



2026 EDITION

Main Street: Michigan's Grassroots Economic Development Engine

Celebrating over 20 years of empowering the people of Michigan to get involved in the health of their communities while preserving the charm and history of our state.

MICHIGAN MAIN STREET State Coordinating Program | miplace.org



REAL IMPACT

The numbers prove it!

 **\$9,179,872**
2024–25 Total
Private Investment

\$482,929,076
Program to date

 **\$12,898,910**
2024–25 Total
Public Investment

\$165,451,898
Program to date

 **29,220**
2024–25 Volunteer Hours
952,016 Program to date

 **93**
2024–25 New Businesses
2,216 Program to date

 **83**
2024–25 Façade
& Building Improvements
3,017 Program to date

Michigan's Downtowns: The Vision Begins at the Heart

Michigan Main Street (MMS) assists communities across Michigan interested in revitalizing and preserving their traditional commercial district. MMS provides technical assistance to local communities as they implement the Main Street Four-Point Approach®, a community-driven, comprehensive strategy encouraging economic development through historic preservation in ways appropriate for the modern marketplace. The program aims to create communities distinguished by economically vital and vibrant commercial districts and downtowns, thereby developing attractive places that make the state economically stronger and culturally diverse.

MAIN STREET AMERICA CEO SPOTLIGHT

"At Main Street America, we've seen how strong statewide coordinating programs multiply the impact of local Main Street efforts. **Michigan Main Street truly stands out as a model for success across our national network.** By aligning state, regional, and local partners, Michigan's coordinating program provides the structure, technical expertise, and shared learning that help communities strengthen their downtowns in lasting ways. This coordinated approach supports inclusive economic growth, attracts investment, and ensures that local leaders have the tools they need to respond to both challenges and opportunities. Michigan's commitment to collaboration demonstrates what's possible when programs work in tandem, setting a powerful example for how coordinated Main Street efforts can build resilient, vibrant downtowns across the country."

—Erin Barnes, CEO, Main Street America



DELIVERING REAL SERVICE DOWNTOWN



Launched in 2025, the Michigan Main Street Round Up email resource quickly became a trusted source of information for downtown leaders across Michigan. Over six editions, it delivered timely, relevant content for downtown management professionals, volunteers, and board members, spotlighting local district achievements, available state and federal grant programs, updates from Main Street America, and practical tips shared by peer Main Street communities. Each issue also included a lighthearted snapshot of where Main Street staff have been working since the previous roundup. With a growing distribution list of 184 subscribers, this resource is helping strengthen connections, build capacity, and support continued downtown success statewide.

We celebrated Live6 Alliance's Select Level Michigan Main Street designation with Governor Gretchen Whitmer and the many district stakeholders who have worked hard to revitalize their neighborhood into a vibrant commercial corridor in northwest Detroit.

This new partnership gives Live6 Alliance direct access to the Michigan Main Street team in partnership with Main Street America to provide specialized capacity-building support to galvanize their revitalization efforts.

This year, Michigan Main Street provided over 50 technical assistance touch points with our Select and Master Level communities. These touch points ranged from MI Main Street staff conducting trainings and accreditation visits, and all the way to specialized services geared towards providing high-impact solutions to revitalization challenges. The specialized services we provided this year included Entrepreneurial Ecosystem in Adrian and Niles; Strategic Planning in Rogers City, Evart, and Lapeer; Fund Development in Cheboygan; Business Recruitment in North End; Transformation Strategy update in Grand Haven and Blissfield; District Futures in Old Town; and Storyville Social Blitz in Grosse Pointe and Saline.

MAIN STREET VIBRANCY GRANT

The Main Street Vibrancy Grant Program provides grants to Select or Master Level Michigan Main Street communities for projects that enhance the vibrancy and economic vitality of Michigan Main Street downtowns. Projects could include pop-up shop programs; implementation of a marketing or advertising campaign; physical improvements such as new seating, seasonal infrastructure, signage, or art; and other transformative projects that help create a sense of place and a more vibrant community.



Engaged and Network Level

This year, two virtual Downtown Forums were held to better engage with prospective Main Street communities and provide specialized training and networking opportunities. In addition to training sessions, Engaged and Network Level communities have the opportunity to meet one-on-one with Michigan Main Street staff throughout the year to receive tailored recommendations related to their downtown scorecard results to help move their organizations and districts forward.

MMS Continues to Lead the National Curve on Providing Training for Local Practitioners

The Michigan Main Street staff hosted three in-person intensive educational opportunities this year, geared towards practical and implementable topics relevant for building successful and effective downtown management programs to bolster downtowns and commercial corridors across the state of Michigan. This year's training opportunities proved to be powerful and timely for directors and volunteers alike.

MMS staff hosted a workshop at MEDC headquarters in **Downtown Lansing** for directors to share details of projects and programs that have been integral to their success. These **Director TED Talks** covered topics including DDA/Main Street board education, engaging with legislators, starting a revolving loan fund, storytelling using social media, sponsorship programs, organization succession planning, establishing a vacant property ordinance, and volunteer recruitment. Directors continue to share that networking opportunities and sharing of best practices are two of the most valuable benefits of participation with MMS.



Main Street directors and volunteers met in downtown **Coldwater** for a workshop focused on **the "why" behind historic preservation**. Led by the MEDC's State Historic Preservation Office, the training aimed to deepen participants' understanding of how preservation supports the long-term vitality, identity, and character of Michigan's downtowns. By exploring foundational preservation principles, participants learned how these approaches not only protect historic assets but also activate community pride and stimulate economic development. The workshop highlighted how preservation tools can be integrated

into local government planning, showcased examples of typical Main Street commercial buildings to illustrate the Secretary of the Interior's standards, and introduced the role of archaeology in understanding the layers of history beneath our urban centers.

Fall training consisted of a two-day workshop in downtown **Grosse Pointe**. Day one featured a round-robin discussion with MS directors and a tour highlighting unique areas of the Grosse Pointe district, including the Downtown Art Takeover project. On day two, directors were joined by board members for a workshop addressing the number one challenge of many Main Street communities: **increasing board member engagement**. Facilitated by Oriana Solutions with over 70 attendees, participants left with strategies they can use immediately to help recruit and onboard engaged and enthusiastic board members, in addition to tactics

they can use during their board meetings to foster critical conversations and board member participation.



CITY PARTNER SPOTLIGHT



"Grand Haven is incredibly fortunate to have such a strong, collaborative relationship with its Main Street program. Through intentional partnership and shared vision, the district has continued to adapt and thrive while prioritizing the activation of space, creative placemaking, and experiences that strengthen downtown as the social and economic heart of the community."

— **Ashley Latsch, City Manager, Grand Haven**

BOARD MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

"As both the board chair and the resident member of our Main Street/DDA, I see the value of the Main Street program in both my professional and personal life. The programming we have implemented has enhanced Owosso visually and economically, while strengthening community engagement. I believe our success is rooted in three key factors: a balanced board that combines institutional knowledge with fresh perspectives; an executive director who effectively translates board ideas into actionable outcomes; and strong community partners who lead their own programming initiatives with the support of the board. While our volunteer board does not have the capacity to execute every initiative directly, we play a critical role in empowering and supporting the goals of our community."

— **Daylen Howard, Board Chair, Owosso Main Street**



MEDC LEADERSHIP SPOTLIGHT

As we close the chapter on 2025, the Michigan Main Street (MMS) team has so much to celebrate! Our commitment to empowering local leaders, strengthening partnerships, and building a statewide network of passionate professionals and volunteers remains stronger than ever. Together, we're driving the revitalization of Michigan's downtowns and commercial corridors, shaping lively, welcoming spaces where communities truly thrive. This year, we proudly marked milestone anniversaries with six Michigan Main Street communities—powerful reminders of the impact of MEDC's placemaking efforts and the continued success of our downtowns and neighborhood districts. Through

customized technical assistance, Main Street is preserving historic assets, enhancing visual appeal, and fostering vibrant spaces filled with thriving, place-based small businesses.

A heartfelt thank you to Laura, Leigh, Jill, and all our executive directors for positioning MMS as a leading coordinating program and for keeping our communities at the center of our work. MMS is more than a program—it's a catalyst for collaboration and a champion for community spirit. Together, we're ensuring that every Main Street community is a place where people want to build their future."

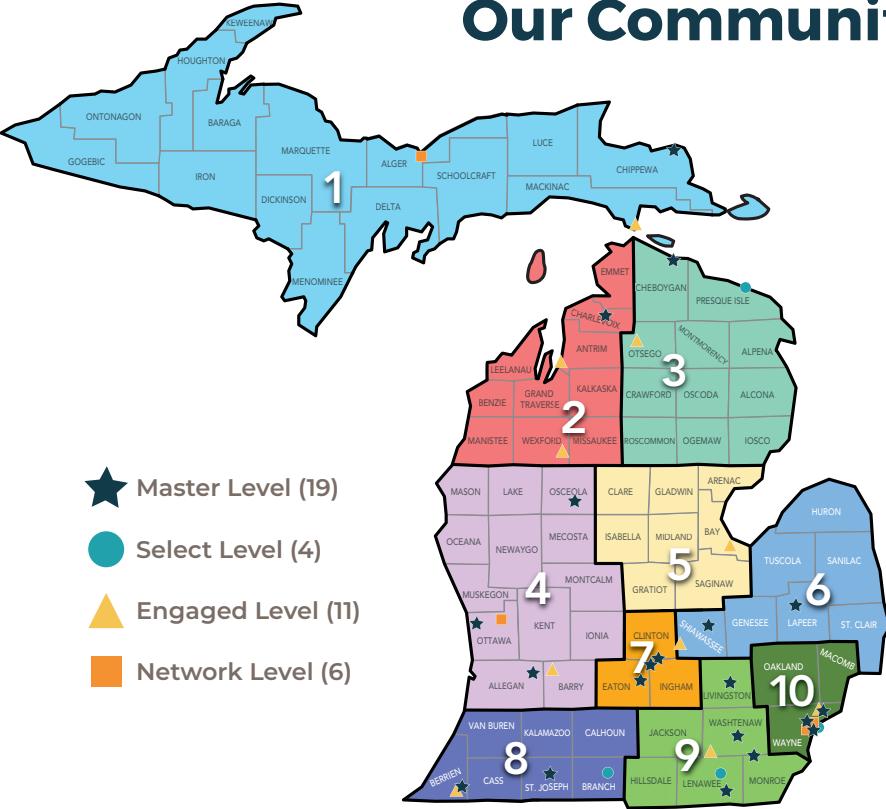
—Michelle Parkonen,
Managing Director,
Technical Assistance Programs



"The successes of 2025 highlight the strength of the Michigan Main Street program and the communities we serve. Our team's dedication and willingness to meet community's where they are, help our downtowns advance their visions forward. By embracing innovation while staying rooted in the unique character that defines them, our communities generate significant economic impact and lasting community pride. This work is reflected not only in increased investment and growth, but in the renewed sense of place and pride felt by those who call these community's home."

—Laura Krizov, Manager, Michigan Main Street

Our Communities



MAIN STREET TRAINING SERIES

If your community is interested in learning more about the Michigan Main Street program and the Main Street Approach®, the first step is to complete our training series.

More information about the process to participate in the program can be found on our website at www.miplace.org/programs/michigan-main-street/process.

For more information about our online training, visit www.miplace.org.

"For over 20 years, Michigan Main Street communities have demonstrated that their collaborative, impact-driven approach to strengthening Michigan's downtowns through small business investment, community revitalization and historic preservation creates vibrant and welcoming places that everyone can enjoy. With the tools available through the Michigan Main Street program, communities across Michigan are proving the success and economic vitality that comes from investing in our downtowns."

—Michele Wildman,
Senior Vice President of Community Planning
and Development Readiness, MEDC



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