

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT URBANMAIN

A PROGRAM OF THE NATIONAL MAIN STREET CENTER



**URBAN
MAIN™**

The National Main Street Center (NMSC) has launched a new initiative to provide support to older and under-resourced commercial districts in urban centers. UrbanMain will be complementary to the well-established Main Street America (MSA) network. In some cases, UrbanMain will be incorporated into work of the MSA network and in other cases, NMSC will serve communities directly. Partnering with grassroots organizations and local leaders across the country, NMSC is leading a national movement to enable communities to bring prosperity back to downtowns and neighborhood commercial districts.

Why is the National Main Street Center launching this new program?

The Main Street America movement has long believed that its approach, principles, and disciplines would translate to urban neighborhoods. In fact, it has done that in communities such as Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Orlando, and Washington, D.C. The Main Street methodology has translated well to these urban centers. NMSC staff and board, encouraged by leaders in the MSA network, believe that serving more urban centers is vital to its mission.

How will UrbanMain be different from Main Street America?

UrbanMain will use many of the features of Main Street America grounded by the Main Street Approach. However, urban districts often have different priorities, such as security, transportation, and addressing gentrification which may be different from priorities faced by most MSA communities. Additionally, many urban communities may not be able to access support from their state MSA network because of operational or funding constraints. In these cases, we offer consulting and training services directly to these communities.

What type of services will UrbanMain offer?

Offerings from UrbanMain include both strategic and tactical services to meet the variety of conditions and needs of city and community leaders. Strategic services focus on a comprehensive, multi-phased approach to district revitalization based on decades of experience

and a proven methodology. Tactical services provide specific components of a district revitalization plan for those communities needing help implementing select aspects of an existing plan.

What size communities will UrbanMain support?

UrbanMain will focus on communities with populations of more than 100,000. To be most cost effective, cities able to work on multiple concurrent commercial districts will have priority.

Will there be a network for UrbanMain similar to the network of Main Street America communities?

NMSC will launch a new peer network for urban commercial district practitioners. In fact, an initial convening of these urban practitioners took place this past Spring. This network will be able to access UrbanMain fee-for-service specialized training and technical assistance, solution-oriented research, personalized coaching, and additional convening opportunities.

Where will the funds come from to pay for UrbanMain projects?

We anticipate that 50% of the funding needs of an UrbanMain project will come from a city or state agency matched by 50% from a philanthropic source such as foundation or corporation. We expect Strategic Services projects to be three years in length with an on-going peer network/training relationship after that. Tactical Services will be much shorter in length.



Photo: Shaw Main Streets

Is there a way to engage UrbanMain for a preliminary evaluation?

The process of economic transformation requires considerable time and resources. In most cases, it will be beneficial to examine the assets and liabilities of a neighborhood commercial district to better understand the best path for a revitalization program. The UrbanMain Fast Track Assessment focuses on community vision and market understanding.

Learn more about our **Fast Track Assessment**.

“The world is changing faster than ever. There are two types of change—planned change and unplanned change. When you think about change, you can anticipate it, prepare for it and shape and direct it in a way that you like or you can just let it happen.”

Ed McMahon, *Chairman of the National Main Street Center Board of Directors*

Where can I get more information about UrbanMain?

You can find more specifics about services offered by UrbanMain at our website: mainstreet.org/urbanmain.

Or contact our urban services team at:
urbanmain@savingplaces.org.