



## How to Make Your Case to Attend the 2025 Main Street Now Conference

Whether you're a seasoned Main Street Now attendee or thinking about participating for the first time, convincing your boss (or board) to send you or your team can be tricky. We get it: budgets are tight, and conference expenses can be large; work schedules are packed, and the thought of stepping away for multiple days can seem like an insurmountable ask. These are valid and important factors when considering whether to attend Main Street Now.

Presenting your case may be difficult, but it doesn't have to be scary. We're here to help!

If you're not sure how to make your case about attending Main Street Now 2025, check out these three simple steps. They will help you communicate the conference's value and how it can drive success for your Main Street organization.

### **1. Outline the benefits for yourself and your organization**

Start by outlining exactly how attending Main Street Now will help you grow as a Main Street professional and trusted leader in your community.

Think about your organization's short- and long-term goals and the challenges and opportunities you're facing. Start by answering the following questions:

- Which aspects of the Main Street Approach will you focus on developing?
- What specialized knowledge do you need to move a specific project forward?
- How will new ideas and best practices support an initiative planned for the upcoming year?

Then, outline how your attendance will impact your organization. Think about what key learnings you could take away from Main Street Now that would help your organization's specific objectives. Consider including the two stats and one quote that most resonates with your reasoning from the below list\*:

- 93% rated the overall educational content as excellent or good
- 91% said the networking opportunities were excellent or good

- **For the wisdom weaver:** “I loved that the sessions provided a wealth of value that I now have to share with my team back home.”
- **For the new director:** “As a new ED to the organization, I couldn't think of a better way to jump off my 30 day onboarding than to spend it with such an energetic, powerful group of people.”
- **For the hands-on learner:** “The mobile workshops are very beneficial in providing ideas from other cities and provides a relaxed networking experience.”
- **For the network-builder:** “I gained many valuable from the sessions I attended. I also appreciated the opportunity to develop connections with and learn from my peers!”
- **For anyone:** “The Main Street Now Conference was an inspiring and informative experience...The conference's diverse workshops and keynote speakers provided valuable insights into effective strategies for creating thriving, sustainable Main Streets.”

## 2. Offer details about the cost and how you plan to participate

Like writing a grant proposal or sponsorship request, outlining the cost and how you plan to maximize your time at Main Street Now is key to making your case. Generally, the more details you can provide, the better.

Share a breakdown of the costs, which should include:

- Travel (airfare, driving, train, etc.)
- Transportation (to/from travel points and while at the conference)
- Hotel
- Meals/Per Diem ([find GSA's FY25 per diem rates for Philadelphia here](#))
- Registration, including any add-ons

Consider including specific information about your itinerary, such as:

- The types of sessions you plan to attend (check out the [email template](#) for suggestions and this year's [conference themes](#) for a preview of the agenda)
- A list of organizations, individuals, or companies you plan to network with
- Ways you plan to use social media to raise the profile of your participation
- A report highlighting key takeaways and actionable items (you'll provide after you attend)

## 3. Determine how you'll make your case

Next, it's time to determine the best mode of communication to present this information to your boss. There are many ways to do this—some prefer a conversation, while others would like to see a proposal in writing (email, PowerPoint, or letter). Do what works best for your communication style and that of your boss or board! Here are some tips for each method:

- Conversation: Share conference details and website ([mainstreet.org/now2025](https://mainstreet.org/now2025)) in advance and come prepared with your outline.
- PowerPoint: Keep it short and include slides about the conference, the benefits of attending, cost details, and post-conference deliverables.
- Email or letter: Aim for one page and include the abovementioned information.

Whichever method you choose, check out our handy “make your case” email template on the next page. [Download a Word version of the template here >](#)

To: [Insert first name]

Subject Line: Why I must attend Main Street Now 2025

Hi [first name],

I'm writing to request your approval to attend the [2025 Main Street Now Conference](#) in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, from April 7-9. As the largest convening of local leaders and place professionals advancing grassroots downtown and commercial district revitalization initiatives in local communities, Main Street Now is an invaluable opportunity for me to learn how to leverage time-tested techniques and innovative approaches to our community's Main Street efforts. I'll get access to engaging sessions led by peers and industry experts, countless network-building opportunities, and immersive learning experiences with tangible takeaways.

The Main Street Now Conference delivers professional development experiences that support Main Street leaders. For example, attendees at Main Street Now 2024 reported the following: [Include the data responses and one quote that supports your reasoning]

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- **For the wisdom weaver:** "I loved that the sessions provided a wealth of value that I now have to share with my team back home."
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Attending Main Street Now 2025 will significantly help me with these projects:

- [add project or initiative here]
- [add project or initiative here]

I plan to attend sessions focused on [insert topics such as, the Main Street Approach, volunteer management, historic preservation, relationship building, advocacy].

Here are the estimated costs of attending the conference:

- Travel: [\$X]
- Transportation: [\$X]
- Hotel: [\$X] (X nights at \$259 per night)
- Per Diem: [\$X] (X days at \$92 per day)
- Registration: [\$X]
- Total: [\$X]

If I have the chance to attend, I'll share more information, including the sessions I plan to attend. Afterward, I'll share a summary of major takeaways, best practices, and recommendations to optimize our Main Street efforts.

Registration is scheduled to open in early December 2024, with the early bird rate available for a limited time. Thank you for considering this request. I look forward to your reply.

Regards,

[Insert Name/Signature Here]