



Main Street Information Sheet and FAQs

What is Indiana Main Street?

Indiana Main Street encourages the revitalization and restoration of downtown areas in Indiana cities and towns. The program provides technical assistance and educational opportunities to participating communities. Indiana Main Street is the state's coordinating program to the National Main Street Center.

Indiana Main Street Four Point Approach

Design: Enhancing the physical appearance of the commercial district by rehabilitating historic buildings, encouraging supportive new construction, developing sensitive design management systems and long-term planning. The look of downtown, its streets, signs, buildings and store interiors is unique to each Indiana community. Main Street's goal is to work with all these elements to create a friendly, attractive place that will draw in visitors and businesses.

Organization: Building consensus and cooperation among the many groups and individuals involved in the revitalization process. To ensure a self-reliant, broad-based, long-lasting downtown revitalization program, the entire community must rally around the idea. Cooperation from both the public and the private sector is critical to achieve visible results. In addition, a separate staff and business solely dedicated to downtown revitalization is key to achieving long-term, large-scale results.

Promotion: Marketing the commercial district's assets to customers, potential investors, businesses, local citizens, and visitors. To keep investors, visitors, and businesses coming downtown, Main Street must reshape the community perspective of downtown as a hub of activity. Successful downtown image campaigns, as well as promotional activities that build upon the community's unique heritage and culture send a consistent, compelling message promoting the downtown area.

Economic Restructuring: Strengthening the district's existing economic base while finding ways to expand it to meet new opportunities and challenges from outlying development. Main Street's ultimate goal is to create downtowns that are economically viable. Researching the regional market and consumer trends give Main Street organizations a realistic picture of what market mix will work for their downtown. Based on their research, Main Street organizations can begin stabilizing existing businesses and recruiting new businesses to fill the gaps.

Why Main Street/Why Be a Member

- Decatur's historic commercial district is a prominent employment center and represents a significant portion of the tax base.
- The commercial district is a reflection of the community image.
- Locally owned businesses keep profits in town and support other local businesses and community projects.
- A vibrant downtown creates a feeling of "hometown pride" and sense of place.



Main Street Information Sheet and FAQs

- The downtown district is a public gathering area, where parades, special events, and celebrations are held in a unique setting.
- Community character and historic integrity cannot be recreated.

Downtown Enhancement Grants

Purpose – The Downtown Enhancement Grant program is designed to foster innovative approaches to activities, which support and promote community based planning, pre-development, and research initiatives. The goal of these projects is to improve the quality of life and opportunities for increasing private investment and employment in Indiana Main Street communities. The Downtown enhancement Grant priorities are directed by OCRA’s strategic plan and the National Main Street Four Point Approach (discussed on the first page.)

Applicant Eligibility – Eligible applicants for the Downtown Enhancement Grant are current participating Main Street Programs that have been an active Indiana Main Street community for one year. Decatur became an active community as of October 2014.

An active Main Street organization is one that has a production governing group, which has established committees focusing on the implementation of the Four Point Approach. These communities work toward fulfilling their mission statement as well as implementing their work plan. The communities also submit reports requested by the Indiana Main Street office within the reporting deadlines and attend continuing education sessions and workshops as they are scheduled by the IMS office.

Project Eligibility – Qualifying projects are ones which promote economic development in the downtown areas and will enhance the quality of life in the community. Ideal projects could include, but are not limited to, façade renovations or rehabilitations, creation of way finding signage, streetscape/landscaping, mural restoration and other more permanent initiatives as they relate to the grant purpose.

Funding and Distribution –

1. The awarded amount will be dependent on grant availability and parameters.
2. The required local match for a project is dollar for dollar of the amount of the grant funds requested.
3. A maximum of 10% properly documented in-kind match may be applied toward the total project match.
4. Federal and other state funds may not be used as local match. Philanthropic foundations, especially community foundations, are strongly encouraged to participate and provide cash match.



Main Street Information Sheet and FAQs

FAQs

How does Main Street work locally?

Typically, interest in developing a local Main Street program comes from business or property owners, city government, bankers, civic clubs, the Chamber of Commerce, historic preservationists or other civic-minded groups. Community leaders (both public and private sector) discuss goals, establish an organization (Main Street programs are usually independent non-profit organizations), raise money to hire a Main Street manager, and create committees and a board of directors to carry out the work. Once established, the program's participants examine the commercial district's needs and opportunities and develop a long-term, incremental strategy based on the Main Street Four Point Approach to strengthen commercial activity and improve buildings.

Who should be involved in the local Main Street organization?

Everyone with a stake in the commercial district, and its future should be involved. Merchants, property owners, the Chamber of Commerce, industries, local government and private citizens all benefit from a healthy local economy and from a historic city core that reflects the community's heritage and ideals. Solid partnerships are crucial to the Main Street program's success.

Who pays for the Main Street program? Is it a grant?

No. Financial support for the program comes from the local entities that have a stake in the downtown: city government, merchants, businesses, and the public. The success of the Main Street program over the years can be attributed to the fact that it is a local initiative, both organizationally and financially. People are more likely to become involved in and care more about the success of a project to which they have contributed resources and time.

How long does a local Main Street program last?

Commercial revitalization is an ongoing process. Just as a shopping center has a full-time staff and works constantly to ensure proper leasing, management and marketing, downtown and neighborhood commercial districts need ongoing attention, too.