



Quaker Experiential Service and Training

Questions Commonly Asked by Agencies

1. What determines whether my agency gets a Fellow?

Agencies must submit an application by the beginning of February for a Fellow who will begin work just before Labor Day of that year. QuEST reviews these applications for a match with the core Quaker values of nonviolence, social justice, and equality and ensures that appropriate work, supervision, and training can be provided to a Fellow. QuEST also reviews the agency's ability to pay for a Fellow.

Information on prospective agencies is then given to Fellow candidates who have passed through an initial screening process. These applicants then choose two or three agencies with which to interview. An agency will end up interviewing several applicants. Following these interviews, the agencies and Fellows have a chance to rank applicants or placements, respectively. QuEST proposes a final match to the applicant based on best match. If the applicant chooses your agency, a placement is finalized in early May. If no Fellow selects your agency or if you reject an only candidate, then a Fellow will not be placed with your agency. QuEST cannot guarantee that a Fellow will be placed with every agency that applies.

2. Do applicants have to meet some criteria before they are referred to my agency?

QuEST's typical Fellow is a recent college graduate with considerable commitment to social change and/or social service, and often has volunteer, work or life experience relevant to these issues.

Applicants fill out an extensive application with several essay questions, submit references, and go through a lengthy phone interview before being accepted to the program. They agree to abide by QuEST's drug and alcohol policy and non-discrimination policy.

3. How will my agency be able to evaluate applicants?

Your agency will receive the applications of Fellows who have selected your agency as one of their two top choices for placements. You will be able to interview these applicants, usually by phone.

4. What kind of training does my agency have to provide for a Fellow?

An important aspect of a Fellowship is the exchange of volunteer labor for valuable job skills. It is, therefore, very important, both for the benefit of the Fellow and your agency, for the Fellow to receive sufficient orientation and job-specific and issue-specific training. QuEST expects that the agency provide at least as much training for a Fellow as it would for a regular employee, whether the training be in-house or off-site.

5. What kind of supervision does my agency have to provide for a Fellow?

Quality supervision is an important part of the QuEST program. While we accept that other staff may oversee some of the Fellow's work, we ask that there be one designated supervisor so there can be a clear line of accountability. We have found that weekly or bi-weekly meetings between the Fellow and supervisor are very helpful, especially in the early part of the Fellowship. It is also important that the supervisor and/or other staff be frequently available to provide the Fellow with resources and guidance.

6. How many hours does a Fellow work?

Fellows are expected to work 35-40 hours per week, dependent on the agency's definition of full-time. In addition, Fellows receive three weeks of vacation, time off if they are sick, and whatever holidays are granted to other employees at your agency. Fellows will need to be absent once a month for three hours to participate in "QuEST Time." QuEST Time is designed to cover topics intended to enhance the experience by giving Fellows an opportunity to reflect upon and share with their housemates about Fellowship and community experience. Examples of topics we have covered are: nonviolent communication, career development, sustainable living, personal and community goal-setting, exploring Seattle, etc.

7. What happens if the QuEST Fellow at my agency has to leave for some reason or if the placement doesn't work out?

It is extremely rare for one of our Fellows not to complete a full year at their placements. If there are problems, the QuEST Director, based in Seattle, will work with the Fellow and agency to resolve problems. If the placement still doesn't work out, your placement fee is returned to you on a pro-rated basis, and you will no longer have to pay the monthly support fee and Fellow stipend.

8. Is QuEST a religious program?

The QuEST program is a project of the University Friends Meeting (UFM) of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), who provided volunteers to support program administration, and reduced-cost housing. Through QuEST, UFM seeks to create a more just, peaceful, and sustainable world. QuEST welcomes Fellows from a variety of religious backgrounds. It expects neither its Fellows nor its placement agencies to adhere to or participate in any specific religious beliefs or practices. For more information on UFM, please visit www.quest-seattle.org.

9. What are some of the advantages of having a QuEST Fellow over Fellows from other programs?

The QuEST program is a small, local program. There is a half-time program Director in Seattle who works individually with agencies and Fellows to maximize the benefits of the placements to both the agencies and the Fellows. And because it is small, QuEST is able to easily incorporate feedback from Fellows and agencies so that it strengthens the program. The QuEST Director and the program committee work hard to support the Fellows, and to recruit high-quality candidates. Many QuEST Fellows do stay in Seattle following their Fellowship, providing agencies with supporters and skilled staff.

QuEST also provides monthly training sessions to Fellows on topics related to social change and social service. This training supplements the training Fellows receive at their agencies.

Finally, QuEST provides greater financial support and higher quality living arrangements to its Fellows than some other programs, resulting in a competitive applicant pool from which to choose.

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