



# SUCCESSFUL COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS DON'T JUST HAPPEN.

**They need to be planned and nurtured.** Their prosperity requires interest and action from many stakeholders who share a vision for the community.

WEDC's downtown development programs are designed to help communities identify necessary initiatives, stakeholders and resources to make their downtown or urban commercial district a more vibrant and engaging place to live, work and play.

Our programs are designed around The Main Street Approach®, which provides a holistic framework for downtown revitalization focused on four key points:

**Organization** establishes consensus and cooperation by building partnerships among the various groups that have a stake in the commercial district.

**Design** works to create a safe, inviting environment for shoppers, workers and visitors while preserving a place's historic character.

**Economic Vitality** works to build a commercial district that responds to the needs of today's consumers while promoting economically profitable businesses and properties.

**Promotion** communicates unique characteristics, cultural traditions and community pride to create a positive image and attract interest in and traffic to your district.

# DOWNTOWNS AND HISTORIC COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN OUR COMMUNITIES AND IN WISCONSIN'S OVERALL ECONOMY.



Photos courtesy of Main Street Marshfield, Sturgeon Bay Visitor Center, and Eagle River Revitalization Program.

WEDC.ORG



# DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

ACHIEVING YOUR VISION FOR REVITALIZATION

MAIN STREET | CONNECT COMMUNITIES



## RESOURCES AND SERVICES

Participants in both the Wisconsin Main Street and Connect Community Programs enjoy access to a wide variety of educational resources, training and tools designed to further local revitalization initiatives, including:

- Regional workshops on pertinent topics
- Annual conference programming
- Regular webinars
- Case studies and best practices
- Regional networking events
- Manager/board orientation/training
- Toolkits on relevant topics such as market analysis, volunteer management, event production, design guidelines, marketing, etc.

**WISCONSIN MAIN STREET** communities receive intensive technical assistance from WEDC's downtown development staff and consultants to provide tailored support, design assistance and topical solutions for local challenges as well as targeted support for local businesses and property owners.

## OUTCOMES

Downtown development is not a one-size-fits-all endeavor, and local outcomes are as unique as the communities they represent. Ranging in size from 700 to 600,000 residents, each program has made strides in achieving local goals. Participants commonly report increased storefront occupancy, improved environment and aesthetics, increased property values and an expanded customer base, among other outcomes.

## PROGRAMS



### MAIN STREET

The **Wisconsin Main Street** program was created in 1987, and is affiliated with the National Main Street Center. The **Main Street America™** program is designed to provide technical support and training for organizations dedicated to downtown or commercial corridor revitalization activities. The program is flexible in its ability to accommodate a wide range of community sizes and situations. Successful programs will have established a strong local base of support which enables them to undertake a broad spectrum of initiatives specifically designed to foster local success.

### CONNECT COMMUNITIES

Created in 2013, the Connect Communities program is designed to provide training and networking for communities or organizations working on revitalization topics. Connect Communities is a great option for communities beginning new revitalization efforts, those looking to provide additional resources to support local commercial district businesses and property owners, and individuals interested in networking with other professionals and gaining useful information on strategies and techniques to address common revitalization challenges.

## APPLICATION INFORMATION

### MAIN STREET

Applicants to the Wisconsin Main Street program must be organizations focused on downtown or urban commercial district issues. The organization must have paid staff and an adequate budget for carrying out activities (\$40,000 in communities under 5,000 or \$70,000 in larger communities).

Applications are accepted annually in the spring, and interviews will be held with eligible applicants to determine organization readiness. Up to 3 new communities will be admitted to the program in the following fiscal year.

Participating organizations must complete regular reporting and meet annual attendance requirements to remain in the Wisconsin Main Street Program.

### CONNECT COMMUNITIES

Applicants for Connect Communities program may be any organization or governmental entity interested in pursuing revitalization activities at the local level.

Applications are accepted twice annually in the spring and fall, and up to 20 new communities will be admitted to the program in each fiscal year.

Participating organizations must complete annual reporting and meet annual attendance requirements to remain in the Connect Communities program.

