

# CALL FOR APPLICATIONS 2012

## Maine Downtown Network

### *Main Street at a Lighter Pace*

Application deadline: March 30, 2012



#### BACKGROUND

Healthy, thriving downtowns and neighborhood commercial districts are assets to communities endeavoring to sustain or grow their local economy and create or retain jobs. The Maine Development Foundation's Maine Downtown Center (MDC) helps communities throughout the state develop local leadership to revitalize their downtown economy, preserve and enhance their appearance, and boost the image of their traditional business districts using a range of services and assistance.

We serve as the Main State Coordinator for the National Trust Main Street Center, and utilize the successful Main Street Four-Point Approach®, developed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, as the foundation for our work.

1. **Organization** helps everyone work towards the same revitalization goals and maximizes involvement of public and private leaders within the community;
2. **Design** preserves and protects historic buildings and community character and enhances a downtown's appearance through streetscape improvements and pedestrian amenities;
3. **Promotion** attracts visitors and residents, shoppers and diners, and help create a positive, exciting atmosphere downtown;
4. **Economic restructuring** stimulates business development and helps strengthen the downtown economic base through business retention and recruitment.

#### OVERVIEW OF THE MAINE DOWNTOWN NETWORK

The Maine Downtown Center, a program of the Maine Development Foundation, was founded in 1999. Our three-tier program includes the Main Street Maine and Maine Downtown Network programs and the Downtown Institute, an annual training series. The latter two began in 2009. Currently, 17 communities across the state participate in the Maine Downtown Network (MDN) program: Augusta, Bar Harbor, Brunswick, Bucksport, Damariscotta, Dover-Foxcroft, Eastport, Farmington, Houlton, Lisbon, Machias, Madawaska, Millinocket, Norway, Presque Isle, Stonington and Van Buren. The MDN program provides a range of services and assistance to meet a variety of community commitment and readiness levels. MDN designation is for communities involved in developing their downtown revitalization efforts and/or for those communities hoping to achieve Main Street Maine status in the future. Only MDN communities are eligible to apply for designation as a Main Street Maine community.

MDN services help communities build an appropriate organizational and funding base for a comprehensive downtown or neighborhood commercial district revitalization program. Participation as a MDN community does not guarantee selection as a future designated Main Street Maine community, although it will help communities focus and strengthen their revitalization efforts. A core service to MDN communities is access to training by state and national downtown development and preservation experts. MDN communities have the opportunity to learn about best practices in the field, apply what they've learned and to network with peers from around the state.

#### PRIORITY FOR 2012 APPLICATIONS

- Communities who are actively organized their downtown efforts around the Main Street Four-Point Approach®. Specifically, this includes attendance by local downtown leaders at Maine Downtown Conference and Downtown Institute sessions and developing downtown-passionate volunteers from across the community. Engaged volunteers are an essential component.

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## CALL FOR APPLICATIONS - MAINE DOWNTOWN NETWORK

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Selection is a competitive process. The Maine Downtown Center expects to designate up to four new Maine Downtown Network communities in 2012.

**Application Deadline: March 30, 2012**

Electronic submission is required.

Please send to Roxanne Eflin, Senior Program Director, at [reflin@mdf.org](mailto:reflin@mdf.org).

**Checklist of items to include, in order, in your application (ONE PDF, attached to email):**

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- ✓ **Town or City**
- ✓ **Coordinating Applicant/Organization/Department**
- ✓ **Lead Contact name and title**
- ✓ **Lead Contact information (address, phone(s), fax, email and web address)**
- ✓ **List of the names, titles and contact information and roles of all key people involved with your downtown efforts**
- ✓ **Describe Your Downtown** The boundaries/primary focus area of the organization must be:
  - A traditional central business district and center for socio-economic interaction, characterized by a cohesive core of historic and/or older commercial and mixed-use buildings that represent the community's architectural heritage. It may also include compatible in-fill development.
  - Have a sufficient mass of businesses, buildings, and density to be effective.
  - Typically arranged with most of the buildings side-by-side and fronting the sidewalk along a main street with intersecting side streets; compact, easily walkable, and pedestrian-oriented.
- ✓ **Provide streetscape photos (minimum of four from multiple angles) and a map of the downtown district indicating the boundaries of your focused efforts.**
- ✓ **Describe Your Organized Effort and Vision for Downtown:** A well organized effort is one that is broad-based and comprised of many downtown stakeholders (merchants and business owners), residents and municipal government. Describe the committee or group's structure, leadership and volunteers who will manage and inspire the downtown program.
- ✓ **Provide a Budget Summary:** Income and Expenses and sources of each, including in-kind contributions are needed. Maine Downtown Network communities must be willing to work toward developing diversified and sustainable program funding for their downtown efforts.
- ✓ **Pledge Your Commitment**
  - The Main Street Four-Point Approach® provides a proven and comprehensive approach specifically designed to address the issues and opportunities of traditional commercial districts. Following this approach is a requirement of initial and on-going participation, and is the foundation of all MDC assistance. Regular communication with the MDC is required.
  - A partnership agreement and an annual participation fee ranging from \$250-\$1,000 (based upon population) are required from all Downtown Network communities.
  - Representatives must attend MDC trainings (minimum of three per year) to remain active as a member of the Maine Downtown Network. Discounted registration at both the Downtown Institute and the Downtown Conference is intended to stimulate participation.
  - Services from the Maine Downtown Center are provided for two years; however, participating communities must actively build organizational readiness to remain at this level for the entire commitment period. The Downtown Network-level membership with the Maine Downtown Center does not authorize a local organization to use the Main Street trademarked name.

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<b>SERVICES PROVIDED TO MAINE DOWNTOWN NETWORK COMMUNITIES</b>	
Downtown Institute & Annual Conference	MDC sponsored training by a variety of experts on key downtown development topics. Discounts and scholarships are available. (various locations)
Start-up Visit and Report	MDC staff and Advisors conduct a Start Up Visit with the local leaders and provide a written report <u>with a prioritized step-by-step checklist</u> to help guide work planning for Years One and Two.
Consultations	MDC staff available for email/phone consultations.
Organizational Visit (Early in Year Two) and specialized training	On site visit with staff and Advisors helps identify progress and provides suggestions for moving forward. Specific trainings may be included.
Membership to National Main Street Center	Allows access to Members-only section of National Main Street Center's website and extensive resource and training library; discounts on books/trainings.
New Manager Orientation/Training	Help for a program manager or executive director should one be hired.
Coordinator Meetings	Following each Downtown Institute, time is reserved for "networking with the Network" which includes training by staff along with a program update.
Maine Street Resource Café (online library)	Publications, PowerPoints and documents are available online. Books and publications are also available in hard copy to checkout from the office.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

**Roxanne Eflin, Senior Program Director**  
**Maine Development Foundation/Maine Downtown Center**

[www.mdf.org](http://www.mdf.org)

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