In the Path of Totality FAQs

Find information on the program landing page including a link to the application: https://www.mainstreet.org/howwecanhelp/inthepathoftotality

When can I apply for the grant?

The grant is open starting June 21, 2023, at noon CT and it closes on August 1, 2023, at noon CT.

Which Main Street communities are eligible?

Applicants must:

- Be located with the path of totality
- Be a designated Main Street America community (with a status of affiliate or accredited)
- Host an eclipse-related gathering or event on April 8, 2024
- Demonstrate a commitment to providing science engagement opportunities for residents
- Have an annual operating budget of less than $1 million

My Main Street organization is an official accredited or affiliate community, but it is not listed among the eligible communities. Is my organization eligible for this program?

This grant program is only open to designated Main Street America (MSA) communities based on their membership and official status as accredited and affiliates, and based on their location within the total solar eclipse’s path of totality. They are communities that will experience complete darkness for a period of time on April 8, 2024.

The status and location requirements mean only certain MSA member communities in Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Maine, Missouri, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Vermont are eligible. Click here for a full list of eligible communities or visit the program landing page here.

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 Main Street America accredited or affiliate communities.

Are you interested in the program, but not a member of Main Street America? Let us know and we keep you updated as other resources become available. Have a question about your Main Street community's status? Contact Main Street America's Membership Department at 312.610.5613 or membership@mainstreet.org, or email pathoftotality@mainstreet.org.

Please note: Main Street America is currently sharing information and will be providing a list of resources that are available to all communities interested in the eclipse. See the “Science on Main...
In the Path of Totality FAQs

Street” blog series, the Resource Kit Main Street America is providing on the solar eclipse, and more on the program landing page here.

Our organization is located outside of the path of totality, but we will host an event to watch the partial eclipse. Are we eligible for this grant?

No. Your organization must be within the path of totality outlined on the map provided, between the two yellow lines, indicating your community will experience a full, total eclipse. However, Main Street America is offering non-grant resources to all interested communities and encouraging communities to email if interested. See the screenshot below indicating which communities are in the path of totality.

Please note: Main Street America is currently sharing information and will be providing a list of resources that are available to all communities interested in the eclipse. See the “Science on Main Street” blog series, the Resource Kit Main Street America is providing on the solar eclipse, and more on the program landing page here.

I want to use grant funds for building a website and a major marketing campaign to attract people to our district for the eclipse. Is this a permitted use of grant funds?

The In the Path of Totality grant program is focused on helping grantees create and promote science activities, purchase related materials, etc. needed to engage residents in science. The majority of grant funds should be spent on an event and activities that utilize in that manner. Some marketing and a web presence may be needed to make that possible, so that would be a related, eligible use. However, using the funds to focus on promoting your festival to tourists or for a broad marketing campaign is not an eligible use.

My organization and staff do not have experience planning science-related or educational events, but we want to apply for this grant to organize one. 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. The Simons Foundation is able to connect you with scientists and other resources
that may be helpful as you plan your event. There are questions in the application about your organization’s experience and your desire for support from the Simons Foundation.

Please indicate in your application that you will need assistance if you would like help connecting with scientists.

I have other questions about planning my event for residents and for visitors. Will this grant program help with that?

This grant program is focused on science engagement and events for residents. At will have a special opportunity to work specifically on their event plans and ideas with professional science-event planners and scientists at the Solar Eclipse Planning Workshop in San Antonio on September 29-30, 2023.

The workshop event in September is hosted by the Astrophysical Society Eclipse Task Force and is happening in advance of their annual meeting.

We want to host an event for residents 5 weeks before the eclipse. Is that ok?

No. This program should be focused on activities on the day of eclipse or in the days immediately leading up to it.

I’d like to use my funds to partner with our local library or schools. Is that an eligible use of grant funds?

It is a great idea to partner with your local library! Libraries, schools, and many similar public institutions will be receiving a lot of resources from NASA and other organizations. We would like your grant funds to be used mostly for your science event with residents and where resources are scarce, so we ask that you not include libraries as subgrantees in your proposal – especially since they may already be receiving resources. Please check with potential partners or email us at pathoftotality@mainstreet.org for more or if you have specific questions about eligible uses.

Do grant funds need to be repaid?

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 "In the Path of Totality" 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 pathoftotality@mainstreet.org.

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

We will notify all applicants about the status of their submission in August 2023 via the email 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 pathoftotality@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. Your event budget (see template examples)
2. A copy of your Transformation Strategy
   (This is only required if your community has a Transformation Strategy)
3. A photo or photos of your Main Street district.
4. At least 2 letters of support for your event and science engagement activities.
5. Itemized budget
6. Timeline and plan to be ready to host events by April 8th
7. A photo (or photos) of your downtown/commercial district
8. W9

**Optional**

9. 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 pathoftotality@mainstreet.org or call 312.610.5613 to leave a voice message. Please allow up to 3 business days for a response.