

Intentional Communities for Aging in Place

Getting Started

In most communities, residents who want to enjoy the advantages of an intentional community will need to build their own, but few know how to get started. While the path to success is different for each group – reflecting differences in membership, community resources, and goals – all founders face the daunting task of creating a complex organization from scratch. The following list summarizes the basic steps.

1. Learn all you can about other communities and connect with their founders.
2. Assess interest among potential members. Is this something they truly want? Does the idea generate energy and excitement?
3. Recruit a founders group that includes people committed to contributing their time, money, and connections to the project.
4. Assign a leader to orchestrate start-up activities or hire a consultant to fill this role.
5. Draft a compelling mission statement that every member of the founding group endorses.
6. Identify and assess community resources (e.g. service providers, local businesses, hospitals, educational institutions, civic organizations) that can help fulfill the mission.
7. Cultivate strategic partnerships with community stakeholders who can provide pro-bono consultation, visibility and credibility, direct services, and/or access to potential funding sources. Possibilities include hospitals or healthcare networks, education institutions, local business, municipal government, neighborhood associations, housing sponsors, and home care providers.
8. Develop program plans. What services and activities will your community offer?
9. Create a business plan that identifies start-up funding and staffing requirements.
10. Raise start-up funding. Potential sources include contributions from founding members, private foundations, and local corporations. Public grants may also be available for organizations with low-income membership.
11. Create a timeline for achieving key objectives. Regularly assess progress and revise strategy as needed.

The Village Concept: A Founder's Manual is a comprehensive guide created by the founders and staff of Beacon Hill Village. For more information, email bhvillage@aol.com or download an order form from www.beaconhillvillage.org. Beacon Hill Village also provides consulting services to support the development of new communities.