



Montana Main Street Member Application

Montana Main Street Program

Due on a Rolling Basis

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Program Overview

The Montana Main Street Program, established in 2005, is administered by the Community MT Division within the Montana Department of Commerce. As a state coordinating program within the Main Street America network, the MMS Program awards competitive grant funding to communities focusing on planning and/or implementation projects directly related to downtown revitalization, development and historic preservation. Using the Main Street Approach to downtown revitalization, the MMS Program also offers technical assistance to communities striving for economic vitality while maintaining local historic integrity, quality of life and a sense of place. Such goals are best met by uniting larger community ideas and efforts with Program organization, coordination and resources.

Mission

The MMS Program is dedicated to bettering the economic, historic and cultural vitality of Montana's downtowns through community development, revitalization and historic preservation. MMS fosters grassroots efforts through coordination and technical assistance. The Program focuses on a comprehensive approach to revitalizing downtowns and preserving the historic structures that contribute to Montana's unique sense of place.

Vision

Adopting the Main Street Approach to revitalization, MMS facilitates efforts to improve downtown economies and historic districts. MMS aims to encourage and promote local efforts through a statewide network focused on educational outreach, collaboration and organizational coordination.

Goals

- Preserve and promote statewide historic and cultural resources.
- Promote long-term planning for revitalization efforts.

- Coordinate conversations among and within Montana communities.
- Support economic and community development.
- Cultivate a sense of place.
- Enable the success of local businesses by supporting vibrant downtown districts.

MMS communities are locally driven programs that implement the nationally recognized [Main Street Approach](#). Each member community is responsible for developing a local framework focused on planning and downtown revitalization. MMS communities are limited in number to 40 and receive technical and financial assistance from Commerce, as funded by the accommodations tax.

Program Background

In Montana

MMS serves as the statewide coordinating program with the authority to designate communities and use the trademarked Main Street methodology through a licensing agreement with the National Main Street Center. MMS oversees training, technical services and the framework created to determine each community's threshold for meeting the Main Street America's Standard of Performance.

Since its inception, the MMS Program impact has:

- Community volunteer hours exceeding 745,000
- Four million dollars in grant funding
 - Supported over 100 Main Street Planning and Implementation projects
- Twenty-eight million dollars in private and public investments
 - Supported over 2,150 building improvement projects
- Creation of 1,395 downtown businesses
- Creation of 4,445 full- and part-time jobs

MMS communities are locally driven programs that focus on implementing the nationally recognized Main Street Approach in their defined downtown district. The communities within the MMS network are committed to providing staff and financial resources needed to address the community-based approach of sustainable revitalization. Each community is responsible for developing its local framework for administering MMS, including establishing a board of directors, overseeing the staff that will execute the Program and promoting the partnerships needed to secure the long-term viability of the Program. For more information, visit the Montana Main Street [website](#).

Main Street America

Main Street America has revitalized older and historic commercial districts for over 45 years. Today, it is a network of more than 1,200 neighborhoods and communities, rural and urban, that share both commitments to place and to building stronger communities through preservation-based economic development. Main Street America is a program of the nonprofit National Main Street Center, a subsidiary of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Main Street America is a mark of distinction. It is a seal recognizing that participating programs, organizations and communities are part of a national movement with a proven track record for celebrating community character, preserving local history and generating impressive economic returns. Since 1980, over 2,000 communities have been part of Main Street America, bringing renewed energy and activity to America's downtowns and commercial districts.

Main Street America communities are encouraged to make use of the time-tested Main Street Approach. The Main Street Approach is rooted in a commitment to broad-based community engagement, a holistic understanding of the factors that impact the quality of life in a community and strategic emphasis on the core principles of downtown and neighborhood revitalization: economic vitality, design, promotion and organization.

Four-Point Approach

Economic vitality focuses on capital, incentives and other economic and financial tools to assist new and existing businesses, catalyze property development and create a supportive environment for entrepreneurs and innovators that drive local economies.

Design supports a community's transformation by enhancing the physical and visual assets that set the commercial district apart.

Promotion positions the downtown or commercial district as the center of the community and hub of economic activity, while creating a positive image that showcases a community's unique characteristics.

Organization involves creating a strong foundation for sustainable revitalization effort, including cultivating partnerships, community involvement and resources for the district.

Benefits for Montana Main Street Communities

MMS communities benefit from the following:

Partnership

- Communities selected to participate in the MMS network become partners with MMS in a long-term, asset-based economic development effort proven to have a positive impact on investment and job creation.
- Main Street communities are limited in number to 40 and receive focused assistance to develop local Main Street organizational structures.
- MMS invests in onsite visits, training and technical assistance. After the initial startup phase, the State invests in Main Street communities in the form of ongoing technical assistance and training for directors and volunteers.

Training

- Main Street communities are eligible for program-specific training such as board and committee training, regional workshops and topical workshops.
- Representatives from MMS communities are encouraged to attend the annual MMS/Downtown and national Main Street Now conferences. When funding is available, Commerce offers scholarships for attendees.

Technical Assistance

MMS staff at Commerce:

- Guide MMS communities through goal setting processes to direct MMS efforts
- Provide action planning sessions
- Conduct community assessment onsite visits in each community every two years
- Offer virtual check-ins with local Main Street organizations
- Deliver virtual training for boards and committees
- Give guidance and support to communities regarding how to identify and develop financial resources
- Provide telephone consultations to local Main Street organizations

Network

- MMS communities may take advantage of and participate in a special network of participating Main Street communities statewide and nationally. This allows for collaboration on best practices, techniques and strategies for downtown development.
- MMS communities benefit from connections to a program that has been established in Montana for over 20 years and access to the expansive network of downtown development professionals. From emails to “60 Minutes with Main Street” calls, the extensive network and reach of MMS can provide local

organizations with information and resources related to the best practices and national trends in downtown development.

- MMS communities are permitted to use the Main Street trademarks on materials designed to promote the efforts of the local organization in collaboration with the State of Montana.
- MMS communities shall identify themselves by posting the Commerce logo, accompanied by the following: “In collaboration with the Montana Department of Commerce, we are a Montana Main Street Community.”

Funding

- Occasionally, the MMS Program will make funds available to members of local Main Street organizations for conference travel scholarships or other special opportunities. To be eligible to receive these funds, local Main Street organizations must, at a minimum, comply with the terms of this agreement.
- Main Street communities are eligible to apply for MMS Impact and/or Planning grants.
- MMS distributes information on funding opportunities from federal, state, corporate and nonprofit sources for funding downtown projects.

Resources

- MMS maintains a library of document samples of projects and activities undertaken by other communities in the Program.
- MMS develops publications and recorded webinars to assist local Main Street organizations in strengthening their operations and improving their downtown improvement efforts.

Marketing and Recognition

- Main Street organizations are eligible to apply for the prestigious [Excellence on Main Street Awards](#).
- MMS communities receive marketing and recognition through [Commerce's website](#), [press releases](#), local annual reports, MMS presentations, social media sites and onsite visits.
- MMS will assist your community in becoming a Main Street America designated community, if desired.

Member Application Guidelines

Eligible Applicants

Applicants understand that they are part of a larger national network, [Main Street America](#), that leads an inclusive, impact-driven movement dedicated to reenergizing and strengthening historic downtowns and commercial districts.

An applicant must be actively perusing downtown revitalization in their community. This work is often accomplished with partner organizations, long- and short-term planning and a proven track record of successful planning efforts and/or projects. This collective movement, with local partners and grassroots leaders, means a community shares in the prosperity of resilient economies, which in turn improves quality of life through place-based economic development and community preservation downtown.

Montana Main Street members are limited to 40. Thus, it is important to contact the Main Street coordinator to confirm whether the Program accepts applications.

Readiness Checklist

Table A: Community Readiness Checklist

Task	Response
The applicant has been in touch with Commerce MMS Program staff and discussed the community’s vision and goals if accepted as a member community.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
The applicant has identified and convened with a core group of local stakeholders, community leaders, city representatives and development groups that are engaged in downtown revitalization in the community and have gained consensus on participating in the network.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
The applicant has discussed the MMS Program and opportunities with downtown businesses and downtown property owners.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
The applicant follows the Main Street America Four-Point Approach and has created sub-committees focusing on these four points.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<p>The applicant has visited MMS communities to explore other downtown districts and talk to local leaders about the MMS experience.</p> <p>If yes, which communities did the applicant observe?</p> <p>If no, please inquire with the State Program to help your community get connected with similar programs.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

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The applicant has invited MMS to their community for a Main Street 101 presentation and to discuss Program requirements and other downtown revitalization strategies.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
The applicant has established a volunteer base.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
The applicant can demonstrate how they will meet the requirement of submitting an annual report. This is often accomplished by first developing an annual strategic plan or detailed work plan.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
The applicant has a budget for downtown revitalization work.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
The applicant has completed the trainings on organization, design, promotion and economic vitality.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Member Application

Application Submission

Member applications can be submitted by email to Main Street Coordinator Micky Zurcher at micky.zurcher@mt.gov. Confirmation of application will be delivered upon receipt.

Local Government Information

Name of town, city or county	
Address (including city, state, zip)	
Applicant name (chief elected official: mayor, manager, administrator)	
Title	
Wet signature	
Phone	
Email	

Local Coordinating Program Information

Name of Main Street organization	
Address (including city, state, zip)	
Name of contact person	
Title of contact person	
Email of contact person	
Phone number of contact person	
Type of Main Street organization (nonprofit, government, committee, other)	
Date applying	
Community population	
Number of businesses downtown	
Website address (if applicable)	
A. Date of Main Street organization training	
B. Date of Main Street promotion training	
C. Date of Main Street design training	
D. Date of Main Street economic development training	
E. Date of Main Street community visit	
Wet signature	

Please provide additional documentation for training sessions A-E above.

Documentation may include sign-in sheets, public notifications of meetings, social media posts, etc.

Supporting Documentation

In addition to the narrative questions, applicants must provide the documentation described in Table B.

Table B.

Document	Description	Check
Map of the Main Street District	This is the geographic area defined as your local Main Street Program boundary and is also the area you will be using in the Quarterly Update.	
List of current board and committee members	This list should include the name of the person(s), their affiliation to the community, the years they have lived in the community and their role on the board/committee.	
Letters of support	Strong applications will have a minimum of three letters. Support letters should be unique and represent a variety of businesses and organizations.	
Photographs	<p>A minimum of five current photographs showing your downtown district. Photographs may include historic buildings, downtown events, aerial/context images, etc. Suggestions include pictures of projects or activities referenced in your application. Photographs should be high resolution in .jpeg format.</p> <p>By submitting these photographs, you agree to allow photos to be used for promotional purposes by the Montana Department of Commerce.</p>	
SMART Goals	SMART Goals were discussed during the trainings.	

 **COMMERCE**

Work/strategic plan	This is an annual requirement to remain in the Program. Templates and suggestions were discussed during the trainings.	
Community assets	Provide a list of assets. This list can be formal or informal.	

Community Application

1. Why are you interested in becoming a Montana Main Street community?

2. What does your community intend to accomplish as a member of the Montana Main Street Program? Please provide specific examples of the short-, medium- and long-term plans. This question can often be supplemented by submitting a current work plan for your organization or referencing community plans.

3. Briefly list and describe any community downtown revitalization efforts and projects recently completed.

Empty response area for listing and describing community downtown revitalization efforts and projects recently completed.

4. Describe the level of interest in your community for the Main Street Program. This should include an assessment of current/potential volunteer sources, as well as participation by local government, economic development organizations, downtown associations and chambers of commerce, cultural and historical organizations, small businesses, nonprofits, etc. It is important to provide a detailed list of all interested community organizations specifically within the downtown corridor. Supporting documentation is strongly encouraged.



5. Describe the general condition of your downtown buildings and their historical/cultural significance. Are any listed in the National Register of Historic Places?

6. Explain how your community would employ the Main Street Center Four Point Approach in your downtown revitalization efforts. You may address each of the four points in turn or provide a general overview that addresses each of the four points.

7. Describe the funding structure of the local coordinating organization.

While answering this question, please be sure you are clearly identifying which local coordinating organization will be leading Main Street efforts.

Does the organization have a budget and if so, how much? If the organization does not have a budget, please describe how you intend to make an impact in your defined boundary, and which resources will be leveraged.

8. Who will be responsible for completing quarterly updates and other Main Street requirements? Please provide the name, organization, email and phone number.

9. Who from your organization will be the main contact for MMS? Please provide the name, phone number and email. Note: this may be the same individual listed above for No. 8.

10. Please describe your relationship with the local government. Does your organization have a MOU or resolution in place helping define the roles?