INFORMATION NETWORK OF KANSAS

2021 Business Plan

1   Introduction

Information Network of Kansas: The Gateway to Kansas Government Information

Without question 2020 has proven to be a year of massive disruption and challenges. Without going through a litany of the issues posed by COVID-19, there are a few key takeaways we have learned during this past year that are at the forefront of our plans for 2021. These include:

- Continued flexibility to adapt to a constantly changing environment
- Readiness to quickly assist agencies with emerging needs
- Mobile devices play an essential role for citizen and business engagement
- Data is more important than ever to helping government agencies and the public make decisions

As we noted in the 2020 INK Business Plan, unlike any other Kansas institution, INK has a mandate to expand the kind, amount, and utility of Kansas government information available to the public, business, and other organizations. While the INK operation has remained relatively small, the idea behind it fueled the creation of the Kansas-based parent company now traded on Wall Street that employs over 200 people in Kansas alone, supporting a larger workforce of nearly 1,000 employees that partners with 26 states to provide digital government services across the nation based on this model started here in Kansas.

In 2020, INK responded rapidly to assist Kansas government agencies in addressing the challenges posed by COVID-19 including the state government shutdown that occurred in March. During the first months of the pandemic, INK staff worked 7 days a week to assist our state and local Partners, and, over the course of the year, developed a number of online services for no charge to assist citizens, businesses, and agencies impacted by COVID-19. A great deal of focus was also placed on assisting the Governors office with these activities, both via KIC and through grants provided by the Board to expand efforts to communicate critical government information to the public.

Due to the significant disruptions posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, some objectives identified for 2020 will be continued or started in 2021. These objectives were carefully considered and warrant further action. This business plan also includes some new initiatives that complement these ongoing projects from 2020.

 INK anticipates that 2021 will be another year where COVID-19-related impacts will be ongoing and unpredictable. Nevertheless, we continue to be well-positioned to assist the public in expanding and improving their interactions with government.   In the past three decades, INK has come to serve a key role in the electronic delivery of government services in Kansas. Over half of all Kansas State agencies and over 300 local government organizations depend on INK to provide secure, innovative, and dependable electronic government services to support their operations, increasing efficiency and lowering the barriers to engaging government, while using a self-funded model that does not rely on taxes. During this time of ongoing challenges, INK's role in assisting these groups is more important than ever.

INK's role, however, is not limited solely to expanding the availability of government information in Kansas. In service of increased transparency and collaboration in service delivery, the *Information Network of Kansas Act* (K.S.A. 74-9301, et. seq.) charges our organization with expanding the base of

users of this information and seeking advice and expertise from the public, service subscribers, businesses, associations, and academia on their information needs and innovative ideas for how to improve access to and filing of information. In turn, INK is charged with using this information, along with the expertise of its private partner, to provide advice to the Secretary of Administration, the Office of Information Technology Services, and state agencies on the provision of data to the public.

Central to the success of INK is our nine-member board made up of both government agencies and representatives of user groups who guide the organization, setting strategy and, each year, approving a Business Plan that sets out the work of INK in achieving its mission. The Board provides a vital link between the perspectives of government data and service providers and users of the Network and their constituencies, enabling them to take a broad view in their decision making that considers the current and emerging needs of stakeholders from both inside and outside government.

This Business Plan summarizes INK's goals and related initiatives for calendar year 2021, along with information about the organization, its resources, budget and operating environment, including both challenges and opportunities. Under the terms of the contract, it will be used for ongoing progress reporting throughout the year.

2   Statutory Mission

The goals in this business plan are based directly on the *Information Network of Kansas Act*. While the statute includes specifics about the mechanics of INK operation, the following list of responsibilities make up the primary goals of the organization. They are condensed only to make them easily understandable for use in setting the direction outlined in the sections that follow:

- Provide a gateway to Kansas public information
- Expand the amount, kind, and utility of information available
- Expand the base of users of Kansas government information
- Improve access technologies
- Seek advice from the general public, network subscribers, and other parties in accomplishing its mission
- Advise the state (Secretary of Administration, OITS, and Agencies) on citizen and business access to information
- Provide oversight of the Network Manager

Each of these mission objectives and our plans for achieving them are discussed below.

2.1   Provide a Gateway to Public Information

For many individuals, the primary way they interact with the government is through websites and online services. This interaction is constantly evolving and expanding. However, there are other ways this interaction occurs.

As shown in the diagram below, INK supports interaction between agencies, businesses and the public in a broad variety of ways. Two decades ago, most interaction occurred through only three channels – in-person, on the telephone, or through the mail. Over time, the public expects to not only connect to

Kansas government through those methods but also through mobile apps, social media, email, home assistants, and online chats with new channels and technologies continuing to emerge.

Diagram 1. INK Creates and Supports Channels for Public Interaction with Government
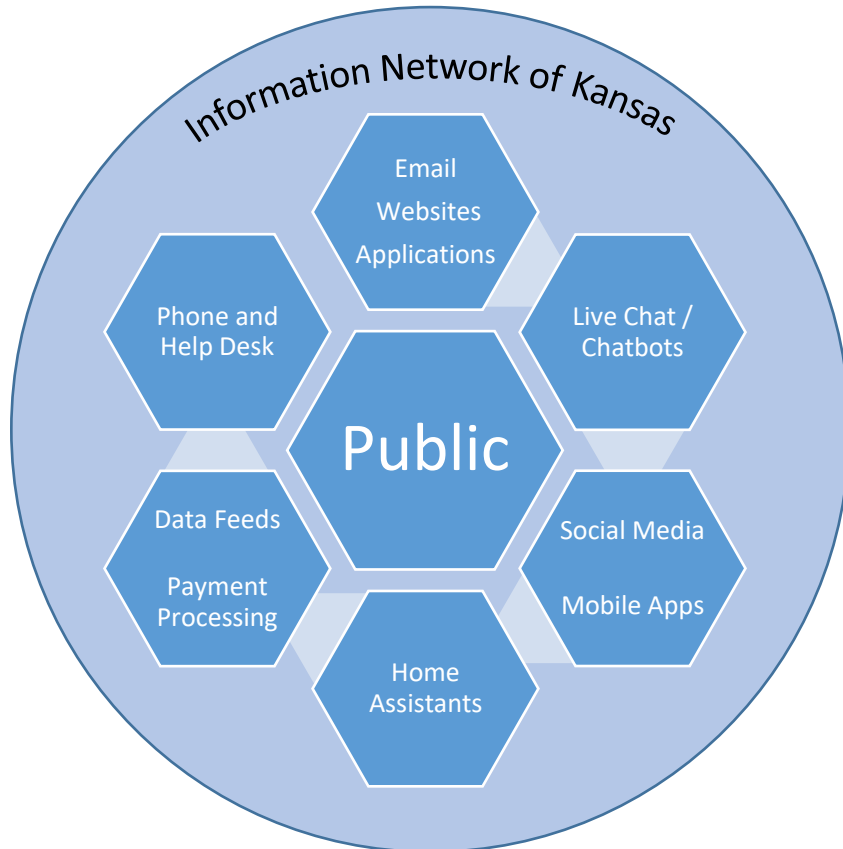
By statute, INK was created to deliver and support a "Single Face" of government. And, its model remains central to exploring, developing, and implementing access to both new and existing information, along with the technologies needed to access it. INK's strategic role is to assist the public (including business, nonprofit and academic groups) in accomplishing these objectives while minimizing the need to navigate government processes or technology.

The COVID-19 pandemic has further increased the public's expectation that almost any interaction with government should be made available online and at any time. This is especially true for younger adults. In 2020, the University of Utah (*publication forthcoming 2021*) interviewed young adults in Kansas along with that same demographic in other states to learn more about their expectations regarding online government.

Some of the key findings from those interviews included:

The desire to find government services in one location…

NEED A GOVERNMENT GUIDE

78% prefer all federal, state, and local government services be offered online in one place

61% do not know which level of government provides a specific service

55% believe government structure is confusing

…and the desire to control engagement and notifications with agencies.

ENGAGED WITH GOVERNMENT – ON THEIR TERMS

87% Think it's important to **be engaged** with government and aware of decisions that affect them

72% Prefer to **only engage** with government for required actions – paying taxes, renewing licenses, etc., *and…*

Opt-In Notifications Are a Key Driver:

82% Online transaction **confirmations**

77% Alerts about **chosen** topics of interest

81% Reminders of upcoming **required** actions

50% Suggestions for other **relevant** online services

INK is well positioned to expand the services we provide to meet these growing expectations.

In support of our mission, in 2021 we plan to invest in and grow use of the all the channels for information and service delivery shown in the diagram above to accomplish the mission of providing a gateway to Kansas Public Information:

- Email
- State / local government websites and applications
- Phone and Help Desk
- Data Feeds and Payment Processing
- Mobile Apps
- Social Media
- Live Chat / Chatbots / Home Assistants

Each of these communication and service channels present opportunities to better serve government's users by providing data and online services in ways that meet the needs of individuals, businesses, and agencies. The following section groups and prioritizes our 2021 objectives by the main elements of INK's statutory mission.

2021 Objectives

Expand types of gateways

- **Mobile.** The COVID-19 pandemic has further accelerated the public demand for mobile access to services at all levels of government. To meet people where they are doing business, INK needs to make mobile a centerpiece of our approach to providing solutions.

  Objective: Implement at least three information services on a mobile platform. *This objective is brought forward from the 2020 Business Plan*.

- **Phone, Help Desk, Email**

  Objectives:

  1) As identified in the Customer Service Section, one of the 2021 objectives is expanding the agencies using the JIRA ticketing system for Help Desk assistance. This is an internal gateway.

  2) Expand contact information on the state portal to include, integrate, and/or improve access to a directory of state agency help desk / 800 numbers and contact information for the public.

- **Social Media**

  Objectives: In 2020, INK implemented a state Social Media Directory. In 2021, our efforts will involve three projects:

  1) Work with the state's public information officers and the Governor's office to enhance this directory and look for ways to support their work on social media.

  2) Analyze INK's current use of Social Media channels (Our Twitter following is one of the largest in Kansas government) and use that analysis to more fully integrate them into the state portal and INK strategic initiatives going forward.

  3) Implement at least one online service through a social media platform. This will be approached as a proof of concept to evaluate the demand for such a gateway as well as identify potential challenges such as security, privacy, and usability. *This objective is brought forward from 2020 Business Plan.*

- **Data Feeds (and APIs and data sets)**

  Objective: Engage state agencies to identify what API's are currently available to the public. Using this data, create a webpage identifying these API's for use by other entities. *This is a continuing project from 2020.*

- **Payment Processing.** In support of the delivery of electronic government services, INK provides payment processing to over a hundred government organizations in Kansas.

  Objective: Explore the use of a payment solution to allow individuals to pay cash at participating retailers for some types of online government services.

- **State home page (Enhancing the primary gateway located at Kansas.gov)**

  <u>Objectives:</u>

  1) Perform user testing with 5-7 users of different occupations / roles of the Kansas.gov website. Solicit feedback from at least two groups of eight private sector individuals regarding the current Kansas.gov website that includes INK subscribers and one group of state agency staff that includes web accessibility expertise. *This is a continuing project from 2020*.

  2) Using the feedback gathered from these groups to improve the usability of the Kansas.gov gateway and make changes as needed to improve the usability of the website. *This is a continuing project from 2020*.

- **Live Chat / Chatbots / Home Assistants**

  <u>Objective:</u> Work with state and local partners to identify opportunities to further expand the use of Live Chat and Chatbots to assist individuals and businesses in interacting with government.

2.2 Expand the amount, kind, and utility of information available

With agencies, businesses, and individuals adapting to working remotely, economic and other disruptions, access to government data remains vital to business and the public. To maximize the potential benefits of this data, INK needs to engage government to improve our understanding of what data is being collected and created by Kansas government, what data is or is not available to the public, business, or other interested parties by practice, policy, or statute, and what data has value to those groups that is not currently available – as well as ways to make it more usable to them. INK is well-positioned to collaborate in this work.

Core to understanding the benefits of data is user engagement. Understanding the information needs of various user groups will help prioritize the type and amount of information to be delivered, the best form to do so, and which data would provide the greatest benefits. Examples of such benefits include:

Public
- Data that helps individuals make decisions such as the prevalence of COVID-19 cases in a specific area
- Data about the performance of agency programs including availability and adoption of services, and related trends.
- Data that helps the public more clearly understand the mission and scope of services provided by Kansas units of government. This data would be accessed directly from these organizations.

Private Sector
- Data that assists businesses with making decisions to improve operations or mitigate risks. For example, data that helps a farmer determine crop or soil conditions. Drone or satellite data might be used to for this kind of service.
- Data, that when used in conjunction with other data, may facilitate a new understanding of an issue. For example, workplace injury data that combined with NAICS code, could potentially be used to better understand risks associated with a specific type of injury.

Government

- Data that can assist with an agency's mission. For example, NAICS code data collected by one agency could potentially be shared with another agency to better understand industries that are growing or declining and where to target information about programs
- Data that can be used to improve customer service. For example, tailoring delivery of services on and offline to improve the efficiency of utilization, or eliminating the need for a person to go in-person to a government office by implementing or combining services.

2021 Objectives

Expand the amount, kind, and utility of information available

Objectives:

1) **Data assessment.** Develop a pilot program to:
   - Identify data being collected by a government organization and assist in understanding its security classification and the access policies that apply to it.
   - Identify which data sets are currently being made available to outside users and, to the degree possible, how those groups are using it.
   - Identify additional external users who could benefit from access to the data sets that are currently being made available, as well as those that are not.
   - INK and the pilot organization would examine potential, costs, risks and benefits of providing the datasets and potentially work with the organization and customers to make one or more data sets available.

   This objective is brought forward from the 2020 Business Plan.

2) **Pandemic-related data.** Explore and document new or revised data generated by agencies related to COVID-19 initiatives that may be useful to other agencies or the private sector in achieving government goals in this area.

3) **Social Media Service Delivery Pilot.** Implement at least one online service through a social media platform. This will be approached as a proof of concept to evaluate the demand for such a gateway as well as identify potential challenges such as security, privacy, and usability. *This objective is brought forward from the 2020 Business Plan.*

In addition to these efforts, INK will explore opportunities in specific domains of data, including:

- **District Court Data.** With the transition to a new system, this may present opportunities to provide new or aggregated data sets to the private sector, providing "value-added" services to subscribers or other parties.

  Objective: INK continues to pursue a non-disclosure agreement with the Office of Judicial Administration and their vendor providing their system to determine if there is data that can be used or combined in a matter to provide added value to the private sector. These efforts will include market research and contacting / convening INK subscribers from communities currently using this data - and prospective ones - to understand their needs and potential opportunities. *This is a continuing project from 2020.*

- **Department of Corrections Data.** In 2019-2020, we began a project to make some frequently requested datasets from Department of Corrections easier to access by users with the intent that this Open Data model might be used to provide similar services for other agencies. There is a wide range of users of this data including Higher Education.

  Objective: Continue to work with Department of Corrections to identify data frequently used by external parties and identify / implement a reusable platform that can be used to provide this data. *This is a continuing project from 2020.*

(see additional initiatives included in *Section 3 – Marketing Plan* below)

2.3   Expand the Base of Users of Kansas Government Information

Increasing the number of users of INK services and expanding on the services available to those users is core to the mission of INK. One fundamental approach for expanding the number of users is the implementation of a mobile platform for citizen and business engagement.

2021 Objectives

Develop / implement mobile platform

1) Objective: Develop and implement a plan for establishing a mobile platform for citizen and business engagement, including identifying opportunities to extend or expand existing services with existing customers to a mobile platform. *This objective is brought forward from the 2020 Business Plan.*

2) Objective: Identify and engage with other states that have implemented a successful mobile platform approach and determine if those best practices can be leveraged in Kansas. *This objective is brought forward from the 2020 Business Plan.*

2.4   Improve Access Technologies

The COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced the need for electronic interaction with government. Nevertheless, in the State of Kansas there remains many paper forms being used by agencies. With the tools available to INK, we hope to reduce the number of paper-based processes used by agencies.

Improving access to technologies for those with disabilities is also an important objective. Many emerging technologies present both opportunities and challenges for providing government services to those with disabilities and INK should be at the forefront of identifying and investigating those tools, in collaboration with representatives from affected communities.

2021 Objectives

Work with organizations representing disabled users.

Objective: Continue to engage the Kansas Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and the Kansas Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired. Explore ways that INK can better serve the deaf, hard of hearing, and visually impaired communities. This may include providing more information regarding services available to this community, enhancing technologies that are being used such as the Amazon Echo, chatbots, audio readers, or providing new online services. *This objective is brought forward from the 2020 Business Plan.*

Encourage, support, and partner with state technology accessibility organizations.

Objective: Expand involvement with the Kansas Partnership for Accessible Technology, including solicitation of opportunities to contribute and use expertise from the state's accessible technology community. This organization did not meet in 2020. *This objective is brought forward from the 2020 Business Plan.*

Identify and implement new opportunities to provide online services.

Objective: Work with government agencies to identify and document public-facing paper-based processes for which there is significant benefit to both government and the customer of moving them online. From this list of opportunities, identify and initiate two projects to provide and/or improve electronic access. This will be accomplished in concert with the review of opportunities for expanding data access above.

2.5   Seek advice from the general public, subscribers, professional associations, academic groups, institutions and individuals with knowledge of and interest in areas of public information access, gateway services, add-on services & electronic filing

Users of the services provided by INK are one of the best sources of information on how INK can improve, expand, and succeed. Obtaining feedback from those individuals and groups is vital to ensuring that we adapt to the needs of these constituencies.

In 2021 we will continue to focus on obtaining user feedback. Many of these planned activities in 2020 were delayed or modified due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, although things are not yet back to "normal", we believe that there will be opportunities in 2021 to continue this initiative.

2021 Objectives

1) **Online focus groups.** Conduct at least three focus group events (likely via Zoom) to solicit input on existing or potential new services that are provided by INK.

2) **Public Survey.** Conduct at least one survey of individuals regarding the online services that would assist them - with emphasis on services that allow individuals to avoid going into a government office.

3) **Solicit feedback from user groups.** Use professional and association connections to identify parties with expertise in public information access and electronic filing to solicit advice and recommendations for increasing / improving access in Kansas.

2.6   Advise the State (Secretary of Administration, OITS, Agencies) on Citizen/Business Data Access

Providing advice and guidance to the State is a key benefit provided by INK. With three decades of experience in providing data and services to citizens and businesses, INK has a great deal of information to draw upon to assist the State in achieving its goals.

Assist and advise the state in strategic planning and policy for Information Management

Objective: Participate in and assist the State with the development of a new Strategic Information Management (SIM) Plan, including possible funding through INK as has occurred in previous iterations, to ensure effective integration with overarching strategic planning for information management at the State. The Strategic Information Management Plan is a responsibility of the State's Information Technology Council, of with the Executive Director is a member. *This objective is brought forward from the 2020 Business Plan.*

Objective: Assist the state in revising the Information Technology Advisory Council Policy 8000 addressing Data Administration in the state. The role of INK is directly tied to the state's information management and the ease with which we can identify information of value to the public and help make it available.

2.7   Oversight of the Network Manager

INK can most effectively perform its mission when the Network Manager is optimally conducting its activities. The Board of Directors and Executive Director of INK provides guidance to the Network Manager. During 2021 the Executive Director will continue to work with the Network Manager to review processes and to identify opportunities for improvements along with validating reporting requirements and associated measures.

These reviews are intended to be ongoing and reoccurring process. Accordingly, even when all the reviews are completed, this process will continue as new areas are added and areas previously covered are revisited.

2021 Objectives

Perform joint reviews of key areas of INK operations.

These "operational reviews" consist of an overview of existing processes, controls, decision making and reporting, as well as alignment with INK strategic objectives conducted with the participation of the Network Manager, Executive Director, and key operational management and staff, to include the following areas:

1) Financial Administration and Reporting
2) Payment Processing
3) Security and Information Management
4) Business Contingency Planning and Disaster Recovery
5) Business Development
6) Communication Processes (including Press Releases and Social Media)
7) Marketing/Branding
8) Legal and Contractual Processes
9) Project Management
10) System Development Lifecycle
11) Technical Architecture

3   Marketing Plan

We are evaluating our marketing approaches for 2021 based upon the ongoing challenges posed by COVID-19. As noted below, we expect that live events such as participating in conferences will be severely restricted in 2021.

Events

Providing agency leaders with the opportunity to learn more about INK and the services we do and can provide is critical to achieving INK's mission. All planned events in 2020 were cancelled. We expect that there will possibly be a few in-person events in 2021 and even then, likely only late in the year. We expect to participate in these events whether in-person or virtually. These include Kansas County Treasurer Association events.

We do anticipate working with the Center for Digital Government on their events in 2021. These are expected to be virtual again in 2021.

Social Media

INK has been very active with promoting government information via social media. Social media is a key way that the public obtains information and interacts with businesses and government. We will continue to carefully expand our use of social media as a platform for reaching individuals.

[VOTE]

Marketing Materials

An important initiative in 2020 was rebranding as the Information Network of Kansas from dual identities of KIC and INK. Currently, the Information Network of Kansas and its contractor, the Kansas Information Consortium have been promoted over time as KIC, INK.org, AccessKansas, and Kansas.gov, with services branded as KanPay and KanAccess.   This move to consolidate branding has been important for a number of reasons including helping us educate agencies on the valuable services and expertise we can provide to them and to help new and existing customers understand INK's mission as the state's gateway to public information.   We will continue to work on this rebranding in 2021.

2021 Objectives

Rebranding

Objective: Continue to rebrand materials, services, and websites as INK.

Market services

Objective: Identify at least two services provided by INK and prepare a marketing plan for those services. Implement the marketing of those services. This work is in addition to other business development for expanded rollout of new and existing services.

Focus on improving and expanding use of web analytics to drive marketing and measure success

Objective: Continue to roll out, improve and publicize https://analytics.kansas.gov/ and implement efforts to incorporate these statistics, along with social media measures to assess impacts/opportunities.

Gather / Develop materials in support of the 30th Anniversary of INK (January 2022)

Objective: Prepare a marketing initiative for the 30th anniversary of INK. This will be presented to and reviewed by the Board and rolled out in 2022.

4   Customer Service Plan

INK has two key customer bases:
- Users of the services we provide on behalf of government agencies including individuals and businesses.
- Government organizations that we assist in performing their missions. This includes support for their websites, data administration, payment processing, and online services.

INK provides customer support through phone calls, online chats, emails, and direct messaging through social media. For our agencies and large business customers we have, in the past few years, implemented an online ticketing system called JIRA. Those entities can submit a ticket that is then processed through our automated system. This solution provides INK with more details of issues or enhancement requests which in turns allows us to more effectively resolve those matters.

2021 Objectives

Objective: Further expand the JIRA ticketing system into at least five additional agencies.

Objective: Survey individuals about how they prefer to interact with customer support including chatbots, live chat, telephone, email, and social media.

Objective: Survey subscribers to gauge satisfaction and identify new ways of assisting these individuals. *This objective is continued from 2020*.

5   Technology Plan

In 2021 we do not anticipate any major technology shifts for INK. We will continue to focus on updating existing services to ensure that they are on modern platforms and enhanced to take advantage of the latest technologies. We will maintain our focus on stability, reducing planned maintenance impacts to production systems, and otherwise ensuring that when users access systems these systems are operational and secure.

We will continue to make incremental improvements to our technology platforms. We are placing special emphasis on process improvements to further increase uptime and to harden systems against security threats.

Mobile

Mobile technology will be a key element of our 2021 technology initiatives. Mobile devices have become the primary way many individuals access the internet and government services. Accordingly, it is critical to INK's mission to make mobile technology an integral element of the services we provide. Several objectives identified in this business plan are focused on INK's expansion into mobile technology.
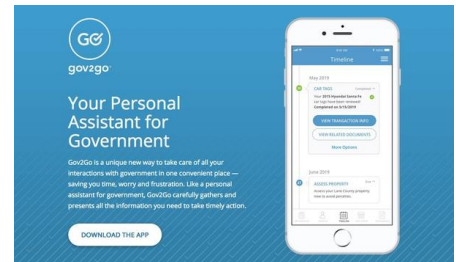
Cloud

The current Master Contract does not provide for hosting of INK applications in the cloud. In 2021 we will be investigating if it makes sense to propose that one or more services be developed in a 3rd party cloud infrastructure. If appropriate, these opportunities will be presented to the INK Board for approval.

Innovation

As we do continuously, we will explore emerging technologies that may benefit the users of INK systems. We do not anticipate any significant new technologies being implemented in 2021 as we focus on expanding deployment of existing technologies such as chatbots.

Security

The State of Kansas is nearly continuously under attack by outside entities that seek to obtain sensitive data, ransom access to government websites, and to generally disrupt government. One of the most critical responsibilities of INK is to prevent these bad actors from achieving their objectives. Continuously adapting to the changing security landscape and aggressively addressing vulnerabilities are ongoing activities for INK. INK will continue to focus on security as it is the foundation for every one of our services.

6   Staffing

The Network Manager is currently staffed at 24 individuals. INK has one employee, the Executive Director.

7   Financial Plan

Estimated revenues and costs for operation of INK are outlined in the chart below:

	2021 Portal Budget
Portal Gross Receipts	$465,538,558
Agency Fee Submissions	$455,029,050
Portal Costs	$2,367,609
Portal Net Revenue	$8,141,899
Network Manager Share	$6,920,614
Retained Earnings (INK)	$1,221,285
INK Expenses	*To be determined in approved INK Budget*
Portal Net Income Before Grants	--
Existing Grant & Restricted Fund Balances	--
Net change in Cash Position	--

8   Fee Adjustments

The Network Manager is not proposing any fee changes at this time.

9   Conclusion

INK has been an important partner to the State of Kansas in identifying and implementing solutions to address the challenges posed by COVID-19. Although INK has done much more than focus on COVID-19 during 2020, this has been a core element of many projects undertaken during the past year. We expect that much of 2021 will be similar. Even after COVID-19 (whenever that might be), it is unlikely that things will "snap back" to where they were prior to the pandemic. Individuals and businesses have shifted their expectations about interacting with government. INK is ready to assist agencies with adapting to these changing expectations.

We anticipate that a number of the projects that were delayed or modified in 2020 will be undertaken during 2021. However, we will remain ready to assist agencies as needed during the upcoming year no matter what challenges arise.