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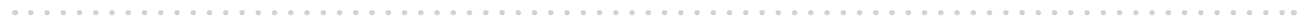
MEASURING IMPACT FOR MAIN STREET TRANSFORMATION: A PRACTITIONER'S GUIDE



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Main Street America™ has been helping to revitalize older and historic commercial districts since the late 1970s. Today, it is a movement consisting of more than 1,600 neighborhoods and communities, rural and urban, who share both a commitment to place and to building stronger communities through preservation-based economic development. Main Street America is a program of the nonprofit National Main Street Center, a subsidiary of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Measuring Impact for Main Street Transformation: A Practitioner's Guide was written in collaboration with Jon Stover & Associates.

This guide was shaped by input from the National Main Street Center (NMSC) board-appointed Four Point Refresh Task Force. The Task Force was led by Main Street veteran and NMSC Board Member Mary Thompson.

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This Resource Guide provides a practical framework to help Main Street leadership and staff understand the purpose and uses of Reinvestment Statistics, Transformation Strategy Metrics, and other types of data. This document summarizes how to collect, assess, and communicate this information to improve program operations, deepen impact, and enhance your ability to serve your community.

While this publication can be read in sequence from cover to cover, you may jump directly to the sections that are of the most interest.

WHY COLLECTING AND TRACKING DATA IS IMPORTANT

Main Street programs improve their communities in many ways, from supporting new business ventures, to creating people-friendly public spaces, to preserving and repurposing historic structures, and so much more. While not all of a Main Street program's work is easily measurable, it is critical that we identify ways to tell a more complete story about the difference Main Street makes, and that we have the data to back it up.

In today's resource-constrained environment, impact is everything. Good leaders know that measuring impact makes for a more effective organization. And in turn, savvy funders recognize that an organization is a worthwhile investment if they can be specific about their impact. So, whether your organization is looking to better assess internal operations, communicate more effectively about your mission, build on successful programming, or strengthen your bottom-line (likely, you're doing all of these things), measuring impact is key.

DATA BENEFITS AND USES

Nonprofits, government agencies, and private companies alike are placing increasing emphasis on being data driven. Tracking data for your Main Street program can help you speak a common language with outside partners or investors, better understand your community, and make your programming even more successful. Common benefits include:

- // Understanding the needs of your community
- // Recording and communicating what you and your Main Street program have accomplished
- // Supporting fundraising efforts and building advocacy capacity
- // Understanding and communicating your program's impacts
- // Tracking how your community has changed over time
- // Evaluating and improving your programming

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THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN DATA, METRICS, AND REINVESTMENT STATISTICS

Metrics are categories that contain a single type of data. A successful organization can only measure so many things well and what it measures should tie to its definition of success. Good metrics have three key attributes: their data are consistent, inexpensive, and easy to collect. Main Street America requires designated Main Street programs to collect and report a series of metrics called **Reinvestment Statistics**.

THE ROLE OF REINVESTMENT STATISTICS

What are Reinvestment Statistics?

Reinvestment Statistics are a standardized set of metrics that are reported by local Main Street programs to their Coordinating Program, which compiles the data and provides it to Main Street America every year. Reinvestment Statistics, such as net new jobs, building rehabilitations, and public and private investment, provide an opportunity to measure, track, and communicate the preservation, revitalization, and economic activities of a commercial district over time. Because it is reported in a standardized way across all communities, it can be compiled and tracked at a regional, state-wide, and even nationwide level. This information helps Main Street America, Coordinating Programs, and local programs alike tell the Main Street story by understanding and communicating a program's progress and changes within its community.

Best Practices for Collecting Reinvestment Statistics

Reinvestment Statistics tell the best story when tracked accurately and consistently. Main Street staff have the local knowledge and relationships to gather information that might be impossible for an outsider to collect. That said, supplementing on-the-ground reporting with third-party data sources can help streamline the data collection process. Main Street America requires programs to report approximately 11 metrics once a year. Some states and cities require programs to collect additional metrics and/or report some or all of them bi-annually, quarterly, or even monthly. Local programs and Coordinating Programs should review their reinvestment statistics closely and compare with recent periods to identify potential errors, ensure accuracy, and recognize interesting or troubling trends.

Getting the Most from Your Reinvestment Statistics

- Consider using the Main Street Approach™ to frame how you use your Reinvestment Statistics to tell your program's story. For example, trends relating to your operating budget and volunteer hours may help you communicate changes or growth related to *Organization* or your program's operations. The number of facade improvements or rehab projects indicates success of *Design* efforts; event attendance speaks to level of *Promotion* and engagement, employment, rent, investment, and population trends help connect a program's activities to its neighborhood's *Economic Vitality*.
- Be mindful not only of the accuracy of the data you collect, but also the amount of effort, time, and cost it takes you to obtain it. Data loses its value if it is inaccurate and/or overly burdensome to collect. Consult with your peer programs, Coordinating Program, or Main Street America if you are having difficulties. And if it is available, considering using third party data when possible to help validate or supplement the information you collect on the ground.
- If needed, attend sessions at the Main Street Now Conference or enroll in Main Street America Institute courses pertaining to data collection and use best practices, and encourage your Coordinating Program to provide data training sessions and resources.
- Proceeding sections of this guide detail how to leverage your data to answer particular questions, reach certain stakeholders, or achieve specific objectives.

BEYOND REINVESTMENT STATISTICS

Don't Stop at Reinvestment Statistics

Reinvestment Statistics are the baseline metrics you should understand about your downtown or district. However, there is a lot of additional information that is helpful to track. For example, recording non-quantitative information such as the past year's programs, their direct results, and what you would change or improve may help you be more deliberate when putting together your budget, strategic plan, and developing programming for the following year. Later in this guide we discuss how the Transformation Strategies you select as part of your implementation of the Main Street Approach can help you identify additional metrics to guide you in achieving certain goals or outcomes.

REINVESTMENT STATISTIC DEFINITIONS AND COLLECTION PROCESS

FULL-TIME JOBS CREATED (NET)

Definition: Sum of all changes in full-time employment at businesses within the Main Street district. This can be calculated as the total number of new full-time jobs created at each business minus the total number of full-time jobs no longer in existence.

Collection Methods: Collecting the total number of jobs in a community can be a difficult task. Main Streets are often most successful when they survey their business owners. Make sure to consider seasonality—does employment increase along the corridor during the summer months? Winter season? One full-time seasonal job typically equates to one-third of an annual full-time job. Often, local economic development corporations may track this data. Main Street programs with many businesses should consider tracking this information from third-party data sources such as the Bureau of Labor Statistics or ESRI.

PART-TIME JOBS CREATED (NET)

Definition: Sum of all changes in part-time employment at businesses within the Main Street district. This is can be calculated as the total number of new part-time jobs created at each business minus the total number of part-time jobs no longer in existence.

Collection Methods: Few third-party data sources collect part-time employment information. Main Street programs should survey local businesses to collect part-time employment. Like full-time jobs, consider how seasonality may play a role in part-time jobs.

NEW BUSINESSES CREATED (NET)

Definition: Total change in businesses. This refers to the total number of new businesses that opened within the past year in the Main Street district minus the total number of businesses that closed over the past year.

Collection Methods: Main Street programs should maintain an active list of businesses within their boundary. This should be updated annually. The overall change in number of businesses should be provided as the Reinvestment Statistic.

REHABILITATION PROJECTS COMPLETED

Definition: Total number of rehabilitation projects—including construction work such as repairing, renovating, modifying, reconstructing—that were completed since reporting last year's Reinvestment Statistics.

Collection Methods: Rehabilitation projects should be recorded after each project is completed. Ribbon-cutting ceremonies or the move-in date for new tenants indicate when a project is completed and thus should be recorded.

NEW CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS COMPLETED

Definition: Total number of new construction that were completed since reporting last year's Reinvestment Statistics.

Collection Methods: New construction projects should be recorded after each project is completed. Ribbon-cutting ceremonies or the move-in date for new tenants indicate when a project is completed and thus should be recorded.

PUBLIC IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS COMPLETED

Definition: Total number of public improvement projects that were completed since reporting last year's Reinvestment Statistics. Public improvement projects may include, but are not limited to, streetscaping, lighting, public signage, parks, transportation, etc.

Collection Methods: Public improvement projects are often financed by municipalities. Main Street programs should work with local officials to track the completion of these projects. Make sure to track completed programs by calendar year rather than fiscal year (or within the set of months designated by your Coordinating Program).

PUBLIC INVESTMENT (\$)

Definition: Total dollar figure of all public investment into the Main Street district.

Collection Methods: Main Street programs should contact their local municipalities to determine the total annual public investment. Make sure to consider fiscal year vs. reporting year when assessing this total amount.

PRIVATE INVESTMENT (\$)

Definition: Total dollar figure of all private investment into the Main Street district. This may include development and redevelopment projects, private donations and grants, etc.

Collection Methods: Track the total private investment by categories such as new construction and redevelopment, private donations to the community and Main Street, grants received, etc.

VOLUNTEER HOURS CONTRIBUTED

Definition: Total number of hours volunteered within the Main Street. Hours should be logged and tracked for each Main Street event as well as general volunteer support, such as administration, throughout the year.

Collection Methods: Tracking volunteer hours is most manageable by tracking hours after each event. Additionally, administrative volunteers can use a volunteer log or simply fill out a sign-in/out sheet during each volunteering session to easily track and manage these hours.

BOUNDARY MAP

Definition: The geographic area within the Main Street district.

Collection Methods: Each Main Street program should have a map of their program boundary on file and readily available in electronic format. Main Street programs should provide their Coordinating Programs with any updates each year as part of the Reinvestment Statistics.

AVERAGE ORGANIZATION BUDGET

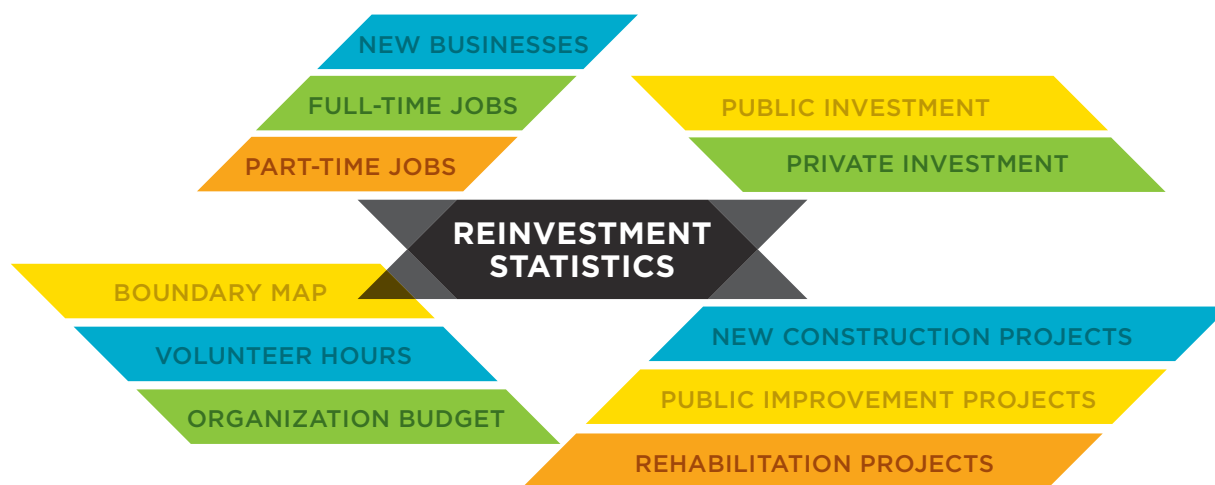
Definition: Sum of each Main Street's budget divided by the total number of Main Street programs within the Coordinating Program.

Collection Methods: Each Main Street program should report its annual operating budget to their Coordinating Program.

NUMBER OF PROGRAMS IN COORDINATING PROGRAM

Definition: Total number of the Main Street programs within the Coordinating Program.

Collection Methods: The total number of programs should be grouped by program structure and/or tier information when applicable.



BACK TO BASICS:

Reinvestment Statistics as a Tool to Help Tell Your Main Street Story and Inform Your Programming

Reinvestment Statistics are rooted in the core functions of a Main Street program. Thinking about how these indicators align with the Four Points can help you communicate key program successes or, on the other hand, identify local needs that require more attention. For example, a community may be experiencing high levels of retail vacancy. Tracking vacancy rates over time can help you understand not only if conditions are changing, but if your programmatic efforts are working. The following list includes just some examples of how you can apply Reinvestment Statistic data to answer key questions about your community and guide your programmatic efforts.

ECONOMIC VITALITY

How can my Main Street program help create or sustain jobs in the community?

How can my Main Street program help bring new businesses to the area?

Are my businesses seeing an increase or decrease in customer traffic?

DESIGN

Are the vacant retail spaces in my program's boundaries tenant-ready? If not, what can my Main Street program do to help improve and market these spaces?

Has my Main Street program recently met with city officials to discuss streetscaping needs or public improvement projects?

Are there local artists in my area that can help support local businesses by designing storefronts, signage, and marketing material?

How can my Main Street help generate additional investment in my community?

Are there buildings in my Main Street program area that need to be rehabbed? If so, how can the program help advocate for these buildings and find investors?

PROMOTION

How can my Main Street help attract more customers to my district?

Are the vacant spaces in my Main Street being adequately marketed or represented? Do we work with a commercial broker or real estate expert to help with this?

Do the businesses within my Main Street program need assistance with social media or digital marketing?



ORGANIZATION

Are the Reinvestment Statistics I'm collecting accurate? Am I collecting this information efficiently?

Is my program in need of additional volunteer capacity? How can I increase the number of volunteer hours for my Main Street program?

Does my program's operational budget support the needs of my Main Street?

Does our mission statement or strategic plan need updating?

SPOTLIGHT ALABAMA MAIN STREET

How a Coordinating Program Makes Data Collection Easy and Accessible

Alabama Main Street has taken significant steps towards making the data collection process as easy and valuable for its local programs as possible. The Coordinating Program created an online portal where local program staff members can directly input monthly data through the Alabama Main Street website. The website also features historical program-wide data, such as net new jobs created, and public and private dollars invested, on its website's homepage making it easy for online visitors to quickly understand its total statewide impact. Program-specific data can be found on the website as well, clearly highlighting how individual communities have been impacted by their local Main Street organization.



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The Coordinating Program organizes in-person training sessions for its local executive directors, offering step-by-step data collection instructions, such as the best municipal departments to contact for each data point and what specific questions to ask. This statewide emphasis on quality data has resulted in several Alabama programs avoiding proposed public funding cuts. Instead of seeing their funding reduced, many programs have instead seen annual public funding increase as a direct outcome of data-focused presentations to local officials, where executive directors clearly outline the program's local economic and fiscal impact.



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SPOTLIGHT MICHIGAN MAIN STREET

Assessing the Ease and Accuracy of Self-Reported Data

Optimizing the data collection process is a key priority for Michigan Main Street. It recently conducted a comprehensive assessment of the reliability of their historic data. The study, which examined a set of economic indicators to compare historic self-reported data to third-party data sources, found that the self-reported figures typically were the most reliable source of local data. This allowed the organization to feel more confident in communicating their existing data to key funders and decisionmakers throughout the state.

Through this process, Michigan Main Street was also able to gain insights from local program directors regarding how the data collection process could be enhanced. For example, certain data points were frequently mentioned as particularly difficult to collect. Many local programs were also unsure of the exact purpose behind collecting many data points. These insights helped Michigan Main Street shape a set of new strategies to make the data collection easier and more valuable for local programs moving forward. Without the initial decision to embark on this reliability assessment and outreach process, Michigan Main Street would not have been aware of these underlying opportunities to improve the data collection process.

USING METRICS TO EVALUATE EFFECTIVENESS AND IMPROVE PROGRAMMING

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are quantitative metrics used to track and assess progress over time.

While Reinvestment Statistics themselves classify as KPIs, Main Streets can use additional KPIs specifically tailored to their district to better meet strategic objectives and leverage a community's unique characteristics.

KPIs should be:

- /// Clearly aligned with specific organizational objectives or strategies
- /// Measured in a relatively quick, low-effort, and consistent manner
- /// Expressed through numbers

For example, a program that wants to grow the agricultural economy of its community can track average attendance at local farmers markets or the number of businesses that have partnerships with local farms or community gardens. When KPIs are directly aligned with strategic goals, they can evaluate if their programs are leading to demonstrable results.

MEASURING THE IMPACT OF YOUR TRANSFORMATION STRATEGIES

The Main Street Approach emphasizes the importance of rigorous outcome measurement, both as a means to assess effectiveness, and as a way to communicate the impact of the Main Street program to stakeholders.

While all Main Street programs measure standard outcomes through the collection of Reinvestment Statistics, your program should also be looking at a series of tailored outcome measures that reflect your particular goals as an organization, as well as the Transformation Strategies you have developed.

Transformation Strategies, a key component of the Main Street Approach, articulate a focused, deliberate path to revitalizing or strengthening a downtown or commercial district's economy. A program's work on Transformation Strategies should be organized around the Four Points: Economic Vitality, Design, Promotion, and Organization. A revitalization program's work—and its Transformation Strategies—need to be informed by a solid understanding of local and regional market data, as well as sustained and inclusive community engagement.

BEST PRACTICES FOR EVALUATING EFFECTIVENESS BASED ON METRICS

Consider data trendlines: Data collected over a period greater than three years provides a more reliable trend than a two-year sample size.

Consider each metric: Try assessing each of the Reinvestment Statistics and other metrics individually rather than only focusing on a select few to ensure that your Main Street program addresses a variety of issues and needs.

Focus on attractable effectiveness: Look for data trends that are specific to the work the Main Street program created.

Leverage local insights: Work with local businesses and community stakeholders through direct outreach to determine qualitative evidence that builds upon empirical data.

What Are Transformation Strategies?

Transformation Strategies help to guide a revitalization program's work. An effective Transformation Strategy serves a particular customer segment, responds to an underserved market demand, or creates a differentiated destination. Some *ready-to-use* strategies—called Catalyst Strategies—fall into two broad categories: those that are focused on a specific customer segment and those that are focused on an industry, product, or service segment.

Examples include:

FAMILY-FRIENDLY

AGRICULTURE CENTER

WORKERS AND RESIDENTS

ARTS (PERFORMING AND VISUAL)

ELDER FRIENDLY AND AGING-IN-PLACE

CONVENIENCE GOODS AND SERVICES

ENTERTAINMENT AND NIGHTLIFE

KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY

COLLEGE TOWN



Build a diverse economic base | Catalyze smart new investment | Cultivate a strong entrepreneurship ecosystem

Create an inviting, inclusive atmosphere | Celebrate historic character | Foster accessible, people-centered public spaces

Build leadership and strong organizational capacity | Ensure broad community engagement | Forge partnerships across sectors

Market district's defining assets | Communicate unique features through storytelling | Support buy-local experience

SPOTLIGHT TRANSFORMATION STRATEGY EXAMPLES

Below are some additional examples how KPIs can be developed to support and track specific Transformation Strategies. These are only general approaches that may be applicable to some communities. Think through the types of transformations your community needs, what programmatic approaches could help achieve your goals, and what performance indicators can help track your successes.

Agricultural Economy

Districts that serve agricultural communities and/or support home food production, locally-sourced food, and environmental sustainability.



Possible Approaches

Building partnerships between culinary businesses and local farms or community gardens

Working with real estate brokers and entrepreneurs to fill vacant downtown buildings
Number of farmers markets organized by program or businesses

KPI Examples

Number of farmers markets organized by program or businesses

Number of nearby community gardens (and members)

Vacancy rate of downtown storefronts

A Transformation Strategy articulates a focused, deliberate path to revitalizing or strengthening a downtown or commercial district's economy. Grounded by both an understanding of the underlying drivers of the local and regional economy, as well as community feedback and engagement, a Transformation Strategy should describe a market position that the commercial district can successfully fulfill.

An effective Transformation Strategy serves a particular customer segment, responds to an underserved market demand, or creates a differentiated destination.

Arts

Districts that support the development of creative industries, such as design, music, dance, as well as arts-related education, production, and distribution businesses.



Possible Approaches

Supporting efforts that attract artists and other creative professionals to reside in or around commercial district

Organizing arts-related events, such as art walks or gallery exhibits

Coordinating the creation of public art, such as sculptures or murals, in district

KPI Examples

Number of arts-related events organized by program or businesses

Number of nearby housing units designated and/or subsidized for artists

College Towns

Districts that seek to make a strong connection with a nearby educational institution and attract students and faculty to local businesses.



Possible Approaches

Encouraging businesses to offer commercial deals to students and faculty

Organizing programming designed to capitalize on major school occasions, such as sporting events or new student orientations

Developing partnerships with nearby colleges, particularly admissions offices and business departments

KPI Examples

Percentage of total business sales that occur during the school year

Percentage of total customers who are enrolled students or school faculty

Want to learn more about Key Performance Indicators? See page 9

Elder-Friendly & Aging-In-Place

Districts that help people continue living independently for as long as possible by providing goods, medical and social services, and a safe, accommodating, environment.



Food

Districts that aim to expand the role of food sales and food service by supporting the development of restaurants, cafes, caterers, farmers' markets, and food production spaces.



Possible Approaches

Implementing elder-friendly design features such as long crosswalk timers, smooth sidewalks, curb ramps, benches, wheelchair ramps, and other handicapped accessible features

Offering events or promotions marketed towards senior citizens

KPI Examples

Number of Main Street businesses that offer home delivery services

Percentage of senior citizens serving on volunteer committees or board of directors

Number of events or promotions marketed towards senior citizens

Possible Approaches

Helping businesses solicit customer feedback on online review platforms such as Yelp and Google as well as partner with mobile delivery services such as Uber Eats or DoorDash

Nominating and promoting Main Street businesses for local and regional culinary awards

Providing technical or financial assistance to help cover high startup costs of new culinary businesses

Organizing or supporting food-related events, such as food truck festival or district-wide restaurant specials

KPI Examples

Number of food-related events organized

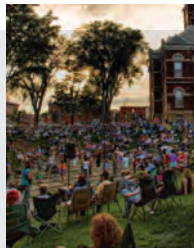
Percentage of businesses that partner with mobile delivery services

Number of accolades award to culinary businesses in Main District

Number of cross-promotional partnerships between different Main Street culinary businesses

Entertainment & Nightlife

Districts that aim to attract evening-oriented activity that addresses the things people do when they go out for enjoyment, such as dining, drinking, music, and performing arts.



Possible Approaches

Coordinating nighttime entertainment events, such as concerts or theme parties

Marketing commercial district as destination spot for evening and late-night activities

KPI Examples

Percentage of businesses that are open past 9:00 pm on weekend nights

Percentage of food and beverage sales that occur on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday evenings and nights

Number of nighttime entertainment events organized by program or businesses

Millennials

Districts that aim to attract customers born between the early 1980s and early 2000s, typically with an emphasis on offering a shopping experience that prioritizes experiences and entertainment.



Possible Approaches

Conducting a survey to collect demographic information of Main Street customer base

Providing digital marketing assistance to businesses

Helping businesses solicit customer feedback on online review platforms such as Yelp and Google

KPI Examples

Average age of commercial district visitors

Percentage of Main Street businesses with social media accounts

Percentage of millennials serving on volunteer committees or board of directors

SPOTLIGHT: MICHIGAN MAIN STREET TRANSFORMATION STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION TOOL

MAIN STREET TRANSFORMATION STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION																									
Desired Future State/Transformation Strategy Vision																									
PROJECT/ PROGRAMMING	OVERARCHING GOALS												PARKING LOT	FOUR POINTS											
	Overarching Goal #1				Overarching Goal #2				Overarching Goal #3					Economic Vitality	Design	Promotion	Organization								
	Measure of Success #1	Measure of Success #2	Measure of Success #3	Measure of Success #4	Measure of Success #1	Measure of Success #2	Measure of Success #3	Measure of Success #4	Measure of Success #5	Measure of Success #1	Measure of Success #2	Measure of Success #3		Measure of Success #4	1. Support existing economic base	2. Promote strategic use of space + development	3. Assemble resources	1. Promote physical improvements	2. Preserve + enhance existing historic fabric	3. Encourage planning + best practices	1. Position district as center of activity	2. Market district assets	3. Enhance positive image	1. Promote the revitalization effort	2. Foster community engagement
Project/Program #1																									
Project/Program #2																									
Project/Program #3																									
Project/Program #4																									
Project/Program #5																									
Project/Program #6																									
Project/Program #7																									
Project/Program #8																									
Project/Program #9																									
Project/Program #10																									
Project/Program #11																									
Project/Program #12																									
TOTAL																									

PLANNING AND VISUALIZING YOUR IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

“After working with each of their local programs to identify community-specific Transportation Strategies, Michigan Main Street created a tool to help programs strategically plan for the specific ways their strategies could be implemented and evaluated in the future.

Using the above chart, programs can break down their strategies into a smaller set of specific goals and accompanying “Measures of Success”—quantitative metrics that can track progress over time (i.e. event attendance; number of new establishments related to strategies, etc.). Programs can also list out potential programs or projects and see how each would align with these goals and metrics, helping programs establish a road map for implementing their Transformation Strategy in an efficient, measurable way.

EVENT ATTENDANCE
OCCUPANCY RATES
PEDESTRIAN TRAFFIC
MEASURES OF SUCCESS
QUANTITATIVE METRICS
VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES
NEW ESTABLISHMENTS

SALES TAX
ARTIST GROWTH

COMMUNICATING AND LEVERAGING YOUR FINDINGS

TOOLS FOR LEVERAGING DATA

So you've collected good data, now what? Data doesn't do any good in a vacuum. Effective Main Street programs capitalize on that information to secure new members and supporters, raise funds, make the case for investment, recruit new businesses, and so much more. The following tools are just some ways in which a Main Street can summarize and communicate quantitative findings about their program's operations or district's conditions.

- /// **Market Analysis and Retail Viability Assessment.** Market analyses and retail viability assessments allow for a deeper understanding of local and regional economic and retail trends impacting communities, helping programs set the framework for future retail enhancement strategies. These studies also provide an opportunity to engage with local business owners and real estate professionals, helping Main Street staff build key relationships and better understand how market forces are being felt on the ground.
- /// **Leakage Analysis.** A leakage analysis, also often called a "Sales Gap," measures the degree to which a commercial area is capturing retail demand in its surrounding area. For example, if a city's downtown had a leakage rate of only five percent for hardware stores, that would mean that it is almost completely capturing nearby demand. This helps paint a clear picture of how a commercial area can retain existing customers, attract new visitors, and better serve the needs of the local community.

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Looking for more information about Market Analysis and Leakage Analysis? Check out the *National Main Street Center's Market Analysis for Community Transformation: A Practitioner's Guide*. This guide walks you through the intricacies of market analyses and provides helpful tools for conducting your own studies.

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- /// **Retail Competitive Advantages and Retail Broker Pitch Sheet.** When attracting new businesses or retaining existing ones, knowing your area's strongest competitive advantages, and having the data to support them, is an invaluable tool. Having concise "pitch sheets" on-hand, ready to give to retail brokers or prospective business owners considering a move to your district, can be the difference between a vacant storefront being filled or not.
- /// **Economic Impact Analysis.** An economic impact analysis can measure the economic gains, such as jobs, sales, and wages, generated by a program, or specific event or development. This can be a crucial resource when communicating the importance of your program or specific project to stakeholders. Regularly scheduled economic impact analyses can also shed light on how particular events, such as a festival or seasonal promotion, grow or decline over time, allowing programs to make more educated decisions on programming and marketing strategy.
- /// **Fiscal Impact Analysis.** A fiscal impact analysis measures the amount of tax revenue attributable to an event, development, or program. Like an economic impact analysis, this can be a valuable advocacy tool, particularly for programs that receive public dollars.
- /// **Community Impact Analysis.** This type of analysis describes the impact programs have on their communities. These analyses typically focus on quality-of-life impacts such as social cohesion, historic preservation, safety, and design. Data for this type of impact analysis is typically more difficult to quantify but can produce results that have a wide range of appeal.
- /// **Face-to-Face Meetings.** In-person conversations, meetings, or interviews with Main Street leadership are often the first time a community member learns about a program. Therefore, having a few key data points to share during face-to-face interactions can go a long way in building local support for your program.
- /// **Marketing Materials.** Generic marketing materials such as flyers, brochures, and postcards can supply the public with a great overview of your Main Street program, significant events or achievements, and exciting news. Consider your audience for each of the materials. Are these materials on hand at the office? Are you trying to gain donors for a specific event? Are you updating businesses with new opportunities?

/// **Website.** Updating your program’s website to include a section featuring your program’s economic, fiscal, and community impacts help a diverse range of stakeholders understand the value of your program. Consider adding an “impact” section or including metrics within the footer of your homepage with key statistics.

/// **Annual Reports.** Annual reports can highlight the achievements and impacts of your Main Street program each year. Consider including spotlights of success stories (such as a special event, new business, or milestone achieved) and communicating your impact through Reinvestment Statistics and other performance indicators.

/// **One-Pager.** Program one-pagers provide stakeholders with a clear snapshot of your program and its impacts. These can easily be attached to grant applications and fundraising efforts.

/// **Boundary Map.** Maintain a clear, visual boundary map of your program area to communicate to stakeholders and constituents the area your program influences. Letter-size maps can easily be attached to grant applications and filed with annual reports.

/// **Special Events.** Consider hosting special events such as dinners, socials, and happy hours to gather stakeholders and communicate success verbally. Think of how your event displays and vocalizes the impacts your Main Street program has generated.

/// **Local Press Releases, Articles, Interviews, and Social Media.** Generating press releases and contacting local media can help generate a larger audience for your Main Street program. This can drive more participants to events or promotions, and also highlight significant impacts such as awarded grants and improved streetscaping.

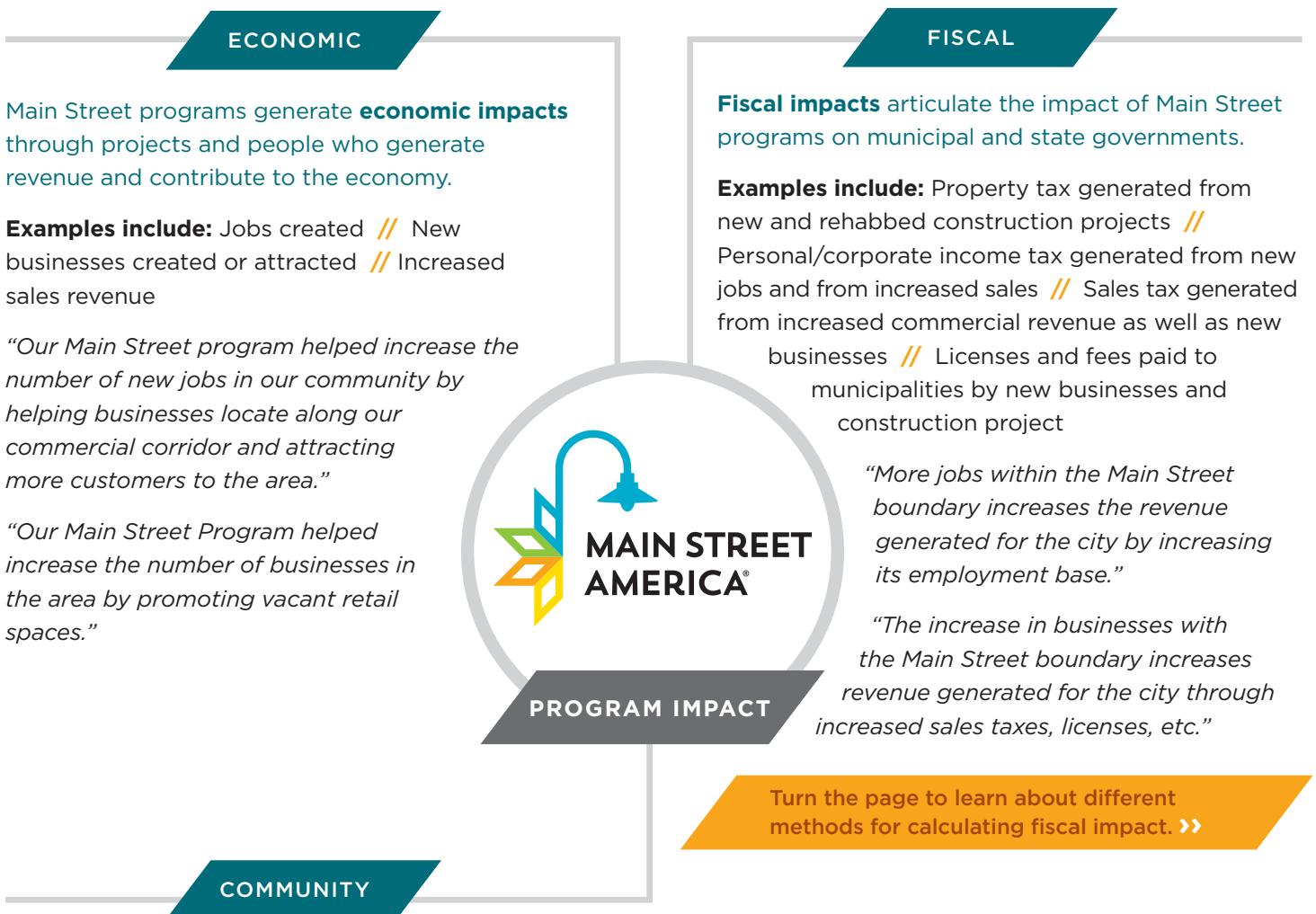
MAIN STREET AUDIENCES: ORIENTING FINDINGS TO SPECIFIC STAKEHOLDER NEEDS

Main Street programs have a wide range of stakeholder types. When communicating with the following stakeholders, your message should be geared specifically to their specific needs, concerns, and aptitude. Of course, this table is neither a complete list of stakeholders nor of communication methods, but is intended to represent key audiences and the types of messages that resonate with each.

TYPE OF MAIN STREET STAKEHOLDER	DATA COMMUNICATION METHOD												
	Market Analysis and Retail Viability Assessment	Leakage Analysis	Retail Competitive Advantages sheet	Economic Impact Analysis	Fiscal Impact Analysis	Community Impact Analysis	Face-to-Face Meetings	Marketing Materials	Website	Annual Reports	Memorandum, One-Pager	Press Release, Article, Interview	Social Media
Program staff and board members	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Current and prospective business owners/representatives	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X	X
Landlords, brokers, management companies	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X			X	X
Commercial property owners, real estate developers	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X			X	X
Supporters and partners of the local business community	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Potential funders and the philanthropic community				X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Residential community and neighborhood leaders		X		X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X
City and county public officials and agency leadership				X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X
State or local Coordinating Program			X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
State government agencies and other statewide leadership				X	X	X	X			X	X	X	

MAIN STREET ECONOMIC, FISCAL, AND COMMUNITY IMPACTS

Main Streets impact communities in several important ways. These impacts can be thought of in three categories: economic benefits, fiscal benefits, and community benefits. These impacts can stretch well beyond a local retail corridor or downtown as Main Street programs have a positive impact on cities, counties, regions, and even at the state level. Understanding the numerous ways a Main Street impacts the community can help you tell a more complete story about a Main Street's value.



DIFFERENT METHODS FOR CALCULATING FISCAL IMPACT

There are different ways to measure and communicate a program's fiscal impact.

Fiscal Return on Investment

A Fiscal Return on Investment (ROI) analysis measures how much money a city, county, or state invests in Main Streets relative to how much tax revenue it gains back as a result over time. This is typically expressed as a percentage or ratio. This type of analysis can be a very helpful tool for policymakers, as they want to make sure they are being fiscally responsible and are allocating resources wisely. Main Street programs have demonstrated a positive fiscal impact across the country, and ROI analyses have been successful in helping to secure or retain public dollars. Unfortunately, undertaking a program fiscal impact or ROI analysis requires a level of expertise beyond what many programs have in-house and usually requires the help of a financial or economic consultant.

Reinvestment Ratio

The Reinvestment Ratio is a more readily-available metric used by Main Street America to communicate the impact of public investment on a Main Street community. The ratio compares public investment dollars (such as local or state Main Street funding) with private real estate investment (such as the cost of new real estate development or building rehab work). A local or state-wide Reinvestment Ratio is relatively easy to calculate because the inputs (public and private investment) are Reinvestment Statistics each program collects each year. The ratio shows the relative scale of public and private investment, and provides a number that can easily be compared across communities. However, there is no direct causal relationship between the two inputs in the Reinvestment Ratio. In other words, the ratio does not help one understand how much of the private investment is attributable to the public investment.

SPOTLIGHT MSA'S ONGOING NATIONWIDE PROGRAM ECONOMIC IMPACT ANALYSIS

NATION-WIDE ECONOMIC IMPACT

Main Street America evaluates Reinvestment Statistics in concert with other locally collected data to assess the economic impact of Main Street programs across the country. Preliminary findings from 2015 to 2016 show that Main Street Programs contribute significantly to a local economy. The presence of a Main Street program leads to an average of \$3.1 million more in sales each year than would be expected otherwise in non-Main Street areas. Between 2015 and 2016, a total of \$3.3 billion in sales was attributable to Main Street programs.

DEEPER DIVE: USING THE ECONOMIC DATA TO ASSESS FISCAL IMPACT

An analysis of government spending on Main Street programs in the city of Boston and the states of Washington, Oklahoma, and Pennsylvania showed a significant positive fiscal return on investment. Each collects more tax revenue than the amount of money spent on these programs. This is a positive net fiscal impact. Between 2015 and 2016, the four programs that were evaluated had a net fiscal impact ranging from \$2.4 million to \$22.3 million more tax revenue than



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would have been expected without the presence of a Main Street program. For each dollar invested by the respective state or city, an additional \$3.01 to \$12.73 in tax revenue was generated due to the attributed increase in economic activity. It is worthwhile to note that every state and city has a different economic climate, a different tax structure, and differing Main Street program impacts. As such, fiscal impact findings in one state or city do not necessarily represent the national average.

COMMUNITY IMPACTS, ECONOMIC IMPACTS, AND FISCAL IMPACTS ARE INTERRELATED

It is important for Main Street America and each Coordinating Program to understand the concept of a Main Street's fiscal impact. Not everything a Main Street program does is quantifiable or has an immediate impact on the bottom line of their local businesses. That said, many of the programs, initiatives, and grants administered by Main Streets do directly impact their local economy. The private sector is not the only beneficiary. An increase in the number of businesses, in employment, and in sales lead to greater corporate

income tax revenues, greater personal income tax revenues, and greater sales tax revenues respectively. Each of the four case studies undertaken within this analysis found that the increase in tax revenue attributable to the Main Street program exceeded the annual state and local contributions to the programs. In short: Main Street programs in Boston, Washington, Oklahoma, and Pennsylvania have a positive fiscal return on investment.

SPOTLIGHT H STREET FESTIVAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

H Street Main Street (HSMS, located in Washington, D.C.), assessed the fiscal and economic impact of its H Street Festival in September 2017. The annual event is part of a revitalization strategy that brings attention to the developing arts and entertainment district spanning 10 blocks of H Street NE. The 2017 festival featured more than 500 artists and performances plus an array of local, regional and international cuisine, shopping, arts exhibits, and educational events. Over 100 festival attendees were randomly selected and surveyed regarding their spending during the event. Following the festival, 48 businesses were surveyed about the festival's impact on their sales.

The study detailed some of the primary ways in which the festival impacted the neighborhood businesses and city fiscal revenues. The assessment calculated how many more sales were generated by businesses during the festival than would have been expected if not for the festival. It also calculated how many additional jobs this supported and the how much money the city collected through local taxes and licenses as a result of the festival. The study helped demonstrate to the city why it should continue to support the festival, such as providing police coverage and agreeing to close H Street to traffic.

Furthermore, the study helped identify the types of businesses that saw the most sales during the festival and the types of businesses that experience some negative impacts, and presented strategies to help ensure that all types of businesses gained from the festival.



CREDIT: SARA LOVELAND

ADVOCATING FOR YOUR PROGRAM

There are many ways to advocate for your Main Street program. Consider advocating by:

- **Sharing stories and successes.** Main Street programs play a vital role in preserving and creating engaging, thriving communities—make sure to share these stories.
- **Promoting the Main Street and commercial corridors.** More promotion often means more customers, which benefits local businesses and attracts more people to the area.
- **Helping people learn about Main Street.** When addressing new audiences and ongoing constituents, explain what a Main Street program is and the work of Main Street America.
- **Understanding your community.** Use both data and anecdotes to learn about the needs and unique qualities of your Main Street community.
- **Clearly articulate accomplishments.** Distinct language and quantitative data can demonstrate your Main Street's accomplishments to constituents.
- **Tracking, evaluating, and improving programming.** Carefully monitor programs and initiatives by documenting data (such as number of attendees), surveying participants, and assessing the outcomes. Use this information to improve programs and evaluate changes.
- **Developing memos, reports, charts, and pitch sheets.** Printouts, mailers, email blasts, and social media posts are great avenues to advocate for your program. Share updates, market events, and milestones through a variety of platforms.
- **Attending city and state hearings and facilitating face-to-face conversations with city and state officials.** Maintaining an active presence with officials helps promote the value of your Main Street program and generates necessary political support.
- **Being your own advocate ... and develop political advocates, too!** Program success is often derived from how Main Streets are perceived within their community, local stakeholders, and political leadership. This success helps sustain and grow public and private support, ensuring program longevity.



CREDIT: MONROEVILLE MAIN STREET

SPOTLIGHT

JASPER MAIN STREET & MONROEVILLE MAIN STREET

Using Relationships to Collect Data and Build Support

While collecting reliable data might seem like a daunting task for some local programs, a strong network of business and municipal contacts can substantially improve the speed and accuracy of data collection. Programs such as Jasper Main Street and Monroeville Main Street in Alabama have been able to leverage their strong networks of business owners, real estate brokers, planners, and municipal administrators to quickly collect their data over the phone. Since the programs collect the same data each month, these phone conversations soon become routine, making the collection process quicker and smoother over time.

In turn, both Monroeville Main Street and Jasper Main Street have leveraged their data to continue building a strong network of local supporters. For example, Monroeville Main Street sends out a bi-annual newsletter to local business owners, corporations, foundations, real estate professionals, and residents that highlights up-to-date impact statistics. This newsletter has become one of the program's most effective methods for developing new relationships and receiving financial contributions from community stakeholders. Similarly, both programs strategically use all press coverage they receive, such as interviews or newspaper articles, to focus the public's attention on the programs' empirical impact, using qualitative anecdotes to supplement their data-oriented message, instead of the other way around.



SPOTLIGHT NEW MEXICO MAINSTREET

Effectively Packaging and Communicating Data

When advocating for the importance of your Main Street organization, clear and simple statistics will likely be one of the most important pieces of a successful presentation or report. Coordinating programs like New Mexico Main Street have learned to successfully leverage their data in a visually appealing and concise manner that has resulted in continued support from the New Mexico Legislature, which approves the allocation of public dollars to the program. Before presenting to the legislature, the program creates small “rack cards” that include a short summary of recent accomplishments with simple, specific data illustrating their success. For example, a rack card about the program’s initiative to expand creative innovation (pictured right) included a photo, a short summary, and the number of new creative enterprises started in Main Street districts over the past year. Materials like these, which are easy to make and distribute, can be used in a variety of contexts and are highly effective in quickly and clearly communicating local program impact.

VARIOUS ZUNI ROYALTY PARTICIPATE IN ONE OF THE FEATURED SOCIAL DANCES IN ZUNI PUEBLO MAINSTREET.

CREDIT: WELLS MAHKEE, JR.



ADVANCING CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

Creative industries contribute more than \$1.4 billion annually to the state's economy. However, there are many untapped areas to grow local economies especially in our rural towns.

The Arts & Cultural Districts Program advances economic vitality through innovative small businesses, light manufacturing and cultural enterprises, harnessing our unique cultural assets.



"Building on the Past, Facing the Future: Reviving the Creative Economy of New Mexico" (2018) 2019
WWW.NMARTSANDCULTURALDISTRICTS.ORG



Monumental Bronze Sculpture in downtown Artesia

EXPANDING CREATIVE INNOVATION

The Arts & Cultural Districts program is a collaboration of state agencies and private entities (Economic Development, Cultural Affairs and Tourism) to grow and diversify the economy. Arts and heritage organizations, cultural institutions and facilities, preservation organizations, revitalization and business groups join together to support local economic development.

In 2017, State Authorized Arts & Cultural Districts reported 25 new Creative Enterprises.
 Funded by
WWW.NMARTSANDCULTURALDISTRICTS.ORG



NEW MEXICO
 arts & cultural
 DISTRICTS PROGRAM

DATA RESOURCES

The following sources provide relevant data for Main Street programs:

American Fact Finder This user-friendly US Census portal combines dozens of annual demographic and business census surveys including American Community Survey, Economic Census, and Business Patterns data. This data can help Main Streets collect a range of information including employment, business information, demographics, housing and more. factfinder.census.gov

CoStar This leading supplier of commercial real estate data collects and provides a wide range of data pertaining to the physical conditions of commercial buildings, tenants, lease terms, and much more. CoStar data is available through a subscription model that is too expensive for most Main Street programs to afford individually. Check with your state and local economic development agencies to see if they have CoStar access and are willing to share data. www.CoStar.com

ESRI Comprehensive demographic, lifestyle and consumer spending, and business content is available through ESRI. For a small fee, ESRI will provide select data base on the geographic boundary of your Main Street program. www.esri.com

Google Most businesses create listings on Google, which can be a great place to start a business inventory, especially in larger Main Streets with many businesses. www.google.com/maps

Local Municipalities and Nonprofit Agencies Your local government can be a great resource for collecting data within your Main Street program. Property values, building conditions, and property use are just a few examples that are often readily available at the city or county level. For more information contact your local municipality.

Open Data Many counties and states provide free data as part of their Open Data initiative. Often you can find high resolution aerials, information pertaining to the physical environment, and population statistics. Located in a large city? You might even be able to get detailed information such as streetscaping elements and parking. For more information try googling your city and/or state and “open data” to see what’s available.

PolicyMap As an online portal, PolicyMap distributes demographic, real estate, and job data for communities across the country. www.policymap.com

US Bureau of Labor Statistics Economic data such as employment rates, spending patterns, wages, and industries, are provided through the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Data is available at both the state and county-level and can provide reference for your Main Street compared to local benchmarks. www.bls.gov

United States Census Bureau Every decade, the Census releases data pertaining to a wide variety of topics including population, the economy, businesses, housing, and income. Data is available at a range of geographies including zip codes, municipalities, and Census blocks. Census data is available through American FactFinder as well as third-party data sources such as ESRI. www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045217

WalkScore As the leading international measure of walkability, public transit accessibility, and proximity to community-serving amenities, WalkScore also provides real estate data, crime statistics, and commute travel time analysis in some markets. www.walkscore.com