



Lessons Learned: Insights from the Annual Accreditation Process

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What Does It Mean to be a MainStreet Community?

- Your community...
 - Has been officially designated by the state regional coordinating program.
 - Implements the Main Street Approach to advance economic development goals.
 - Meets, or is striving to meet, annual accreditation criteria.



Why do the Annual Program Review & Accreditation?



Local programs share accomplishments, successes; demonstrate performance



Help NMMS understand progress made on implementing strategies and achieving goals



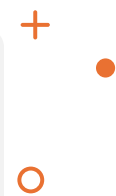
Helps NMMS identify opportunities for providing technical assistance, funding



Required by Main Street America; determines designation as Affiliate or Accredited program

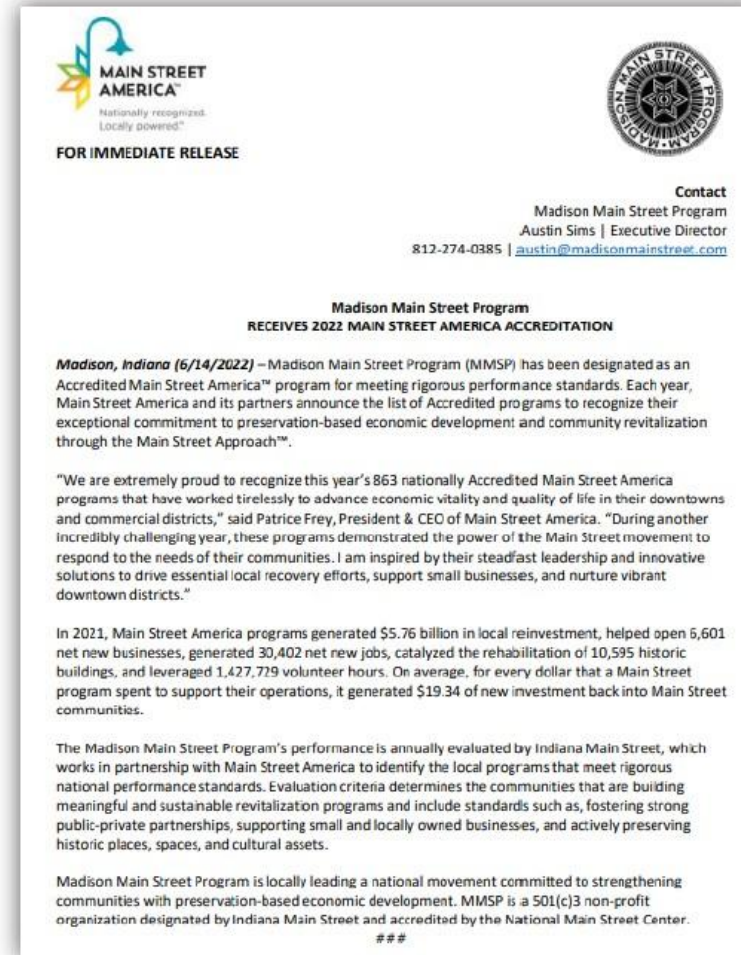


Provides information to share with State Legislature, NMEDD



WHY IS ACCREDITATION VALUABLE

- + Recognizes programs that operate with the highest standards
- + Requirements help programs with fundraising, volunteer development, and overall sustainability
- + Challenges the board to organize and grow
- + Illustrates accountability and credibility to your partners, community, and volunteers
- + Eligibility to apply for the Great American Main Street Award



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From Main Street America

Why is being an Accredited program in New Mexico valuable?



- **Funding for Construction Projects**
 - NMMS only provides CAPITAL OUTLAY FUNDING FOR CONSTRUCTION to ACCREDITED PROGRAMS
- **NMMS Technical Assistance**
 - NMMS technical assistance to programs designated as “Affiliate” will be focused on CAPACITY-BUILDING and STRENGTHENING THE ORGANIZATION.
- **Contract Requirements**
 - Some local government contracts REQUIRE that the local MainStreet program MAINTAIN ACCREDITED DESIGNATION.
- **Prestige/Public Perception**
 - Designation as an Accredited program communicates that your organization is PERFORMING AT A HIGH LEVEL and meeting all the requirements.

Broad Takeaways of the Accreditation Process

From Kat, Connie & Charles



Charles

- Put accreditation related processes/ tasks/ documents on your work and board calendars!
- This can help ensure you have most of the accreditation documents you need ahead of time so it's not a last-minute scramble.
- Here are three suggestions for accreditation items for you calendar:
 - Work plan, budget, Conflict of Interest Disclosures - these should be part of your annual meeting (or one of the first meetings of your fiscal year)
 - Community Self Assessment - scheduled at least one month in advance of your accreditation meeting
 - Important legal filings, 990, NMSOS & NMAG reports - make sure you know when these items are due so you can ensure compliance and accountability!

Connie

- Time management
 - Plan Ahead: The accreditation process requires dedicated time.
 - Block your calendar: Schedule time to gather your necessary documents and complete the self assessment and performance report.
- Detail, Detail, Detail
 - Read the instructions, things change from year to year
 - Be thorough: More detail simplifies NMMS's evaluation of your progress.
 - Provide context: Showcase achievements but be sure to include specifics that demonstrate growth and impact.
- Embrace Weaknesses
 - Be honest: Use this process as a way to identify areas for growth.
 - Plan for progress: Identified weaknesses can be turned into actionable steps for future success.

Kat

- NMMS Staff/ Local Evaluators
 - We are here to assist; no question is too small or insignificant.
 - Reach out ahead of time with any issues you may have; if you have an area of concern or something specific you would like addressed during your accreditation meeting, share that with us .
- Community Insight
 - Every community is different, there are no two alike, and therefore they must each be evaluated independently.
 - We rely on the information you provide us to let us know what is going on in your community, don't assume that we know.

Personal Takeaways

Kat - Collaboration

Charles - Solidarity

Connie - Reputation

Accreditation Process Shoutouts!

Most partner surveys!

- Artesia MainStreet - 31 partner surveys.

Most people in attendance at the accreditation meeting!

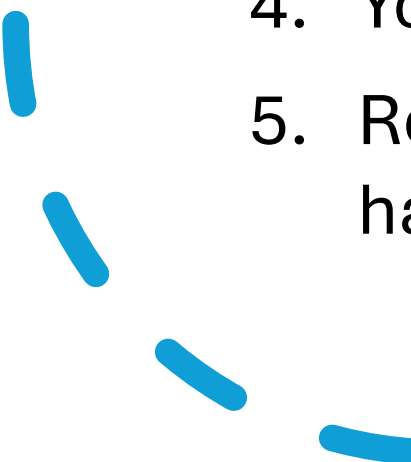
- Los Alamos MainStreet – 24 meeting attendees.

Accreditation documents submitted furthest in advance of their meeting!

- Raton MainStreet – five weeks in advance.



Now it is time for roundtable discussions!

1. Break up into groups of 10-ish people.
 2. Select someone to facilitate and someone to be the scribe (it can be the same person).
 3. Read through the questions and discuss them as a group.
 4. You have 30-ish minutes for discussion.
 5. Report out to the larger group the highlights of what you have discussed.
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Roundtable Discussion Prompts

1. How do you approach your **performance report** and **MSA self-assessment** to ensure you are **capturing and communicating** all the important details about your **accomplishments and impact**?
2. Did the self-assessment open your eyes to any **opportunities for strengthening your organization** that you hadn't previously thought of?
3. What do you/your organization **do well**, as far as the accreditation process goes, and what could you **improve upon** in the future? What do you consider the **most challenging** part of the accreditation process?
4. Is there a **project** you reported on during this accreditation process that you are **proud of and think your peers should know about**? Please share!
5. What **suggestions** do you have for NMMS for **improving the accreditation process** in the future?



Thank you!



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