



HOW DOES THE MICHIGAN MAIN STREET PROGRAM HELP COMMUNITIES?



Michigan Main Street (MMS) began in 2003 and is a Main Street America™ Coordinating Program. As a MainStreet America™ coordinating program, MMS is affiliated with the National Main Street Center, which helps to lead a powerful, grassroots network consisting of over 40 coordinating programs and over 2,000 neighborhoods and communities across the country committed to creating high-quality places and to building stronger communities through preservation-based economic development.

MMS communities are designated through a competitive application process. These communities have continued to generate real results by supporting new and existing businesses, planning and funding physical improvements, organizing events and promotions to raise the profile of their downtown district and engaging community members in downtown revitalization. Information reflecting the impact of the MMS Program is self-collected and shared with the Michigan Main Street Center by Select and Master Level communities on a monthly and annual basis.

To read more about the successes of the Michigan Main Street Program, download the full [Michigan Main Street Impact Report – 2024 edition](#).

Main Street Approach™

The Main Street Approach™ is a unique, historic preservation based economic development strategy that focuses on leveraging existing social, economic, physical and cultural assets to energize community revitalization efforts and help manage success for the long term. The approach leads to tangible outcomes that benefit the entire community through encouraging communities to enact long-term change while also implementing short-term, inexpensive and place-based activities that attract people to the commercial core and create a sense of enthusiasm about the community.

The Main Street Approach is a methodology consisting of three integrated components:

1. The vision provides a foundation for outlining the community's identity, expectations and ideals for future development while being grounded in an understanding of the economic market realities of the district.

- Transformation strategies identify long-term and short-term actions that provide a clear sense of priorities and direction to help move a community closer to implementing their vision. Work on these strategies should align with the Main Street Four Points of organization, promotion, design and economic vitality.
- The Main Street organization must show visible results that can only come from implementing action items and completing projects in the short-term and long-term. Main Street must focus on measuring progress and results in order to justify and demonstrate the wise use of scarce resources.



| MAIN STREET FOUR POINTS® | |
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| ECONOMIC VITALITY | DESIGN |
| <p>Economic vitality strengthens the existing economic assets while diversifying the economic base of the Main Street District to support and improve profitability. The goal is to build a strong commercial district that creates a supportive environment for small businesses, entrepreneurs and consumers.</p> <p>Examples of economic vitality activities include: analyzing current market forces, providing a balanced commercial mix, supporting and expanding existing businesses, recruiting new businesses, supporting housing options, developing infill space, and converting unused or underused commercial space into economically productive property.</p> | <p>Design capitalizes on and enhances the visual aspects of a Main Street District to create a safe, appealing and inviting atmosphere for people to shop and spend time. The physical elements such as the storefronts and building architecture, streetscape, public art, street furniture, parking areas, and public spaces are used to convey a positive image for the downtown.</p> <p>Examples of design actions include: improving the physical appearance of the Main Street District, quality maintenance practices, historic building rehabilitation and adaptive use, and design review processes.</p> |
| ORGANIZATION | PROMOTION |
| <p>A successful Main Street organization builds consensus between the many vested stakeholders throughout a Main Street District to ensure everyone is mobilized and working toward a shared vision for the future of the district. Organizational structure can take many forms depending on community capacity.</p> <p>Examples of organization actions include: fundraising, volunteer recruitment and development, public relations, fostering collaboration between stakeholders, and developing work plans to guide the organization's work.</p> | <p>Effective promotion creates a positive image of the Main Street District to instill community pride and encourage commercial activity and investment in the area. Promotions can be used to communicate the unique characteristics of a Main Street District to spark interest in shopping, dining, living or investing in the community.</p> <p>Examples of promotion actions include: marketing an enticing image, social media campaigns, street festivals, parades, and retail or other special events.</p> |

Is the Michigan Main Street Program right for your community?

Successful Main Street Districts provide:

- Walkable, human-scale environments
- Unique, historic and visually attractive architecture
- A mix of uses, activities and consumers
- A strong existing tax base that attracts new businesses and creates jobs
- A center for activity and community life
- Positive community image and identity
- Opportunities for public-private partnerships
- A place for the community to define its identity through a shared vision of place

Key Questions:

- Does your potential district meet MMS standards for traditional downtown and/or neighborhood commercial districts?
- Is historic preservation important to local citizens and stakeholders?
- Is downtown revitalization a community priority?
- Do you want to leverage human and financial resources in support of downtown?
- Is there a desire to build broad-based community support for downtown revitalization?
- Are public and private stakeholders ready to engage in these efforts?

If so, participation in the Main Street Training Series is the first step.

Goals of The Main Street Training Series & Engaged Level:

- Familiarize community and key stakeholders with the Main Street Approach™
- Access tools designed to build awareness and resources for future Main Street programming
- Identify local stakeholders and strategies to engage them in the Main Street effort
- Join a statewide network of participating communities, including access to the MMS Listserv, to ask questions, make connections and see Main Street in-action across the state