



NEW ENGLAND  
YEARLY MEETING  
OF FRIENDS  
QUAKERS

## Approved Framework for the Fund for Sufferings

### Purpose

The Fund for Sufferings exists to support New England Yearly Meeting (NEYM) as it provides financially for the needs of Friends who suffer as a result of their witness to Truth.

### Criteria for Use

The Fund for Sufferings is available to support Friends who suffer as a result of their faithful witness, and is intended to respond to urgent needs precipitated by witness. This Fund is not to be used for releasing ministers or for other ongoing expenses, except where needed to ensure continuity of support (for example, legal expenses for a prolonged period, when available).

### Eligibility and Use of the Fund

The Fund for Sufferings will be available to members in good standing of the Religious Society of Friends active in New England, but may be extended to others (for example, non-members and attenders, as well as people of other faiths participating in a Quaker-led activity) based on the discernment and discretion of the clerk of the Permanent Board, and on a case-by-case basis. Support should not be presumed, and is not guaranteed, so timely consultation with the clerk of the Permanent Board is strongly suggested.

Examples of time-sensitive expenses that might receive support from the Fund for Sufferings include but are not necessarily limited to: legal expenses resulting from nonviolent direct action and holy obedience/civil disobedience, including bail and expenses related to arrest, property damage/loss and incarceration; legal proceedings or financial penalties related to conscientious objection to military service or war tax refusal; and medical expenses resulting from injuries sustained or illness contracted in the course of public witness.

### Application

Requests including any relevant documentation may be made to [sufferings@neym.org](mailto:sufferings@neym.org). Requests may be submitted by the potential recipient directly, and may also be made on behalf of that person(s) by their local meeting or by another person aware of the need. In some cases, the clerk of the Permanent Board may approach potential recipients without receiving a request.

## **Distribution**

Funds will be disbursed upon approval by the clerk of the Permanent Board, who will determine eligibility and appropriateness of requests in consultation, as needed, with members of the NEYM Faith in Action Committee and others closely connected to the witness or concerns in response to which the need arises. If the Permanent Board clerk is unavailable, the presiding clerk or Yearly Meeting secretary may authorize disbursements. Disbursements will, under normal circumstances, take one to two weeks for the checks to be issued. To ensure a more rapid response, arrangements may be made prior to activities which might result in need of these funds.

## **Review and Replenishment**

Annually, the Permanent Board should conduct a review of the activity of the Fund and determine whether current funds are adequate to the present and anticipated needs to support New England Friends' witness. Replenishment of the Fund by transfer of other unrestricted NEYM-administered funds and/or by wider appeal for contributions will be coordinated with the Yearly Meeting secretary, who will ensure coordination with other financial stewardship and fundraising efforts.

## **Reporting and Accountability**

The clerk of the Permanent Board will report with general information on all recent disbursements (excluding any legally or pastorally sensitive information) at the next meeting of the Permanent Board, and annually to Sessions.

## **Accounting**

A new revolving account in the NEYM Operating Division books called "Sufferings-Unrestricted" will be created, and the current revolving account will be renamed "Sufferings-Restricted." The same policies and procedures for distribution will apply to both, with the exception that restricted funds may be used only for this purpose, while designated funds may be repurposed by decision of the Permanent Board. Having two accounts will allow NEYM to solicit, manage and disburse both board-designated funds (such as allocations from the Legacy Funds) and donor-restricted funds (such as those currently in the original Sufferings Fund) without creating the possibility for confusion of the status of funds in each account. The current Sufferings Fund balance (\$4,939.32 as of 11/7/2017) is understood to be donor-restricted.

Approved: Permanent Board, 17 February 2018