



A program of the MAINE DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION  
[mdf.org](http://mdf.org)

## MAIN STREET MAINE PROGRAM

### 2012 APPLICATION GUIDELINES

*Application Deadline:*

**5:00 p.m.**

**Friday, March 30, 2012**

*Open to all*

*Maine Downtown Network Communities*

**Submit to:**

Roxanne Eflin, Senior Program Director  
Maine Downtown Center

295 Water Street, Suite 5, Augusta, Maine 04330  
[reflin@mdf.org](mailto:reflin@mdf.org) | 207.626.3117 | [www.mdf.org](http://www.mdf.org)

# MAIN STREET MAINE APPLICATION GUIDELINES

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# Introduction

This manual contains information for Maine Downtown Network communities submitting applications for participation in the Main Street Maine Program. Please review this manual carefully before beginning the application process. Selection of Main Street Maine communities is based on resource availability. A selection committee comprised of Maine Downtown Center staff and Advisors will designate one Main Street Maine community in 2012. Additional communities will be added in future years as additional funding and resources become available.

Further information about the Main Street Maine Program may be obtained from:

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reflin@mdf.org | www.mdf.org

For information on the National Trust Main Street program from the National Trust for Historic Preservation, visit [www.mainstreet.org](http://www.mainstreet.org)

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## TIMELINE\*

Deadline for Application	Friday, March 30, 2012, 4:00 p.m.
Selection Committees visit community	April 2012
Announce New Main Street Maine Community during the Downtown Conference	May 18, 2012
Begin work with New Community:	June 2012 and on!

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## The Main Street Maine Approach to Downtown Revitalization

### Maine's Approach

Maine is blessed with numerous historic commercial downtown districts that contribute significantly to our local economy and the quality of place that help defines our state. Vibrant downtowns help small businesses grow and thrive, attract young and creative entrepreneurs, host cultural and artistic events and venues, and provide an alternative to our growing challenge of suburban sprawl. They provide residents and visitors alike with unique shopping alternatives and restaurants as well as key services such as health care, education, and libraries.

To help spur the revitalization of Maine's historic downtowns, the Maine Downtown Center (MDC) was created in 1999 by the Legislature to be the statewide resource for downtown revitalization efforts. A program of the non-profit, non-partisan Maine Development Foundation, MDC works

with communities across the state that are developing and/or implementing downtown revitalization strategies. MDC is the statewide coordinator in Maine for the National Trust Main Street Center and serves as Maine's leading resource for downtown revitalization and provides technical assistance, training and coaching to community leaders.

Successful downtown revitalization programs encompass much more than building improvements, façade restoration and parades. Most communities require a comprehensive revitalization strategy that focuses on bringing people back to the downtown district while simultaneously addressing economic issues and physical improvements. Simply improving buildings will not bring business and customers back to the downtown. There is no one thing, no one magic answer, to downtown revitalization; rather, it is a long-term process that requires the commitment and support of the entire community.

In order to provide communities with a comprehensive strategy for downtown revitalization, we instituted the Main Street Maine program in 2001. Our program is based on the successful Main Street economic development model developed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Communities are chosen through a competitive application process, and must demonstrate broad-based community support for the program as well as a strong commitment to raise funds to operate and sustain a professionally staffed downtown revitalization program based on the Main Street Four-Point Approach®. Once selected, communities receive technical assistance and training from the Maine Downtown Center over a three-year period, with on-going support in later years. Current Main Street Maine communities are Bath, Belfast, Biddeford, Gardiner, Rockland, Saco, Sanford, Skowhegan, and Waterville. We encourage interested applicants to visit these communities and meet with Main Street board members and staff before submitting an application.

## **The National Trust Main Street Program - Overview**

The Main Street Four-Point Approach® was developed in 1977 by the National Main Street® Center of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. There are currently over 2,200 communities nationwide who have applied the Main Street Four-Point Approach® to revitalize their historic downtown commercial districts. The National Trust Main Street Center reports that, over the last 30 years, \$48.8 billion dollars in reinvestment in their downtown commercial districts, the creation of 87,850 net new businesses and over 391,050 net new jobs, and 206,600 building rehabilitation projects. While concentrating on revitalization of the community's historic commercial center, these local volunteer-based programs enhance the economic vitality, quality of life, and civic pride of the whole community while countering sprawl and encouraging greater citizen participation in the decisions that are shaping their future.

While commercial district revitalization can be addressed in many ways, the underlying premise of the Main Street Four-Point Approach® is to encourage economic development within the context of historic preservation that is appropriate to today's market place. This proven strategy advocates a return to community self-reliance, empowerment, and the rebuilding of commercial districts based on its many unique assets including historic architecture, local ownership, and a sense of community.

**The Main Street Four-Point Approach® is incremental and will not produce wholesale, immediate change.** Expensive improvements, such as pedestrian malls constructed with once plentiful public funds, often fail to address the underlying causes of commercial district decline and do not always produce the desired economic results. If a long-term revitalization effort is to

succeed, it will require careful attention to every aspect of downtown – a process that takes time and requires leadership, vision and local capacity building. The Main Street program should be seen as one of many tools that a community utilizes to generate economic and entrepreneurial growth. Also, while an important component of an overall plan for downtown revitalization, communities should not confuse substantial public improvement projects for the Main Street program.

A local Main Street program is not designed to tackle the larger issues of an entire community. The focus is limited to the revitalization of the central business district. This certainly takes into account that a healthy, economically viable, and attractive downtown is important to the community's overall health and vitality, and vice versa.

Both the public and private sectors of the community must be involved and committed for a local Main Street program to succeed. Each sector has an important role to play and each must understand the other's needs, strengths and limitations so that an effective partnership can be created. An effective Main Street program has representation from downtown merchants and building owners, community residents, and official town representation (city manager, select board member, etc). You may find that your community has other key stakeholders, such as local economic development organizations, business associations or Chambers, faith-based organizations, and/or local community development organizations. For more information, visit the National Trust Main Street Center's web site at [www.mainstreet.org](http://www.mainstreet.org).

## **The National Main Street Center's Four-Point Approach®**

The Main Street methodology addresses the following four areas of concern and combines activities in these areas to develop a community's individual strategy for redeveloping their downtown. They are organization, design, promotion and economic restructuring.

### **Organization**

The Main Street Four-Point Approach® to downtown revitalization requires the effort of the entire community. The merchants, property owners, local government officials, community residents, and civic leaders must agree to support common goals for revitalization and join together in a partnership. Successful Main Street programs are usually structured as a 501(c)3 non-profit organization guided by an active working volunteer board with four standing committees that correspond to the Four Points develop projects and work plans for implementation. Local programs hire a paid downtown manager\* who is necessary to coordinate the various efforts of the organization's board of directors, individuals and groups to ensure that all are working together to develop the downtown. (\*The downtown manager may also be titled Executive Director.)

### **Design**

Good design is essential to all aspects of downtown revitalization, the core of which is grounded in historic preservation. Importantly, the Main Street design philosophy seeks to utilize and enhance those elements of quality design that remain in each building. Good design must be extended to include promotional literature, storefront window and merchandise displays, signs, banners, trees, flowers, public building and infrastructure improvements and street amenities.

### **Promotion**

The promotion of the downtown as a single, unified commercial area will help attract customers and strengthen Main Street's role as a viable business center. The downtown organization should

coordinate an aggressive promotion and marketing campaign that includes a program of special public and retail events. If it is to thrive, the downtown must improve both its self-image and the image it projects to potential customers and investors.

### **Economic Restructuring**

Economic restructuring – also known as business development - seeks to change the ways in which downtown “works” by restoring many of the elements that Main Street has lost over the past few decades. While many small downtowns may not regain their dominance as primary retail centers, careful economic and market analysis usually confirms that they can maintain economic strength by diversifying the present mix of retail uses and by attracting new retail and non-retail functions, including office, recreation, services, and residential uses. Retail and business retention and recruitment, development of effective merchandising techniques, encouraging entrepreneurial reuse of upper stories for downtown housing and office space, and better utilization of existing and potential recreational assets are all aspects of economic restructuring.

## **The National Main Street Center’s Eight Principles**

Countless experiences in helping communities bring renewed life to downtown have shown time and again that the Main Street Four-Point Approach® succeeds only when combined with the following eight foundation principles:

### **1. Comprehensive**

A single project cannot revitalize a downtown or commercial neighborhood. An ongoing series of initiatives of the four points is vital to build community support and create lasting progress.

### **2. Incremental**

Small projects make a big difference. They demonstrate that “things are happening” on Main Street and hone the skills and confidence the program will need to tackle more complex problems. Over time, small changes make a dramatic difference in the commercial district.

### **3. Self-help**

The Maine Downtown Center can provide valuable direction and hands-on technical assistance, but only local leadership will bring long-term success by fostering and demonstrating grassroots community involvement and building local capacity, entrepreneurship and commitment to the revitalization effort.

### **4. Public/Private partnership**

Every local Main Street program needs the support and expertise of both the public and private sectors. Both local government and the private sector bear responsibility for funding the local Main Street program.

### **5. Identifying and capitalizing on existing assets**

To avoid mistakes or creating false expectations, one of the Maine Downtown Center’s key goals is to empower communities to recognize and make the best use of their unique offerings. Local assets provide the solid foundation of a successful Main Street initiative.

## **6. Quality**

From storefront design to promotional campaigns to graphics to special events, quality must be the goal. The local Main Street program and the commercial district must be synonymous with quality.

## **7. Change**

Changing community attitudes and habits is essential to bring about a commercial district renaissance. A carefully planned Main Street program will help create paradigm shifts that change public perceptions and practices to support and sustain the revitalization process.

## **8. Action-oriented**

Frequent, visible changes in the look and activities of the commercial district will reinforce the perception of positive change. Small, but dramatic improvements early in the process will remind merchants and the community that the revitalization effort is underway. This requires the hands-on involvement of program leaders, staff, and volunteers.

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# **Services Provided to Main Street Maine Communities**

**The following services are provided by the Maine Downtown Center to all communities:**

### **Maine Downtown Institute**

A series of six affordable half-day training workshops on downtown revitalization topics are held each year. These are open to the public and afford an excellent opportunity to learn and network.

### **Maine Downtown Conference**

One to two day major event, hosted by a different downtown each year.

### **Online Resource Library**

The online Library includes valuable links and information on over 20 topics about downtown revitalization – printable documents and great browsing found here.

### **Hard Copy Resource Library**

Access to hard copy files, newsletters, reports and audiovisual aids relating to downtown revitalization from the Maine Downtown Center.

### **Telephone/E-Mail Consultation**

MDC staff is available by telephone and e-mail to discuss and offer advice on Downtown issues.

### **Community Talks and Workshops**

A PowerPoint presentation and discussion about downtown revitalization, or a facilitated discussion about downtown priority-setting.

### **Special Consulting**

MDC staff or consultants are available for a fee to facilitate community organizing. Staff and/or consultants can provide on-site assistance for boards and staff to deal with local issues and problems. This can involve special strategy sessions, goal setting, committee training, or other specialized assistance.

**The following services are available to officially designated Main Street Maine communities:**

### **Year-One Training and Technical Assistance**

A package of \$30,000 in training funding and technical assistance is provided by the Center to each Main Street Maine community on a draw-down basis, to be used in a variety of ways over the first

two-three years of their Main Street designation. Communities can expect to receive the following types of intensive assistance during their first year in the program:

### **Reconnaissance Visits**

The MDC staff will visit each community to assist with an informal needs assessment, to help organize the downtown program and activities.

### **Hiring Assistance**

While it is the sole decision of the local organization as to who is hired to serve as staff to the Main Street organization, the MDC requires consulting prior to hiring the director (also referred to as the local manager.) The MDC Senior Program Director or designee will be included as a non-voting member of the hiring panel. Sample job descriptions, job announcements and other information to help insure the best possible hiring choice is available through the MDC. The MDC can also assist the community by posting the opening on our website and on the job listing service at the National Main Street Center website.

### **Main Street Approach Training and Organizational Development Assistance**

Two full days of training sessions for downtown boards and managers are provided. The MDC staff and specialists in the areas of organization, design, promotion, and economic restructuring, will provide training. The sessions will emphasize the mechanics of downtown revitalization and what it means to be a Main Street Manager and a member of a board. A minimum of eight should attend these sessions, though more are encouraged. Additionally, MDC staff will be available to each community for a total of two days to assist with aspects of organizational development (organizing committees, by-laws, fundraising, strategic planning, etc.) – based on specific community needs.

### **Resource Team Visits**

Four experts on-site for three days are provided. Highly experienced and skilled interdisciplinary team members from the fields of nonprofit leadership, architecture, business development and marketing will be assembled to address the needs of each Main Street Maine community. This resource team will spend three days in each town meeting with community leaders to observe and analyzing local conditions. An Resource Team Report will be produced to provide the basis for the local downtown organization's ongoing work plans.

### **Design Assistance**

An architect will visit each community for a total of three days during the initial one-two years. These visits might consist of one-on-one visits with property owners on a building-by-building basis. The architect will offer suggestions for improvements and will assist with facade improvements (no interior work), infill building design, and graphics for such things as signage and streetscape improvements. Design work will typically include sketch elevations and design guidelines.

### **Specialized Technical Assistance and Training**

Funds are available to hire experts mutually chosen by the local program and the MDC Senior Program Director will assist local programs with specific aspects of the Main Street Four-Point Approach®. For instance, experts may be engaged to assist with market analysis, graphic design, branding and marketing the downtown, organizing promotions and special events, and a variety of other topics.

### **Program Evaluation**

At the end of the first year of a Main Street Maine program, Downtown Center staff, assisted by member of the Center's Advisory Council and Senior Advisors, will conduct a program evaluation and discuss findings with the local Downtown Director and Board.

## **Three Years of Training and Networking**

Main Street Maine communities can expect to receive the following types of assistance for each of the first three years following official designation:

### **Main Street Conferences – State and National**

Maine Downtown Center will pay registration fees for attendance (see below). Local programs or participants need to pay for their own travel and accommodations.

- National Main Street Conference: Manager and one board member
- State Downtown conference attendance: Manager and four people

### **Membership in the National Main Street Network**

For three years, each Main Street Maine community will receive paid membership in the National Trust Main Street Network, valued at \$250/year. Benefits of membership include a monthly newsletter, access to on-line database and list serve, a telephone information hot-line, and discounts to conferences, on Main Street publications, products and trainings.

### **Specialized Technical Assistance and Training**

Technical assistance provided in second and third years of the organization's program are intensive, but less structured and will vary depending on the community's needs. Executive Director and volunteer meetings and workshops and ongoing technical assistance will continue. Progress evaluations and assistance in yearly work plan development are generally considered necessary services provided by the MDC upon request. Special visits to address a particular local topic of concern will also be offered. MDC staff expects to spend one or two days on-site in each year-two and year-three community.

### **Public Relations**

Maine Downtown Center staff and specialists will visit with community and business leaders to help generate community interest. MDC will publicize local accomplishments and promote local events.

### **Downtown Managers Meetings and Annual Retreats**

Downtown managers are required to attend meetings that include an educational component as well as discussion and networking. These are usually held immediately following each Downtown Institute session (six times per year). One yearly three-day training retreat funded by the MDC is required for all managers.

## **Green Downtowns and Downtown Innovation Grants**

Main Street Maine communities will be eligible to apply for matching grants as funds are available. These grants range in size and designed to be used for small, creative and highly visible projects.

## **Benefits of Main Street Maine Designation**

The most important benefit to Main Street Maine designation is that, over time, the heart of your downtown will become a more thriving, aesthetically pleasing and productive center of commerce and social activity. The program promotes local leadership development and civic engagement, supports local business retention and recruitment efforts, improves the downtown's visual image, and brings people downtown again through promotions and other events.

In addition to the value of technical assistance and training provided by the MDC, there are other tangible benefits including:

- ❖ Access to MDC Advisors. Our Advisory Council and Senior Advisors are experienced experts in a variety of fields related to downtown revitalization, and many provide pro bono and in-kind assistance and guidance to designated Main Street Maine communities.
- ❖ Inclusion in Maine Downtown Center grant applications. From time to time, the MDC initiates grant applications to support Main Street Maine and Maine Downtown Network programming at the state and local level.
- ❖ CDBG Downtown Revitalization Grants. Main Street Maine communities are awarded 3 extra points through the Department of Economic and Community Development's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) grant program for downtown revitalization. (Maine Downtown Network communities are awarded 1 extra point.)

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## Community Commitment

### Prepare and Submit Application

Any Maine Downtown Network community may apply for Main Street Maine designation in accordance with the following:

- ✓ At least two representatives of the applying organization must attend an application workshop which will be held in January in their community; TBD.
- ✓ Completed application is received no later than 4:00 p.m., Friday, March 30, 2012:
  - Must include signed pledges of financial and other commitments
  - Must include resolution of support by the municipality
- ✓ If chosen as the next Main Street Maine Community, a Letter of Agreement must be signed with the MDC, stating:
  - Community pledges to use the Main Street Four Point Approach®, hire a downtown manager, and have a downtown organization
  - MDC pledges to offer training, technical assistance and other responsibilities.

In applying for designation as a Main Street Maine community, you are inviting representatives from the MDC and the National Trust Main Street Center to help guide and focus your downtown revitalization efforts based on the Main Street approach.

### Financial Commitment

**Main Street Maine communities must raise adequate funding to support a downtown management program for at least three years. It is very important to understand that this is an ongoing program, not merely a three year project, and funding will be needed after the initial three year pledge.** It is important this be communicated to all funders.

For municipalities with populations greater than 5,000, there must be adequate funding to support a full-time downtown manager. For municipalities with populations less than 5,000, there must be adequate funding to support a downtown manager at least 25 hours per week. However, MDC strongly encourages even small communities to consider a full-time manager.

Short of actually being able to secure three years of adequate funding by the application deadline, consideration will be given to demonstrating commitment to secure funding by virtue of pledge letters and other means.

**Besides ample and sustainable funding to pay the manager's salary and benefits, the downtown organization must provide an adequate operating budget to cover expenditures for travel, training, promotions, specialist services, office rent, computer and internet service, printing, postage, and other miscellaneous expenses for operating and effectively managing a Main Street program.** The amount of the budget will vary from community-to-community depending on size, needs, and the area's cost-of-living. Municipalities and businesses that fund the Main Street program should view this as an *investment*. (See sample budgets under Section VII, letters F & G).

After the initial three years, if the program has shown measurable results, it is logical that the community (municipality, residents, merchants, business owners, civic leaders, etc.) would continue funding a successful program. Applicants must develop adequate growth-oriented budgets for a minimum of the program's first three years.

Each community is encouraged to generate volunteer, in-kind or paid assistance to provide administrative/clerical support. Your manager is a paid professional with a busy, comprehensive work load, spending much time working downtown, away from the office and out from behind a desk. Assistance is needed to help with mailings, filing, phone calls, website updating, etc.

Community-based funding to support a downtown management program for three years may come from municipal government, local business contributions, contributions from local individuals, community-based fundraising events, and other sources. A minimum one third of program funding needs to come from the municipality.

## **Institutional Commitment**

### **1. Have an existing downtown organization or start one**

Lasting downtown revitalization efforts will only succeed in communities having well structured and ongoing, incorporated active downtown organizations. Such groups assume responsibility for certain needed tasks such as downtown promotions, facilitation of private sector building improvements and other cooperative projects. The downtown organization is responsible for establishing the overall direction of the local revitalization program, the program budget and staff. This organization should ultimately become a contact for the local community government on all matters affecting the downtown. This entails building a certain amount of trust, understanding, mutual respect and open support of each one's roles.

### **2. Commit to using the Main Street Four-Point Approach and Eight Principles**

All Main Street Maine communities are required to work systematically through a work plan stating goals and objectives based on the Eight-Principle Main Street Four-Point Approach to downtown revitalization – concentrating attention on issues related to design, organization, promotion, and economic restructuring. While the approach is tailored to each community, training and technical assistance is geared to this successful model. Annual National Main Street Accreditation is the goal.

## **Time Commitment**

**A considerable time commitment will be required of volunteers in order to implement the Main Street Maine program. It is essential that all board members realize what is expected of them.**

Below is a list of the sample time requirements of the local program staff and board of directors. Many of these meetings are mandatory for the downtown manager and board members. Attendance is recommended at some meetings for other members of the downtown organization.

## Projected Time Requirements:

Main Street Approach Training	Two days – all board members
Reconnaissance Visit	One day – all board members
Resource Team Visits	Three days – all board members
Local Board and Committee work	Four to six days – all board members
Downtown Manager Meetings	Four to Six days per year – staff
Downtown Institute	Six days – staff and as many board members as possible
National Main Street Conference	Three to Four days – Required for all Managers; recommended for at least one board member
Maine Downtown Conference	One day – staff and as many board members as possible

## Evaluation and Information Sharing

Upon completion of the first year of operating as a Main Street Maine program, the MDC will conduct a program evaluation and share the results with the program leadership. The evaluation will include successes and areas for improvement. It is expected that each Main Street Maine community will freely discuss lessons learned with other Maine communities. Staff and local leaders may be asked occasionally to make presentations to other communities.

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# Selection of Main Street Maine Communities

## Criteria

The MDC Selection Committee will designate downtowns likely to show demonstrable success. The following criteria will be used to designate Main Street® Maine communities:

Funding Commitment	20%
Broad Public/Private Support	20%
Foundation for Revitalization	20%
Work Plan	20%
Likelihood of Demonstrable Change	20%

### A. Basic Information

Part A of the application form asks for basic information. While not strictly part of the criteria by which applications will be judged, this information will be reviewed and will assist the selection committee with the decision. Compiling this information will also benefit the applicant community.

### B. Funding commitment to sustain local program – 20%

Ideally, enough funds are formally committed to support a downtown manager, support staff, and an office for at least three years. Communities over 5,000 should raise enough funds to support a program with a full-time downtown manager. Communities under 5,000 should raise enough funds to support a program with a Downtown Manager working 25 hours per week. In lieu of formal commitment of funds, pledges of intent to commit funds will be considered. Signed, written pledges will be given more consideration than less formal pledges.

Commitments for cash pledges are given more consideration than pledges of in-kind support, although in-kind support is valid. The higher percentage of funds needed that are committed in writing, the more consideration will be given. Additional consideration will be given to applicants that show commitment of funding support beyond three years. Again, this is an ongoing program, not a three year project, and funding will be needed after the initial three year pledge.

### C. Broad-based public/private support – 20%

Ideally, funding support is balanced from among the following three sources:

Municipal government	1/3
Downtown businesses and property owners	1/3
Residents, Events and other sources	1/3

These are not exact and rigid requirements, but should be used as a guide when developing your local fundraising strategy. In lieu of support coming in thirds from each of the above noted sources, consideration will be given for support from a variety of sources. Minimal consideration will be given to applications where overwhelming support comes from a single source.

The desire to become a Main Street Maine community is supported throughout the community and this is demonstrated with letters of support from a wide variety of community interests, such as businesses, property owners, non-profit organizations, and residents.

### D. Foundation for Downtown Revitalization – 20%

The community will demonstrate the following:

- Strong, capable public and private sector leadership with a solid knowledge of and strong desire for downtown revitalization
- A non-profit organization devoted to downtown revitalization and supported by a broad mix of public and private interests
- An accomplished track record of planning and actions that demonstrate commitment to community improvement, or a proven commitment to achieve, such as:
  - i. A town-approved comprehensive plan consistent with Maine’s Growth Management Act
  - ii. A Downtown Revitalization Plan
  - iii. A well defined Main Street or central business district for which there is existing data on business mix, housing, size, and market position of the commercial district.
  - iv. Existence of local historic preservation plan and activity such as locally landmarked properties and/or properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places, a local historic district and/or National Register Historic District, demolition delay ordinance, design standards and guidelines and a system of design review.
  - v. Other activities, institutions, and/or plans that contribute to a strong foundation for establishing a Main Street Maine program.

In lieu of an already established nonprofit organization, the following will be considered:

- Pledge of commitment to establish an independent 501(c)3 organization
- Establishment of a formal affiliation with a similar organization with a downtown focus
- Pledge of commitment to establish a formal affiliation with a similar organization with a downtown focus
- **NOTE:** The MDC Selection Committee *may* consider an application from a Downtown Network municipality who demonstrates capacity and commitment to serve as the lead downtown coordinating organization, thereby funding the manager’s position and benefits, provided a nonprofit organization dedicated to downtown revitalization serves in partnership with the program.

### E. Work plan for downtown revitalization – 20%

The work plan will:

- a. incorporate the Main Street Four-Point Approach® to downtown revitalization and demonstrates broad-based understanding of the approach and the Eight Principles
- b. work toward a vision for the downtown that is widely supported by the community
- c. build on existing community strengths and addresses existing community weaknesses
- d. perpetuate an ethic of historic preservation

- e. includes a realistic three-year budget that supports:
  - Downtown Manager
  - Support staff
  - Administrative expenses including office, travel, promotions, etc.
  - Ongoing training for staff and volunteers

In lieu of full incorporation of each of the above listed elements, consideration will be given to work plans that partially incorporate these elements.

## **F. Likelihood of demonstrable change – 20%**

Ideally, the application persuades any reader that if awarded Main Street Maine designation, this community will achieve great things relative to their present status. Over the next few years downtown investment will increase, the number of downtown businesses and downtown jobs will grow significantly, valuation of downtown property will increase, and the downtown will experience an obvious and profound cultural change. Essentially, downtown will be more active and vibrant!

Considerations include: (1) true need for commercial district revitalization and preservation, (2) changing demographics and economic conditions, (3) likelihood of success of the program as designed. The community's starting place may be a factor in its ability to achieve great improvements, but it is not the most important factor. Likelihood of demonstrable change is the most important factor.

## **Selection Process**

Main Street Maine designation is determined by the Senior Program Director of the MDC based on the recommendation of the MDC's Selection Committee. The selected Main Street Maine community will be announced during the Maine Downtown Conference. After designation is announced, if desired, the Director of the Maine Downtown Center will meet with all other communities that applied to discuss their application.

**Note:** Please do not be discouraged if your application for participating in the Main Street Maine Program is not accepted this year. The application process itself is a very valuable experience. The questions you and others will seek to answer and the goals you will articulate during the application process may help to provide direction to your town's downtown revitalization efforts – and make your community better positioned for designation in the future.

## **Assistance from the Maine Downtown Center**

Staff and Advisory Council members of the Maine Downtown Center want to be helpful to communities as they prepare their applications; however, at the same time we want to be sure all applicant communities are treated similarly. For this reason, the MDC has established the following Application Assistance Guidelines:

1. Applicant communities may contact Roxanne Eflin, MDC Senior Program Director with any questions regarding the application process. Questions shall be sent via email to [reflin@mdf.org](mailto:reflin@mdf.org).
2. Written answers to all questions submitted will be posted on the MDC webpage.

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## **How To Apply**

Any previously designated Maine Downtown Network community may apply for Main Street Maine designation. At least two representatives of the applying organization must attend the pre-application workshop listed on Page 3. A completed application must be received in the MDC office and via email no later than 4:00 p.m., March 30, 2012.

## How to Prepare an Application

The application is designed to be completed by laypersons and should not be completed by just one person. One of the most effective ways to complete the application and build awareness of the Main Street program locally is to make multiple copies of the application and divide the application into sections to be completed by members of the Main Street steering committee or organizing group. Collect the answers and transfer them to the original form, gathering the appropriate signatures where needed. A wide variety of individuals, governments, and constituent groups can and should be involved in completing the application.

### Application Helpful Hints

1. Begin work first on those items which depend on other people – such as obtaining a municipal resolution and/or pledges of financial support.
2. Every question may not be relevant to every applicant. N/A (Not Applicable) may be an acceptable answer to some questions.
3. The downtown management area/boundary should be the well-defined traditional commercial core of your community. Select the area that has the strongest concentration of commercial buildings. Avoid the temptations to include many peripheral areas with mixed uses, scattered buildings and vacant land. Focus on your traditional downtown area.
4. Be generous and complete with your budget. For instance, the downtown manager and volunteers will have to travel to several meetings per year, in some cases national conferences.
5. Broad-based participation is essential to a successful Main Street Program. Letters and resolutions of support from a wide range of organizations offer a strong indication that participation will be community-wide. We encourage you to think of the application process as a tool to seek community opinions and to build partnerships. Groups that you may wish to solicit for support are: businesses, residents, shoppers, schools, libraries, local organizations, government (municipal), individual merchants, chambers of commerce, tourism/convention and visitor bureaus, historical societies, financial institutions, arts associations, civic organizations, real estate professionals, property owners and other constituents. Letters of support should explain the writer's commitment to the Main Street Program such as: financial support, in-kind contributions, volunteer time or interest in the program. You may include as many letters of support as you collect.
6. Understand that revitalization is a long-term process of improvement that must involve the entire community. Main Street is a continuous process for downtown revitalization, just as your community's industrial recruitment efforts must be ongoing to be successful.
7. The Main Street program succeeds because of volunteer collaboration – and collaboration begins with the application process itself. The application is designed to be completed by volunteers. It represents an opportunity for you to learn more about your community and gain public input for the revitalization process.
8. Be sure to use the application checklists to assure a complete application has been submitted.
9. Proofread the application.
10. Questions? Call Roxanne Eflin, MDC Senior Program Director at 626-3117 or 229-9465 (mobile).

## How to Format and Where to Send

Applications must be submitted following the 2012 Main Street Maine application format. Alternative formats will not be accepted. **Applications are limited to 25 total pages (12 point, one inch margins.** We encourage you to limit your answers to the space provided in the application. **Applications shorter than 25 pages are fine – brevity and conciseness is encouraged.** Attachments will not be counted in the total page count.

Although application scores are not based on presentation, a well-organized application facilitates review. One electronic version (Word or pdf) **and** one hardcopy application is required and must be submitted on 8.5 x 11 white paper, double sided - **no staples or holes please.** Attachments should be confined to an 8.5 x 11 format. Attachments can be folded or reduced to fit this size.

Applications and all attached materials, including photographs, become the property of the MDC and may be used for promotional purposes. If photographs are copyrighted or require attribution, this must be clearly stated. Copies of submitted applications, or portions of applications, will be available only by contacting the community that submitted the application. A fee may be charged to provide such copies.

Do not include materials in the application that have not been requested, such as oversized maps, meeting minutes, brochures, etc.

Only one copy of any downtown plan, survey, or study completed in the past three years should be included with the original application – multiple copies are not necessary.

## **Application Checklist:** Check to make sure your application contains:

- \_\_\_ One original application with appendices and one digital document (Word or PDF), including high-resolution jpg images. Include only one copy of your downtown plan/study.
- \_\_\_ **Maps** (Appendix A) folded to fit 11x17” format, which show:
  - A clear outline of the downtown area boundary that will be the focus of your Main Street Maine program
  - Zoning in the downtown area, including overlay boundaries such as local historic districts
  - Special assessment, tax increment financing and local/national historic districts
- \_\_\_ **10 Photographs** (Appendix B) of various aspects of your Main Street Maine Program Area. These should be submitted electronically and on disk as jpg files – high quality counts.
- \_\_\_ **Historic Properties** (Appendix C). List all properties within your Main Street Program Area that are locally land marked or listed individually in the National Register of Historic Places.
- \_\_\_ **Financial Pledges** (Appendix D). Be sure to create a list of pledges for years one, two, and three. The list should identify specific sources and amounts and should note if the pledges are cash or in-kind. Actual signed letters and/or resolutions should be included behind the overall list of pledges, in the same order as listed.
- \_\_\_ **Letters and Resolution of Support** (Appendix E). Please create a list of letters of resolution and support and behind this, in the same order as listed, please include the actual documents of support (without financial or in-kind support).
- \_\_\_ **Organization Documents** (Appendix F). If the organization that will administer your Main Street Program already exists, provide a copy of the organization’s Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws and IRS tax status determination letter.
- \_\_\_ **Commitment to Hire a Downtown Manager** (Appendix G). A letter of commitment to hire a downtown manager for three years; must be hired within six months of designation.



## **SAMPLES:**

### **Resolutions, Letters, Budgets, Organizational Chart and Application Checklist**

#### **Sample Resolution for the Host Organization**

*A resolution for the new or existing organization that will be responsible for the local Main Street Program. The resolution authorizes participation in the Main Street Maine program and should be included in Appendix E*

WHEREAS, the Main Downtown Center, a program of the Maine Development Foundation, has been established to assist cities and towns, in developing a public/private effort to revitalize urban neighborhood and traditional central business district commercial areas, and

WHEREAS, the Main Downtown Center serves as the state coordinator in Maine for the National Trust Main Street Center, and

WHEREAS, the Maine Downtown Center designates at least one Maine Street Maine city or town annually to participate in its ongoing program and receive intensive technical assistance from the Maine Downtown Center for a minimum of three years, and

WHEREAS, the City/Town of \_\_\_\_\_ desires to participate in the Main Street Maine Program,

NOW THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF

\_\_\_\_\_  
(new or existing organization)

SECTION 1. That the organization applies for selection to participate in the Main Street Maine program with the specific goal of economically revitalizing the designated Main Street district within the context of the preservation and rehabilitation of its historic commercial buildings, and agrees to participate in the development and financial support of the local Main Street program.

SECTION 2. That the organization guarantees that a Downtown Manager will be employed for a minimum of three years, and be hired and in place within six months of designation.

SECTION 3. That the organization recognizes that a commitment to commercial district revitalization is an ongoing process requiring continuous attention, community support and involvement, and a full public/private partnership.

PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED THIS \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
President of Board/Steering Committee

## Sample Resolution for a City or Town

*This resolution authorizes participation in the Main Street Maine program and designating a municipal official to represent the city/town on the local non-profit Main Street governing board of directors. It should be included in Appendix E.*

WHEREAS, the Main Downtown Center, a program of the Maine Development Foundation, has been established to assist cities and towns, in developing a public/private effort to revitalize urban neighborhood and traditional central business district commercial areas, and

WHEREAS, the Main Downtown Center serves as the state coordinator in Maine for the National Trust Main Street Center, and

WHEREAS, the Maine Downtown Center designates at least one Maine Street Maine city or town annually to participate in its ongoing program and receive intensive technical assistance from the Maine Downtown Center for a minimum of three years, and

WHEREAS, the Main Street Maine program will accept one city or town to participate in its ongoing program and receive intensive technical assistance from the Maine Downtown Center for a minimum of three years,

WHEREAS, the City/Town of \_\_\_\_\_ desires to participate in the Main Street Maine program,

NOW THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL/BOARD OF SELECTMEN: OF THE CITY/TOWN OF \_\_\_\_\_.

SECTION 1. That the City/Town of \_\_\_\_\_ endorses the submission of this application and agrees to participate in the development and financial support of the local Main Street program.

SECTION 2. Endorses the goal of economic revitalization of the designated Main Street district within the context of the preservation and rehabilitation of its historic commercial buildings, recognizing that the Main Street program is one of many economic and community development tools.

SECTION 3. That the City/Town of \_\_\_\_\_ endorses the hiring of a Downtown Manager.

SECTION 4. Recognizes that a commitment to commercial district revitalization is an ongoing process requiring ongoing attention, community support and involvement, and a full public/ private partnership.

ADOPTED THIS \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor/Chair, Board of Selectmen

\_\_\_\_\_  
Attest

# Sample Resolution for a Chamber of Commerce, downtown merchants association, economic development corporation, or similar organization(s)

*This should be included in Appendix E.*

WHEREAS, the Main Downtown Center, a program of the Maine Development Foundation, has been established to assist cities and towns, in developing a public/private effort to revitalize urban neighborhood and traditional central business district commercial areas, and

WHEREAS, the Main Downtown Center serves as the state coordinator in Maine for the National Trust Main Street Center, and

WHEREAS, the Maine Downtown Center designates at least one Maine Street Maine city or town annually to participate in its ongoing program and receive intensive technical assistance from the Maine Downtown Center for a minimum of three years, and

WHEREAS, the Main Street Maine program will accept one city or town to participate in its ongoing program and receive intensive technical assistance from the Maine Downtown Center for a minimum of three years,

WHEREAS, the City/Town of \_\_\_\_\_ desires to participate in the Main Street Maine program,

NOW THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(name of organization)

SECTION 1. Fully endorses the submission of this application and agrees to participate in the development and financial support of the local Main Street program.

SECTION 2. Recognizes that a commitment to commercial district revitalization is an ongoing process requiring ongoing attention, community support and involvement, and a full public/ private partnership.

SECTION 3. Endorses the goal of economic revitalization of the designated Main Street district within the context of the preservation and rehabilitation of its historic commercial buildings,

PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED THIS \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
President of Board

\_\_\_\_\_  
Executive Director

## Sample Letter of Commitment to Hire a Downtown Manager

*This should be included in Appendix G.*

We hereby declare that upon selection to participate in the Main Street Maine Program, the \_\_\_\_\_ Main Street Program will conduct a search to find and hire a (full/part) time\* paid Downtown Manager, who will be in place no later than six months of the date of designation. We further commit to fund this position for a minimum of three years during the startup partnership with the Main Street Maine Program.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of President of new or existing organization  
that will be responsible for the local Main Street program)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

*\*Indicate full- or part-time, depending on the population of the community. Communities with less than 5,000 population may hire a part-time (minimum 25 hours per week) paid Downtown Manager, although full-time is highly recommended. Communities with population greater than 5,000 must hire a full-time (minimum of 40 hours per week) paid Downtown Manager.*

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## Sample Pledge Letter

*This is to be used by local partners to make pledges of financial commitment. Letters should initially be sent to whoever is assembling the application and all pledge letters should be submitted as attachments to the application. This should be included in Appendix D.*

(Date)

Roxanne Eflin, Senior Program Director  
Maine Downtown Center  
295 Water Street, Suite 5  
Augusta, ME 04330

Dear Ms. Eflin:

We enthusiastically endorse the application of \_\_\_\_\_ to become a Main Street Maine community. To this end, you will find our pledge to assist in the implementation of this effort for \$\_\_\_\_\_ payable in equal annual payments of \$\_\_\_\_\_ over the next three years.

We are pleased to make this contribution and to support the revitalization and promotion efforts of our Downtown. We understand that the local Main Street program will be an ongoing effort for years to come, focusing on the comprehensive Four-Point Approach of Organization, Design, Promotion, and Economic Restructuring. This pledge is contingent upon \_\_\_\_\_ being accepted into the program.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

Please Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Business Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/Town: \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

## Sample Budget for Smaller Community - Under 5,000 Populations

### Sources of Income and Support - Smaller Community

	1 <sup>st</sup> Year	2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	3 <sup>rd</sup> Year
	Projected Income	Projected Income	Projected Income
<b>SOURCE</b>			
<b>Local Government</b>	<b>\$12,000</b>	<b>\$12,500</b>	<b>\$13,500</b>
Cash	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$11,000
In-Kind	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,500	\$ 2,500
<b>Private Contributions</b>	<b>\$18,500</b>	<b>\$21,250</b>	<b>\$22,000</b>
Cash	\$15,000	\$17,250	\$17,500
In-Kind	\$ 3,600	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,500
<b>Events</b>	<b>\$ 3,000</b>	<b>\$ 4,000</b>	<b>\$ 5,000</b>
Grants <b>Be Specific</b>			
	\$	\$	\$
Other <b>Be Specific</b>			
	\$	\$	\$
	\$	\$	\$
	\$	\$	\$
<b>*Total</b>	<b>\$33,500</b>	<b>\$37,750</b>	<b>\$40,500</b>

- Small (under 5,000) communities must show at least \$30,000 in committed/pledged support.
- Copies of Pledge Letters should be included in the application, behind the total list of pledges.
- Total column should equal the total of the In-Kind and Pledged columns.
- Total of Income and Donations should equal or exceed the Total Expenditures on following page.

## Projected Expenses - Smaller Community

	1 <sup>st</sup> Year Amount	2 <sup>nd</sup> Year Amount	3 <sup>rd</sup> Year Amount
Manager's Salary	17,000	18,000	19,000
Manager Benefits	1,300	1,350	1,600
Travel	1,200	1,400	1,500
Professional Development	1,000	1,500	1,500
Rent	*2,400	*2,800	*3,200
Utilities	500	500	500
Telephone	900	1,000	1,000
Office Supplies	750	500	500
Postage	650	1,000	1,000
Insurance/Bonding	500	500	500
Accounting/Legal Fees	*1,000	*1,000	*1,000
Equipment <sup>1</sup>	1,500 (*1,000)	500	500
Dues/Subscriptions	200	200	200
Printing/Photocopying	1,500 (*1,000)	2,000 (*1,500)	2,000 (*1,500)
Photographic Supplies	100	0	0
Project Activities	1,500 (*300)	4,500 (*1,300)	5,500 (*800)
App. For 501 (c)(3) Tax Status	500	0	0
Contingency	1,000	1000	1000
Other (Specify)			
<b>TOTAL<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>33,500</b>	<b>37,750</b>	<b>40,500</b>

\*Indicate which items (if any) will be supplied by in-kind donations.

- Office Space donated by \_\_\_\_\_.
- Computer hardware, fax machine, Internet Service donated by \_\_\_\_\_
- Printing donated by \_\_\_\_\_.
- Local professionals are providing Legal and CPA Services.

<sup>1</sup> Include computer equipment and answering machine or messaging system. Purchase or donation of these items is mandatory.

<sup>2</sup> Total expenditures should equal, or be less than, the Total of Income and Donations from previous page.

## Sample Budget for Larger Community - Over 5,000 Population

### Sources of Income and Support – Larger Community

	1 <sup>st</sup> Year	2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	3 <sup>rd</sup> Year
	Projected Income	Projected Income	Projected Income
<b>SOURCE</b>			
<b>Local Government</b>	<b>\$20,000</b>	<b>\$22,500</b>	<b>\$25,000</b>
<b>Private Contributions</b>	<b>\$38,000</b>	<b>\$38,500</b>	<b>\$39,500</b>
<i>Cash</i>	<i>\$28,000</i>	<i>\$28,500</i>	<i>\$29,500</i>
<i>In-Kind</i>	<i>\$10,000</i>	<i>\$10,000</i>	<i>\$10,000</i>
<b>Events/Sales</b>	<b>\$6,000</b>	<b>\$8,000</b>	<b>\$10,000</b>
<b>Grants Be Specific</b>			
<b>Other Be Specific</b>			
<b>*Total</b>	<b>\$64,000</b>	<b>\$69,000</b>	<b>\$74,500</b>

Copies of Actual Pledge Letters must be included as attachments to the application.

Total of Income and Donations should equal or exceed the Total Expenditures from the following page.

## Projected Expenses - Larger Community

	1 <sup>st</sup> Year Amount	2 <sup>nd</sup> Year Amount	3 <sup>rd</sup> Year Amount
Manager's Salary	\$36,000	\$38,000	\$40,000
Manager Benefits	2,371	3,000	3,750
Additional Staff Salary	1,850	4,500	5,000
Additional Staff Benefits	150	300	500
Travel	1,200	1,400	1,500
Professional Development	1,500	1,800	1,800
Rent	*4,200	*4,200	*4,200
Utilities	500	600	600
Telephone/mobile/DSL	1,000	1,200	1,200
Office Supplies	1,000	*500	500
Postage	1,000	1,000	1,000
Insurance/Bonding	500	600	700
Accounting/Legal Fees	*2,000	*2,000	*2,000
Equipment <sup>3</sup>	2,500 (*2,000)	750	500
Dues/Subscriptions	200	200	200
Printing/Photocopying	2,000 (*1,500)	2,000 (*1,500)	2,000 (*1,500)
Photographic Supplies	100	200	250
Promotional Activities	2,500 (*300)	2,500 (*800)	2,500 (*300)
Business Improvement Projects <sup>4</sup>	1,000	1,500	3,000
App for 501 (c)(3) Tax Status	500		
Contingency	1,929	2,750	3,300
Other (Specify)			
<b>TOTAL<sup>5</sup></b>	<b>\$64,000</b>	<b>\$69,000</b>	<b>\$74,500</b>

\*Indicate which items (if any) will be supplied by in-kind donations.

-Rent donated by \_\_\_\_\_.

-Computer/printer, other peripherals, facsimile, and answering machine donated by \_\_\_\_\_.

-Accounting and legal services donated by local professionals.

-Printing donated by the \_\_\_\_\_.

<sup>3</sup> Include computer equipment and answering machine or messaging system. Purchase or donation of these items is required.

<sup>4</sup> Funds used to assist businesses with façade grants, workshops, consultants, etc.

<sup>5</sup> Total expenditures should equal Total of Income and Donations from previous page.