BUILDING STRONG COMMUNITIES
To be vibrant and competitive, Michigan communities must be ready for development. This involves planning for new investment, identifying assets and opportunities, and focusing limited resources. The MEDC supports the growth of vibrant, diverse, and resilient communities by providing economic development services and programs to attract and retain talent in Michigan communities.

“We were a downtown development authority that became a Main Street Downtown Development Authority, and we have benefited from the resources, the technical assistance, the network, the training, everything you get by being a part of this phenomenal group of people that all have the same goal: to help make your town the best it can be. It’s phenomenal what you can do with ideas and networking, and we’re proof of that.”

Lisa Croteau, Executive Director, Niles Main Street/DDA

The MICHIGAN MAIN STREET PROGRAM exists to help communities interested in revitalizing and preserving their traditional commercial district develop main street districts that attract both residents and businesses, promote commercial investment, and spur economic growth.

Michigan Main Street (MMS) staff provides technical assistance and services to communities at three levels: Engaged, Select, and Master. Each level is designed to assist the community in tackling increasingly sophisticated district revitalization efforts by utilizing the Main Street Approach—a common-sense approach to tackling the complex issues of revitalization by capitalizing on a district’s history and identifying the unique assets of the community itself.

ENGAGED LEVEL
A community will officially be recognized as an Engaged Level Main Street Community once they complete the following activities:

- Participate in the Main Street training series
- Develop a communications plan following the Main Street Basics training
- Develop a fund development plan following the Main Street In Practice training

SELECT LEVEL
The Select Level provides communities with specialized training within their own community. The intent of the Select Level is to assist communities in implementing the Main Street Four-Point Approach™. The 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. In addition, at the Select Level, communities receive over $100,000 worth of specialized trainings designed to help revitalize their downtown or traditional neighborhood commercial district.

MASTER LEVEL
The Master Level is the most prestigious level of the MMS program. The intent is to continue assisting communities that have successfully integrated a full Main Street program into their community. This is achieved by continuing to offer select level trainings and networking opportunities through MMS, as well as the opportunity to act as mentors for other MMS communities. In addition, Master Level communities continue to receive specialized technical assistance based on the needs of the district.

VIBRANCY GRANT
Select and Master Level Main Street Communities are eligible to apply for the Main Street Vibrancy Grant Program. The Vibrancy Grant offers a unique opportunity to supplement the technical assistance, education and training provided by Michigan Main Street with financial support for innovative placemaking to help transform Michigan Main Street districts into vibrant places.

MICHIGAN MAIN STREET TRAINING SERIES
The first step for communities interested in participating in MMS is completing the Main Street training series, which provides:

- A basic understanding of the Main Street Approach™
- An overview of the strategies that build awareness and participation in future Main Street efforts

For more information, email michigananmainstreet@michigan.org or visit www.miplace.org.
If your community invites public input, plans for future investment and offers superior customer service, then Redevelopment Ready Communities® is for you!

A community that achieves an RRC designation has a clear vision for the future and welcomes private sector investment through a proactive and predictable customer-centric approach to development. An RRC designation signals to residents, business owners, developers and investors that a community has removed development barriers by incorporating deliberate, fair and consistent processes. A certified RRC has a clear vision for the future, established through collaborative community planning, and welcomes private sector investment through a proactive and predictable customer service approach to development. RRC certification signals to residents, business owners, developers and investors that a community has removed development barriers by incorporating deliberate, fair and consistent processes.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDED

Communities engaged in RRC are supported with hands-on technical assistance throughout the certification process. They build productive relationships with their community planner and have access to a wide range of resources ranging from the RRC baseline report to the RRC library, webinars, workshops, planning documents, ordinance updates, and more. The community planner connects the community not only with resources to achieve certification, but also works to challenge nays and capture community development momentum at critical junctures which can lead to long-term prosperity.

RRC BEST PRACTICES

Developed by public and private sector experts, the RRC Best Practices are the standard for evaluation. Communities are able to choose from two available paths for a customized experience. Each best practice addresses key elements of community and economic development. To be awarded certification, a community must demonstrate that all best practice components have been met. The RRC Best Practice training series is aimed at building the capacity of local governments in communities eager to work toward and adopt RRC Best Practices.

CERTIFIED COMMUNITIES

When a community becomes certified, it signals that it has effective development practices. These include clear development procedures, a community-supported vision, an open and predictable review process, and compelling sites for developers to locate their latest projects. Certified RRCs gain access to the expertise of the Redevelopment Services Team, focused on a proactive approach to site redevelopment.

ESSENTIALS COMMUNITIES

Communities who have achieved the Essentials designation have all the key documents and practices in place to provide a predictable development experience and meet local planning and zoning responsibilities under Michigan law. Essentials communities gain access to technical assistance match funding opportunities.

MEDC’s Redevelopment Services Team (RSTeam) is the next frontier of the Redevelopment Ready Communities® (RRC) program. The RSTeam proactively packages priority Redevelopment Ready Sites (RRSites) throughout RRC certified communities across the state of Michigan.

Michigan’s communities of all sizes are rich with sites ripe for redevelopment. These properties may be in the form of vacant land, a superfluous surface parking lot, a former industrial site, a historic building that has fallen on hard times, or even vacant storefronts or upper stories along a traditional commercial street. Reimagining these properties for more productive uses will help community leaders meet multiple goals, from increased tax revenue to a better quality of life for existing residents.

Upon RRC certification, communities across the state engage with the RSTeam to receive personal and direct one-on-one professional support to assist in the redevelopment of their priority sites. The RSTeam provides technical assistance tailored to each community, including the following services: baseline site consultation, priority site promotion, predevelopment assistance, design/build scenarios, and developer matchmaking.

For more information, email RRC@michigan.org or visit www.miplace.org.

“The Redevelopment Services Team at MEDC has proved integral in the activation of our priority redevelopment sites in the city of Kalamazoo. Their expertise and guidance allowed us to attract a well-seasoned developer to a tired opportunity in our downtown through the development and promotion of a top-notch site RFQ. They have an obvious passion for quality redevelopment solutions and have helped position us for further success.”

— Antonio Mitchell, Director, Community Planning & Economic Development, City of Kalamazoo

For more information, email Dan Leonard, Redevelopment Services Director (regions 1–5) at leonarddd@michigan.org and Nate Scramlin, Redevelopment Services Director (regions 6–10) at scramlinn@michigan.org or visit www.miplace.org/sites.
You can help save our lights!

Michigan has more lighthouses than any other state in the country. The Michigan Lighthouse Assistance Program (MLAP), a grant program which is funded through the sale of specialty license plates and administered by the SHPO, supports lighthouse preservation. Since the plate was first made available in 2000, the MLAP has awarded more than $2.7 million in matching grants for lighthouse rehabilitation projects. You can support this effort! Get your plate at www.michigan.gov/saveourlights.

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The MEDC's support of new and existing main street businesses, as well as the local entrepreneurial ecosystem, helps foster a supportive business climate and provides tools and resources that are accessible statewide to aid in small business success.

MATCH ON MAIN
Match on Main is a reimbursement grant program that serves as a tool to support new or expanding place-based businesses by providing up to $25,000 in funding to support an eligible small business through an application submitted, administered, and managed by the local unit of government, downtown development authority, or other downtown management or community development organization where the business is located. The MEDC finds value in supporting place-based businesses located in certified and essentials Redevelopment Ready Communities® and Michigan Main Street districts, given the local capacity that has been built to support new and existing businesses through the technical assistance, training, and education communities gain by participating in these programs. The focus of Match on Main is to support place-based businesses as they seek to launch and grow on Main Street.

INITIATE (SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT)
Small businesses across the state now have access to new tools and resources to help them launch and grow in Michigan, including an online small business learning platform called "Initiate." The Initiate resource portal covers topics such as money, marketing, management, and resiliency resources by using a variety of learning methods including videos, templates, and guides. To best position our business community to access these tools, the MEDC is partnering with community and economic development organizations, financial institutions, and other small business support organizations to work one on one with businesses at the local level. Business retention efforts are critical at the local level. Through a "Train the Trainer" model, partner organizations that serve small business customers will learn how to establish consistent business retention programs locally, how to build trust with business owners, how to use available tools to understand business needs, where to direct businesses using MEDC's Initiate portal, and how to develop consistency, accountability and follow through in your organization's small business support and development services.

EDUCATION, TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
Through the MEDC, communities and small businesses have access to a statewide network of resource providers that offer tools, trainings and technical assistance. These resource providers are often referred to as business support organizations (BSO). Technical assistance offered by BSOs include education on diversifying sales channels, attracting new customers, implementing new systems and technology, increasing access to capital, and more. BSO programming for small businesses aligns with the MEDC's strategic focus initiatives by improving businesses’ core business acumen and increasing coaching and mentorship opportunities. From guiding entrepreneurs with an idea, to celebrating a bricks and mortar ribbon cutting, to ultimately supporting a business as it expands operations—resources are available to help entrepreneurs launch, stabilize and grow their #PureMichigan business.
The council guides the distribution of state and federal resources within Michigan to the following programs:

**OPERATIONAL SUPPORT**

Provides operational support to nonprofit arts and cultural organizations. MACC defines arts and cultural organizations as those organizations whose primary mission is to provide an experience, including a learning experience, that is based in a specific arts or cultural discipline.

**PROJECT SUPPORT**

Provides support to nonprofit, municipalities and colleges/universities for the production, presentation and creation of arts and culture that promotes public engagement, diverse and excellent art, lifelong learning in the arts and the strengthening or livability of communities through the arts.

**ARTS IN EDUCATION**

Provides support to school-based arts learning projects, designed to introduce or enhance student knowledge of and participation in a particular art form such as: dance, theatre, music, creative writing, storytelling, visual arts (including video, media arts and graphic design), or traditional folk arts.

**NEW LEADERS**

Provides support of arts and culture related projects or collaborations led by a young person (ages 14–30 years old) who is associated or connected to an established youth/teen council or young professionals group.

**CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT**

Provides support for nonprofit arts and cultural organizations and municipalities that provide funding assistance for the expansion, renovation, or construction of arts and cultural facilities; upgrade of equipment and furnishings to provide an up-to-date environment; provide or increase accessibility to persons with disabilities, or integrate energy efficient products and technologies.

**MINIGRANT PROJECTS**

Support special opportunities and address arts and cultural needs locally. The grant can assist in promoting public engagement, diverse and distinctive art, lifelong learning in the arts and the strengthening or livability of communities.

**PROFESSIONAL/ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT GRANT**

Assist non-profit arts and cultural organizations, artists, arts administrators, arts educators and film professionals with opportunities that specifically improve their management and/or brings the artist or arts organization to another level artistically. The Minigrant POD program may provide Michigan arts and cultural organizations, artists, arts administrators and arts educators a presence at national conferences and workshops.

**EQUIPMENT & SUPPLIES GRANT**

Provides K–12 schools with funding to assist with the purchase of arts equipment (including repairs of arts equipment) or supplies being used within the classroom/school setting.

**FIELD TRIP/BUS GRANTS**

Provides assistance to K–12 schools for the transportation cost of an arts or culture-related field trip.

**FIELD TRIP/BUS GRANTS**

Provides K–12 school with funding to support local or regional vision or goal identified in a master plan or economic development strategy. Projects in geographically disadvantaged areas will be most competitive.

**PLACE CONSIDERATIONS**

Projects should be designed and programmed in concert with basic tenets of urban design (mass, density, type and scale). Additional competitive elements include historic rehabilitation, mixed-use and mixed-income projects, inclusive design, and environmentally sustainable buildings and sites.

**ECONOMIC & FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Projects will need to demonstrate financial need. All funding sources, including debt and equity, must be maximized and development costs must be reasonable.

**LOCAL AND REGIONAL IMPACT CONSIDERATIONS**

Competitive projects support a local or regional vision or goal identified in a master plan or economic development strategy. Projects in geographically disadvantaged areas will be most competitive.

**GUIDANCE**

**LOCAL AND REGIONAL IMPACT CONSIDERATIONS**

• Project supports the vision and goals stated in the local master plan, downtown plan, and/or capital improvements plan and economic development strategy.

• Located in a Redevelopment Ready, Michigan Main Street, or Certified Local Government community.

• Located in a geographically disadvantaged area (GDA); [click here](#) to see a public map of Michigan’s geographically disadvantaged areas.*

• Community financially supports the project.

• Project supports local/regional workforce and career opportunities.

• Project incorporates emerging developers.**

• Project serves as a catalyst within the community, fostering additional development and investment.

• Project promotes mixed-income neighborhoods.

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MEDC administers the Michigan Strategic Fund programs (below) to facilitate the reinvigoration of communities across Michigan. Communities that meet the eligibility requirements may apply for the following financing and incentives:

**Brownfield Redevelopment Act (PA 381)**
Any city, village, township, or county may create a Brownfield Redevelopment Authority. Brownfield incentives promote investment in eligible properties such as contaminated, blighted, functionally obsolete, or historic properties. Tax increment financing (TIF) allows for reimbursement of costs incurred from eligible activities on brownfield properties from the incremental revenue generated by new investment on the property.

**Build MI Community**
Is a tool that provides access to real estate development gap financing for small scale, incremental redevelopment projects. The Build MI Community initiative has been established to reactivate underutilized or vacant space into vibrant areas by promoting capital investment into redevelopment projects being taken on by developers and property owners. The initiative offers real estate developers and community leaders an opportunity to transform underutilized real estate into vibrant, active areas.

**Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)**
The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development allocates CDBG funding to the state of Michigan through the MSF with assistance from the MEDC for further distribution to eligible units of general local government (UGLGs). The CDBG program funds are used to provide grants and loans to UGLGs, usually with populations under 50,000, in support of economic or community development projects. Project proposals are considered and evaluated based upon the MSF’s approved funding guide. Eligible project types may include infrastructure, historic preservation and rental rehabilitation. CDBG program funds are used to provide grants and loans to UGLGs, usually with populations under 50,000, in support of economic or community development projects. Project proposals are considered and evaluated based upon the MSF’s approved funding guide. Eligible project types may include infrastructure, historic preservation and rental rehabilitation.

**Community Revitalization Program (CRP)**
The Community Revitalization Program is a tool that provides community revitalization funding for projects that promote community revitalization by accelerating private investment, fostering redevelopment of functionally obsolete or historic properties, and reducing blight. CRP is designed to support real estate development, infill and historic preservation projects in downtowns and high-impact commercial corridors. CRP awards fill financial gaps with loans, grants or other economic assistance in projects that promote community revitalization by accelerating private investment. The program is designed to support real estate development, infill and historic preservation projects in downtowns and high-impact commercial corridors. CRP awards fill financial gaps with loans, grants or other economic assistance in projects that promote community revitalization by accelerating private investment. The program is designed to support real estate development, infill and historic preservation projects in downtowns and high-impact commercial corridors. CRP awards fill financial gaps with loans, grants or other economic assistance in projects that promote community revitalization by accelerating private investment. The program is designed to support real estate development, infill and historic preservation projects in downtowns and high-impact commercial corridors. CRP awards fill financial gaps with loans, grants or other economic assistance in projects that promote community revitalization by accelerating private investment. The program is designed to support real estate development, infill and historic preservation projects in downtowns and high-impact commercial corridors. CRP awards fill financial gaps with loans, grants or other economic assistance in projects that promote community revitalization by accelerating private investment.

**State Historic Preservation Tax Credits (PA 343 of 2020)**
Provide a credit of up to 25 percent of rehabilitation costs for both income-producing and owner-occupied historic properties. A limited amount of credits are available each calendar year.

**Transformational Brownfield Plan (TBP)**
The Transformational Brownfield Plan (TBP) (Act 46 of 2017) is defined as a brownfield plan that, among other requirements, will have a transformational impact on local economic development and community revitalization. TBP projects may request sales and use tax exemption, property tax increment capture, construction period tax capture, withholding tax capture, and income tax capture revenues as determined necessary to fill a demonstrated financing gap.

**Local Community Development Tools**

**Business Improvement District (BID)/Principal Shopping District (PSD) (PA 120)**
Cities, villages, and urban townships may create a BID or PSD to allow a municipality to collect revenue, levy special assessments, and issue bonds in order to address the maintenance, security, and operation of that district.

**Business Improvement Zone (BIZ) (PA 120)**
BIZ can be created by private property owners of those parcels in a zone plan within a city or village to levy assessments and finance activities and projects outlined within a zone plan.

**Commercial Redevelopment Act (PA 255)**
PA 255 encourages the replacement, restoration, and new construction of commercial property in a city or village. Property taxes generated from new investment are abated for a period up to 10 years. Land and personal property are not eligible.

**Commercial Rehabilitation Act (PA 210)**
PA 210 encourages rehabilitation of commercial property in a city, village, or township. Property taxes generated from new investment are abated for a period up to 1.5 years. Land and personal property are not eligible.

**Conditional Land Use Transfer (PA 425)**
PA 425 is a program that allows one municipality the option of conditionally transferring land to another public act was established to ease the legally difficult process of annexation, and to encourage cooperation. Cities, villages, and townships may enter into land transfer agreements.

**Corridor Improvement Authority (CIA) (PA 57, Part 6)**
CIA is designed to assist cities, villages, and townships by allowing the use of tax increment financing or other funding tools to implement eligible improvements in designated commercial corridors.

**Downtown Development Authority (DDA) (PA 57, Part 2)**
ODA is designed to be a catalyst in a community’s downtown. It provides a variety of funding options including a tax increment financing mechanism, which can be used to fund public improvements and levy a limited millage to address administrative expenses.

**Local Development Financing Authority (L DFA) (PA 57, Part 4)**
L DFA allows a city, village, or urban township to use tax increment financing to fund public infrastructure improvements for eligible properties. L DFA’s can promote economic growth and job creation through supporting companies in manufacturing, agriculture processing, and high technology operations.

**Neighborhood Improvement Authority (NIA) (PA 57, Part 8)**
NIA may use its funds, including tax increment financing, to fund residential and economic growth in residential neighborhoods. An authority may also issue bonds to finance these improvements.

**Obsolete Property Rehabilitation Act (OPRA) (PA 146)**
Tax incentives are available to encourage redevelopment of contaminated, blighted, and functionally obsolete buildings in eligible core communities. OPRA helps spur private development in urban areas and centers of commerce, by temporarily freezing local taxes up to 12 years.

**Redevelopment Liquor License (PA 501)**
Through PA 501, the Liquor Control Commission may issue new public on-premises liquor licenses to local governments in addition to quota licenses allowed in cities under PA 58.

**Water Resource Improvement Tax Increment Finance Authority Act (PA 57, Part 7)**
Through PA 94, a city, village, or township can establish a Water Improvement Tax Increment Finance Authority to prevent deterioration in water resources, and to promote water resource improvement or access to inland lakes, or both.

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**Other Resources**

**Business Assistance and Resources**
MEDC and its network of local and regional partners provide business assistance and business resources throughout Michigan. To learn more, visit [www.michiganbusiness.org/small-business](http://www.michiganbusiness.org/small-business).

**Pure Michigan Talent Connect**
Employers and job seekers alike can search an extensive database of job openings, post and view résumés and jobs, view upcoming job fairs, and tap into a variety of specialty career services at [www.mitalent.org](http://www.mitalent.org).

**Small Business Development Center (SBDC)**
Michigan’s SBDC has 10 regional offices that provide counseling, training, and many other valuable resources to support small businesses. Visit [www.sbdcmichigan.org](http://www.sbdcmichigan.org) for more information.

**For more information about community eligibility and program guidelines, visit [www.miplace.org](http://www.miplace.org).**

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Dedicated to shared economic success, the Michigan Economic Development Corporation promotes the state’s assets and opportunities that support business investment and community vitality. MEDC’s programs and services connect companies with people, resources, partners, and access to capital.