



# 2025-2026 Georgia Exceptional Main Street (GEMS) MOU

Memorandum of Understanding

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This document should be signed by all local parties  
(Authorized City Representative, Board Chair, and Main  
Street Program Manager) by **July 1, 2025**

Please email [ellen.hill@dca.ga.gov](mailto:ellen.hill@dca.ga.gov) with any questions.

**GEORGIA EXCEPTIONAL MAIN STREET PROGRAM  
MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING  
2025 - 2026 Program Year**

This agreement is entered into and executed by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs Office of Downtown Development (hereinafter referred to as "DCA"), the City/Town of Cartersville, Georgia (hereinafter referred to as "Community"), the Local Main Street Program Board of Directors, and the Downtown Manager for the Community. DCA will enter into this agreement with the above parties to provide services in return for active and meaningful participation in the Georgia Exceptional Main Street Program by the Community as specified below.

This agreement outlines the necessary requirements set forth by DCA for the Community's participation in the Georgia Exceptional Main Street Program for the stated term. DCA is the sponsoring state agency for the Georgia Exceptional Main Street program and is licensed by the National Main Street Center (hereinafter referred to as "National Program") to designate, assess, and recommend for accreditation Main Street programs within the State of Georgia.

In recognition of the agreement by DCA, the Community, the Board of Directors, and the Downtown Manager to maintain an active Local Main Street Program, the parties have agreed to the following:

**ARTICLE 1: THE COMMUNITY AGREES TO—**

1. Appoint or contract with an entity to serve as the Board of Directors for the local Main Street Program. The city council may not serve as the Main Street Board.
2. Set and review boundaries for the target area of the local Main Street Program.
  - a. A copy of these boundaries should on file with DCA and uploaded to the Main Street Boundary Map folder in your program's shared DCA Dropbox folder at all times.
  - b. The Community should work with the Board of Directors to review boundaries at least once every three years.
3. Employ a full-time paid professional downtown manager responsible for the daily administration of the local Main Street Program.
  - a. The downtown manager must have a job description that identifies at least 75% of their duties that relate directly to the Main Street program. A copy of the job description should remain on file with DCA at all times.
  - b. The downtown manager should be paid a salary consistent with other community and economic development professionals within the state. The program manager's salary must be paid in excess of minimum wage.
  - c. The Community must notify DCA within one week of any downtown manager vacancy and the Community must appoint an interim downtown manager until the position is filled. DCA must have accurate contact information for the downtown manager at all times.
  - d. The Community shall be afforded a period of thirty (30) days to assess the vacant position and publish the job opening. Programs with staff vacancies exceeding ninety (90) days may be placed under probationary status or risk forfeiture of their designation.
  - e. Provide an annual evaluation of the downtown manager. If the manager is employed by an entity other than the local government, require that entity to provide an annual evaluation and performance review.
4. Provide for local Main Street Program solvency through a variety of direct and in-kind financial support.
  - a. If the downtown manager is an employee of the local Main Street Program and not the Community, the Community assures that the program has the financial means to pay for said

- manager for the period of this agreement.
- b. The local Main Street program must maintain an identifiable and publicly accessible office space. DCA recommends this space to be in the local Main Street program area.
- c. The local Main Street program must have sufficient funding to provide travel and training for the downtown manager and the Board of Directors.
- 5. Assist the downtown manager in compiling data required as part of the monthly reporting process.
  - a. Provide for a positive relationship between the downtown manager and key city staff to access the following information in a timely manner:
    - i. Business license data
    - ii. Building permit data
    - iii. Property tax data
    - iv. Geographic Information Systems data (mapping support when available)
  - b. Review reported data submitted by the downtown manager to assure accuracy.
- 6. Use the “Main Street America™” name in accordance with the Main Street America® policy on the use of the name Main Street.
- 7. Notify DCA in writing prior to any wholesale changes in the local program, including staff changes, major funding changes, changes in organizational structure/placement of the program, or major turnover in the board of directors. Such notice should be received by DCA one month prior to said changes. Changes may result in program probation, the loss of accreditation, or the removal of program designation.

## ARTICLE 2: THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AGREES TO—

1. Assist the downtown manager in creating an annual work plan that incorporates incremental and meaningful goals related to the Main Street Approach™ utilizing Community Transformation Strategies and the Main Street Four Point Approach™.
  - a. The work plan should include specific tasks, assignments, or a point of contact for the task, related budget needs, and a timeline.
  - b. The work plan will serve as a strategic plan for the local program for a period of three years or less.
  - c. A copy of the work plan must be on file and uploaded to the Work Plan folder in the program’s shared DCA Dropbox folder and updated annually with DCA.
2. Provide opportunities for regular public engagement and support of the Local Main Street Program.
  - a. DCA recommends a public downtown visioning event/town hall meeting annually.
  - b. The Board should identify opportunities for volunteer support and assistance in executing the work plan.
  - c. The Board should actively engage the community for financial and in-kind support of the local program.
3. Conduct, at minimum, one board training, orientation, or planning retreat per year for the local program.
4. Meet a minimum of 11 times per year and ensure that the minutes of each meeting are maintained and distributed. Such meetings should be open to the public and public notice should be given related to meeting times and agendas.
5. Attend training to become better informed about the Main Street Approach™ and trends for downtown revitalization and to support the downtown manager.
6. All Board Members are required to have at least 2 hours of continuing education annually. Training must be documented using the required training log template and uploaded to the corresponding Dropbox folder.
7. All newly appointed Board Members are required to become Main Street 101 certified within the first year of their first term. A copy of each Board Member’s Main Street 101 certification must be uploaded to the Training Log folder in your program’s shared DCA Dropbox folder.
8. All current Board Members must be Main Street 101 certified. A copy of each Board Member’s Main Street 101 certification must be uploaded to the Training Log folder in your program’s shared DCA Dropbox folder.
9. Assure the financial solvency and effectiveness of the Local Main Street Program.
  - a. Adopt an annual budget that is adequate to support the annual work plan, maintain an office and support staff, and provide for training and travel.
  - b. Maintain current membership of the Local Main Street Program to the National Main Street Center to be eligible for accreditation.

- c. Provide for policies to expend funds, enter into debt, and provide programming support for the local Main Street Program.

ARTICLE 3: THE DOWNTOWN MANAGER AGREES TO—

1. Complete all reporting required by DCA to maintain National Accreditation of the local Main Street Program.
  - a. Complete monthly economic and programming activity reports, including portions of said reports that are required as part of the local program assessment process by DCA. These reports must be completed by the last day of the following month. (Example: March report due by April 30<sup>th</sup>). Failure to complete monthly reports in a timely manner may result in program probation, the loss of accreditation, or the removal of program designation.
  - b. Participate in the annual manager's survey provided by DCA. Failure to complete the annual manager's survey by the deadline may result in the loss of accreditation.
  - c. Provide documentation of all meetings, work plans, budgets, job descriptions, and mission/vision statements for the organization.
  - d. Provide documentation to support the work of the organization as it relates to the Main Street Approach™, including information related to historic preservation as required by the National Main Street Center.
  - e. Provide, from time to time, documentation related to local ordinances, plans, codes, and policies that are specific to the Community's downtown area.
2. Participate in training to broaden the impact of the local Main Street Program.
  - a. The downtown manager and/or board members are expected to attend at least one preservation or economic development-related training annually.
  - b. The downtown manager is required to attend, at minimum, one in person training offered by DCA Office of Downtown Development.
  - c. DCA requires managers to attend at least 30 hours of training annually (including webinars, annual trainings, statewide workshops, etc.) Eligible training hours can come from both DCA and non-DCA-hosted training events. Training must be relevant to the field of downtown development, historic preservation, planning, community development, and economic development. A record of the manager's training hours must be uploaded to the Training Log folder in your program's shared DCA Dropbox folder.
3. Respond to requests by DCA in a timely manner.
4. Take advantage of the Georgia Main Street network of professional downtown managers.
5. All newly hired managers must complete Main Street 101 training with DCA within the first 6 months of employment in the local community. All existing downtown managers must be Main Street 101 certified.
6. Provide regular updates between the local Main Street Program and the Community.
  - a. Managers are encouraged to provide at least quarterly reports to the local government.
  - b. Managers are encouraged to provide copies of all minutes, budgets, and work plans to the local government in a timely manner.
7. Maintain and preserve project files. Document downtown projects and other major local program information in a thorough and systematic fashion. All relevant programmatic documentation should be uploaded and stored in the DCA shared Dropbox folder created for your local program, following the organization structure outlined in DCA's "A Visual Guide to Dropbox Management" document, which is located in the "Resources" folder of the Georgia Main Street website. This is to help ensure a seamless transfer of project files to city representatives or successor managers in the event of personnel changes.

ARTICLE 4: DCA AGREES TO—

1. Supervise all communications between the Community, state government agencies and the National Main Street Center as it relates to the local Main Street Program.

2. Conduct a curriculum of training on an annual basis to assist the downtown manager, the Main Street Board, and the Community with the local downtown revitalization program.
3. Assist local Main Street Programs with organizational issues that may prevent the successful progress of the Community's downtown revitalization strategy.
  - a. DCA may provide assistance, directly or through partnerships, to assist in the execution of local organization strategy sessions, training, retreats, and community visioning sessions.
  - b. DCA may assist communities in selecting candidates for the position of downtown manager as requested.
  - c. DCA may require a local Main Street Program to host an on-site assessment visit if the program has had a leadership or organization change, is currently in a probationary status, or is in jeopardy of losing accreditation or designation status.
4. Provide timely assistance and guidance to the Community as a result of requests for service, monthly reports, or the annual assessment process.
  - a. DCA may contact a community upon observation of monthly reporting abnormalities, missing data, or missing reports. If a community becomes delinquent in multiple reports, DCA may contact the local board chair or city manager/administrator about the delinquency.
  - b. DCA may assist in training local staff or volunteers in the reporting process.
  - c. DCA will provide unlimited telephone consultations with local programs.
  - d. DCA will attempt to provide on-site assistance as feasible.
5. Provide ongoing press coverage of the GEMS program, including social media outreach, to recognize and publicize the work of local programs.
  - a. DCA will highlight the GEMS community through both the Georgia Main Street website and social media channels.
6. Provide access to resource materials, sample codes and ordinances, organizational documents, and templates for local programs.
  - a. DCA will provide GEMS communities with the first right of refusal on all scholarships and financial incentive programs offered by the Office of Downtown Development.
7. Conduct an annual program assessment for the Community highlighting success and opportunities for improvement.
8. Provide fee-based strategic planning assistance to the local program.

ARTICLE 5: ALL PARTIES AGREE THAT—

1. This agreement shall be valid through June 30, 2026.
2. This agreement may be terminated by DCA or the Community by written notice of 60 days. Termination of this agreement by the Community will result in the loss of local Main Street designation. Communities that choose to terminate their Georgia GEMS Main Street Program affiliation will be required to formally apply for and participate in the Start-Up process if they desire to regain their National Accreditation in the future.
3. If the Community, Board of Directors, and/or Downtown Manager fail to fulfill their obligations set forth in this agreement, DCA reserves the right to determine a course of action for the local Main Street Program as it deems appropriate. This may include probation, loss of accreditation, or termination of designation.
4. If, at any point during the 2025-2026 program year, there is a change in the local program manager, the local program is required to submit a new MOU, including the new manager's signature, certifying that person's understanding of the requirements of this relationship.
5. Any change in the terms of this agreement must be made in writing and approved by both parties.

**GEORGIA EXCEPTIONAL MAIN STREET PROGRAM**

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

**2025-2026 Program Year**

THIS AGREEMENT IS HEREBY EXECUTED BY AND BETWEEN THE PARTIES BELOW:

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (COMMUNITY): Cartersville

\_\_\_\_\_  
Authorized City Representative (ACR)  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
ACR Name Printed

\_\_\_\_\_  
ACR Title

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**MAIN STREET BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Board Chair Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Board Chair Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Term Expires

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**DOWNTOWN MANAGER**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Manager's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Manager Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Hired

☐ Please check here if this position is vacant.

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GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS  
OFFICE OF DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT  
GEORGIA MAIN STREET PROGRAM

\_\_\_\_\_  
ODD Director's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Cherie Bennett  
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Georgia Department of Community Affairs  
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Atlanta, Georgia 30329

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