
2012 Great American Main Street Awards® Application Instructions

The Great American Main Street Awards® (GAMSA) application process has two stages - Preliminary and Semifinalist:

- **The Preliminary Application** is an online application and will ask for statistical figures from your community, narrative about your revitalization efforts, and photographs. The application fee of \$150 is due with your preliminary application.
- **The Semifinalist Application** will be required for semifinalists only and will ask for additional background material, including a short video, maps, letters of support, other supporting documents, and a resolution of support from your local government. There is no additional charge for this application.

Only entries that conform to the application directions will be considered. Please note that all materials submitted will become the property of the National Trust for Historic Preservation and will not be returned.

Eligibility Guidelines

The Great American Main Street Awards® competition is open to all National Main Street Programs accredited for at least the two years prior to applying for the award. In other words, to be eligible for the 2011 awards, you must have been accredited in both 2009 and 2010. At this time, previous winners are ineligible to apply for GAMSA.

Preliminary Application Details

The Preliminary Application must be submitted via our online application. Eligible Main Street Programs (see above), will receive an email with instructions for how to receive your personalized link to the online application. Please remember, the *Preliminary Application* must be submitted entirely online.

If you have not been invited to submit but believe you may be eligible, please email your name, program name, city, and state to mainstreet@nthp.org. We will attempt to respond to all inquiries within 3 business days.

You will be able to save and revisit your responses until your application is complete and submitted. Please note that this link is unique to your account, so safeguard it throughout the entire application process.

The online application will include questions asking for:

- Background information about your commercial district and Main Street program;
- Key participants;
- History of the revitalization effort;
- Your work in the four points;
- Economic impact of the revitalization effort;
- Your own assessment of merit
- Outlook for the future

In addition, you will be required to submit up to thirty (30) **high resolution** digital images. You can find tips and suggestions for taking and choosing the photos to submit online at www.mainstreet.org/gamsa. Go to the “How to Apply” page for details.

Before you start the online application, carefully read all instructions and the questions found at the end of this document. We **strongly** recommend that you first compose your answers in a word-processing program, such as MS Word, and then cut and paste your responses into the online application. We also advise that you save a complete copy of all your answers for your records.

If you have any technical problems completing the application, contact (202) 588-6219 or mainstreet@nthp.org.

Application Fee

A one-time application fee of \$150 is due with the submission of your *Preliminary Application*. Payment can be made online (Visa, MasterCard, Discover and American Express only) or by check. Instructions for submitting payment are included in the online application. Payments must be received by the Preliminary Application Deadline (September 7, 2011). No additional payment is necessary for the *Semifinalist Application*.

Selection Process

All entries are reviewed and assigned preliminary scores by National Trust staff using the criteria below. The top scoring applications will be selected as semifinalists and then be invited to submit a *Semifinalist Application*. A jury of representatives from the community revitalization, economic development, and historic preservation fields will review the semifinalist applications and select up to five winners. The jury will use these same criteria to evaluate each semifinalist application. Evaluation of applications is based on the achievements of the commercial district and community as a whole, and not the performance of an individual or a single organization.

- Active involvement of the public and private sectors;
- Broad-based community support for the revitalization effort;
- Quality of achievements over time;
- Innovative solutions to significant problems;
- Commitment to historic preservation;
- Evolving track record of successful commercial district revitalization;
- Comprehensive revitalization effort: activity in all four points of the Main Street Four-Point Approach®;
- Economic impact of the revitalization program; and
- Successful small business development.

Important Dates

July 18, 2011 Online application available
September 7, 2011 Preliminary applications due
October 17, 2011 Semifinalists selected and all applicants notified of status
December 9, 2011 Semifinalist applications and supporting materials due
January 23, 2012 2010 GAMSA winners selected and all semifinalists notified of status
April 2, 2012 Winners announced at the 2012 National Main Streets Conference in Baltimore

Confirmation of receipt of your preliminary application and semifinalist application will be sent via email within seven (7) business days of submission.

Recognition of Winners

Winners of the 2012 Great American Main Street Awards® competition will be notified in January 2012 and will be officially honored at an awards ceremony during the 2012 National Main Streets Conference held April 1-4, 2012 in Baltimore, Maryland. The awards ceremony will feature the winners' achievements, as well as the presentation of the award. The information on winners is kept confidential until the official announcement.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation will also distribute press releases announcing the award winners to local and national media and winning communities will be featured in an issue of the National Trust Main Street Center's bi-monthly journal, *Main Street Now*, on the www.mainstreet.org and www.PreservationNation.org, as well as other media. Great American Main Street Awards® winning communities also receive a bronze plaque and a certificate marking their achievement.

Preliminary Application Questions

Below you will find detailed descriptions of all the questions you will be asked on the online application. Please use this as a reference for preparing your answers. It is strongly recommended that you compose and save all your answers before beginning your online application.

Important note about response lengths:

Please make note of the response length limits. These will be rigorously enforced and responses that exceed the indicated length may not be considered. The online application will NOT restrict you from submitting answers that are too long. So please be sure to check each of your answers before finally submitting your application.

1. Contact Information and Authorizations

In the online preliminary application, you will be asked to submit the following contact information and agree to the release authorization below:

Contact Information

- Name of the Main Street program
- Name of the city/town/neighborhood
- Contact person
- Title
- Organization
- Address
- Phone number
- E-mail
- Website for the applying organization

Release Authorization

- I, the undersigned represent and warrant that I have the authority to give and thereby give the National Trust for Historic Preservation the absolute and unqualified right to use, in whole or in part, in whatever manner the National Trust may desire, including, but not limited to, use for publicity, audiovisual presentation, and/or promotion, any written or photographic materials entered in the National Trust's Great American Main Street Awards® program.
- The National Trust for Historic Preservation is hereby given permission to make any editorial changes and/or additions to the materials submitted as it deems necessary or desirable for production purposes.
- I, the undersigned, further agree to defend, indemnify, and hold the National Trust, its trustees, directors, officers, employees, members, and agents harmless from and against any and all claims and liabilities that may arise out of any misrepresentation or breach of this warranty.
- I, the undersigned, have verified that the information provided in this application is correct to the best of my knowledge.

Coordinators Authorization

- I, the undersigned, have received permission from my state/city-wide/regional coordinator to apply for this award.

2. Background Information

The following information submitted online should pertain to the Main Street district that is applying for the award, not the entire city or town within which the district is located.

- How many blocks are in your Main Street district?
- What is the nearest major city?
- What is the population of your town/city, based on the 2010 US Census where your district is located?
- Indicate the number of businesses in each category
 - Retail shops
 - Restaurants
 - Service businesses
 - Offices
 - Arts and entertainment
- Annual operating budget of the Main Street organization
- Percentage of your annual budget from the following funding sources
 - Public funding
 - Private funding
- Indicate your organization's tax status. Please choose the primary category if more than one applies.
 - 501 (c) 3
 - 501 (c) 4
 - 501 (c) 6
 - Government Agency
 - For-profit
 - Other: _____

3. History of the Revitalization Effort

Briefly outline how your community has used the Main Street Approach. Please include what prompted your community to begin its revitalization efforts, reasons for the district's economic decline, how and why the Main Street Approach was chosen, formation of the Main Street effort, and it's successes

Response Length: No more than 500 words.

4. Key Participants

List the major organizations and constituent groups that have been actively involved in your revitalization effort and briefly describe their roles.

Response Length: No more than 250 words.

5. The Main Street Four Point Approach®

Organization

Describe the structure of your Main Street organization: the composition of the board and committees, program budget, how money is raised, the community support and involvement of both public and private sectors in the revitalization efforts.

How has your Main Street organization improved the community in ways that previous organizations may not have addressed? What are some innovative approaches your group has used to ensure the succession of volunteer leadership, adjust to changing economic or governance situations, or sustain itself over the long term?

Response Length: No more than 500 words.

Promotion

How have your organization's promotion efforts changed the image of your downtown or business district? Highlight some innovative approaches and significant accomplishments in positioning, marketing, and promoting your district. Describe how your organization's promotion activities are fostering economic development.

Response Length: No more than 250 words.

Design

In the realm of design, which projects by your Main Street program and its partner organizations have helped transform your district visually and functionally? What are some innovative approaches or noteworthy accomplishments to date? How has your program shown its commitment to historic preservation as it works with property and business owners on design-related improvements? Describe how the design assistance your program has provided to business and property owners is increasing economic vitality in the district.

Response Length: No more than 250 words.

Economic Restructuring

How has the capacity of your program grown to facilitate preservation-based real estate development? Describe innovative property development projects that have occurred and the role of your Main Street program in the process. Has upper story housing development and/or infill residential development been a component of your program's economic restructuring plan.

Response Length: No more than 250 words.

Describe the small business development efforts your program has initiated, including roles played by other organizations. Give an example of how your organization has assisted a business start-up or helped in expanding and/or improving an existing business.

Response Length: No more than 250 words.

6. Economic Impact

All data submitted below should be from the start of your Main Street efforts, as specified below, to the present day.

Indicate the year in which your community began to use the Main Street Approach (either by the applicant organization, its predecessor, or other entities).

Describe the economic impact of the Main Street Approach for the categories below.

- Net number of new jobs
- Net number of new businesses
- Number of building rehabilitations
- Number of new buildings
- Number of housing units added
- Vacancy rate when your program began
- Vacancy rate today
- Dollar amount of public investment
- Dollar amount of private investment

7. Your Own Assessment of Merit

Key Accomplishments or Milestones

If asked to sum up the legacy of your Main Street program to date, what outcomes or activities would you highlight? Briefly describe up to, but no more than, three (3) major achievements.

Response Length: No more than 250 words.

What Makes Your District a Winner?

Applying the Main Street Approach has made a big difference in nearly 2000 communities across the United States. What sets your district apart from the typical successful story. Why should you win a Great American Main Street Award®?

Response Length: No more than 250 words.

8. Outlook for the Future

What are your district's strategic initiatives for the next five years?

Response Length: No more than 250 words.

9. Images and Descriptions

You are asked to submit 30 digital images, along with appropriate photographer credit and a brief description. Directions for how to submit them will be found on the online application.

Image File Format Guidelines:

To complete your application for the 2012 GAMSA award, you must submit thirty (30) digital images. The content of the photos should enhance your written responses and clearly provide visual support and evidence that your Main Street district should be a 2012 Great American Main Street Award recipient.

Digital images should be provided in jpg or tiff format and should be 1600x1200 pixels or larger. A 1600x1200 pixel image translates to a 5x4 photo at 300 dots per inch (dpi). Photographs taken for the web at 72 dpi are unacceptable because the quality is too low to be used in print publications. If possible, please submit color photos.