

Getting Ready for TN Main Street

The Tennessee Main Street program is a Main Street America™ Coordinating Program. Tennessee's vibrant communities are places that anyone would be proud to call home. TNECD Department of Community and Rural Development uses established funding programs and new initiatives to connect communities to funding and technical assistance, to identify and build off their assets, and to advance economic development across the state.

The Main Street™ movement has been transforming the way communities think about the revitalization and management of their downtowns and neighborhood commercial districts for decades. Specifically, Main Street™ is three things: *a proven strategy for revitalization, a powerful network of linked communities, and a national support program that leads the field.* The National Main Street Center is a subsidiary of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

The Main Street Four-Point Approach™ is a unique multi-faceted economic development tool that enables communities to revitalize their downtowns by leveraging local assets - from historic, cultural, and architectural resources to local enterprises and community pride. It is a comprehensive strategy that addresses the variety of issues and problems that challenge traditional commercial districts by focusing on the following areas:

- **Design** - getting downtown into top physical shape and creating a safe, inviting environment through appropriate building renovations, streetscape and public space improvements, good signage, attractive window displays, and overall aesthetic qualities.
- **Economic Vitality** - strengthening the community's existing economic assets while diversifying its economic base through identification of current and potential market opportunities, business retention and recruitment, working with small business owners and entrepreneurs and development of financial assistance and training tools.
- **Promotion** - creating a positive image to rekindle community pride and improve consumer and investor confidence in the commercial district through special events, marketing, and branding; and
- **Organization** - building partnerships among the various groups that have a stake in the downtown and creating a well-run, financially sustainable non-profit organization that operates the Main Street™ program locally.

Getting Ready for TN Main Street continued

To implement a local Main Street™ program, communities typically create a new non-profit organization specifically for this purpose. While this method is often the best option, effective revitalization programs are also housed within city government or in existing nonprofits, such as a business association or economic development corporation. It is important to remember that the organization must involve both the public and private sectors, including downtown interests and stakeholders as well as representatives from throughout the community. Local government must support district revitalization and the Main Street Four-Point Approach™ philosophically and financially. The private sector must embrace the Main Street Approach and provide ideas, time, expertise, and resources to make the local revitalization program successful.

A local non-profit Main Street™ organization is governed by a Board of Directors, supported by paid, professional staff, and engages a variety of volunteers who implement projects and activities that correspond to each of the “four points”. The National Main Street Center oversees coordinating programs, such as the Tennessee Main Street program, and provides a variety of resources to support downtown revitalization and “placemaking” in the United States. More information about the Main Street Four-Point Approach™ and the National Main Street Center is available online at www.MainStreet.org.

The Tennessee Main Street Program

As a Main Street America™ Coordinating Program, Tennessee Main Street is part of a powerful, grassroots network consisting of over 40 Coordinating Programs and over 1,200 neighborhoods and communities across the country committed to creating high-quality places and to building stronger communities through preservation-based economic development.

The Tennessee Main Street (TMS) Program serves as a statewide resource for communities seeking to revitalize and manage their traditional downtowns. In 2003, the Tennessee legislature approved a resolution to re-establish the Tennessee Main Street Program in order to assist these communities with their economic revitalization and development efforts. Although TMS serves as a general information source in this capacity, hands-on technical services (including training and research) are typically delivered to local programs that have achieved designation through a structured application process and maintain designation annually by meeting program requirements and submitting an annual report. TMS designated communities have developed an organization specifically focused on downtown revitalization and are effectively applying the National Main Street Center’s comprehensive Four-Point Approach™.

Getting Ready for TN Main Street continued

TMS is administered by the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development's Community and Rural Development Division. It follows the proven downtown revitalization model developed by the National Main Street Center.

Benefits

There are many benefits to establishing a designated Main Street program in your community. They start at the national level through affiliation with the National Main Street Center. This respected, proven nationwide program provides resources, training, and technical assistance through coordinating statewide programs (such as TN Main Street).

Designated Tennessee Main Street programs receive on-site technical assistance, participate in quarterly training meetings, and have access to special webinar series, grant opportunities, and media spotlights. Communities benefit from a structured approach with professional management and annual reporting, so progress can be easily monitored, communicated, and celebrated.