

The 19 Steps: How People Typically Start a Community

Founders of intentional communities typically do the following things to create their projects. Not all founders do all these things. Some of these steps, or processes, can be simultaneous, or ongoing, or can occur in a different order. Nevertheless, I hope this list gives you a basic idea of what community founders typically do.

- (1) Choose the general community location and basic financial structure.
- (2) Agree on and write up the group's shared Mission & Purpose.
- (3) Choose and practice a fair, participatory method for decision-making and self-governance. (ongoing).
- (4) Organize and make available to community members all meeting minutes, decisions, policies and agreements. (ongoing).
- (5) Promote the group's Mission and Aim to others and encourage more people to join.(ongoing).
- (6) Create and implement a clear, thorough membership process. (ongoing).
- (7) Learn and practice good communication skills and an effective conflict-resolution process.(ongoing).
- (8) Find ways to help people stay accountable to group agreements. (ongoing)
- (9) Choose site criteria for the property they will buy together; begin the land-search process; choose the property.
- (10) Decide how they will own the land together.
- (11) Choose a legal entity for co-owning the property.
- (12) Research zoning regulations and get a zoning variance if necessary, or possible.
- (13) Figure out how to finance the property purchase and development; create a land payment fund; buy the property.
- (14) Determine the internal community finances: how the land-purchase and development costs will be paid, how annual recurring costs will be paid, and what labor requirements will be.
- (15) Keep track of community finances and set up a bookkeeping system.
- (16) Create a Permaculture-based site plan for how the group will develop the property.
- (17) Begin developing land according to the Permaculture-based site plan (ongoing).
- (18) Organize a work exchange program to help develop physical infrastructure.
- (19) Build dwellings and move onto the property (ongoing).