QuEST wants our program to be accessible to as many people as possible, including people of all class and economic backgrounds. Our Fellows come to the program with different financial resources and with different needs. There are also unanticipated expenses during the year, some of which cannot be met by the established financial benefits of the program. QuEST initiated the Access Fund in 2019 in order to support Fellows who come from poor and working class backgrounds and those who have self-identified financial needs connected to equity, inclusion, and identity. We remain grounded in our core value of simplicity, while recognizing that without critical reflection about differences in wealth, the ideal and practice of simplicity can become a luxury for people with financial means. Through the Access Fund, we seek to put our values into action — we acknowledge differences in our lived experience, welcome people of marginalized socioeconomic status and other identities more fully and explicitly, and practice wealth redistribution.

QuEST holds the funds but we do not want to be a gatekeeper, which would reinforce the very systems we are seeking to transform. The funds are distributed on the honor system. To receive money from this fund, simply email the Director with the following information: (1) that you are requesting money from the Access Fund, (2) the amount that you need, and (3) the planned use. After you use the funds, send the Director a bill or receipt to include with QuEST bookkeeping. If there is a use for which you would like complete privacy, you may omit #3.

This information will be partially confidential. The QuEST Committee will review the amount and use of the funds at the end of the year but your name will not be shared. The QuEST Committee Clerk can have access to all information in order to support and hold the Director accountable.

The Director will facilitate and/or bring in a facilitator to support conversations about class, money, and simplicity among the Fellows, including open discussion about the Access Fund. The Director will remind the Fellows at least quarterly about the Fund and encourage them to use it. The Fund is new and we would appreciate feedback as we implement it. As the year progresses, we invite current Fellows to share with the Director and QuEST Committee about how we can improve our description of this fund and the process we use to distribute it. We also ask our network of alumni, Quakers, agencies, and other partners to offer affirmations or suggestions if they have them. QuEST supporters are encouraged to make direct donations to this fund if so moved.

In its initial year (2019-2020), the Access Fund is $3000. If requests during the year exceed that amount, the Director and QuEST Committee commit to help the Fellows’ fundraise to meet their needs, though in these circumstances we cannot guarantee we can meet your requests or that they can remain confidential. At the end of our fiscal year in August, we will review the use of the Fund and its distribution process and determine how to continue.

Thank you for participating in this small revolutionary experiment with us!

Approved by the QuEST Committee, August 2019