and practices, bridging polarities, and Quaker Institute for the Future quakerinstitute.org reconciling tensions between norms of work in professions and Quaker testimonies QIF is especially interested in supporting proposals that respond in some way to the Urgent Call to the Religious Society of Friends (<https://quakercall.net/>) but other proposals are more than welcome. For more detail on the context of QIF's reasons for offering this program, see the Clerk's Post at: <https://quakerinstitute.org/clerks-post-responding-to-the-urgent-call/>

Applicants do not need to be members or attenders of Quaker Meetings but they should be interested in exploring some version of the kind of spirit-led approach to action and research that QIF brings to efforts to deepen questions and frame approaches. Collaboration on proposals is encouraged and separate grants may be provided to each participant on a team that takes part fully in the process.

The awards of the grants will be on a rolling basis and people can apply at any time. Typically, recipients will be clustered into small peer groups of two to five to support collaborative learning. However, the aim will be to provide both funding and support in as rapid a way as due process and clearness can allow in the discernment. The assumption is that once a grant is accepted, the part time work on it including clearness meetings and presentation at some venue would take place typically over a period of 6 to 10 weeks although if it seemed helpful this process could be stretched out over whatever length of time would seem most appropriate. A person receiving a grant is free to use the funds in whatever way they find most helpful. Past grant recipients have, for instance, used the money to enable them to free up time to focus on reading and writing about their leading by reducing work shifts they need for income. Others have used the money to purchase software or to travel in ways that are helpful.

It is our hope that these grants will enable a significant number of the individuals receiving them to reach a point of clearness that will enable them to successfully follow up in further pursuing whatever kind of research or action project they are exploring. It is likewise our hope in the short term that a significant number of co-sponsors may be led to support such projects. Further, we hope cosponsors will find that they not only have the opportunity to support and nurture the spiritual growth, research and social action of young people but that they will find their communities are increasingly empowered, strengthened and led forward by the skills, insights, energies, and other resources those young people bring to the cosponsoring communities.

For more information or to initiate a proposal either as an individual applying for release funds or as a group seeking to sponsor someone, please contact Gray Cox at gray@coa.edu or #207-460-1163. For more about QIF, see www.quakerinstitute.org.