



THE MAIN STREET AMERICA EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

COMMUNITY SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL

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THE MAIN STREET AMERICA EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

COMMUNITY SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL

For over 40 years, Main Street programs across the country have used the **Main Street Approach™** to support revitalization and catalyze positive transformation of their downtowns and neighborhood commercial corridors. Through grassroots leadership, partnership building, community engagement, and a commitment to holistic preservation-based economic development, thousands of Accredited and Affiliate Main Street programs have created lasting impact for their local economies and communities as a whole.

AN EMPOWERING MODEL FOR REVITALIZATION

The new Main Street America Evaluation Framework, developed by Main Street America (MSA) in close partnership with Main Street Coordinating Programs, outlines what it means to be a highly successful Main Street program and sets a path for growth and development for newer programs. Depending on achievement, score, and maturity, programs will either be designated at the Exploring, Mobilizing or Advancing tier by the Virginia Main Street Program.

Annual program assessments are an important opportunity for local Main Street leaders, volunteers, partners, and Coordinating Programs to come together to reflect on the progress of a program's efforts and identify opportunities to build and grow.

The following Self-Assessment has been developed as a tool to help Main Street leaders recognize how their program's efforts already align with the new standards and identify areas for deeper focus and prioritization. The tool will also serve as a basis for local leaders to work with their Coordinating Program on identifying areas for capacity building, program development, and training needs. This process will also inform Main Street America on our network's strengths, greatest needs and opportunities.

WHO SHOULD USE THIS TOOL

- Currently and previously accredited programs.
- Programs wanting to move up a tier.
- Start-up programs should also use the self-assessment as a guide to establish a strong foundation for their revitalization programs with the vision of becoming an accredited program.

WHEN TO USE THIS TOOL

This Community Self-Assessment Tool will be due as part of your program's overall annual assessment process. The information reported in this document will be submitted online through the [Annual Assessment Portal](#). This information along with all supporting materials and requisite documents will be due every year by January 31st.

HOW GRADING WORKS

Within each Standard in the new Self-Assessment Tool, you will be able to rate yourself on the indicators listed using the below scale.

Not Meeting Indicator:

Needs Assistance:

Meeting Indicator:

For each indicator, you will select one of the above options. The activities listed under each indicator are examples of best practices but is not an exhaustive list of how each program may meet the Six Standards. While we hope that all accredited programs will be able to meet or exceed all indicators outlined in this document, we know that every city has ups and downs, therefore, we ask for an honest assessment of your current ability to meet these six standards. Unlike former versions of the assessment process, this document has no threshold for what is considered passing.

The purpose of this document is not to define who is "in" and who is "out," but how we, as a Coordinating Program, can better assist you in your city's downtown development journey. While this document will play a role in the accreditation process, it will not be the only component under consideration.

WHEN DECIDING WHAT BOX TO CHECK

We know it can be hard when deciding what box to check. Below we have created a quick reference guide to aid you in the decision making process.

Meeting Indicator:

Check this box if your Main Street program has 2-3 robust examples of projects, programs, activities or measurable objectives illustrating the ways in which your organization is currently meeting this indicator. Main Street staff should easily be able to discuss and describe these items during their community assessment presentation. Supporting documentation should be easily accessible and available upon request.

Needs Assistance:

Check this box if your Main Street program has 1 - 2 limited examples demonstrating how your organization is currently, or has previously, met this indicator. Examples of projects, programs, activities or measurable objectives that are limited in scope, scale, impact or that reflect efforts from the last 1 - 3 years would fall under the category of "Needs Assistance."

Not Meeting Indicator:

Check this box if your Main Street program has no current examples or 1 - 2 prior examples. Examples must be current in order for an organization to be considered "meeting an indicator". Examples from 3, or more, years ago are not considered "current." The Main Street program should be ready to discuss how they are working towards meeting this indicator in the future and the role that the Virginia Main Street Program can play in assisting them during the process.

NEXT STEPS

While this document is available to all designated and non-designated Main Street programs as a self-assessment tool, only communities that are seeking consideration for Accreditation by the National Main Street Center will be required to submit their official responses through the [Online Assessment Portal](#).

When submitting answers through the portal please be aware that additional information will be required when communities indicate they are "Not Meeting" or "Need Assistance" in meeting an indicator. While no additional information will be required when programs select the "Meets Indicator" box, the manager, board and staff should be prepared to share and discuss examples of how their program has met this indicator during the presentation component of the Annual Assessment process.

STANDARD 1

BROAD-BASED COMMUNITY COMMITMENT TO REVITALIZATION

Standard One reflects that successful and sustainable revitalization efforts are not just the work of a single organization but should be the result of a community-wide effort that brings the public and private sectors together with a strong sense of ownership in their downtown or commercial district. This Standard reviews the Main Street organizations' essential role in fostering a culture of inclusion, engagement, collaboration, and commitment from all sectors of the community. Launching a program, growing it incrementally from one year to the next, and sustaining success for the long run are only possible through a diversity of strong partnerships and collaborations, continued outreach, and communication.

FOCUS AREAS

Communities engaged in the Main Street Approach understand how essential these key areas of focus are for an organization's success: **A) Partnerships and Collaborations, B) District and Community Outreach, and C) Communication and Public Relations.**

KEY INDICATORS

The following indicators provide important guidance on how Main Street programs, the public sector, district stakeholders, and the community at large can work together to develop strong partnerships and collaborations. Each indicator serves as an example of how your Main Street program is effectively meeting the Standard of building and fostering a broad community commitment to revitalization.

A) PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS

INDICATOR 1: Main Street has developed partnerships and collaborations with local governments that demonstrate shared responsibilities for the district's revitalization and its program. Examples of how these partnerships are demonstrated include, but are not limited to:

- Participation in strategy development and planning.
- Collaborations in the implementation of programming or work plans.
- Monetary and non-monetary resources for the Main Street program.
- Engagement of elected officials and/or staff in the Main Street program Board and committees.
- Promoting the district revitalization and their partnership with Main Street.

Not Meeting Indicator:

Needs Assistance:

Meeting Indicator:

A) PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS

INDICATOR 2: Main Street has developed partnerships and collaborations with both nonprofit organizations and private sector entities that demonstrate shared responsibilities for the district’s revitalization and its program. Examples of how these partnerships are demonstrated include, but are not limited to:

- Participation in input session to guide future planning initiatives.
- Collaborations in the implementation of programming or work plans.
- Monetary and non-monetary resources for the Main Street program.
- Engagement with the Main Street program Board and committees.
- Promoting district revitalization and their partnership with Main Street.

Not Meeting Indicator:

Needs Assistance:

Meeting Indicator:

B) DISTRICT AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH

INDICATOR 1: Main Street has expanded its reach to connect and engage with all sectors of the community (businesses, property owners, workforce, other organizations, and residents). Examples of how these partnerships are demonstrated include, but are not limited to:

- A variety of communication tools (online and printed materials) used to reach a broad group of district stakeholders.
- Inclusive work plans that are intended to reach a diverse make-up of the community.
- Regular outreach visits to district businesses, property owners, stakeholders, and community partners.

Not Meeting Indicator:

Needs Assistance:

Meeting Indicator:

C) COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

INDICATOR 1: Main Street has maintained communication and implemented public relations that inform and educate the community and district stakeholders about the district and the Main Street program. Examples of how these efforts are demonstrated include, but are not limited to:

- The program’s external marketing (online, printed, social media, etc.) clearly promotes the role and impact of the Main Street program.
- Main Street’s leadership and staff are actively engaged in public relations activities that educate, build awareness, and promote the Main Street program.
- Main Street highlights positive stories about the district through a variety of media tools.

Not Meeting Indicator:

Needs Assistance:

Meeting Indicator:

C) COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

INDICATOR 2: Main Street has maintained communication and implemented public relations that inform and educate the public sector or local government about the district and the Main Street program. Examples of how these efforts are demonstrated include, but are not limited to:

- Main Street meets with local government officials or attends council meetings to share progress and impact.
- Main Street invites participation of local government officials and staff to meetings and encourages visits to the district and programming activities.
- Main Street promotes the impact of local government investments and participation.

Not Meeting Indicator:

Needs Assistance:

Meeting Indicator:

INDICATOR 3: Main Street has promoted the district's positive image, brand identity, and assets. Examples of how these efforts are demonstrated include, but are not limited to:

- A distinctive brand has been created and implemented to promote the downtown district as a destination.
- A unique identity has been created and implemented to represent the organization.
- Social media platforms are used to promote the value of the district and the Main Street program.
- An annual report is produced noting successes across the Four Points.

Not Meeting Indicator:

Needs Assistance:

Meeting Indicator:

STANDARD 2

INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Strong, thriving communities don't just happen. They need effective leaders at all levels, from a broad base of committed volunteers to dedicated professional staff offering their time, talents, and passion for this work. Standard Two reflects the value we place on PEOPLE as Main Street's greatest resource and our belief that everyone in the community has a place in Main Street. This Standard encourages Main Street programs to place a strong priority on human capital and develop a clear operational structure and practices that increase the organization's capacity to engage all sectors of the community and leverage their participation in their revitalization efforts.

FOCUS AREAS

Communities engaged in the Main Street Approach understand how essential these key areas of focus are for an organization's success: **A) Inclusive Organizational Culture and Diverse Volunteer Engagement, B) Active Board Leadership and Supporting Volunteer Base, C) Professional Staff Management, and D) Effective Operational Structure.**

KEY INDICATORS

The following indicators provide important guidelines on how Main Street programs can become proactive and effective agents for inclusive community engagement and leadership development, ensuring that the investment of time and talents is a rewarding experience. Each indicator serves as an example of how a Main Street program is effectively meeting the Standard of building and fostering broad community commitment to revitalization.

A) INCLUSIVE ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND DIVERSE VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT

INDICATOR 1: The Main Street organization has demonstrated its commitment to diverse, inclusive, and equitable district and community engagement. Examples of how these efforts are demonstrated include, but are not limited to:

- The organization's stated mission and core values show a commitment to engaging all sectors of the community it serves.
- Internal and external messaging promotes that Main Street has a place for everyone in the community and that diverse engagement is welcomed and valued. Communication tools address language barriers as appropriate.
- Work plans and programming activities address accessibility and inclusive design for all community members.
- The organization's policies address equitable access for all district and community stakeholders in the organization's leadership structure (Board and committees) as well as in specific projects and activities.

Not Meeting Indicator:

Needs Assistance:

Meeting Indicator:

INDICATOR 2: The Main Street organization has implemented an inclusive volunteer program that demonstrates the capacity to implement approved annual work plans and programming for the district. Examples of how these efforts are demonstrated include, but are not limited to:

- Clearly outlined volunteer needs for approved work plans or programming activities are in place and promoted broadly.
- A proactive effort to recruit diverse volunteers representing the entire community in a culturally competent way.
- Active volunteer coordination throughout the year that ensures attention to thoughtful placement, rotation, and retention of new and existing volunteers within the organization.
- Initiatives, activities, or events are taking place throughout the year to recognize and/or demonstrate appreciation for Main Street volunteers.
- Volunteers at all levels have access to and receive appropriate orientation, trainings, and leadership development throughout the year.

Not Meeting Indicator:

Needs Assistance:

Meeting Indicator:

INDICATOR 3: The Main Street Board of Directors is formed with a diverse and balanced representation of district and community stakeholders. Examples of board make-up could include but are not limited to:

- District business and property owners
- District and community residents
- Community businesses/corporations
- Institutions (schools, universities, foundations, nonprofits, government)

Not Meeting Indicator:

Needs Assistance:

Meeting Indicator:

INDICATOR 4: The Main Street organization has developed a leadership base that reflects the district and the community it serves. The leadership base should be open, inclusive, and representative of the entire community, taking into account a broad range of dimensions of diversity, including race, ethnicity, gender, education, physical and mental ability, veteran status, and income level. The program should take proactive measures to ensure under-represented groups are included. Examples of a diverse and inclusive board include, but are not limited to:

- Looking at the community's most recent population data, Main Street leadership reflects:
 - A balanced level of participation of all age groups.
 - The racial and ethnic diversity of the community.
 - Gender balance.
- The organization's leadership base demonstrates a wide range of skills, experiences, and perspectives.

Not Meeting Indicator:

Needs Assistance:

Meeting Indicator:

B) ACTIVE BOARD LEADERSHIP AND SUPPORTING VOLUNTEER BASE

INDICATOR 1* Board members have demonstrated active engagement in the Main Street program throughout the year. Ideally, 100% but no less than 75% of Board members have:

**All of the items identified below are required to pass this indicator. Please check each box below to verify your program has met each baseline requirement. Meeting this indicator is required to be eligible for accreditation.*

Attended Board meetings 75 percent of the time throughout the year.

New Board members participated in Board orientation and existing Board members participated in at least one training offered by the Coordinating Program.

Played an active role on the Board by contributing to a committee, a task force, or key initiative.

Advocated for the program and the district within the community, in coordination with Main Street staff and the rest of the board.

INDICATOR 2: Board members have demonstrated active leadership and support to ensuring the program is appropriately funded to meet its operational responsibilities and programming goals. Examples of active board leadership include, but are not limited to:

- Participated in the development of fundraising goals.
- Led or participated in a key fundraising activity of the organization.
- Made direct solicitations.
- Supported donor relationship, retention, and/or recruitment.

Not Meeting Indicator:

Needs Assistance:

Meeting Indicator:

INDICATOR 3: The Main Street program has developed an active, supporting volunteer structure to ensure capacity to plan and implement the approved work plans. Examples of how these efforts are demonstrated include, but are not limited to:

- Establish committees, task forces, or teams to support the program's selected Transformation Strategies, Board's outlined priorities, and the Four Point Approach.
- Each volunteer committee, task force, or team has an active leader, chair, or co-chairs.
- Each volunteer committee, task force or team has an appropriate number of members to plan the approved number of projects or initiatives it intends to implement.
- Committees or teams participate in trainings that support their roles at least annually.

Not Meeting Indicator:

Needs Assistance:

Meeting Indicator:

C) PROFESSIONAL STAFF MANAGEMENT

INDICATOR 1*: The Main Street organization has maintained the level of professional staff necessary to achieve its mission, goals, and annual work. These efforts are demonstrated by fulfillment of all the following:

**All of the items identified below are required to pass this indicator. Please check each box below to verify your program has met each baseline requirement. Meeting this indicator is required to be eligible for accreditation.*

The Main Street Program meets the minimum staffing requirements established by the Coordinating Program. At a minimum, Main Street America requires part-time staffing for cities under 5,000 population, and 1 FTE for cities over 5,000 population

Main Street staff have job descriptions and defined performance expectations.

Main Street director and staff has completed Main Street 101.

Main Street staff participates in professional development offerings provided by Main Street America, Coordinating Program, etc.

Main Street staff communicates regularly with the Board and specifically with the Board Chair and offers regular monthly reports to the Board.

INDICATOR 2: The Main Street Board of Directors has supported and provided guidance to its Main Street director and staff throughout the year. Examples of this include, but are not limited to:

- The Board provides regular feedback to the program's director.
- The Board ensures a formal performance review of all Main Street staff is conducted at least once annually.
- The Board supports the development of an annual budget to support professional staff. This includes but is not limited to competitive pay, benefits and opportunity for appropriate merit-based increases.
- The Board supports the development of an annual budget and provides staff with professional development and training opportunities, including travel.
- The Board or the program's managing organization has a plan in place to manage succession or the director's transition and recruitment.

Not Meeting Indicator:

Needs Assistance:

Meeting Indicator:

D) EFFECTIVE OPERATIONAL STRUCTURE

INDICATOR1*: The Main Street organization has developed appropriate operational and organizational practices to manage effectively. This must include the following:

**All of the items identified below are required to pass this indicator. Please check each box below to verify your program has met each baseline requirement. Meeting this indicator is required to be eligible for accreditation.*

A clearly defined mission and vision statement that confirms the purpose of the organization.

Established by-laws, which are reviewed annually and revised appropriately to carry out the program's mission for the district. Bylaws should include but are not limited to operating policies and procedures, conflicts of interest, personnel management, leadership selections, elections, and terms, Board roles and responsibilities, etc.

Appropriate insurance for the organization, Board/staff, and its programming.

Legal and financial requirements are met and maintained as required with its tax status or operation structure.

A clearly defined organizational chart that includes where your organization is housed and the line of supervision.

A map illustrating clearly defined district boundaries.

STANDARD 3

DIVERSIFIED FUNDING & SUSTAINABLE PROGRAM OPERATIONS

A successful revitalization program must have the financial resources necessary to carry out its work and sustain its operations. Program sustainability relies on diversity of revenue streams as dependency on one primary or only source could jeopardize the program's operations. Through this Standard, Main Street programs demonstrate a priority for ensuring that the community is investing in the Main Street organization and programming efforts through a comprehensive and balanced funding structure that ensures successful and sustainable revitalization efforts.

FOCUS AREAS

Communities engaged in the Main Street Approach understand how essential these key areas of focus are for an organization's success: **A) Balanced Funding Structure, B) Strategic Revenue Development and Fundraising, C) Budget and Work Plan Alignment and D) Financial Management and Best Practices.**

KEY INDICATORS

Understanding that funding is an essential resource to accomplish the work of revitalization, the following indicators included under this Standard can guide Main Street programs in building, growing, and sustaining diverse and balanced mix of investment in the revitalization efforts and the Main Street program from the start and throughout the years.

A) BALANCED FUNDING STRUCTURE

INDICATOR 1: The Main Street organization's budget demonstrates a balanced funding structure with a diverse mix of public and private sector sources. Examples of how these efforts are demonstrated include, but are not limited to:

- Contributions from private sector: e.g., businesses, community members and/or partner organizations.
- Special assessment areas.
- Sponsorships.
- Earned revenues.
- Memberships.
- Local Government.
- Grants.

Not Meeting Indicator:

Needs Assistance:

Meeting Indicator:

INDICATOR 2: The private sector is investing in the district’s revitalization efforts and the Main Street program. Examples of how these efforts are demonstrated include, but are not limited to:

- Fundraising activities such as event sponsorships, marketing initiatives, and/or special project funding.
- Main Street program’s earned incomes, such as rents, merchandise sales, etc.
- Investor programs such as memberships, Friends of, annual donations, etc.
- In-kind services.
- A special tax self-assessment mechanism(s) approved by district property and/or business owners, such as BIDs, CIDs, DDAs, etc.

Not Meeting Indicator:

Needs Assistance:

Meeting Indicator:

INDICATOR 3: The public sector is investing in the district’s revitalization and the Main Street program. Examples of how these efforts are demonstrated include, but are not limited to:

- Annual contribution to the Main Street.
- Service agreements or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Main Street program.
- Support through the employment of the Main Street Director.
- Direct funding for event sponsorships & marketing initiatives.
- In-kind Services.

Not Meeting Indicator:

Needs Assistance:

Meeting Indicator:

B) STRATEGIC REVENUE DEVELOPMENT AND FUNDRAISING

INDICATOR 1: The Main Street program demonstrates commitment to strategic revenue development process and oversight. Examples of how these efforts are demonstrated include, but are not limited to:

- The program regularly reviews fund-development plans, goals, and progress.
- A designated Board member provides active financial oversight for the program and is engaged in revenue development planning and reporting.
- A fund-development committee, organization committee, or team is in place to lead fund-development planning and implementation.
- Committees are engaged in seeking funding to support projects.

Not Meeting Indicator:

Needs Assistance:

Meeting Indicator:

C) BUDGET AND WORK PLAN ALIGNMENT

INDICATOR 1: The Main Street organization has an annual budget that is aligned to the organization's strategies and goals. Examples of how these efforts are demonstrated include, but are not limited to:

- Alignment with the mission.
- Alignment with a selected Transformation Strategy and/or approved work plan.
- A diversity of income sources.

Not Meeting Indicator:

Needs Assistance:

Meeting Indicator:

D) FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND BEST PRACTICES

INDICATOR 1: The Main Street organization demonstrates sound financial management outlined by processes and procedures. Examples of how these efforts are demonstrated include, but are not limited to:

- Financial tracking systems and reporting practices are in place. (QuickBooks or other software)
- The organization's monthly financial statements are reviewed by the Treasurer.
- The organization has a third party financial professional compile and reconcile monthly financial statements.
- The organization has had a third party financial professional review, reconcile and/or audit the program's finances at a minimum every two years.

Not Meeting Indicator:

Needs Assistance:

Meeting Indicator:

INDICATOR 2: The Main Street organization's financial management has clear leadership and oversight. Examples of how these efforts are demonstrated include, but are not limited to:

- Leadership roles and responsibilities relating to budgeting, fund-development, and financial reporting are clearly outlined through Board, committee and/or Treasurer job descriptions.
- The Main Street Board of Directors conducts monthly reviews of the organization's finances to ensure appropriate accountability and alignment with programming.

Not Meeting Indicator:

Needs Assistance:

Meeting Indicator:

STANDARD 4

STRATEGY-DRIVEN PROGRAMMING

Main Street has built a strong track record for making change happen in communities across the country. Change is an important guiding principle for Main Street. But rather than letting change just happen, Main Street programs define and manage it from one year to the next through a strategy-driven work plan and aligned implementation process. Standard Four brings together all integrated components that must be in place to plan and successfully implement the revitalization work. Centered around Main Street's Four Point Approach, these integrated components are driven by a local Transformation Strategy(s) aligned through community participation and based on understanding of the district's unique and competitive market position.

FOCUS AREAS

Communities engaged in the Main Street Approach understand how essential these key areas of focus are for an organization's success: **A) Planning Guided by Inclusive Community and Market-informed Inputs, B) Defining Direction through Transformation Strategy Identification and Development, and C) Strategy-aligned Comprehensive Work Planning and Implementation Across all Four Points.**

KEY INDICATORS

The following indicators provide important guidelines on how Main Street programs can develop a community and market informed strategy-driven planning and implementation process.

A) PLANNING GUIDED BY INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY & MARKET- INFORMED INPUTS

INDICATOR 1: The organization's annual planning process as informed by a comprehensive set of inputs that guide Transformation Strategy identification and work plan alignment and implementation. Examples of recommended inputs can include but are not limited to:

- Inclusive district and community input is gathered at a minimum of every three years to keep the pulse on the district's needs through focus group events, online surveys, and/or other strategies.
- Market research and analysis has been conducted for the district's trade area within an appropriate time interval, depending on the local economy. This is recommended at least every three to five years.
- Business inventory is up to date and reflective of the district's business mix, uses, and existing clusters.
- Building inventory is up to date and reflective of the district's property ownership, condition, uses and status (for sale, for lease, occupied).
- The organization maintains an asset map that recognizes distinctive place-based assets within the district that highlight unique and competitive advantages and market opportunities.
- Strategy reflects opportunities driven by local and national trends.

Not Meeting Indicator:

Needs Assistance:

Meeting Indicator:

B) DEFINING DIRECTION THROUGH TRANSFORMATION STRATEGY IDENTIFICATION AND DEVELOPMENT

INDICATOR 1: Main Street has defined and aligned as an organization around Transformation Strategy that is guiding the revitalization work. Examples of how these are demonstrated include, but are not limited to:

- The program has identified a Transformation Strategy(s) that can best respond to the district and community vision, needs and market opportunities.
- The board formally adopts a Transformation Strategy(s).
- Partner organizations or other stakeholders have adopted or endorsed selected Transformation Strategy.
- The Strategy(s) have measurable benchmarks.
- Annual fund-development goals and allocations are guided by the Transformation Strategy(s).

Not Meeting Indicator:

Needs Assistance:

Meeting Indicator:

C) STRATEGY-ALIGNED COMPREHENSIVE WORK PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION ACROSS ALL FOUR POINTS

INDICATOR 1: The Main Street board conducts an annual strategy-driven work planning process with volunteer committees to guide the organization's programming. Examples of effective work planning practices can include but are not limited to:

- The Board works with Main Street staff to outline priorities or goals that guide the initiatives, projects, and activities in annual work plan.
- Projects, events, or initiatives are aligned with selected Transformation Strategy(s).
- The Transformation Strategy(s) are reflected comprehensively across all Four Points.
- Work plans include written action plans for critical projects that outline specific tasks, timeline, budget, volunteer hours, who's responsible, etc.
- Stakeholders and community partners have claimed responsibility for individual tasks identified within the work plan.

Not Meeting Indicator:

Needs Assistance:

Meeting Indicator:

STANDARD 5

PRESERVATION-BASED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Successful Main Street efforts are built on the guiding principle that district economic development is obtained by leveraging and preserving its unique historic and cultural assets. Standard Five confirms our strong belief that a community's own place-based and diverse cultural assets reflects the richness and strength of its identity and establishes a competitive market advantage.

FOCUS AREAS

Communities engaged in the Main Street Approach understand how essential these key areas of focus are for an organization's success: **A) Preservation Ethics and Education on Historic and Cultural Assets, B) Standards and Best Practices for Place-based, People-focused Design, and C) Promotion of Historic, Heritage, and Cultural Assets.**

KEY INDICATORS

The following indicators provide important guidelines on how Main Street programs can build a strong foundation for revitalization through the preservation of building and cultural assets, educating the public on their value to economic growth, and enlisting businesses and property owners in redevelopment efforts.

A) PRESERVATION ETHICS & EDUCATION ON HISTORIC & CULTURAL ASSETS

INDICATOR 1: Main Street demonstrates the community's commitment to its historic and cultural assets. Examples of how these are demonstrated include, but are not limited to:

- The district has historic buildings listed as local landmarks, a national landmark district, or listed in the National Register of Historic Places.
- The community is a Certified Local Government (CLG).
- The district has received cultural, arts, or other special designations or recognitions.
- Main Street advocates for a local preservation ordinance or the community has one.
- Main Street has developed or supported the development of design standards, guidelines, and tools property owners can use to preserve, improve, and maintain historic buildings.
- Incentives or in-kind services are in place to assist with improvements to historic and cultural resources (e.g., façade grant, sign grant, low interest loan, design assistance)
- Local, county, and/or regional strategies acknowledge and incorporate the preservation of heritage and cultural assets as economic development priorities.

Not Meeting Indicator:

Needs Assistance:

Meeting Indicator:

A) PRESERVATION ETHICS AND EDUCATION ON HISTORIC AND CULTURAL

INDICATOR 2: Main Street educates and builds awareness about preservation and cultural assets among stakeholders, public sector, community organizations and residents at large. Examples of how these are demonstrated include, but are not limited to:

- Holding education and awareness activities that promote the value of the district’s historic fabric and cultural assets throughout the year or at least annually during Preservation Month.
- Providing programming and resources for district property and business owners that results in the preservation and rehabilitation of local historic assets.
- Attending staff and volunteer trainings provided by the Coordinating Program, Main Street America, or other organizations.
- Building strong collaborations (e.g., Historic Preservation Commission, Certified Local Government, Historical and Arts entities, etc.) to support tools, ordinances, zoning policies that preserve the district’s built and cultural assets.

Not Meeting Indicator:

Needs Assistance:

Meeting Indicator:

B) STANDARDS AND BEST PRACTICES FOR PLACE-BASED, PEOPLE-FOCUSED DESIGN

INDICATOR 1: Main Street is an advocate and partner for the implementation of standards, guidelines, and best practices for the preservation of historic and cultural assets. Examples of how these are demonstrated include, but are not limited to:

- Partnered with local government, commissions, and community groups to assess and incorporate heritage and cultural assets into economic development and marketing priorities and initiatives.
- Provided or connected district property owners with assistance in redevelopment that is aligned with the district’s strategy(s).
- Provided guidance that educates property and business owners and developers on state and local ordinances, incentives, and other redevelopment tools.
- Provided guidance to projects that leveraged preservation and/or economic development funding tools to support building improvements (TIF, Historic Tax Credits, CLG, USDA grants, etc.)
- Program advocates for threatened historic properties.
- Program works to acquire and renovate dilapidated property to attract new ownerships and investment.
- Work with city leaders to enforce maintenance standards.

Not Meeting Indicator:

Needs Assistance:

Meeting Indicator:

C) PROMOTION OF HISTORIC, HERITAGE, AND CULTURAL ASSETS

INDICATOR 1: The Main Street program actively promotes the district's historic and cultural assets. Examples of how these are demonstrated include, but are not limited to:

- Activities/programming that interpret, celebrate, and recognize local heritage and cultural resources.
- Working with media to promote stories that highlight the district's historic and cultural assets and messages their importance to the community and economic growth.
- Conducts activities that educate property owners on the benefits of rehabbing historic properties to increase the economic value of the property.

Not Meeting Indicator:

Needs Assistance:

Meeting Indicator:

STANDARD 6

DEMONSTRATED IMPACT AND RESULTS

Main Street communities are part of a national network with a proven record for generating strong economic returns and strengthening the district's position within a highly competitive marketplace. Standard Six highlights the importance of tracking, packaging, and demonstrating the qualitative and quantitative impact of the program's revitalization efforts. It also provides the opportunity for the local Main Street program to tell their stories and advocate for resources needed for sustainability.

FOCUS AREAS

Communities engaged in the Main Street Approach understand how essential these key areas of focus are for an organization's success: **A) Demonstrating the Value of Main Street, B) Measuring and Packaging Quantitative and Qualitative Outcomes and C) Promoting Progress and Demonstrating Impact and Results.**

KEY INDICATORS

The following indicators provide important guidelines on how Main Street programs can build the case for Main Street and demonstrate the impact of their revitalization efforts.

A) DEMONSTRATING THE VALUE OF MAIN STREET

INDICATOR 1: Main Street is positioned as an advocate for the district, promoting revitalization as an economic development priority among the public and private sector and community at large. Examples of how these are demonstrated include, but are not limited to:

- District revitalization and physical and economic improvements are included in recent regional, or citywide master plans, economic development plans, comprehensive plans, etc.
- Main Street participates in ongoing local planning efforts that involve the district.
- Main Street participates in guest presentations to local community organizations and institutions.
- Small business owners in and around the district regularly seek and receive assistance or support from the Main Street program (e.g., letters of support for grants or loans, marketing support on the Main Street program's website and social media, etc.)
- District stakeholders advocate for the program when requested.
- The district is highlighted in local partners' communication and marketing efforts (e.g., city, tourism, economic development, etc.) with blog posts, multi-line descriptions of the district, and/or photos featuring the district, etc.
- Main Street's logo, webpage, and/or social media links are included on local government and other partner organizations' websites.
- Entrepreneurs and local business owners regularly approach the Main Street program about commercial spaces in the district that could potentially serve as a base-of-operations for a new business or new location for an existing business.

Not Meeting Indicator:

Needs Assistance:

Meeting Indicator:

B) MEASURING AND PACKAGING QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE OUTCOMES

INDICATOR 1: Main Street regularly collects and maintains district revitalization statistics (quantitative) and intangible impact data (qualitative) across the Four Points of the Main Street Approach and examines changes over time as required by the Coordinating Program. Examples of how these are demonstrated include, but are not limited to:

- Submits accurate and on-time quarterly revitalization statistics.

Did not complete or submit all reports:

Submitted All Reports:

INDICATOR 2: Main Street annually collects and maintains organizational impact statistics (quantitative) and intangible impact data (qualitative) and examines changes over time. Examples of how these are demonstrated include, but are not limited to:

- Submitted Main Street Network Annual Salary and Program Survey

Did not submit:

Submitted:

C) PROMOTING PROGRESS & DEMONSTRATING IMPACT & RESULTS

INDICATOR 1: The district's revitalization programming, achievements, stories, and reinvestment statistics are promoted. Examples of how these are demonstrated include, but are not limited to:

- Sharing with district stakeholders, local units of government, anchor organizations, funders, and the community at large.
- Highlighting and publishing success stories of impactful projects on digital platforms (website, social media channels, etc.) and local media outlets.
- Publishing and distributing an annual report and summary of revitalization statistics.
- Highlighting key statistics and testimonials on website and other marketing materials.

Not Meeting Indicator:

Needs Assistance:

Meeting Indicator:

THE MAIN STREET AMERICA EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

COMMUNITY SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL

Alignment Worksheet

After reviewing the [Community Self-Assessment Tool document](#), use this worksheet to score yourself on the indicators listed for each of the six standards based on the scale below:

Not Meeting Indicator:

Needs Assistance:

Meeting Indicator:

While it is our hope that all accredited programs will be able to meet or exceed the indicators outlined in this document we know that every city has times of growth and regression. This is why we ask for your honest assessment regarding your currently ability to meet each of these six standards. Unlike former versions of the assessment process, in this document there is no threshold for what is considered passing. The purpose of this document is not to define who is "in" and who is "out", but how we, as a Coordinating Program, can better assist you in your city's downtown development journey. While this document will play a role in the accreditation process, it will not be the only component under consideration.

STANDARD 1: BROAD-BASED COMMUNITY COMMITMENT TO REVITALIZATION

A) Partnerships and Collaboration

Indicator 1:

Indicator 2:

B) District and Community Outreach

Indicator 1:

C) Communications and Public Relations

Indicator 1:

Indicator 2:

Indicator 3:

STANDARD 2: INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

A) Inclusive Organizational Culture and Diverse Volunteer Engagement

Indicator 1:

Indicator 2:

Indicator 3:

Indicator 4:

B) Active Board Leadership and Supporting Volunteer Base

Indicator 1: Required

Indicator 2:

Indicator 3:

C) Professional Staff Management

Indicator 1: Required

Indicator 2:

D) Effective Operational Structure

Indicator 1: Required



THE MAIN STREET AMERICA EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

COMMUNITY SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL Alignment Worksheet

STANDARD 3: DIVERSIFIED FUNDING AND SUSTAINABLE PROGRAM OPERATIONS

A) Balanced Funding Structure

Indicator 1:

Indicator 2:

Indicator 3:

B) Strategic Revenue Development and Fundraising

Indicator 1:

C) Budget and Work Plan Alignment

Indicator 1:

D) Financial Management and Best Practices

Indicator 1:

Indicator 2:

STANDARD 4: STRATEGY-DRIVEN PROGRAMMING

A) Planning Guided by Inclusive Community and Market-Informed Inputs

Indicator 1:

B) Defining Direction through Transformation Strategy Identification and Development

Indicator 1:

C) Strategy-Aligned Comprehensive Work Planning and Implementation Across all Four Points

Indicator 1:

STANDARD 5: PRESERVATION-BASED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

A) Preservation Ethics and Education on Historic and Cultural Assets

Indicator 1:

Indicator 2:

B) Standards and Best Practices for Place-based, People-focused Design

Indicator 1:

C) Promotion of Historic, Heritage, and Cultural Assets

Indicator 1:

STANDARD 6: DEMONSTRATED IMPACT AND RESULTS

A) Demonstrating the Value of Main Street

Indicator 1:

B) Measuring and Packaging Quantitative and Qualitative Outcomes

Indicator 1:

Indicator 2:

C) Promoting Progress and Demonstrating Impact and Results

Indicator 1:

Accreditation Disclaimer: While we appreciate each community's perspective on their program's current ability to meet the Six Standards, it will ultimately be up to the Coordinating Program to decide if the local program's self-assessment is an accurate reflection of events on the ground. Coordinating staff will evaluate if a program has met the requirements for each indicator based on our office's understanding of the expectations set forth by the National Main Street Center.