

THE MAIN STREET APPROACH TO RECOVERY

As downtowns begin to reopen to the public, the Main Street Approach™ can serve as a powerful tool for economic recovery efforts. The Main Street Approach is a time-tested framework for community-driven, comprehensive revitalization that has strengthened downtowns across the country. The strategies that guide this approach are organized around four points: Economic Vitality, Design, Promotion, and Organization. Organization involves creating a strong foundation for a sustainable revitalization effort, including cultivating partnerships, community involvement, and resources for the district. Keep reading to learn about Organization-related recovery activities and ideas to help your Main Street navigate the impact of COVID-19.



Recruit a public health official to your Board of Directors.

Offer an ex-officio slot to help guide your recovery efforts.

Be prepared to advocate for your program when state and local stimulus packages are developed:

- Publish your program's annual statistics
- Create a recovery plan with a budget
- Have letters of support ready for your organization
- Reach out to your city to ensure they know your program needs continued or increased funding. Ask your coordinating program for a [letter of support](#) to your local government officials.

Risk assess your budget.

Develop backup plans for revenue reductions and consider other sources of revenue, including:

- Community Foundations
- Local/Regional Corporations for small business programming and operational support
- Permission to recast special event sponsorships for alternative downtown programming and operational support

Develop strategies to raise revenue now.

- Create an email campaign asking your stakeholders for donations to support Main Street. Describe how COVID-19 is impacting your downtown and your organization, share how your program is responding, and explain how you will use their donation.
- Thank everyone who has supported your organization in the past, and show photos of your recent impact, if possible.



- Make targeted asks to successful businesses or local philanthropists to ask for funding for your organization and Main Street businesses.
- Don't assume all businesses can't honor their pledge or membership to your organization. Communicate and check in with them often.

☐ Examine social entrepreneurship opportunities for added revenue.



For example, Downtown Rochester in Rochester, Mich., is selling branded face masks to benefit their Road to Recovery events and promotions.

☐ Check in with your volunteers.

Share your thoughts on your downtown's recovery and let them know they are needed now more than ever.

☐ Evaluate your organization's recovery pathway.

- Human Resources: Do you need to make cuts, furloughs, or change contracts?
- Budgets: Examine revenue sources and create ratings for their potential to decrease or increase. What expenses can be reduced to coincide with revenue projections? Review income and cash flow statements.
- Legal: Consider the status of your contracts and your lease situation.
- Insurance: Evaluate the status of future events and office visitors.

☐ Use social media tools to share news about your organization, its work, and future needs.

☐ Know your state's reopening guidelines.

For those needing guidance, be a connector and convener, but not the authority.

☐ Develop your District Recovery Plan.

See planning graphic below.

