



2021-2023 Annual Standards for Accreditation

Introduction

The purpose of the Georgia Main Street Program's annual year-end assessment is to recognize program accomplishments made during the previous calendar year, to address additional downtown revitalization issues, and to discuss barriers which would prevent the local program from achieving future work plan goals and activities. This assessment is not meant to be a qualitative ranking to compare your community's downtown revitalization and management activities with other programs but should be used as a way to evaluate the successfulness of your local program and the greater role it plays in your community's development. Main Streets vary considerably in the size, scope and type of downtown projects and programs. Therefore, comparison between communities is impossible. Instead, this evaluation examines the effectiveness of the local Main Street program within its own context and circumstances.

This year end assessment takes into consideration information gathered throughout the year from several sources including but not limited to, input from municipal partners, on site visits, conversations or emails with the board, committee members and staff. This information combined with this document will be used to determine a program's eligibility to receive a Main Street America designation.

The National Main Street Center, in cooperation with the Georgia Main Street coordinating program, provides benchmarks and guidelines on downtown development best practices and serves as a framework for programs to more effectively operate under. In addition to the standards outlined in this document, compliance in execution of the Memorandum of Understanding between the local program and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs' Office of Downtown Development is closely monitored during the evaluation process.

The following information must be submitted annually by the **January 15th** deadline in order to be eligible for consideration.



National Main Street Program Accreditation Criteria

1. Broad-based community support
 2. Vision and mission statements
 3. Comprehensive work plan
 4. Historic preservation ethic
 5. Active board and committees
 6. Adequate operating budget
 7. Paid professional staff
 8. Program of ongoing training
 9. Reporting of key statistics
 10. Main Street Network membership
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Manager recommendations for topics to discuss during this year's evaluation:

In order for a local Main Street program to be eligible for consideration of the Classic Main Street or GEMS designation, from the Georgia Main Street Program, they must receive a minimum score of 7 points in Standards #1-3 and #5-10. In Standard #4, which speaks specifically to the program's historic preservation ethic, a minimum of 10 points must be met. Other factors such as staff, board support, city support and the health or vibrancy of the overall historic commercial district will also be considered as part of the designation process.

Please be aware that key indicators below, which are in bold font, indicate a requirement for designation.

1. Broad-based Community Support

At its best, a local Main Street Program represents and involves a coalition of organizations, agencies, businesses, and individuals from throughout the community. This does not only include property or businesses in the historic commercial district or those who have a direct economic tie to it, but all members of the community who are interested in the community's overall economic, cultural and historic health. Involvement by both the public and private sectors is critical as well; neither sector can revitalize the historic commercial district without the skills and vantage points of the other. Ideally, both sectors will participate in the revitalization process by providing funding, leadership, and ideas, and by encouraging collaboration between existing programs to assist in the revitalization process. By actively involving a broad range of interests and perspectives in the development of your historic commercial district, the Main Street program leverages the community's collective skills and resources to its maximum advantage. The overall goal is for a broad range of people from both sectors to understand and be philosophically committed to the revitalization process, and the maximum resources possible to achieve the goal of revitalizing the historic commercial district.

Indicators-

- Organization actively recruited new volunteers. (1 point)
- Staff spends time building relationships with downtown business owners and district stake holders. (1 point)
- Organizations that have a membership program or Business Improvement District actively worked to recruit new members and retain existing members. (1 point)
- Board representation came from at least 4 of the following entities: chamber, CVB, city, county, preservation organization, district property owner, business owner, resident, large employer, other community institution/organization. (1 pt)
- Community involvement was comprised of financial, in-kind, and volunteer support for the success of the program, this should be reflected in the work plan. (1 pt)
- Organization partnered with at least 3 other organizations, this should be reflected in the work plan. (1 point)
- The Board and/or Manager presented at a City Council Meeting regarding the benefits and accomplishments of the Main Street Program. (1 point)
- Organization demonstrated a strong relationship with community partners.
(i.e. Police, Mayor, City Manager, City Clerk, County, State Legislators, Fire Dept, EMS, Civic Clubs, Schools, Board of Realtors, Banks, Utility Providers, Chamber, Tourism) (2 points)
- Organization maintained an active public relations campaign that includes tools such as a newsletter, updated website, social media, press releases, annual meeting, annual report. (1 point)

2. Vision and Mission Statement

A mission statement communicates the organization's sense of purpose and overall direction. The mission statement should additionally identify the method to achieve the community's vision for their downtown. A vision statement communicates and describes the look and feel of the district when the mission has been accomplished.

Be mindful that neither is simply a slogan. Both statements should be developed with the participation of the board, committees, program volunteers, and the community.

Indicators- *Please note text in bold indicates a requirement*

- **Current and clear mission statement uploaded in Dropbox. (2 points)**
- **Current and clear vision statement uploaded in Dropbox. (2 points)**
- All board members are familiar with the mission statement. (2 points)
- Organization annually reviewed the mission and vision statement. (1 point)
- Organization actively promotes the mission and/or vision to the public using tools such as its website, business cards, press releases, banners, printed materials, etc. (2 points)
- National Main Street and Georgia Main Street logo are present on press releases, banners, printed materials, the local Main Street program's website and city website. (2 points)

Total: _____

3. Comprehensive Work Plan

A comprehensive annual work plan provides a detailed blueprint for the organization's activities; reinforces the program's accountability both within the organization and in the broader community; and provides measurable objectives by which the program will track its progress. Tasks, with names of people assigned to complete them, budgets and timelines are important components that add to the strength of this document.

Indicators- *Please note text in bold indicates a requirement*

- **Has a current annual work plan on file with DCA and this document was regularly reviewed during board meetings. (3 points)**
- **Program utilized O.D.D. work plan template, or an approved format. (2 points)**
- Has the annual work plan and transformation strategies accessible and visible on website. (1 point)
- Hosted at least one annual meeting of the Board to develop the annual work plan and review transformation strategies. (1 point)
- Solicited input from the community, through a survey, public meeting or on-line inquiries regarding the development of the work plan. (1 point)
- Board members assisted in the execution of the work plan to achieve transformation strategy goals. (1 point)
- Committees, task forces or volunteers met to detail and execute items identified in the work plan. (1 point)

Total: _____

4. Historic Preservation Ethic

Historic preservation is central to a Main Street program's purpose. The historic buildings and public spaces of a traditional commercial district enrich civic life and add value on many levels to the community. Developing a historic preservation ethic is an ongoing process of education and discovery for a community and for a local Main Street program. Main Street programs that have embraced a strong historic preservation ethic are successful in saving, rehabilitating, and finding new uses for traditional commercial buildings. A strong focus should be on intensifying the uses of the district's buildings, through both specific building improvement projects and through policy and regulatory changes, which make it easier to develop property within the commercial district.

Many Main Street programs support preservation values, but do not fully understand that preservation is a shared responsibility and ethic, not just an activity or group of activities. Historic preservation involves not only rehabilitating older commercial buildings, but also the process of adopting long term preservation sensitive planning, positive land use policies, education and removing barriers to downtown investment.

Indicators- *Please note text in bold indicates a requirement*

- **Community has an active database of the downtown business district including photos and property descriptions and a copy of the database is uploaded to Dropbox (2 points)**
- Downtown property or district is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. (2 points)
- Downtown is a locally designated historic district. (1 point)
- Organization used news outlets and social media to educate community regarding the history and cultural significance of your downtown. (1 point)
- The organization has print, physical, or digital materials to educate the community regarding the history and cultural significance of the downtown. (1 point)
- The downtown district has a facade grant program, or an alternative grant program of similar impact, available for local businesses. (1 point)
- Community is a Certified Local Government. (1 point)
- Municipality has a code enforcement strategy in place. (1 point)
- Organization or local business sought design technical assistance from DCA, a partner organization or a private entity. (2 points)

4. Historic Preservation Ethic Cont.

- Community received and executed a Historic Preservation Fund Grant from the National Park Service. (3 points)
- Local community hosted a national historic preservation activity in May or another preservation project during the calendar year. (2 points)
- Local program attended a statewide Historic Preservation Commission training during the calendar year. (2 points)
- Downtown has commercial design guidelines and a review process in place to maintain the historic integrity of the district. (2 points)
- The organization has a strong relationship with Historic Preservation organizations, code enforcement, building inspector and/or planning office. (1 point)
- The city/downtown has one of the following designations as certified by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs: (1 point for each)
 - Plan First
 - Rural Zone
 - Opportunity Zone (must include Downtown)
- Preservation sensitive building rehabilitation was completed. (1 point)
- Projects using either Federal Rehabilitation Investment Tax Credits (RITC) or the State Income Tax Credit for Rehabilitated Historic Property incentives were completed downtown. (2 points)
- Downtown projects utilized State financial incentives (DDRLE, CDBG) during the previous calendar year. (1 point)
- Community has a sign ordinance in place that is specific to the historic commercial district, and a copy is uploaded to Dropbox. (1 point)
- No historically significant buildings were demolished in the calendar year. If a building was demolished, the documentation process was thoughtfully executed, and the community was made aware of demolition mitigation

measures. (2 points)

Total: _____

*For this standard you must achieve a total of **10** out of the possible **32** points in order to be recommended for accreditation.*

5. Active Board & Committees

Main Street revitalization is an ongoing program of changing a community's attitudes about its traditional historic commercial district. The direct involvement of an active board of directors and active volunteers is vital to this process. The Main Street director is responsible for facilitating the work of volunteers, not for single-handedly revitalizing the historic commercial district. In some cases, local Main Street programs were originated by or have merged with other organizations, which have a broader agenda (such as a chamber of commerce or a convention and visitors bureau). A local Main Street program with this structure has a better chance of long-term success if it maintains focus on its particular purpose and if its mission statement, work plan, budget, and governing body remain distinct from that of the larger organization in which it is contained. A full board that meets regularly, as stated in its by-laws, is extremely important in supporting this success.

Indicators- *Please note text in bold indicates a requirement*

- **Board met a minimum of 10 times during the calendar year, had a quorum at all meetings and a copy of all board minutes and meeting agendas are on file with DCA via Dropbox. (2 points)**
- **Organization has a signed annual MOU on file with the DCA regarding the processes and official execution of the local Main Street program. (1 point)**
- **All new Board Members attended Main Street 101 within their first year of their first term on the board. (1 point)**
- **Copy of board roster using DCA template is uploaded in Dropbox. (1 point)**
- Board of directors is not a figurehead board but is a working board that actively participates in the activities of the organization, other than monthly board meetings. (2 points)
- Board meetings are well-managed, with an agenda prepared and distributed in advance, along with a copy of the past meeting's minutes and financial report. (1 point)
- Organization has by-laws, board member commitment letter, board member job descriptions. (1 point)
- Organization host a board member orientation process for new board members. (1 point)
- Organization holds Directors and Officers insurance. (1 point)
- Board members participated in training opportunities, other than Main Street 101. (1 point)

Total: _____

6. Adequate Operating Budget

In order to be successful, a local Main Street program must have the financial resources necessary to carry out the annual program of work. The size of a program's budget will change as the program matures (in its early years, it may need less money than in high growth years). In addition, program budgets are likely to vary according to regional economic differences and community size.

Indicators- *Please note text in bold indicates a requirement*

- **A copy of the organization's annual budget is uploaded in Dropbox. (1 point)**
- **The Board is provided an up-to-date financial report at each meeting and copy of financial report is included in the program's monthly minutes in Dropbox. (1 point)**
- Program has a budget adequate to the execution of the annual work plan as outlined in the MOU. (1 point)
- Funding is derived from at least 3 of the following sources: membership, earned income, sponsorship, municipal support, county support, facility leases, special event revenue, special tax districts, hotel/motel tax, charitable contributions, or grants. (1 point)
- At least 20% of the budget comes from non-tax generated revenue. (1 point)
- Budget includes education and travel expenses to attend training offered by the Office of Downtown Development or other downtown development related training opportunities, as outlined in the MOU with DCA. (1 point)
- Organization has at least 3 months of operating reserves in savings, at the time of completing the annual assessment. (1 point)
- A copy of the organizations budget is publicly accessible. (2 point)
- Program has an annual audit or review of finances. (1 point)

Total: _____

7. Staff Management & Development

Coordinating a successful Main Street program requires a trained, professional staff person whose sole focus is the success of their downtown. Main Street Managers come from a broad range of academic and professional backgrounds. The most successful Main Street Managers are those who are good communicators, support and motivate volunteers, have good project management skills, and keeping revitalization activities moving forward on schedule and on budget.

Date of Hire for Main Street/Organization Director: _____

Date of annual employee evaluation: _____

Indicators- *Please note text in bold indicates a requirement*

- **Executive staff was in place for at least 10 months during the calendar year. (1 point)**
- **75% of the staff's time was spent on Downtown Development related activities, programs or initiatives. (1 point)**
- Staff meets the Georgia Main Street Program salary average of \$51,500. (2 points)
- Staff received appropriate benefits. (1 point)
- Executive staff received a formal written evaluation, during which performance expectations were discussed, reviewed and revised. (1 point)
- Organization provided manager with professional development opportunities. (1 point)
- Executive staff is active and engaged in the community, this is clearly demonstrated through both social and printed media. (1 point)
- Executive staff made regular monthly reports to the board. (1 point)
- Manager is a Main Street America Institute graduate or holds a license, certificate, or degree in the field of planning, economic development, finance, historic preservation, architecture, EDFP, AICP, and/or Certified Economic Developer. (2 points)

REQUIRED FOR NEW MANAGERS

Completion date of Main Street 101 certification: _____
(Please upload a copy of certificate to Dropbox)

Total: _____

8. Program of Ongoing Training

In order to meet new challenges and ensure a strong organization, Main Street program participants need ongoing training. Participants, both staff and volunteers, need different skills in different phases of the revitalization process. For that reason, the skills a program's participants learn in the program's catalyst phase is rarely adequate for the growth or management phases. As staff and volunteer turnover occurs, new staff members and new volunteers will need basic Main Street training. Moreover, all program participants should stay current on issues that affect traditional commercial districts and recent revitalization techniques and models. Regular attendance at trainings and networking events is required for Main Street executive staff.

Indicators- *Please note text in bold indicates a requirement*

- **Main Street Manager received at least 30 hours of downtown development related training, and must demonstrate this through the completed training log uploaded to Dropbox. (4 points)**
- Organization representative (staff and/or board member) attended the annual Main Street Now or National Trust's Past Forward conference. (2 points)
- An elected official from your program's city/county or manager's direct supervisor is Main Street 101 certified. (1 point)
- Manager or at least two board members attended the Georgia State Historic Preservation Conference or Governor's Tourism Conference. (1 point)
- The manager utilized the Georgia Main Street YouTube channel as a learning or review tool. (1 point)
- Manager is a graduate of the Georgia Academy of Economic Development. (1 point)
- Program Manager participates as either mentor or mentee in the Georgia Downtown Association's mentorship program. (1 point)
- Staff used the Georgia Main Street Managers Facebook Group and/or National Main Street list serve as a tool to improve your district. (1 point)

Total: _____

9. Reporting of Key Statistics

Tracking statistics for private and public investment, jobs and business creation provided a tangible measurement of the local Main Street program's impact and is crucial to securing financial and programmatic support for the revitalization effort. Statistics must be collected on a regular, ongoing basis, and shared as needed.

Indicators- *Please note text in bold indicates a requirement*

- **Organization submitted all monthly reports no later than 30 days after the end of each calendar month. (6 points)**
- Organization created and distributed an annual report promoting work plan accomplishments and reinvestment statistics, a copy of this report is uploaded to Dropbox. (2 points)
- Staff regularly communicated as necessary with the Office of Downtown Development outside of trainings and networking meetings. (1 point)
- Organization shared annual community impact numbers with elected officials at a city council meeting or work session. (1 point)

Total: _____

10. Main Street Network Membership

Participation in the National Main Street Network membership program connects local programs to their counterparts throughout the nation, providing them with valuable information and resources.

Indicators- Please note text in bold indicates a requirement

- **Organization is a current National Main Street Network member.**
(10 points)

Total: _____

Standard 1 Totals: _____

Standard 2 Totals: _____

Standard 3 Totals: _____

Standard 4 Totals: _____

Standard 5 Totals: _____

Standard 6 Totals: _____

Standard 7 Totals: _____

Standard 8 Totals: _____

Standard 9 Totals: _____

Standard 10 Totals: _____

Total number of the above accreditation standards receiving 7 or more points: _____

Organizations scoring at least 7 points in Standards #1-3 and #5-10, with at least 10 points in Standard #4 are eligible to be recommended for national accreditation.

Annual Assessment Check List and Affidavit

Main Street Program's Dropbox Folder contains:

Map of Main Street program's district boundaries (Annual Assessment folder)

Main Street program's organizational chart (Annual Assessment Folder)

Mission and vision statement (Standard #2 folder)

Annual work plan (using DCA template, Standard #3 folder)

All board meeting agenda and minutes (Standard #5 folder)

Copy of the MOU (Standard #5 folder)

Board roster (using DCA template, Standard #5 folder)

Main Street program bylaws (Standard #5 folder)

Annual budget, showing program revenue/expenses and monthly financial statements (Standard #6 folder)

Main Street Manager job description (Standard #7 folder)

Main Street Staff job descriptions (Standard #7 folder)

Training log and completion certificates for manager, staff and board members (Standard #8 folder)

Our program has completed and submitted all 12 monthly Community Activity Reports. (it is optional to place copies in Standard #9 folder)

A copy of the Main Street program's membership with the National Main Street Center. (Standard #10 folder)

By signing this affidavit, I here-by certify that all the above documentation has been uploaded to _____'s shared DCA Dropbox folder and is, to the best of my knowledge, an accurate portrayal of our local Main Street program.

Manager Signature:

Board Chair Signature:

Supervisor's Signature:

Date: