

# Business Plan 2020



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## **Our Mission**

**We help people connect to and learn from intentional communities.**

FIC has over 33 years of partnership with hundreds of intentional communities. At a time when people are desperate for more social connection and answers to complex problems, intentional communities offer hope in an increasingly broken world.

### **Through community we transform...**

- Loneliness into belonging and meaning
- Economic inequality into cooperative economy
- Climate crisis into sustainable ecological design

People need community.  
Communities need people.  
**People and communities meet at [ic.org](https://ic.org).**

## Goals & Strategy

- **To fulfill our mission, our goals are to:**
  1. Increase the number of people living in Intentional Communities (ICs)
  2. Increase the number of forming and established ICs
  3. Increase exchange amongst ICs and people
  4. Increase the sharing of community-building skills
- **To meet these goals our strategy is to develop our existing website and content into a platform that connects:**
  - Individuals to ICs
  - Individuals interested in ICs to each other
  - ICs to each other
  - Individuals to resources for learning community-building skills

***Please see Key Performance Indicators below for details on measuring these goals.***

## Overview

For over 30 years, FIC has been a source for inspiration, direction and knowledge for community seekers, builders, and organizers around the world. The FIC is the primary organization through which people connect with intentional communities. We connect seekers and starters, share essential community-building skills, and facilitate meaningful connections within a larger movement that is building cooperative culture.

In order to expand our reach and impact, while creating a financially sustainable model for our organization, we envision adopting an innovative platform model. Borrowing the best from sites such as AirBnb, Facebook, Craigslist, and OkCupid, we will provide individual and IC users with tools and resources to meet their needs for belonging and meaning through community.

Using our online software and innovative platform, ic.org will be a place where users can share content, interact, and find their place within the rapidly growing communities movement. The website becomes both a community resource and a place for meaningful connection. It is both a community finder and a community maker.

By creating profiles and pages on this platform individuals will be able to find communities they'd like to visit and access content on community-building skills. Communities will be able to share opportunities and find new members. Both will be able to contribute to and learn from a knowledge base.

Revenue will be generated through the platform by creating Premium services for Individual Profiles and Community Pages that are available for a monthly subscription fee.

The Knowledge Base will organize and supplement our existing content and provide an interface to support users in finding what they're looking for. It will also include a Document Library of community policies and a Discussion Forum.

We will continue to sell print, digital, and online media through an online store integrated into a Knowledge Base.

Banner and Classified Advertising will continue to be available with improved customer service and analytics, and will be better integrated into the website.

We will continue to accept tax-deductible donations as a 501(c)3 Non-profit to help keep the Knowledge Base free, Premium fees low, allow us to interface with journalists and researchers, engage in inter-organizational movement building, and develop new projects and programs.

## Market Research

This summer hundreds of people participated in our research to learn how to make ic.org better than ever before. We heard that people want an easier way to find and connect to the community that is right for them. They also need easier access our wealth of resources and content. Here you can read the full [FIC Market Research Report 2019](#). Below are key insights from the research.

### Website Stats:

- 40-50k unique visitors/month to ic.org
- 63% of users from organic search
- 85% of users visit the Directory pages
- 87% live in the United States
- ic.org receives up to 10x greater traffic than websites that have the same top keywords

### User Interest:

- 70% of users are interested in visiting communities or learning community skills
- 28% of users are interested in joining or starting a community
- 2% already live in intentional communities

### Communities in Directory:

- 1076 communities (The actual number of communities in the Directory at any given time fluctuates between 1,000-1,500 listings.)
  - 603 established
  - 462 forming
  - 50 re-forming



- 10 disbanded
- 99% open to visitors and new members
- 97% are open to visitors but not new members
- We estimate there are a total of 3,500 intentional communities in the United States alone

## Programs & Products

### Revenue Streams

1. Premium Individual Profiles
2. Premium Community Pages
3. Ad sales
4. Knowledge Base purchases
5. Donations

### Platform Users

#### Public Access

- **Anyone who visits ic.org will be able to:**
  - View the Communities map and limited Community Page content
  - View Classifieds
  - View Knowledge base
  - Purchase Banner and Classified Ads
  - Access Customer Service

#### Individual Profile

- **Anyone who creates Basic (free) Individual Profile will be able to:**
  - Create an Individual Profile
  - Create a Community Page
  - Access Basic Search for Community Pages
  - View full Community Page content
  - Download free content and make purchases from Knowledge base
  - View Discussion Forum
- **Anyone who purchases a Premium Individual Profile will be able to:**
  - Access and appear in Matchmaking, Advanced Search, and Notifications
  - Save “Favorite” communities
  - Access the internal messaging system
  - Participate in Discussion Forum

## Community Page

- **Anyone who creates Basic (free) Community Page will be able to:**
  - Display Community Details, up to 3 photos
  - Appear in Matchmaking, Advanced Search, and Notifications
  - Participate in Discussion Forum
- **Anyone who purchases a Premium Community Page will be able to:**
  - Access Advanced Matchmaking, Search, and Notifications
  - Assign additional Page Admins
  - Create certain Classified Ads for free (e.g. events, opportunities, real estate)
  - Upload/link a video and create a photo gallery
  - View an analytics display for their Page
  - Access the internal messaging system

## Advertising

### Features:

- Banner and Classified Ads
- Self-service Ad purchase & placement, support available
- Representative support for Custom/Higher\$ Packages
- Analytics display (page or dashboard widget) with email notifications
- Ad purchases available to non-user Clients (values aligned companies, organizations, or individuals, businesses, or organizations who do not have a page or profile)

## Knowledge Base

### Features:

- New cornerstone articles and link structure for online, digital, and print content, both free and products for sale
- Community Document Library
- Discussion Forum
- Online Storefront for products

## Future Projects and Programs

The success of this plan will lay the foundations for a variety of possible projects and programs, including:

- Additional platform features, including:
  - Add-on “Verified” badge
  - Response rate tracking
- Resuming ongoing content creation, including articles, videos, guides and toolkits, online courses, books, and more

- An updated print Directory
- Support for events and regional organizing
- Consulting services and referrals

## Organizational Development

The FIC is not the same organization it was when it started in 1987, and we live in a very different world. For over 30 years a succession of passionate and dedicated people from intentional communities have stewarded the evolution of FIC as an organization, as the FIC has stewarded the growth of the IC movement.

We began publishing *Communities* magazine in 1992, taking it digital in 2014. Ic.org was started in 1994, and the Directory was turned into a free, online resource in 2004. The Bookstore was adopted in 1999 and went online in 2002.

During this time an all-volunteer organization morphed into a formal Board/Staff structure. Roles have been modified over time to fit the needs of the organization. A generational transfer of leadership was smoothly enacted.

As the FIC expanded its efforts to support a growing movement, we always made sure to focus on programs that generated income, supplemented by grassroots fundraising in the form of donations and membership. For many years we focused on publishing the print Directory, *Communities*, and other publications through our bookstore. Increasingly we sought to add videos, digital and online content, and compilations of articles from *Communities*. Selling online advertising gradually became a more important source of income.

And for many years this was viable, but this has become less and less true. As our organizational capacity has gradually been stretched thinner and thinner we've struggled to keep up with changes in technology as well as the publishing and media industries.

Our financial situation has been increasingly precarious, and this year, after good fortune pulled us out of a crisis, we decided that we could not responsibly continue the cycle. It was time to change or fold.

This business plan represents the change we believe will bring FIC back to a state of financial stability with potential to expand. The plan focuses on rebuilding around what our research says is working, the Directory and advertising on ic.org. Our research indicates there are enough individuals and communities that want features that they would pay for to create a viable financial model.

Our existing team has the capacity to begin this project, which we have done, while bringing on additional team members to see this plan through to fruition. All we need is the funding to expand our capacity and make it happen.

In addition, we are taking this opportunity to redevelop how we operate and make decisions.

We are exploring a team-based management system that organizes and maps the functions necessary to complete our work onto the needs and abilities of the people involved in an adaptive and responsive way.

We want to create a governance and management model based on values of integrity, transparency, clarity, agility, shared leadership, equal-opportunity, and collaboration.

Collectively, our Board and Staff have a tremendous amount of knowledge and experience with cooperative governance and management. We will bring this to bear in the restructuring of our organization into something that better reflects our values and culture, and can be a model for the movement.

## Team



### **Kim Kanney**

*Operations, Knowledge Base, Sales*

Kim Kanney has been working for FIC since 2014, largely managing the operations of both the Communities Bookstore and Communities Directory. Kim is a member of Sandhill Farm, serves on the board for Red Earth Farms, and works at the Milkweed Mercantile Eco-Inn at Dancing Rabbit Ecovillage in northeast Missouri. She's dedicated to the re-imagination of 45-year-old Sandhill Farm and also strengthening the wider community in her region. When not immersed in spreadsheets, her hands are often digging into the soil of garden beds, carrying wild foraged mushrooms, or holding a crochet hook.





## Adam McKenty

*IT, Web Development, Operations*

Adam McKenty is a technologist and entrepreneur with a passion for finding ways we can work together to create sustainable, harmonious human society on planet Earth. A lifelong communitarian, Adam brings a decade of experience running a web development and consulting agency to his role as FIC's IT director. When not writing code or planning upgrades for [ic.org](https://ic.org), he [writes essays](#), investigates cooperation through the [Collective Intelligence Network](#), plays music in a [family folk band](#), and travels from his home base of Cortes Island, Canada.



## Cynthia Tina

*Marketing, Design, Communications*

Cynthia Tina works at the heart of regenerative community networks, creating change by uplifting examples of a future world unfolding. She is Communications Director for the Foundation for Intentional Community, Vice President on the Board of Trustees for the [Global Ecovillage Network](#) and Coordinator of the [Day of Sustainable Communities](#) in North America, as well as co-creator (now advisor) of both [NextGENNA](#) and the [Regenerative Communities Alliance](#). She has traveled to over one hundred sustainable community projects across four continents. Her passion is supporting community projects to flourish through strategy consulting, marketing services, and group facilitation. Learn more about Cynthia at [www.cynthiatina.com](http://www.cynthiatina.com)



## Yana Ludwig

*Personnel, Organizational Development, Fundraising*

Yana Ludwig is a cooperative culture and intentional communities advocate, and an anti-oppression activist. She serves on the Foundation for Intentional Community board, and is a trainer and consultant for communities, worker owned cooperatives and nonprofits. Her book, *Together Resilient: Building Community in the Age of Climate Disruption*, was the Communal Studies Association 2017 Book of the Year. She's a host on the Solidarity House podcast (focusing on climate, socialism and culture change) and a co-founder of Solidarity Collective (an income sharing community in Wyoming). Yana is also a Democratic candidate for US Senate in 2020. Her website is [www.yanaludwig.net](http://www.yanaludwig.net)



## Sky Blue

*Operations, Fundraising, Admin*

Sky Blue has spent the last 20 years living, working, and organizing in intentional communities, cooperatives, and community organizations, and current serves as the Executive Director for the FIC. He's visited over 120 ecovillages, communes, co-ops, collectives, and cohousing and co-living communities in the US and Europe. He's worked for the Federation of Egalitarian Communities and Global Ecovillage Network of North America. He is an event producer and consultant for Communities Conferences and other events around the country. As a movement builder he explores the relevance of intentional communities as laboratories and training grounds for addressing the systemic, global problems humanity faces.

# Timeline & Financials

## Financial Summary

### January - June 2020:

- Total income from existing sources: \$24,000
- Total expenses: \$240,000
  - Existing expenses: \$44,000
  - Start-up expenses: \$172,000
- **Total start-up funds needed: \$216,000**

### Ongoing Operations

- **Projected avg. monthly cash flow:**
  - Income: \$31,300
  - Expenses: \$30,000
  - **Net: \$1,300**

## Timeline

### Prep Phase

- **November - December 2019**
- **No additional funding needed**
- **Activities:**
  - Fundraising
  - Initial UX Design
  - Website development planning

### Start-up Phase

- **January - March 2020**
- **Funds needed: \$123,000**
  - **Existing income: \$13,000**
  - **Total expenses: \$136,000**
    - Start-up expenses: \$106,000
    - Existing expenses: \$30,000
- **Activities:**
  - Platform development
  - Knowledge Base development
  - Admin & Operations development
  - Alpha Testing

## Launch Phase

- April - June 2020
- Funds needed: \$93,000
  - Existing income: \$11,000
  - Total expenses: \$104,000
    - Launch expenses: \$89,500
    - Existing expenses: \$14,500
- Activities:
  - Beta Testing
  - Transitioning existing operations to new system
  - Launch new website

## Ongoing Operations

- July - December 2020
- Projected avg. monthly net: \$1,300
  - Income: \$31,300
  - Expenses: \$30,000
- Activities:
  - Admin
  - Operations
  - Web Development/IT
  - Customer Service
  - Marketing
  - Advertising
  - Knowledge Base
  - Fundraising
  - Contractors + Advisors

***Please contact us if you would like to see the full Financial Projections for this plan.***

## Ongoing Operations (Functions)

### Areas

- Admin
- Operations
- Web Development/IT
- Customer Service
- Marketing
- Advertising

- Knowledge Base
- Fundraising
- Contractors + Advisors

## Admin

- **Finances**
  - Bookkeeping
  - Accounting
- **Legal**
  - FHL
  - User agreements and enforcement
  - Corporate filings
  - Representation
  - Fiscal sponsorship
  - Policies
- **Internal communication systems/platforms management**
  - GSuite
  - Zoom

## Operations

- **Strategic planning (coordinate the process)**
  - Organizational development and culture
- **Personnel & “HR”**
  - Hiring, orientation, and onboarding
  - Firing, offboarding
  - Job descriptions
  - “Team building” and conflict resolution

- **Budgeting & Financial Management**
- **Partnerships, Contracts, and inter-organizational relationships**
- **Coordination between Circles**
- **Project management**
- **Troubleshooting for Staff**
- **Research, Reports, Proposals**
- **Interacting with Journalists and Researchers**
- **Dealing with complaints**
- **In-person meetings**

## Web Development/IT

- **Website maintenance**
  - Plugin and core updates
  - Server admin
  - Theme updates as needed
  - Payment systems maintenance
  - Content management support
- **Internal information systems management**
  - Bookkeeping/Financial management software
  - Internal/offline database
  - CRM
  - [Automated customer service](#)
  - Documentation development and maintenance
- **Tech support**
  - Staff support
  - User support
- **Management - prioritization, planning, coordination, execution**
  - Selection and management of external development contractors
  - Prioritization of IT and development needs and tasks
  - Vendor selection
  - Development of ongoing FIC IT strategy

## Customer Service

- **Reception**
  - Receiving and responding to inquiries and issues
  - Troubleshooting issues with customers
    - Purchasing/payment
    - Experience issues
  - Directing questions to or alerting relevant Staff



- Tech problems
- Journalists and Researchers
- Complaints
- Additions to knowledge base and automated customer service

## Marketing

- **Strategy**
  - Product evaluation & optimization
  - Team management
  - Campaigns
  - Copywriting
  - Email marketing
- **Relations**
  - Partnerships
  - Event sponsorship
  - Press relations (releases & kit)
  - CRM
- **Content**
  - SEO
  - Newsletter
- **Social**
  - Social media
- **Design**
  - UX & testing
  - Analytics
  - CRO / SEM
- **Sales**
  - Converting communities to premium
  - Lead generation (finding new communities)
  - Follow up with customers for testimonial/feedback

## Advertising

- **Manage self-service ads**
  - Approve/decline
  - Technical assistance
- **Representative support for custom packages**
  - Close deals & fulfill custom ad packages for larger clients

## Knowledge Base

- **Content Management**
  - Edit, curate, organize and develop content
  - Ideate improvements to search functionality
- **Community Management**
  - Discussion Forum moderation

## Fundraising

- **Fundraising Strategy**
- **Fundraising Campaign Planning and Management**
- **Donor Management**
  - Thank you's and tax info for one-time and monthly donors
  - Donor engagement and solicitations

## Key Performance Indicators

We will track the following to measure the success of our goals:

### Goal 1: More People in ICs

- **Basic Profiles**
  - Total # of per month
- **Premium Profiles**
  - Total # per month
  - Revenue per month
- **Matchmaking click-throughs**
  - Total # per month

### Goal 2: More ICs

- **Basic Community Pages**
  - Total # per month
- **Premium Community Pages**
  - Total # per month
  - Revenue per month

### Goal 3: More exchange amongst ICs & People

- **Messages sent**
  - Total # per month
- **Response rate of communities**
  - Average per community per month

- **Ad purchases**
  - Total # per month
  - Revenue per month
- **Classified posts**
  - Total # per month

#### Goal 4: More sharing of community building skills

- **Website visitors**
  - Unique visitors per month
  - Return visitors per month
- **Donations**
  - Total # per month
  - Revenue per month
  - Average donation size per donor
- **Knowledge base**
  - Resource downloads (free/donation)
    - Total # per month
    - Total revenue per month
  - Purchases
    - Print
      - Total # per month
      - Total revenue per month
    - Digital
      - Total # per month
      - Total revenue per month
  - Discussion forum
    - # of posts per month