



# Main Street: Michigan's Grassroots Economic Development Engine

We are empowering the people of Michigan to get involved in the health of their communities while preserving the charm and history of our state.

2022 EDITION

MICHIGAN MAIN STREET State Coordinating Program

[miplace.org](http://miplace.org)



The Node, Niles

## REAL IMPACT

The numbers to prove it!



**\$26,646,354**

2020-21 Total Private Investment

\$346,519,759  
Program to date



**\$12,929,313**

2020-21 Total Public Investment

\$128,919,620  
Program to date



**37,197**

2020-21 Volunteer Hours

810,704 Program to date



**127**

2020-21 New Businesses

1,622 Program to date



**143**

2020-21 Façade & Building Improvements

2,499 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.

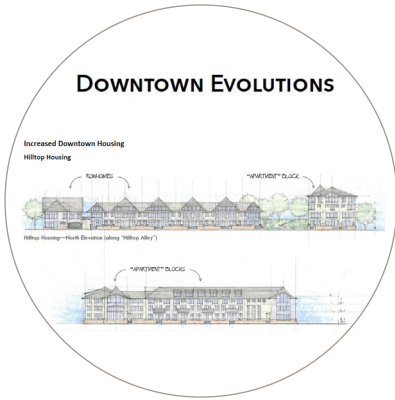
## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SPOTLIGHT

"Michigan Main Street has been extremely valuable for our community. Utilizing the Main Street Approach has allowed us to boost community pride and investment in our downtown, engage our residents and business owners and energize our volunteer base. Michigan Main Street doesn't just provide the tools and resources for communities to thrive, they show you how to use them in a proven, effective way. Because of Main Street, Lapeer has a solid foundation and focus that will allow us to sustain and support our great downtown."

—James Alt, Executive Director, Lapeer Main Street DDA



# DELIVERING REAL SERVICE DOWNTOWN



Developed and coordinated a **Downtown Futures Service** in Charlevoix with the purpose of identifying guiding principles for future development and design, opportunity sites, development patterns, and future demand for housing and small businesses within the Main Street/DDA district.



Continued to build our **Covid-19 response resources** through developing a “Winter Strategies Guide for Downtowns and Business Districts.” The winter strategies guide provides communities with ideas to give them a jump-start on preparing for winter placemaking, organized around the Main Street Four Points. This guide is an introduction to creative solutions, dialogue with community stakeholders and a foundation for embracing winter as a season of opportunity and prosperity. MMS staff recorded a webinar and made many presentations to partner organizations about what communities could do to embrace winter every single year.



Developed a **business development tool kit** containing information, examples and tools to help guide local Main Street organization’s overarching economic vitality approach and related business development efforts. Best practices, proposed actions, tools and the potential roles played by Main Street organization staff, board members and committee volunteers are offered for guidance, to help jump-start or refocus the scope of local Main Street economic vitality efforts, and to promote action.

## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR SELECT AND MASTER COMMUNITIES

This year, the Michigan Main Street staff provided communication planning and branding services to two communities designed to help each community prepare messages for target audiences and have a downtown destination and organizational branding system. In addition, four communities received business recruitment services designed to aid each in developing engaging recruitment materials and perfecting their business recruitment process. Five communities received fund development services targeted at helping organization’s assess existing revenue needs and develop fundraising tactics and a larger fund development plan to diversify revenue and strengthen overall organization sustainability.



## Engaged Level resources to all downtowns

Continued to build out our online resource library through adding a one-page overview for each of the Main Street Four Points that provides communities with the key objectives of each of the four points and can be used as a committee planning tool. In addition, four communities received technical support at the Engaged Level to assist in navigating through the Select Level application process and prepare the communities to have successful applications.

# Enhancing vibrancy within Mich. Main Street communities

This year, Michigan Main Street launched a \$100,000 grant program providing five local main street organizations: Grayling, Three Rivers, Owosso, Blissfield, and Downtown Lansing Inc., with \$20,000 each to implement projects within their Main Street districts. The Vibrancy Grant Program 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.

The table shows the projects that were funded in each of the five communities.

APPLICANT ENTITY	PROJECT DESCRIPTION
Grayling Downtown Development Authority	Downtown clock, outdoor seating, sanitation stations, crosswalk art, wayfinding signage
Blissfield Downtown Development Authority	Mini-park revitalization and gazebo for food-truck park, art events, and outdoor space activation
Owosso Downtown Development Authority	Streetscape: flower beds, benches, bike racks
Downtown Lansing Inc.	Business incubator space
Three Rivers Downtown Development Authority	Downtown in Bloom: public art upgrades to murals and art-inspired banners, lighting, bistro seating, and outdoor games (chess and ping pong tables)



# Getting on board with Main Street



“Saline Main Street has been a positive force in downtown Saline since 2012. In the beginning we were

focused on events that would bring people to discover our downtown.

With Michigan Main Street as a partner and the Four Point Approach framework, we have evolved into a multi-faceted organization focused on maintaining a vibrant downtown and a fun atmosphere regardless of the day of the year!

Through the pandemic, we refocused and found ways to support and keep businesses open. Now, they are beginning to flourish again and we have had three new businesses open just this past year!

The best part is we are always looking for innovative ways to expand our reach and appeal to visitors and locals alike. We created the “109 Cultural Exchange,” which is a multi-purpose people’s space and a nexus for arts and cultural events located in the heart of downtown Saline. Keep an eye on us!!”

—Jill Durnen, President Saline Main Street

## CITY PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

“As the city manager for Three Rivers, I have grown to rely on the Michigan Main Street program as a guide book to our community’s success. We have adopted the Four Point approach and after a few years, it has paid off. We have enjoyed new outdoor spaces, hosting fundraising events, new business growth, and a boom in upper floor level apartments. I look forward to a continued partnership with Michigan Main Street.”

—Joseph A. Bippus, City Manager, City of Three Rivers

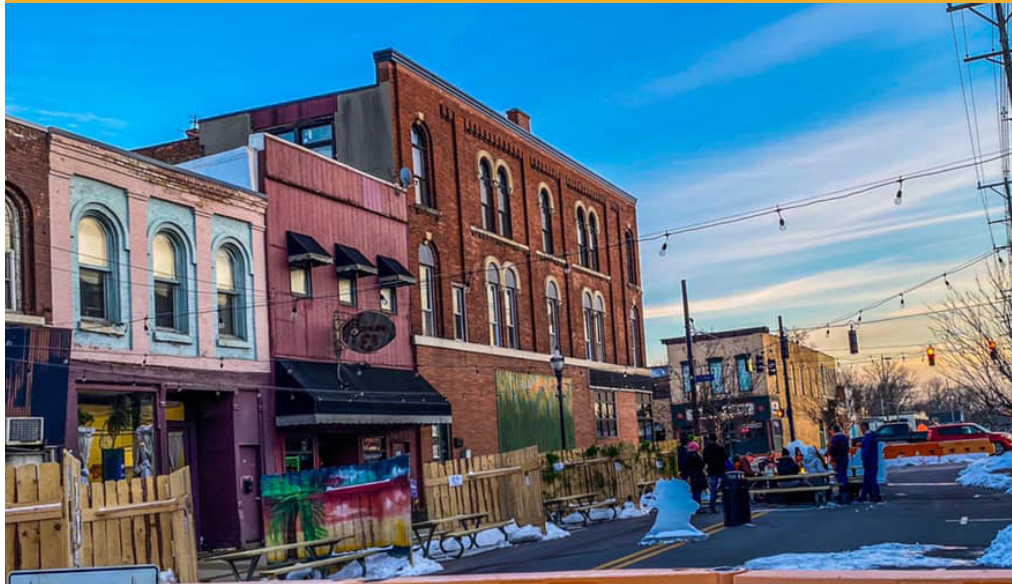


# COMMUNITY OF THE YEAR

## Niles

Niles is located in the southwest corner of Michigan along the St. Joseph River. Niles opened “The Node” during the Covid-19 pandemic as an outdoor gathering space for families, friends, and visitors to enjoy and support downtown businesses in a safe and welcoming environment. The Node is now complimented by a social district, which adds added vibrancy. As an active installation, The Node has

engaged community members in a positive way and has been met with resounding approval and praise, winning a recent MLive readers poll for “Best Outdoor Dining Experience” in Kalamazoo and southwest Michigan. Additionally, Niles has been doing outstanding work recruiting volunteers, communicating with the community, and transforming the district through numerous vibrancy projects.



# 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](http://www.miplace.org/programs/michigan-main-street/process).

You can also visit [www.miplace.org](http://www.miplace.org) for information about our online training.

“Time and time again, we have seen communities using the tools and resources available through the Michigan Main Street program to drive economic change, support local business and improve amenities for local residents. From Sault Ste. Marie to Mexicantown in southwest Detroit, and from Grand Haven to Lapeer, there are exciting things happening in Michigan’s Main Street communities.”

—Michele Wildman,  
Senior Vice President of Community Development, MEDC

## Our Communities

