



2003 National Main Street Community Independent Program Application

What is the National Main Street Community program?

The National Main Street Community program evaluates established commercial district revitalization programs on the basis of ten basic performance standards and provides national recognition to those that meet these standards. The ten performance standards provide benchmarks and guidelines on how the organization should be functioning and an incentive to organizations to perform better and be more effective.

Goals

The goals of the National Main Street Community designation program is to provide standards of performance for *established* Main Street organizations and recognize those that meet those standards. Think of it as getting a 'gold star' for performance. Overall goals are:

- < to provide *national and local visibility* to Main Street programs which understand and fully utilize the four-point Main Street approach and eight Main Street principles and which continue to evolve organizationally to meet new challenges;
- < to provide *national standards for performance* for Main Street programs; and
- < to provide *realistic goals and a tangible incentive* for local Main Street programs which do not yet meet the criteria for national recognition.

Evaluation for Independent Programs

Normally this evaluation is performed by statewide, citywide or countywide coordinating Main Street programs. This application is for independent Main Street organizations and is designed to let programs in states which have no coordinating Main Street organization be evaluated for the National Main Street Community designation.

How does this relate to being a Main Street program?

Being designated a National Main Street Community is not the same as becoming a Main Street organization. Becoming a Main Street organization differs in different states, cities, and counties.

Does this affect whether my program can use the name "Main Street"?

Not exactly. The National Trust owns the trademark on the phrase "Main Street" when used within the context of commercial district revitalization and management. In states, cities, and counties with Main Street coordinating programs, the coordinating program has primary responsibility for determining which communities can use the "Main Street" trademark. In states, cities, and counties *without* Main Street coordinating programs, the National Trust's only current requirement for use of the "Main Street" trademark by a local revitalization organization is that the program successfully uses the Main Street Four-Point Approach in its revitalization activities, and we reserve the right to ask an organization not meeting this guideline to refrain from using our trademark. We encourage communities to self-initiate programs to revitalize older and historic commercial districts

A Tool for Independent Programs

These ten criteria, then, are especially important for independent Main Street organizations, as they provide a benchmark and guidelines on how the organization should be functioning. They are also meant to provide an incentive to organizations to challenge them to perform better and be more

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effective. The National Main Street Center is providing this evaluation opportunity for independent programs in order to build strong organizations in states without statewide programs.

The Ten Criteria

The standards of performance are based upon ten criteria. These criteria were developed by statewide coordinating Main Street programs and are intended to reflect operational performance, not economic performance, thus any program is eligible, regardless of how long it has been active.

Benefits of National Main Street Community Status

The benefits of receiving the designation of National Main Street Community are meant to reward organizations and provide attention within their community. Designees receive a certificate, and a special press release to be used locally to promote their designation. Those that attend National Town Meeting from the community receive a special ribbon for their name badge. National Communities are also listed on the National Main Street Center's website. However, the ultimate benefit is a much stronger and better functioning organization.

Timeframe

This designation is annual, and evaluation is based upon the organization's current activities and structure, as well as performance during the past year. Communities must be re-designated each year. Those communities that do not submit the application by the deadline will have to wait for the 2004 year application cycle. Applicants will be notified within 30 days of their status, and those attending National Town Meeting in May will receive a special ribbon in their registration packet.

Deadlines:

For those intending going to National Town Meeting, have your application postmarked by: **May 7**

Those not attending National Town Meeting, deadline is **June 2**.

Questions?

Contact Amanda West at the National Main Street Center at 202/588-6289 with questions or comments about the application. We welcome your input on this process so we can make it better every year.

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This evaluation is only for programs not in states with active statewide Main Street programs. If your state has an active statewide program contact them for information on National Main Street Community designation. To find out if your state or city has a coordinating Main Street program, contact the National Main Street Center at 202/588-6219.

Organization Information:

Organization Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ **ST:** _____ **Zip:** _____

Name of Organization Executive Director: _____

Is the organization's director completing this application? Yes No

If no, name and title of person completing application: _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

Email: _____

Web Site: _____

Population: _____

Commercial district type: (check one)

downtown neighborhood business district

Has your organization ever been part of a statewide Main Street Program? Yes No

If yes, list number of years: _____

Year your Main Street program was founded: _____

Signatures:

We have discussed each of these items, and have truthfully completed the form.

Board President's Signature

Organization Executive Director's Signature:

Print Name

Print Name

Date

Date

Send to:

Send your completed application with documents postmarked by June 2 (May 7 for NTM attendees) to:

**Amanda West
National Main Street Center of the
National Trust for Historic Preservation
1785 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20036**



Instructions: Please read all the background and guideline information about each criteria. Provide information and documents when requested in italic typeface in order to fulfill the criteria described. Please see the Checklist for Attachments Needed sheet at the end of the document for quick review of what you need to supply. You may also include other documents that support your work in the guidelines that are not requested, but please make sure they are pertinent to the issue at hand. Please clip or group your provided documents by criteria and in numerical order. This will facilitate the review of your application and provide a quicker turn around. Thank you.

1. Has broad-based community support for the commercial district revitalization process with strong support from both the public and private sectors:

Background: At its best, a local Main Street program represents and involves a coalition of organizations, agencies, businesses, and individuals from throughout the community -- not just those who own property or businesses in the commercial district or who have a direct economic tie to it, but *all* members of the community who are interested in the community's overall health. Involvement by both the public and private sectors is critical, as well; neither sector can revitalize the commercial district without the skills and vantage points of the other.

Ideally, both sectors will participate in the revitalization process by providing funding, leadership, and ideas, and by encouraging collaboration between existing programs to assist the revitalization process. By actively involving a broad range of interests and perspectives in the revitalization process, the Main Street program leverages the community's collective skills and resources to maximum advantage. The overall goal is for a broad range of constituencies from both sectors to understand and be philosophically committed to the revitalization process and, to that end, to commit the maximum resources possible to achieve the goal of revitalizing the commercial district.

Guidelines:

- The Main Street organization should have the active participation of a wide cross section of the community at the committee and board levels, including such constituents as:
 - local government
 - regional planning groups
 - realtors
 - property owners
 - business owners
 - local industries
 - financial institutions
 - transportation authorities
 - developers
 - civic groups
 - community development organizations
 - consumers
 - churches, temples, religious institutions
 - historic preservation organizations
 - school groups and students
 - architects and building contractors
 - parking authorities
 - district/neighborhood residents
- **1a.** Please attach list of current board and committee members, listing their titles. Include business or affiliation, mailing addresses and phone numbers.
- Participants should contribute financial, in-kind, and volunteer support for the revitalization program.
- Participants should also look for, and act on, opportunities to make connections between other programs with which they are involved and the Main Street revitalization effort so that, by doing their own work a little smarter, or in a better integrated way, other programs help further the revitalization process.
- **1b.** In an attachment, please list and describe significant partnerships.

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- The program should include an ongoing process for volunteer recruitment, orientation and recognition, constantly refreshing its pool of volunteers and involving new volunteers each year.
 - **1c.** Please attach documents from most recent recruitment, orientation, and recognition activities.
- The downtown revitalization program has broad-based philosophical support from the community.
 - **1d.** Please attach any documents which demonstrate broad based support from the community.
- Municipal government demonstrates a philosophical commitment to downtown revitalization.
 - **1e.** Please attach any documents which demonstrate support from your municipal government.

2. Has developed vision and mission statements relevant to community conditions and to the local Main Street program's organizational stage:

Background: A mission statement communicates the Main Street organization's sense of purpose and overall direction. A vision statement communicates the organization's long-term hopes and intentions for the commercial district. Both should be developed with broad participation by the board, committees, program volunteers and community input.

Guidelines: Some revitalization programs begin with a vision statement; others develop a vision statement after several years of work. *At a minimum*, the Main Street organization should have a mission statement in place, reviewed annually (and updated, if appropriate). If the organization does not have a vision statement at the beginning of the revitalization process, it should develop one prior to the organization's transition from the *catalyst phase* to the *growth phase*.

- The organization has an appropriate written mission statement.
 - **2a.** Please attach a mission statement.
- The mission statement is reviewed on an annual basis and updated as appropriate.
 - **2b.** Please indicate when mission statement was last reviewed: _____
- The organization has an appropriate written vision statement.
 - **2c.** Please attach vision statement.

3. Has a comprehensive Main Street work plan:

Background: A comprehensive annual work plan provides a detailed blueprint for the Main Street program's activities; reinforces the program's accountability both within the organization and also in the broader community; and provides measurable objectives by which the program can track its progress.

Guidelines:

- **3a.** Please attach your current board-approved work plan—it should include the characteristics listed below.

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- The work plan should contain a balance of activities in each of the four broad program areas that comprise the Main Street approach -- design, organization, promotion, and economic restructuring.
- The work plan should contain measurable objectives, including time lines, budgets, desired outcomes, and specific responsibilities.
- The work plan should be reviewed, and a new work plan developed, annually.
- Ideally, the full board and committees will be involved in developing the annual work plan. At a minimum, though, the full board should adopt/approve the annual work plan.
➤ **3b.** *Attach board minutes reflecting final approval and adoption of the work plan.*
- The work plan should distribute work activities and tasks to a broad range of volunteers and program participants.
- There has been significant progress in each of the four points based on the work plan submitted last year.
➤ **3c.** *Please provide the previous year's annual report for your organization, clearly illustrating activity in all four points.*

4. Possesses an historic preservation ethic:

Background: Historic preservation is central to the Main Street program's purpose. The historic buildings and public spaces of a traditional commercial district enrich civic life and add value -- on many levels -- to the community. Developing a historic preservation ethic is an ongoing process of education and discovery for a community and for a local Main Street program. Main Street programs which have embraced a strong historic preservation ethic are successful in saving, rehabilitating, and finding new uses for traditional commercial buildings and in intensifying the uses of the district's buildings, through both specific building improvement projects and through policy and regulatory changes which make it easier to develop property within the commercial district.

Some Main Street programs purport to support preservation values, but do not fully understand that preservation is an *ethic*, not just an *activity* or group of activities. Historic preservation involves not only the process of rehabilitating, restoring, or renovating older commercial buildings but also the process of adopting planning and land use policies which encourage full use of existing commercial centers before new development takes place, removing the regulatory and other barriers which sometimes make it difficult to attract investment to historic commercial districts.

Guidelines:

The program has, or is working towards putting in place, an active and effective design management program (which may include financial incentives, design assistance, regulatory relief, design review, education, and other forms of management).

➤ **4a.** *Please provide documentation of your design management activities, such as those listed above.*

➤ **4b.** *Please provide documentation (such as brochures, etc.) of your organization's historic preservation ethic and efforts in the following areas.*

- The program encourages appropriate building renovation, restoration and rehabilitation projects.

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- The program works to find creative adaptive use, financing, and physical rehabilitation solutions for preserving old buildings.
- The program recognizes the importance of planning and land use policies which support the revitalization of existing commercial centers and works towards putting planning and land use policies in place which make it as easy (if not easier) to develop property within the commercial district as it is outside the commercial district. Similarly, it ensures that financing, technical assistance and other incentives are available to facilitate the process of attracting investment to the historic commercial district.
- The program builds public awareness for the commercial district's historic buildings and for good design.

5. Has an active board of directors and committees:

Background: Main Street revitalization is an ongoing process of changing a community's attitudes about its traditional commercial district(s). The direct involvement of an active board of directors and committees is key to this process. *The Main Street director is responsible for facilitating the work of volunteers, not for single-handedly revitalizing the commercial district.* In some areas, and in communities of some sizes, local Main Street programs have been launched by or have merged with other organizations which have a broader agenda (such as a chamber of commerce or a community development corporation). A local Main Street program in one of these circumstances has a better chance of long-term success if it maintains focus on its particular purpose and if its mission statement, work plan, budget, and governing body remain distinct from that of the larger organization in which it is contained.

Guidelines:

- The board is a working, functional board that understands its roles and responsibilities and is willing to put forth the effort to make the program succeed.
 - **5a.** *In an attachment, describe the board members' role and responsibilities.*
- Committee members assume responsibility for the implementation of the work plan.
- The program has a dedicated governing body, its own rules of operation, its own budget, and its own bylaws, and is empowered to carry out Main Street's mission, even if the Main Street program is a part of a larger organization.
 - **5b.** *Please attach an organizational chart of your program.*
- The board has well-managed, regular monthly meetings, with an advance agenda and regular distribution of minutes.
 - **5c.** *Please provide minutes from past three meetings.*
- Committees have regularly scheduled monthly meetings with an advance agenda that addresses the committee work plan.
 - **5d.** *Please provide agendas from recent meetings of all committees.*

6. Has an adequate operating budget:

Background: In order to be successful, a local Main Street program must have the financial resources necessary to carry out its annual and evolving program of work. The size of a program's budget will change as the program matures (in its early years, it may need less

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money than in its growth years). Also, program budgets are likely to vary according to regional economic differences and community size.

Guidelines:

➤ **6a.** *Attach year end final financial report from last fiscal year and approved budget for current fiscal year. These documents must demonstrate the following.*

- The Main Street program's budget should be adequate to achieve the program's goals.
- The budget should be specifically dedicated for the purpose of revitalizing the commercial district.
- The Main Street program's budget should contain funds adequate to cover the salary and fringe benefits of staff; office expenses; travel; professional development; and committee activities.
- The dollar amount that is "adequate" for a program budget may vary from region to region, depending on local costs of living, and may be different for small-town, mid-size, and urban Main Street programs. General guidelines for *minimum* operating budgets are:
 - small town programs:* \$25,000+ annually
 - mid-size community programs:* \$45,000+ annually
 - urban neighborhood programs:* \$80,000+ annually
- Revenue sources are varied and broad-based, including appropriate support from municipal government.
- There is a strategy in place to help maintain stable funding.
 - **6b.** *In an attachment, please describe your strategy to maintain a stable funding base.*
- There is a process in place for financial oversight and management.
- Regular monthly financial reports are made by the treasurer to the board.
 - **6c.** *Attach last month's financial report as presented at board meeting.*

7. **Has a paid, professional executive director.**

Background: Coordinating a successful Main Street program requires a trained, professional staff person. While Main Street directors come from a broad range of academic and professional backgrounds, the most successful executive directors are those who are good communicators; who can motivate volunteers; and who have good project management skills, being able to keep the revitalization program's many activities moving forward on schedule and within budget. In most instances, the Main Street executive director's position is full-time (generally 40+ hours per week). In small towns without the resources to hire a full-time executive director, a part-time director is usually acceptable (generally 20+ hours per week).

Guidelines:

- The Main Street executive director should be paid a salary consistent with those of other community development professionals within the city, state or region in which the program operates.
➤ **7a.** Please list salary (will be treated confidentially) _____

- The minimum amount of time the Main Street executive director works each week should be consistent with comparable Main Street programs in the city, state or region.

- The executive director should be adequately trained -- and should continue learning about revitalization techniques and about issues affecting traditional commercial districts.
➤ **7b.** Please provide information on executive director attendance at trainings in the past year.

- The executive director has a written job description that correlates with the roles and responsibilities of a Main Street manager.
➤ **7c.** Please attach job description with date of last revision.

- There is a formal system in place for evaluating the performance of the executive director on an annual basis.
➤ **7d.** Please provide date of last evaluation: _____

- Adequate staff management policies and procedures are in place.

8. Program of ongoing training for staff and volunteers:

Background: In order to meet new challenges and ensure a strong organization, Main Street program participants need ongoing training. Participants -- both staff and volunteers -- need different skills in different phases of the revitalization process; for that reason, the skills a program's participants learn in the program's *catalyst phase* are rarely adequate for the *growth* or *management phases*. As staff and volunteer turnover occurs, new staff members and new volunteers will need basic Main Street training. And, all program participants should stay current on issues that affect traditional commercial districts and on new revitalization techniques and models.

Guidelines: The local Main Street program develops local leadership capacity through such mechanisms as:

- Taking advantage of citywide, state, regional and national training opportunities.
- making reference and training materials available locally -- and using them; and
- providing/conducting training when appropriate, including annual Main Street 101 training, annual orientation for board members, and annual committee training.

➤ **8a.** Attach list of trainings that board members or committee members attended in 2002. Include names of board and committee members that attended.

9. Reports key statistics:

Background: Tracking statistics -- reinvestment, job and business creation, and so on -- provides a tangible measurement of the local Main Street program's progress and is crucial to garnering financial and programmatic support for the revitalization effort. Statistics must be collected on a regular, ongoing basis.

Guidelines:

The program collects and tallies statistics related to the revitalization movement, using the baseline criteria listed below. It should keep this data from year to year, providing an economic record of the program's impact over the course of its history. This information is distributed regularly to constituents and in the annual report.

➤ **9a. In an attachment, please provide the previous year's statistical report, as well as a grand total of reinvestment amount from program's inception to date. See chart below for information needed.**

Baseline Data Should Include:

Community Population:	
Net of all gains and losses in jobs:	
Net of all gains and losses in new businesses:	
Number of building rehabilitation projects:	
Number of public improvement projects:	
Number of new construction projects:	
Number of housing units created: <i>upper floor or other</i>	
\$ Value of Private investment spent in above projects: <i>i.e., individuals or private sources of \$ spent on blg. rehabs, public improvements, or new construction.</i>	\$
\$ Value of Public investment spent in above projects: <i>i.e., city, county, state or federal \$ spent on blg. rehabs, public improvements, or new construction.</i>	\$
\$ Value Total of all Investment <i>add public and private investment</i>	\$
Ground-floor vacancy rate when your program started	
Ground-floor vacancy rate now	
Rental rate per square foot when program started	\$
Rental rate per square foot now	\$
Your program's annual operating budget	\$

10. Current member of the National Trust's National Main Street Network membership program:

Background: Participation in the National Main Street Network membership program connects local programs to their counterparts throughout the nation, providing them with valuable information resources.

Guideline:

The program is a current member of the National Trust's National Main Street Network Membership program.

➤ **10a.** *Please provide your organization's membership # and expiration date. To find out if you're an active member, call the Center at 202/588-6219.*

Checklist for Attachments Needed:

Please label your attachments with criteria item numbers and place in order.

Criteria 1:

- 1a.** Please attach list of current board and committee members, listing their titles. Include business or affiliation, mailing addresses and phone numbers.
- 1b.** In an attachment, please list and describe significant organizational partnerships.
- 1c.** Please attach documents from most recent recruitment, orientation, and recognition activities.
- 1d.** Please attach any documents which demonstrate broad based support from the community.
- 1e.** Please attach any documents which demonstrate support from your municipal government.

Criteria 2:

- 2a.** Please attach written mission statement.
- 2b.** Please indicate when the mission statement was last reviewed: _____
- 2c.** Please attach organization vision statement.

Criteria 3:

- 3a.** Please attach your current board-approved work plan.
- 3b.** Attach board minutes reflecting final approval and adoption of the work plan.
- 3c.** Please provide the previous year's annual report for your organization, clearly illustrating activity in all four points.

Criteria 4:

- 4a.** Please provide documentation of design management activities described in Criteria 4 background and guidelines.
- 4b.** Please provide documentation of your organization's historic preservation ethic and efforts in areas described in Criteria 4 background and guidelines.

Criteria 5:

- 5a.** In an attachment, describe the board members' role and responsibilities.
- 5b.** Please attach an organizational chart of your program.
- 5c.** Please provide minutes from past three meetings.
- 5d.** Please provide agendas from recent meetings of all committees.

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Criteria 6:

- 6a.** Attach year end final financial report from last fiscal year and approved budget for current fiscal year.
- 6b.** In an attachment, please describe your strategy to maintain a stable funding base.
- 6c.** Attach last month's financial report as presented at board meeting.

Criteria 7:

- 7a.** Please list salary (will be treated confidentially) _____
- 7b.** Please provide information on executive director attendance at trainings in the past year.
- 7c.** Please attach job description with date of last revision.
- 7d.** Please provide date of last evaluation: _____

Criteria 8:

- 8a.** Attach list of trainings that board members or committee members attended in 2002. Include names of board and committee members that attended.

Criteria 9:

- 9a.** Please provide the previous year's statistical report, **as well as a grand total of reinvestment amount from program's inception to date.** See chart under Criteria 9 for information needed.

Criteria 10:

- 10a.** Please provide your organization's membership # and expiration date. To find out if you're an active member, call the Center at 202/588-6219.

Send to:

Please send your completed application with documents postmarked by June 2 (May 7 for NTM attendees) to:

**Amanda West
National Main Street Center of the
National Trust for Historic Preservation
1785 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20036**