



collabyrinth

finding the way together

New England Yearly Meeting

Equity Systems Change Proposal

Collabyrinth, LLC, is a full-service EDI design partner. We coordinate teams that help you clarify and collaboratively solve systems problems in a manner that keeps equity at the center of the work.

When it comes to equity/systems/change issues, we can figure them out for you (**design**); we can help you as a leader figure them out (**advisory**); or we can help your stakeholders figure them out together so that neither the problem nor the solution is left to be owned by only one person (**facilitation**). Most importantly, we can also help your team, organization, or community incorporate what has been figured out into all your dealings (**strategy**). These constitute our 4 areas of service.

Design Services

Built-to-order responses to discretely identified equity challenges.

Advisory Services

Informed perspective that leaders need to make transformative decisions. Advisory services most often include discussions of strategy, interpretation of data, and planning of interventions. For some, it also serves as much needed spiritual care. Wherever you are in your analysis, our coaching helps you discern how to live it.

Facilitation Services

Skilled event moderation or facilitation of 2-4 day [collaborative problem-solving forums](#) that leverage the expertise of stakeholders, prototype new processes, stress test proposed solutions, and iterate on findings. Extended collaborative design process that guides teams to breakthrough improvements on their internal systems by gathering intelligence, interpreting disruption and emergence at play, and committing to the necessary adaptations.

Strategy Services

Often a combination of all the other services, strategy focuses on communal enculturation. Strategy also includes deployment of standardized tools such as the *UnLearn Inequity* curriculum, which includes the [Truth & Transformation Model](#), the [accountability circle methodology](#), [community provisioning workshops](#), and now [a self-paced, experiential, digital course](#) for transformative learning—learning that changes the conditions under which particular problems occur.

Our goal is to help **your team, organization, or community** collaboratively design a future in which each member can flourish. "A future by design, not by default," as one member of our community of practice puts it. "A vision of a shared future, not [necessarily] a shared vision of the future," as another is apt to note.

Collabyrinth does transformative, mainly systems, work. Transformative, systems work happens over time. Even single day events are collaboratively designed over 2 - 4 months time. We help you take the time to "be transformed in the doing of the work."

Proposition

In furtherance of initial conversations with Secretary of the Permanent Board, Noah Merrill, and other Friends leading the organization's equity work, the New England Yearly Meeting would engage Collabyrinth to provide equity support services over the next 24 months.

The three phases of the work set forth herein can be found detailed in the [NEYM Scope and Sequence](#) companion document.

Phase 1

Marking an Equity Beat

We begin our journey together with four service components:

- 3 **Witnessing Visits** for the Collabyrinth team
- 30 **Equity Advisory** hours, made available to staff and Permanent Board members
- 30 **Unlearn Inequity course** subscriptions, subsidized for leaders on all levels who want to embody equity as an example to their fellow quakers
- 18 **Accountability Circle** host trainings

In order to help NEYM dig into "the spiritual roots of racism and white supremacy that underlie some Quaker traditions and practices, let go of what harms others, make amends for harms done, and address any resistance to doing so" as its RFP describes, the Collabyrinth team has to become more intimately acquainted with the tradition. As we do so, we want to create space for administrative stakeholders to practice processing through equity concerns both 1-on-1 and in small groups. At the same time, we want to expand the circle of equity practice to as many Quaker leaders as will take advantage of the opportunity to engage. If the goal of all three phases is for the community to cultivate a shared language, memory, inquiry, care, and sense of mission related to equity, Phase 1 focuses primarily on the first three of these aspects of communal cohesion.

Phase 1 Fees

Marking an Equity Beat

Fees for Phase 1 initially total **\$81,488** for the quantities listed, with expenses projected at approximately **\$15,400**:

- 3 **Witnessing Visits** for the Collabyrinth team (i.e., Spring Youth Retreat, Annual Sessions, and Meeting Care Day)
- 30 **Equity Advisory** hours (initial batch), made available to staff and Permanent Board members
- 30 **UnLearn Inequity** self-paced course subscriptions, subsidized for leaders on all levels who want to embody equity as an example to their fellow quakers (which will include customizations discussed)
- 18 **Accountability Circle** host trainings

Additional advisory hours may be purchased in blocks of 10 (\$4.6k), 20 (\$8.2k), or 30 (\$10k), to be used over the course of 2, 4, or 6 months respectively.

Additional *UnLearn InEquity* (beta) subscriptions may be purchased \$400 per. Addition Accountability Circle trainings, \$1800 per.

The investment for said services can be paid 50% up-front, with the balance due in two installments. Expenses can be paid directly or reimbursement received within 30 days of receipt of invoice.

Phase 2

Getting in Rhythm

Depending upon scheduling, the Accountability Circle training of Phase 1 may coincide with the **Community Conversations** of Phase 2. Community Conversations are intended to provide a process for pursuing equity that is consistent with Quaker theology and practice. We define racial equity as correcting power imbalances related to race built into constructed systems like our denominations, society, economies, government, education, or any other organization/institution of which we are a part. The need to correct power imbalances will be taken as a given from conversation to conversation. However, what may change is how equity is best embodied in a particular community.

Again, if the goal of all three phases is for the NEYM to cultivate a shared language, memory, inquiry, care, and sense of mission related to equity across its eight quarters, Phase 2 is meant to further those ends most broadly.

Phase 2 Fees

Investment for Phase 2, as currently conceived, totals **\$71,280**, with expenses projected at approximately **\$12,600**.

Phase 3

Making Music Together

All the work over the first 12 months is about building broadly within NEYM an equity culture that can follow through on collective structural commitments. Beginning next June, we would work with NEYM staff, permanent board members, select stakeholders, including those outside the Society of Friends, to develop **a Structural Intervention Map and subsequent action plan** for the organization to continue to implement over the next 5 years. Normally we would provide this particular facilitation over the course of two or more 3-day design forums. NEYM is opting to accomplish this work over 12 monthly 4-hour sessions. Preparation for the process would need to begin 3 months before sessions begin, with the assembling of a Sponsor Design Team whose role is to help inform, organize, and shape interactions. This is where the cultivation of a shared equity mission takes form.

Phase 3 Fees

Investment for Phase 3, as currently conceived, totals **\$80,000** for up to 30 participants at a time or **\$95,000** for up to 45 participants at a time. Expenses, if any, to be calculated closer to the process.

Rationale & Benefits

The benefits of engaging **Collabyrinth** to support the NEYM on its journey of truth and transformation include:

- Collabyrinth is familiar with and supportive of the best intuitions of the history, mission and culture of the church universal and is willing to take time to understand and to honor the specific contextual dynamics of your tradition.
- Collabyrinth consultants are skilled working intersectionally across differences in identity—race, gender, age, sexual orientation, faith, class, education, and other forms of status.
- The NEYM would have the advantage of learning from stakeholders what they need rather than imposing on stakeholders its best intentions.
- This collaborative problem-solving and creative process would bring the NEYM into profoundly meaningful engagement with both current and potential stakeholders.

Endorsements

Collabyrinth's "work with us has helped us to keep this conversation [about diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging] ongoing, and it's obvious to me that our general trajectory has been affected in a positive way."

~Carol Steele, VP of Programs, [Montreat Conference Center](#)

"Melvin Bray is an exceptional [social justice] movement facilitator and strategic thinker who breaks new ground in the field with his powerful combination of gifts as a storyteller, organizer and ritual leader. He holds space with compassion, spirit and a commitment to love and justice that is palpable. We are all nudged just a bit closer to a vision and action toward a world made right and whole by his work."

~Lisa Anderson, VP of Embodied Justice, [Auburn Theological Seminary](#)

"Melvin Bray facilitated an intensive designshop for a new project we are launching.... It was **a fun filled, music filled, joyful and insightful week of work** together. **We now have a solid plan** for our new project and we are moving full steam ahead. Melvin's faithful leadership was a key component to a successful week."

~Lisa Weiner-Mahfuz, former Co-Executive Director, [Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice](#)