



How to Make Your Case to Attend the 2026 Main Street Now Conference

Whether you're a seasoned Main Street Now Conference attendee or thinking about participating for the first time, convincing your boss, board, or city council to send you or your team can be challenging. 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 the 2026 Main Street Now Conference in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

We're here to help!

Check out these **three simple steps** designed to help you present your case with ease and confidence by communicating the conference's value and how attending 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 you're facing and the opportunities you can leverage. 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 these stats and a quote from below that best supports your reasoning:

- 90% rated the overall educational content as excellent or good
- 92% said the networking opportunities were excellent or good
- ***If you're looking for solutions:*** "I found that the sessions gave me great insight and inspiration to bring back to implement in our downtown."
- ***If you're a new director:*** "It was a great introduction into the Main Street world! I'm only a few months into my position and this gave me a great framework for what I'm working towards."
- ***If you're a network-builder:*** "Amazing sessions and networking opportunities. I learned so much!"
- ***Anyone:*** "I really enjoyed the mix of networking, activities, education, and exploration. There were so many different sessions offered that made for a great learning experience along with fun!"

2. OFFER DETAILS ABOUT THE COST AND HOW YOU PLAN TO PARTICIPATE

Next, outline the cost and how you plan to maximize your time at Main Street Now.

Demonstrating the cost-to-benefit connection is key to making your case. Generally, the more details you can provide, the better.

Share a breakdown of the costs, which should include:

- **Registration** — Including any add-ons (mobile workshops, t-shirt, etc.) [Find conference registration rates here.](#)
- **Hotel** — Specially priced rates will be available at three hotels. [Find hotel conference room block rates here.](#)
- **Travel** — Airfare, driving, train, etc.
- **Transportation** — Cab, ride hail, public transit, etc., to/from your travel providers and while at the conference.
- **Meals** — [Find GSA's FY26 per diem rates for Tulsa here.](#)

Consider including specific information about your itinerary, such as:

- **Professional Development** — 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 agenda topics that you'll only find in Tulsa.
- **Networking** — A general list of organizations, individuals, or companies you plan to connect with.
- **Promotion** — Ways you plan to use social media to raise the profile of your participation and acknowledge those who made your attendance possible.
- **Outcomes** — A preview of the report highlighting key takeaways and actionable items that you'll provide upon your return.

3. DETERMINE HOW YOU'LL MAKE YOUR CASE

Next, determine the best mode of communication to present this information to your boss, board, or city council. There are many ways to do this — some prefer a conversation, while others would like to see a proposal in writing, such as an email, PowerPoint, or letter. Here are some tips for each method:

- **Conversation:** Share conference details and [website](#) in advance, and prepare for your chat by jotting down details about the cost and how attending will benefit you and your Main Street organization.
- **PowerPoint:** Keep it short. Include slides about the conference, the benefits of attending, cost details, and post-conference deliverables.
- **Email or letter:** Aim for one page. Start by introducing the conference, followed by why you should attend, the estimated cost, and how you'll share key takeaways.

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

To: [Insert first name]

Subject Line: Why I must attend Main Street Now 2026

Hi [first name],

I'm writing to request your approval to attend the [2026 Main Street Now Conference](#) in Tulsa, Oklahoma, from April 13-15. As the largest convening of local leaders and place professionals advancing grassroots downtown and commercial district revitalization initiatives, Main Street Now is an invaluable opportunity for me to learn how to leverage proven best practices and innovative approaches for our community's Main Street efforts. I'll get access to insightful education 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 2025 reported the following: **[Include the data responses and one quote that supports your reasoning]**

- 90% rated the overall educational content as excellent or good
- 92% said the networking opportunities were excellent or good
- "I found that the sessions gave me great insight and inspiration to bring back to implement in our downtown."
- "It was a great introduction into the Main Street world! I'm only a few months into my position and this gave me a great framework for what I'm working towards."
- "Amazing sessions and networking opportunities. I learned so much!"
- "I really enjoyed the mix of networking, activities, education, and exploration. There were so many different sessions offered that made for a great learning experience along with fun!"

Attending Main Street Now 2026 will significantly help me with the following:

- **[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]**. Afterward, I'll share a summary of major takeaways, best practices, and recommendations to optimize our Main Street efforts.

Here are the estimated costs of attending the conference:

- Travel: **[\$X]**
- Transportation: **[\$X]**
- Hotel: **[\$X] (X nights at \$XXX per night)**

- Per Diem: [\$X] (X days at \$68 per day)
- Registration: [\$X]
- Total: [\$X]

Registration is scheduled to open in early December 2025, 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]