

STUDENT ACTIVITY FEE

2018-2020

Byline Funding Review

**Empathy, Assistance, and
Referral Service (EARS)**

EARS

We Hear You

Submitted Sept. 8, 2017

Request for 2014-16 Student Activity Fee Funding

Mission and Background of EARS

Counseling: The EARS counseling room is open seven days a week during the academic year. It is staffed by extensively trained and professionally supervised student volunteers, who stand by to provide personal counseling on issues ranging from isolation to anxiety, stress, depression, relationship issues, eating disorders – the whole gamut of issues faced by individuals from every part of the campus. Counselors provide both in-person and over-the-phone services. On average these volunteer counselors handle more than 800 calls and walk-in visits to the EARS counseling room every academic year. No issue is too big, or too small for EARS counselors. **Additionally, EARS provides special hours to provide support to Cornell students throughout study and exam days at the end of each term.**

Exams
 Balance Change
 Appreciate
 Challenge
 Acceptance
 Confused
 Classes
 Cope

Fear
 Hope
 Love
 Family
 Differences
 Limits
 Heartbreak
 Friends
 Faith

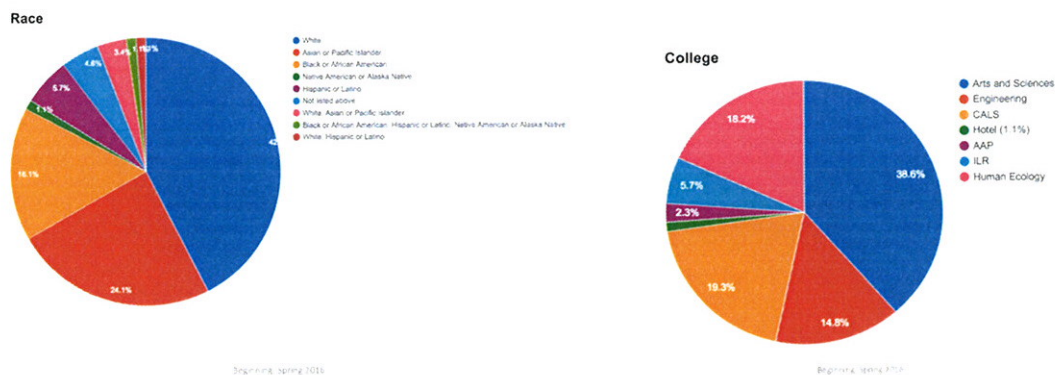
LIFE
 Religion
 Roommate
 Tired
 Resources
 Sleepless
 Time
 Sleep
 Enjoy

TODAY

Confidential Peer Support
 Special Hours
 You Talk. We Listen.

7 - 10 PM Daily. Drop in Rm 213 WSH
 or call 255-EARS (3277)
 Open to all students in the Cornell Community.
 No appointment needed.

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Trainees learn about empathic listening, human relations, leadership, specific challenges faced by college students and helping skills, and they gain self-understanding, compassion and appreciation for others.

Training Manuals

In a previous review period, several members of the appropriations committee raised concerns regarding the costs of using paper manuals for training and encouraged EARS to consider the feasibility of using electronic copies. These members asked us if we invited trainees to come to training with their laptops so as to be able to refer to their on-line manuals during training. A couple of thoughts on this subject are as follows:

EARS manuals (updated and revised annually) beyond being textbooks that can easily be reduced to a PDF format are more used as workbooks that invite trainees to take notes and complete exercises. Trainees are invited to actively use their manuals during training—as they are engaged in "hands on skill training" on counseling and active listening. All too often the manuals also become a tool for trainees to refer back to previous notes (of their own or from what is actually in the manual) as they seek to further integrate skill building. Lastly, as most EARS training requires trainees to be assembled as they would be in a formal counseling session, holding laptops is neither practical or conducive to promoting appropriate attending behaviors (eg., making eye contact, presenting a relaxed and receptive body presence/posture).

Feasibility of On-line Counseling

At a previous review EARS was also asked if we felt with additional support if we could extend our services to offer on-line text counseling. There is actually a national service (Crisis Line Text). It is an excellent service and as a matter of fact 8 current EARS alums are now serving as on-line counselors. One of our alums is part of the national leadership team. When we launched our new website this past December, we added additional information about this service on our site. EARS also continues to serve as an on-line hub and co-sponsor for the on-line chat offered by Suicide Prevention and Crisis Services of Tompkins County.

ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training)

EARS continues to offer two annual ASIST trainings held each year (This coming year this program will be held over fall break and the second one just two days before the start of the spring semester. The program is a comprehensive two day training that aims to support counselors (and other campus leaders) in becoming more comfortable, confident and competent in helping to prevent the immediate risk of suicide. It should be noted that

according to the American College Health Association (ACHA) the suicide rate for young adults ages 15-24 has tripled since the 1950's and suicide remains the second most common cause of death among college students.

While EARS counselors attend two presentations on suicide prevention as part of their EARS training, we recognized that our counselors could benefit from a more expansive training that is nationally recognized by accredited suicide prevention centers. We also acknowledged that this training could be beneficial to other student leaders. In addition to EARS counselors, student leaders from Cornell Minds Matter, OADI and the Student Assembly as well as Cornell staff from Cornell Health, CURW, JA office, Graduate School students services have participated in these trainings.

With byline funding, EARS has been able to train 50 individuals each year (each training component needs to be capped at 25 participants). Trainer fees for last spring and this coming academic year are set at \$1,250 and food (modest breakfast and lunch provided each day) is \$500. When we consider that we have two nationally accredited trainers for two full days and their joint fee will now be a total of \$1250 for each training, we feel this program is very reasonably priced.

Outreach: EARS members who pass a rigorous evaluation to become counselors may also volunteer to be trainers at all three EARS levels – and also to lead outreach workshops for campus groups. Outreach programs vary from year to year but in the past two years included training for select Coop leaders, Panhellenic Rho Gamma (recruitment counselors), Mosaic and Haven student leaders, Peer Advisors in Human Ecology and the Veterinary College, Peer Mentors in the Horticulture Dept. and Human Ecology; student leaders in Alpha Phi Omega, Cornell Minds Matter and participants in the 2nd People's School, Chemistry TA's as well as local nursing home volunteers to name but a few. Two EARS counselors monitor and coordinate programmatic support as requests are received. In past years, EARS has partnered with Residential Programs and other student organizations on campus. These workshops reach more than 700 additional members of the Cornell community.

Leadership Development: Each year, some 30-45 students join the EARS staff, assisting in every aspect of organizing and running this complex service.

Public Relations/Marketing: In addition to many public speaking and training opportunities, students help coordinate extensive public relations and marketing activities to promote constant awareness of the counseling, training and outreach services. In spring of 2016, EARS secured two paid student staff positions (funded by Community Center programming). Each staff person (10 hours a week) has played a critical role in further promoting our services. One staff person partnered in May 2016 with Slope Media to make a short film about EARS that currently runs on our website and Facebook feed. EARS social media outreach has also been tremendously strengthened by our staff members reaching out to other student organization ListServes encouraging others to join our Facebook page. Last spring, Mandibles Café agreed to have EARS stickers attached to coffee cups for the months of March and April. EARS also launched a lawn sign campaign that was displayed last semester and this semester on the Arts Quad, Engineering Quad, CALS quad (just last year, as their quad is under construction this year). Throughout the spring semester one student staff person interviewed all of our graduating students about how being part of EARS had impacted their lives at

Cornell. Graduating student counselors were invited to submit photos of themselves somewhere in their world outside of Cornell. Last fall and this fall we distributed 24 posters of these alums-- highlighting how students of diverse backgrounds, members of many different student groups and colleges experienced EARS as a transformative experience. Posters were distributed to every campus residence as well as advising offices. Additionally this past summer, **EARS received funds from an anonymous donor** in summer of 2017 to hire a private company to produce a state of the art website and to rebrand the EARS (very dated) logo to more fully promotes the services of EARS. <http://orgsync.rso.cornell.edu/org/ears> EARS counselors dedicated many hours in the fall of 2016 to providing critical feedback for website content. Social media outreach now includes monitoring a Twitter feed, Instagram and Facebook page.

EARS Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion

At the heart of the EARS program, we support a vision that all students will feel a sense of welcome and support while studying at Cornell. To be competent counselors in responding to the diversity of our student body who come from across the globe and who at times experience a myriad of challenges that inhibit their ability to flourish, counselors need to be aware of their own cultural lenses with an aim to expanding their ability to be supportive of others who are different from them. Training materials seek to help trainees reflect and expand their ways of seeing and experiencing our world at Cornell. What also helps to strengthen our aim is the fact that EARS training draws students who are members of different colleges and who reflect the diverse racial and cultural diversity of our community. As EARS training fosters deep listening, trainees share over and over that they appreciate the experiences they have had in forming friendships with students they would not have met otherwise. EARS training provides students the safety to "be real" about their personal challenges with the support of their peers. Normalizing that feelings of insecurity and anxiety are a part of most student's lives goes a long way in helping students to not suffer in isolation.

Description of the EARS Group

Officers

EARS leadership is distributed among several different programmatic areas, without specifically designated roles for a traditional President, Secretary, etc. Leadership of staff meetings is facilitated on a rotating basis. EARS has consistently had the following leadership roles: twenty-five different students serve as trainers, four as training coordinators; two students lead a ten-member outreach team; four students volunteer to assist in marketing and public relations; two students coordinate EARS room materials and record keeping; five students volunteer to provide leadership and oversight to the EARS testing process (Long Role Play) that are held four times to test trainees who wish to become recognized counselors.

Number of EARS counselors and training participants has remained fairly steady.

Members

Fall 2017 Counselors: 49 (will hope to secure 12 by December)

Beginning: 130 (registration still open)

Advanced: 63 (training begins this Monday, registration still open)

Intensive: 30 (training begins this Monday, registration still open)

Total: 223

Spring 2017 Counselors: 77 (28 May graduates)

Beginning: 161 (West and North combined)

Advanced: 64

Intensive 31

Total: 256

Fall 2016 Counselors: 61 (2 December graduates)

Beginning: 150

Advanced: 80

Intensive: 30

Total: 260

Spring 2016 counselors: 73 (28 May graduates)

Beginning: 157

Advanced: 82

Intensive: 33

Total: 272

Itemized Budget for Proposed Student Activity Fee EARS

\$2,500	EARS telephone service This funds three phone lines in the EARS room to handle the calls received. (no longer supporting “Chat” server but we are anticipating we may be in need of a new computer—referral data base and counseling notes are computer based).
\$4,700	Training materials Each EARS trainee receives a folder with resources and readings that explain and illustrate the step-by-step acquisition of communication and counseling skills. Additionally, each trainer receives a folder with resources/supplies to draw from in training at each level. On average there are between 15-25 trainers each semester. Costs increase is consonant with increased numbers of students taking training and with training materials for ASIST training.
\$3,800	Consultant and Trainer Honoraria This covers payments to presenters and speakers at each training level, as well as consultants who assist EARS counselors in a variety of in-service trainings. It is imperative that trainees and counselors receive the latest, expert training on the complex issues they face. Additionally, it will cost \$1200. to secure two ASIST trainers for the two day training at Cornell.
\$4,100	Promotional materials EARS uses a variety of materials, including tissues, pens, banners, t-shirts, bookmarks, and balloons, as give-aways to spread awareness about the EARS counseling phone number and hours throughout the campus community.. (EARS now participates in Procrastinate at the Straights each month and provides tabling twice each month across campus). The service only works when members of the campus community are aware that it is available
\$1,700	Reprint EARS Quartercards for campus distribution and tabling Quartercards are mailed about the phone service, training, and outreach and across campus each semester (primarily to student support services across campus, Residential Programs, Gannett Health Center, and EARS trainees.) Additionally EARS counselors use cards to table twice monthly across campus.
\$1,500	Large Poster Campaign Twenty Alumni Testimonial EARS posters as well as general postering at the beginning of every semester continue to be widely distributed across the campus to publicize individual areas of EARS service: training, counseling and outreach.
\$3,000	Advertising in the Cornell Sun, Campus Planner, message boards etc. Quarter-page ads at least weekly in the Cornell Sun will be supplemented this year by display ads in the annual campus planner and quarter cards distributed in residence hall mailboxes. EARS has reduced its advertising budget beginning in 2012-13 by \$1000 by relying a more on social media (e.g., Facebook, listserves and info sessions).
\$21,300	(Total anticipated Byline funding)

EARS Expenditures (in USD)									
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Projected	Projected	Projected	Projected	Projected
	2014 - 2015	2015 - 2016	2016 - 2017	2017-2018	2018 - 2019	2019-2020			
SA	20,250.00	20,637.00	21,319.72	21,300.00	21,300.00	21,300.00			
Telephone	\$2,779.10	\$2,550.00	\$2,550.00	\$2,550.00	\$2,550.00	\$2,550.00			
Training Materials	\$3,951.00	\$3,965.00	\$4,200.00	\$4,500.00	\$4,500.00	\$4,500.00			
Consultants	\$3,540.00	\$4,500.00	\$4,550.00	\$3,800.00	\$3,800.00	\$3,800.00			
Promotion	\$3,800.50	\$4,200.00	\$4,240.00	\$4,200.00	\$4,200.00	\$4,200.00			
Reprint Quatercards	\$1,540.00	\$950.00	\$1,450.50	\$1,500.00	\$1,550.00	\$1,550.00			
Large Poster	\$1,195.40	\$1,800.00	\$1,600.00	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00			
Cornell Sun/Facebook	\$2,654.40	\$2,100.00	\$2,100.00	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00			
General Office	\$789.60	\$525.00	\$560.50	\$700.00	\$700.00	\$700.00			
Total	\$20,250.00	\$20,590.00	\$21,251.00	\$21,250.00	\$21,300.00	\$21,300.00			

CONSTITUTION FOR EMPATHY, ASSISTANCE, & REFERRAL SERVICE

Article I. – The name of the organization

The name of this organization is Empathy, Assistance, and Referral Service (EARS).

Article II. – Affiliation with other groups

EARS is affiliated with the Dean of Students Office of Student Support.

Article III. – Purpose, aims, functions of the organization

EARS provides counseling, training, outreach and leadership development services, open to all members of the Cornell community. Free, confidential telephone and walk-in counseling is offered seven days a week during the academic year in the EARS room, 211 Willard Straight Hall. EARS counselors also volunteer each semester to train other Cornellians who wish to become counselors or to improve their listening skills, their awareness of themselves and of others. EARS offers leadership development to staff members who are able to take on key responsibilities within the organization. EARS also performs a community outreach function by responding to community requests for workshops in communication skills and related topics.

Article IV. – Membership requirements/limitations

Any member of the Cornell community may train to become an EARS counselor. In order to be allowed on staff, they must attend at least two semesters of training, and obtain at least four evaluations from EARS counselors. They must also successfully pass the Long Role Play, a full-length counseling session in which two EARS counselors evaluate the trainee. All staff members are required to attend four staff meetings a semester, as well as to evaluate two Long Role Plays. Each staff member is also responsible for at least one three-hour shift per week.

As an organization, EARS does not discriminate on the basis of actual or perceived age, color, disability, ethnicity, gender identity or expression, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, veteran status, or any combination of these factors when determining its membership and when determining the equal rights of all general members and executive board members, respectively, which shall include, but are not limited to, voting for, seeking, and holding positions within the organization.

Article V. – Officers

EARS operates without formal officers. Leadership tasks for counseling, training, outreach and public relations are divided on a volunteer basis among the counseling staff to cover administrative responsibilities for each academic year. All counselors have an equal say and share equal responsibility for the program. Additional leadership positions within EARS include but are not limited to Beginning, Advanced and Intensive trainers, Long Role Play Coordinators, SAF representative, staff meeting facilitators, publicity, outreach coordinator.

Article VI. – Advisor

The advisor to EARS is the Associate Dean for Student Support, from the Office of the Dean of Students. Duties of the Advisor include assisting EARS volunteers in coordinating all aspects of the counseling, training and outreach and leadership development services.

Article VII. – Meetings

The EARS counseling office is open throughout the academic year: 3-10:30 pm Sunday through Thursday; 3-10 pm Friday and 6-10 pm Saturday. All three levels of EARS training meet from 7pm to 9:30pm on Mondays, throughout the entire semester. EARS staff members have four two-and-a-half hour monthly meetings each semester.

Article VIII. – Quorum

No quorum is needed at EARS staff meetings. Group and program decisions are based on discussion and the consensus of the members.

Article IX. – Referendum and Recall

Informal discussion, led by the staff meeting facilitator will be the norm at all staff meetings. Decisions on changes in the leadership roles will be based on the consensus of the members.

Article X. – Amendments

Amendments to this constitution can be proposed by any EARS counselor or the advisor and will be discussed and decided on at the next staff meeting by all present counselors.

Article XI. – Ratification

This constitution is adopted by the 2001-2002 staff of EARS, on behalf of all past, present, and future members of EARS.