



# PLACE MATTERS





## Michigan Main Street



Main Street, two words that evoke nostalgic feelings and warm memories in many people. That's proof that place matters, and that main streets exist as places of civic pride and community congregation. They are a reflection of

what we love about our towns and our neighbors.

The Michigan Main Street program exists to help communities develop main street districts that attract both residents and businesses, promote commercial investment and spur economic growth.

## HOW CAN WE HELP YOUR COMMUNITY?

Michigan Main Street staff provides technical assistance and services to communities at four levels: **Network, Engaged, Select** and **Master**. Each level is designed to assist the community in tackling increasingly sophisticated downtown revitalization efforts.



Over the past 20 years, the **Michigan Main Street (MMS)** has facilitated real results in participating communities.

## REAL IMPACT

The Numbers prove it!



**\$9,179,872**

**2024–25**

**Total Private Investment**

Program to date: \$482,929,076



**\$12,898,910**

**2024–25 Total Public Investment**

Program to date: \$165,451,898



**29,220**

**2024–25 Volunteer Hours**

Program to date: 952,016



**93**

**2024–25 New Businesses**

Program to date: 2,126



**83**

**2024–25 Façade & Building Improvements**

Program to date: 3,017



## WHY ARE DOWNTOWNS IMPORTANT?

- Downtowns are the **heart of communities**, typically containing a significant amount of jobs and portion of communities' tax base.
- Downtowns **create a network** that supports independent businesses and entrepreneurs.
- Downtowns **provide identity and cultural value** to the region.

# MAIN STREET APPROACH®



The **Main Street Approach**® is a unique, historic preservation based economic development strategy that focuses on leveraging existing social, economic, physical and cultural assets to energize community revitalization efforts and help manage success for the long term. The approach leads to tangible outcomes that benefit the entire community through encouraging communities to enact long-term change while also implementing short-term, inexpensive and place-based activities that attract people to the commercial core and create a sense of enthusiasm about the community.



## **The Main Street Approach is a methodology consisting of three integrated components:**

1. The vision provides a foundation for outlining the community's identity, expectations and ideals for future development while being grounded in an understanding of the economic market realities of the district.
2. Transformation strategies identify long-term and short-term actions that provide a clear sense of priorities and direction to help move a community closer to implementing their vision. Work on these strategies should align with the Main Street Four Points® of organization, promotion, design and economic vitality.
3. The Main Street organization must show visible results that can only come from implementing action items and completing projects in the short-term and long-term. Main Street must focus on measuring progress and results in order to justify and demonstrate the wise use of scarce resources.

## MAIN STREET FOUR POINTS®

ECONOMIC VITALITY	DESIGN
<p>Economic vitality strengthens the existing economic assets while diversifying the economic base of the Main Street District to support and improve profitability. The goal is to build a strong commercial district that creates a supportive environment for small businesses, entrepreneurs and consumers.</p> <p><b>Examples of economic vitality activities include:</b> analyzing current market forces, providing a balanced commercial mix, supporting and expanding existing businesses, recruiting new businesses, supporting housing options, developing infill space, and converting unused or underused commercial space into economically productive property.</p>	<p>Design capitalizes on and enhances the visual aspects of a Main Street District to create a safe, appealing and inviting atmosphere for people to shop and spend time. The physical elements such as the storefronts and building architecture, streetscape, public art, street furniture, parking areas, and public spaces are used to convey a positive image for the downtown.</p> <p><b>Examples of design actions include:</b> improving the physical appearance of the Main Street District, quality maintenance practices, historic building rehabilitation and adaptive use, and design review processes.</p>
ORGANIZATION	PROMOTION
<p>A successful Main Street organization builds consensus between the many vested stakeholders throughout a Main Street District to ensure everyone is mobilized and working toward a shared vision for the future of the district. Organizational structure can take many forms depending on community capacity.</p> <p><b>Examples of organization actions include:</b> fundraising, volunteer recruitment and development, public relations, fostering collaboration between stakeholders, and developing work plans to guide the organization's work.</p>	<p>Effective promotion creates a positive image of the Main Street District to instill community pride and encourage commercial activity and investment in the area. Promotions can be used to communicate the unique characteristics of a Main Street District to spark interest in shopping, dining, living or investing in the community.</p> <p><b>Examples of promotion actions include:</b> marketing an enticing image, social media campaigns, street festivals, parades, and retail or other special events.</p>

# MICHIGAN MAIN STREET LEVELS

The **first step** for communities interested in participating in the Main Street program is participation in the **online Main Street training**. The intent of the training series is to provide communities with a basic understanding and knowledge of the Main Street Approach™, as well as strategies that build awareness and participation in future Main Street efforts.

[Online Training >> Click Here](#)

## NETWORK LEVEL No commitment

Network Level communities are communities that are looking for additional resources to bolster their downtown or district revitalization efforts, but may lack capacity and/or desire to fully participate in Michigan Main Street.

## ENGAGED LEVEL 1–3 year commitment

Engaged Level communities are communities that are on-track to full participation in Michigan Main Street. A community will officially be recognized as an Engaged Level Main Street Community once they have completed the online Main Street training series and have submitted their downtown/district management scorecard. At the Engaged Level, communities are working to complete the Select Level application.

## SELECT LEVEL 5 year commitment

Select Level communities are communities that are dedicated to implementing the Main Street Approach to revitalization. The local Main Street program will have an active board of directors, providing oversight and direction, volunteer-driven committees completing projects and a Main Street director assisting with day-to-day needs. Michigan Main Street staff, along with other professionals, work closely with Select Level communities to train their boards and committees, hire a full-time Main Street director, recruit volunteers and get the local program up and running. In addition, at the Select Level, communities receive over \$100,000 worth of specialized technical assistance designed to help revitalize their downtown or traditional neighborhood commercial district.

## MASTER LEVEL 2+ year commitment

The Master Level is the most prestigious of the four levels of the Michigan Main Street program and is available to communities only after they have successfully completed five years in the Select Level and have achieved National Accreditation through Main Street America. The intent of the Master Level is to continue assisting communities that have successfully integrated a full Main Street program into their community. This is achieved by continuing to offer technical assistance, resources, training, and networking opportunities. Master Level communities have the opportunity to act as mentors for other Michigan Main Street communities.

## MICHIGAN MAIN STREET CHECKLIST

Communities should use this checklist as a guide to understand the responsibility of participation at varying levels to build capacity and participate at the level of the Michigan Main Street Program that is most appropriate.

	NETWORK	ENGAGED	SELECT	MASTER
Complete community interest form	✓	✓		
Complete downtown scorecard	✓	✓		
Submit progress reports due June and December annually	✓	✓		
Complete online training series			✓	
Attend downtown forums annually			✓	
Identify or establish a local Main Street organization and district			✓	
Complete Main Street application				✓
Hire a full-time executive director			✓	✓
Maintain an active downtown/district board			✓	✓
Ensure a dedicated budget for downtown/district transformation			✓	✓
Submit progress reports due monthly			✓	✓
Attend MMS workshops and/or national conference			✓	✓
Meet national accreditation standards set by Main Street America			by year five (5)	✓

## MAIN STREET SOLUTION CENTER

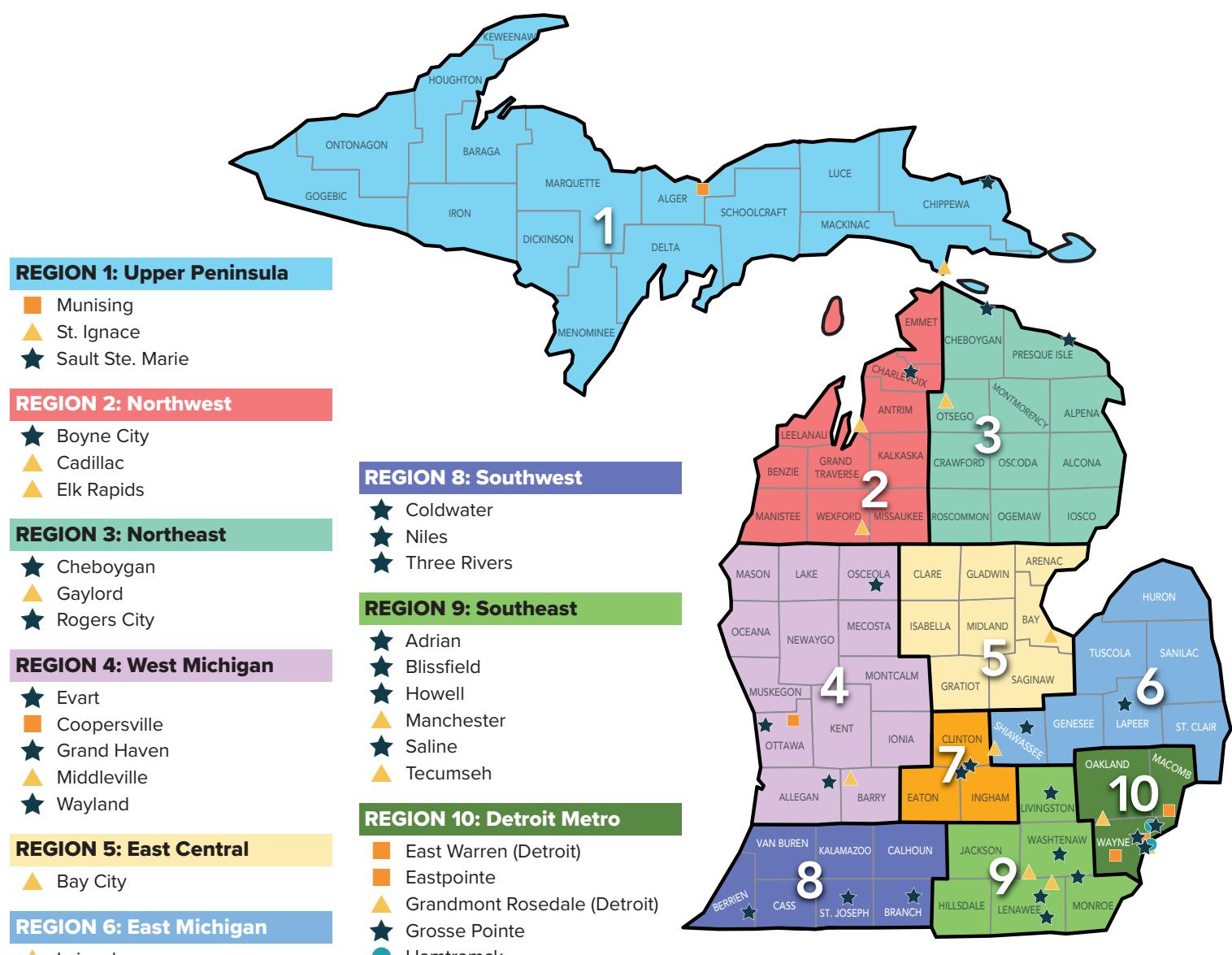
Our **online resource library** provides a comprehensive collection of best practices, case studies, guides and videos on the challenges and solutions for downtown and commercial district revitalization and management. The solution center is organized into eight categories: business, preservation, events, place, real estate, capacity, marketing, and people. To learn more, click [here](#).

# MICHIGAN MAIN STREET SUITE OF SERVICES

Michigan Main Street has developed a robust number of resources, training opportunities, and curriculum of technical assistance services. These offerings can be customized and tailored to meet individual community's needs.

MAIN STREET RESOURCES	NETWORK	ENGAGED	SELECT	MASTER
Access to Main Street Solution Center	■	▲	●	★
Reduced MSA membership for two (2) years		▲		
Engaged Level toolkit (communication templates and resources)		▲		
Annual Impact report			●	★
MAIN STREET TRAININGS	NETWORK	ENGAGED	SELECT	MASTER
Main Street 101 presentation	■	▲		
Downtown forums	■	▲		
MMS workshops		One (1) per year	●	★
Executive director leadership retreat (held every other year)			●	★
Yearly variety of webinars			●	★
National conference registration (one [1] per year)			●	★
New director orientation/on-boarding			●	★
Board training			●	★
Committee chair and volunteer training			●	★
MAIN STREET TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE SERVICES	NETWORK	ENGAGED	SELECT	MASTER
Virtual technical assistance from MMS staff based on solution center resources	■	▲	●	★
Engaged Level community site visit		▲		
Engaged Level virtual check-ins		▲		
Pre-application site visit		▲		
Asset mapping		▲	●	★
Market data snapshot and subsequent updates			●	★
Transformation strategy identification and implementation			●	★
Executive director hiring assistance			●	★
Executive director support and professional development			●	★
Main 5 communication plan			●	★
Branding			●	★
Business recruitment primer			●	★
Business recruitment challenge			●	★
Fund development			●	★
Visitor data snapshot			●	★
Property development primer			●	★
Retail merchandising			●	★
Storyville Social storytelling basic			●	★
Strategic planning			●	★
Annual accreditation visit			●	★
Downtown futures service				★
Entrepreneurial ecosystem				★
Storyville social storytelling blitz				★
Website development grant				★
Pilot new technical assistance opportunities				★
MAIN STREET GRANTS	NETWORK	ENGAGED	SELECT	MASTER
Match on Main			●	★
Vibrancy Grant: Track one and two			●	★

# Michigan Main Street Communities 2026



- Master Level**
- Engaged Level**
- Select Level**
- Network Level**

The Michigan Economic Development Corporation is the state's marketing arm and lead advocate for business development, job awareness and community development, with the focus on growing Michigan's economy. Dedicated to shared economic success, MEDC promotes the state's assets and opportunities that support business investment and community vitality. Michigan Main Street is a technical assistance offering of the MEDC working to revitalize and strengthen Michigan's downtowns and traditional commercial districts.



**MICHIGAN ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

