

Preparing for Main Street Iowa

Main Street is a comprehensive approach to commercial district revitalization. It is imperative that a community fully understands the program and its requirements prior to application. Experience has shown that communities typically take between one and two years to learn about the Main Street Iowa program and its processes before they are ready to commit to the necessary funding. The following four-step process is suggested for a community considering application.

1. Request program materials from Main Street Iowa.
2. An organizing group calls a town meeting to inform local residents about the Main Street program. Invite a representative from a Main Street community to speak to the group about their local program. Reach consensus about whether or not to proceed. Form a core group to conduct a thorough investigation of the program. The group should travel to three or four Main Street districts of similar size to experience local programs. Following the community visits, a second meeting is held. Invite all who attended the first meeting and any other interested groups and individuals to hear the group's results. This will build consensus on whether to proceed to the application stage. Main Street Iowa representatives may be invited to speak at this meeting. Begin a media campaign to inform the community about the program and the results of the core group's findings.
3. Consensus has been reached. The decision to proceed should be supported by local government, development groups, commercial district building and business owners, industry, service groups, etc. Their support must be both financial and philosophical. Continue the media campaign to keep the local citizenry informed of progress.
4. Contact Main Street Iowa about the next application cycle. Applications are usually sought annually, but cycles are dependent on state funding. Completed applications are accepted and reviewed by the Main Street Iowa Advisory Council which makes selection recommendations to the Director of the Iowa Economic Development Authority. The Main Street Iowa Advisory Council members are broad based, have extensive Main Street experience, and include representatives from both the public and private sectors. New programs are announced and begin the start-up phase.

Application information may be requested by contacting:

Main Street Iowa
Iowa Downtown Resource Center
Iowa Economic Development Authority
200 East Grand Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50309 USA
Phone: 515.725.3051
mainstreet@iowa.gov