



ILLINOIS MAIN STREET

Why Support Your Local Main Street Program?

Main Street programs engage citizens, businesses, and property owners in incrementally revitalizing the ‘heart’ of their community. The local Main Street program conducts comprehensive and ongoing work within the Main Street district, addressing each of Main Street’s Four Points—Organization, Promotion, Design, and Economic Restructuring.

Local government is any Main Street program’s most important partner in working to revitalize traditional downtowns, neighborhood business districts, or commercial corridors. Often, the community sees visible physical changes in the local Main Street district first—some improved building facades or new awnings, and maybe new businesses. But there is much, more work going on. As one Illinois mayor stated, “...they can do things that we can’t.” Making an investment in your Main Street program ensures that sustained economic development that preserves both local history and the community’s character will continue.

Here are six compelling reasons to support local funding for the Main Street program.

- Main Street programs are all about local reinvestment. According to the National Trust Main Street Center’s 2010 Reinvestment Statistics, local Main Street programs have generated nearly \$50 Billion of private and public reinvestment since 1980. During that same period, these same Main Street efforts resulted a net gain of over 94,000 full-time jobs nationally.
- Main Street programs work, and work effectively. The National Trust Main Street Center’s 2010 Reinvestment Statistics report that for each \$1 spent to operate a local Main Street program, \$27 is reinvested in the local community. This 27:1 reinvestment ratio really is successful economic development.
- Main Street programs supply valuable human capital through their volunteers. Each year, the typical Illinois Main Street program contributes about 10,000 volunteer work hours to revitalizing the local commercial district. According to national non-profit sources, each volunteer hour represents about \$22.34 in value in 2010. The dollar value of the work donated to the typical Illinois Main Street community represents over \$220,000.
- Main Street program successes generate revenues for local governments. By focusing on business expansion, entrepreneurial growth, and improving the district’s property values through reinvestment, Main Street work helps generate additional real estate taxes, sales taxes, and regulatory fee income valuable to local government revenues.
- Main Street programs work to improve the local image. Supporting business growth in the Main Street district changes local and regional perceptions about the district and the community, not to mention what outsiders will observe. Business growth and physical improvements translate into a better image for the local community that, in turn, enhances broader economic development opportunities.
- Main Street programs build local capacity over time. Funding from local governments usually helps to get Main Street started. Annual contributions to the local Main Street program continue and enhance collaborative work to improve and strengthen the Main Street district and the local economy.