

Science Discovery on Main Street | Simons Foundation & Main Street America Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Find information on the program landing page including a link to the application:

<https://www.mainstreet.org/sciencediscovery>

When can I apply for the grant?

The grant is open starting Wednesday, November 13, 2024, at 10 a.m. CT and it closes on January 4, 2025, at 11:59 p.m. CT.

Which Main Street communities are eligible?

Rural Main Street America (MSA) designated communities (Accredited and Affiliate) in good standing are invited to apply for this grant program.

Eligibility Requirements

- MSA designated community organization in good standing
- Located in a rural area (population of 50,000 or less)
- Commitment to creating science engagement opportunities for residents through Main Street organization and/or by leveraging partnerships
- The organization's annual operating budget is less than \$1 million

Unsure of your MSA designation or member status? Contact membership@mainstreet.org or (312) 610-5613.

My Main Street organization was at one time an official Accredited or Affiliate community or is in the process of becoming Accredited or an Affiliate. Is my organization eligible for this program?

This grant program is only open to designated MSA communities based on their current membership and official status as accredited and affiliates.

Some state or local coordinating Main Street programs may have similarly named statuses for Main Street communities in their area that may or may not be designated MSA Accredited or Affiliate communities.

Unsure of your MSA designation or member status? Are you interested in becoming a member of MSA or an Accredited or Affiliate community? Contact membership@mainstreet.org or (312) 6105613.

Please note: MSA will be providing updates from the grantees to our broader MSA community which may be of interest to others seeking science discovery in their communities. See the "Science on Main Street" blog series, and more on the [program landing page here](#).

I want to use grant funds for a re-branding effort, building a website, and/or a major marketing campaign to attract people to our district to visit the science asset. Is this a permitted use of grant funds?

The Science Discovery on Main Street grant program is focused on helping grantees uncover and leverage their unique science assets, history, and features towards building local pride and creating engaging local attractions and activities by creating a plan around those activities and potentially implementing those plans with additional support. The majority of grant funds should be spent on events and activities for residents. **Up to ten percent (10%) of grant funds may be used for marketing, a web presence, or similar activities, as needed.** Using the funds to focus solely on promoting your science asset to tourists or for a broad marketing campaign is not an eligible use.

What is a science asset?

Some examples of science assets we could leverage or discover through the grant program:

- Historical scientific events or innovations with scientific significance
- Birthplaces or homes of famous (or lesser known) scientists
- Unique natural phenomena (e.g., rare local flowers and flora, unique local tree species, bioluminescence)
- Special geographical features (e.g. unique trails or vistas, geological sites of significance)
- Agricultural products with unique biological aspects
- Unique opportunities or ideal conditions for scientific activities (e.g., dark sky communities for star gazing and solar observation)

My organization does not have a science asset in mind and we are not sure our community has one. Is it ok to apply for a Discovery Grant?

For this grant program, your community does not have to have a science asset identified. In fact, we ask that all participating communities go through the Discovery process – even if they already have an asset in mind! We just ask that the applicant demonstrate a commitment to creating science engagement opportunities for residents through Main Street organization and/or by leveraging partnerships. Grantees will receive support on their discovery journey. Grantees will receive additional 1-on-1 technical assistance; participate in cohort learning and connection opportunities; and receive support for one (1) person to attend the Main Street Now conference in Philadelphia in April 2025 for a special convening of Science Discovery on Main Street recipients to learn, network, and share ideas.

My organization and staff do not have experience planning science-related or educational events, but we want to apply for this grant. Are we eligible? Will help be provided?

YES. This program is looking for applicants who are committed to and enthusiastic about engaging residents in science and for those committed to engaging in science beyond the grant period. The MSA team and our partners, identified with the help of The Simons Foundation, will be able to connect you with science engagement experts, scientists, and other resources as you explore existing and potential Science Discovery on Main Street

science assets and science engagement opportunities in your community. There are questions in the application about your organization's experience and a note that prior experience is not required to apply and receive funding.

Grantees will also:

- Receive additional 1-on-1 technical assistance;
- Participate in cohort learning and connection opportunities, and;
- Receive support for one (1) person to attend the Main Street Now conference in Philadelphia in April 2025 for a special convening of Science Discovery on Main Street recipients to learn, network, and share ideas.

I'd like to partner with our local library or schools. Would that be possible through the Discovery grant or as part of this program?

It is a great idea to partner with your local library! Libraries, schools, and many similar public institutions are wonderful resources and will likely be eager partners. There are likely other creative partners you may consider in the Discovery process to reach and engage people of all ages in your community. If you have additional questions, please contact sciencediscovery@mainstreet.org

Do grant funds need to be repaid? Will grant funds be taxed?

No, grant funds do not need to be repaid. The National Trust for Historic Preservation and its subsidiary, the National Main Street Center, do not comment on the taxability of grant money it distributes. It is up to you and your tax professional, should you consult one, on how to report the grant money you receive.

Using the Submittable Platform

To start your application, you will need to create a login for submittable. When creating your login, please use an email address you monitor regularly. Main Street America (MSA) will use that email address to send you information regarding your application's status through the Submittable platform.

On a desktop or laptop computer, select "Science Discovery on Main Street" and the orange "Submit" button. If you're on a mobile device, click the orange tab next to the application name.

Can I save a draft of my application?

Your application will auto-save as you move through the form on our application platform, Submittable. You can save a draft within the application submission platform, but we strongly encourage you to also save your application in a separate document as back-up.

I can't log into my application, or I'm having other technical issues.

Please contact Submittable (the company that hosts our application) for help logging into your account or if you have any other technical issues. You can find answers to frequently asked questions about using Submittable [here](#). You can contact Submittable customer support [here](#).

How will I know if my application has been submitted?

Once you hit "Submit," you will receive an email notification from Submittable notifying you that your application has been received. Automatic emails from Submittable occasionally get caught in spam filters, so please check your junk folder.

NOTE: this does not include a copy of your application.

Where can I find a copy of my application?

You can find a copy in your Submittable Account under the "Submissions" tab.

Can I change my application once it has been submitted?

No, you cannot make any changes to your application once it has been submitted.

If critical updates are needed, please send them to sciencediscovery@mainstreet.org.

When will I be notified about the status of our application?

We will notify all applicants about the status of their submission by March 2025 via the email address provided in your application. Be sure to check your email regularly, including your junk folders.

Email updates to all applicants will come from Submittable at notifications@email.submittable.com.

Grant recipients will receive next steps from sciencediscovery@mainstreet.org and/or Submittable. Failure to reply promptly to next steps may result in disqualification from the grant program.

Which documents do I need to upload in my application?

In the application, you will be asked to upload the following documents:

1. A copy of your Transformation Strategy or Strategic Plan for your district
(This is only required if your community has a Transformation Strategy or Strategic Plan)
2. A photo or photos of your Main Street / commercial district
3. At least 2 letters of support

4. W9

Optional

5. Additional photos or items to be considered with your application (for example: photos of past events in your district)

Have additional questions?

For other questions, email sciencediscovery@mainstreet.org or call 312-610-5613 to leave a voice message. Please allow up to 3 business days for a response.