

## 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.

**AMERICA**<sup>™</sup>





# 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









FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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#### Madison Main Street Program RECEIVES 2022 MAIN STREET AMERICA ACCREDITATION

Madison, Indiana (6/14/2022) – Madison Main Street Program (MMSP) has been designated as an Accredited Main Street America™ program for meeting rigorous performance standards. Each year, Main Street America and its partners announce the list of Accredited programs to recognize their exceptional commitment to preservation-based economic development and community revitalization through the Main Street Approach™.

"We are extremely proud to recognize this year's 863 nationally Accredited Main Street America programs that have worked tirelessly to advance economic vitality and quality of life in their downtowns and commercial districts," said Patrice Frey, President & CEO of Main Street America. "During another incredibly challenging year, these programs demonstrated the power of the Main Street movement to respond to the needs of their communities. I am inspired by their steadfast leadership and innovative solutions to drive essential local recovery efforts, support small businesses, and nurture vibrant downtown districts."

In 2021, Main Street America programs generated \$5.76 billion in local reinvestment, helped open 6,601 net new businesses, generated 30,402 net new jobs, catalyzed the rehabilitation of 10,595 historic buildings, and leveraged 1,427,729 volunteer hours. On average, for every dollar that a Main Street program spent to support their operations, it generated \$19.34 of new investment back into Main Street communities.

The Madison Main Street Program's performance is annually evaluated by Indiana Main Street, which works in partnership with Main Street America to identify the local programs that meet rigorous national performance standards. Evaluation criteria determines the communities that are building meaningful and sustainable revitalization programs and include standards such as, fostering strong public-private partnerships, supporting small and locally owned businesses, and actively preserving historic places, spaces, and cultural assets.

Madison Main Street Program is locally leading a national movement committed to strengthening communities with preservation-based economic development. MMSP is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization designated by Indiana Main Street and accredited by the National Main Street Center.

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## 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

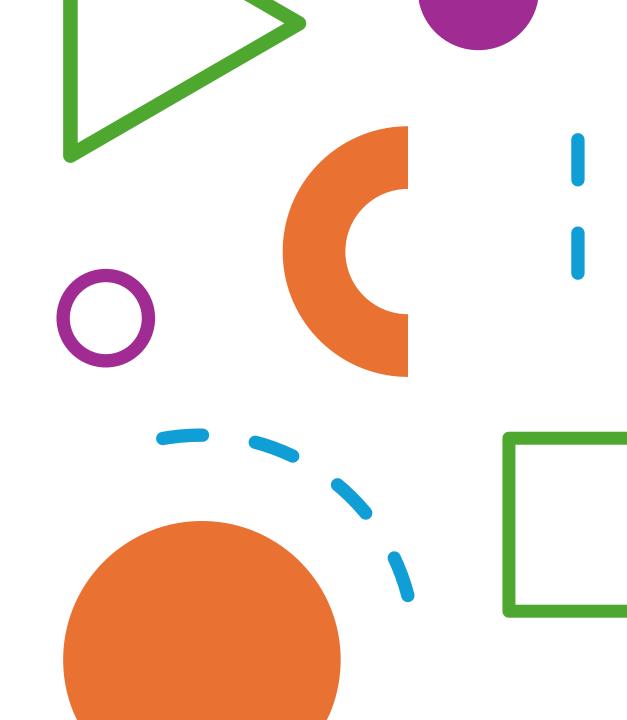
 Some local government contracts REQUIRE that the local MainStreet program MAINTAIN ACCREDITED DESIGNATION.

#### 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.

## 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 <u>accreditation process goes</u>, 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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