As downtowns begin to reopen to the public, the Main Street Approach™ can serve as a powerful tool for economic recovery efforts. The Main Street Approach is a time-tested framework for community-driven, comprehensive revitalization that has strengthened downtowns across the country. The strategies that guide this approach are organized around four points: Economic Vitality, Design, Promotion, and Organization. Organization involves creating a strong foundation for a sustainable revitalization effort, including cultivating partnerships, community involvement, and resources for the district. Keep reading to learn about Organization-related recovery activities and ideas to help your Main Street navigate the impact of COVID-19.

☐ Recruit a public health official to your Board of Directors.

Offer an ex-officio slot to help guide your recovery efforts.

☐ Be prepared to advocate for your program when state and local stimulus packages are developed:
  • Publish your program’s annual statistics
  • Create a recovery plan with a budget
  • Have letters of support ready for your organization
  • Reach out to your city to ensure they know your program needs continued or increased funding. Ask your coordinating program for a letter of support to your local government officials.

☐ Risk assess your budget.

Develop backup plans for revenue reductions and consider other sources of revenue, including:

  • Community Foundations
  • Local/Regional Corporations for small business programming and operational support
  • Permission to recast special event sponsorships for alternative downtown programming and operational support

☐ Develop strategies to raise revenue now.

  • Create an email campaign asking your stakeholders for donations to support Main Street. Describe how COVID-19 is impacting your downtown and your organization, share how your program is responding, and explain how you will use their donation.
  • Thank everyone who has supported your organization in the past, and show photos of your recent impact, if possible.
• Make targeted asks to successful businesses or local philanthropists to ask for funding for your organization and Main Street businesses.

• Don’t assume all businesses can’t honor their pledge or membership to your organization. Communicate and check in with them often.

☐ Examine social entrepreneurship opportunities for added revenue.

For example, Downtown Rochester in Rochester, Mich., is selling branded face masks to benefit their Road to Recovery events and promotions.

☐ Check in with your volunteers.

Share your thoughts on your downtown’s recovery and let them know they are needed now more than ever.

☐ Evaluate your organization’s recovery pathway.

• Human Resources: Do you need to make cuts, furloughs, or change contracts?

• Budgets: Examine revenue sources and create ratings for their potential to decrease or increase. What expenses can be reduced to coincide with revenue projections? Review income and cash flow statements.

• Legal: Consider the status of your contracts and your lease situation.

• Insurance: Evaluate the status of future events and office visitors.

☐ Use social media tools to share news about your organization, its work, and future needs.

☐ Know your state’s reopening guidelines.

For those needing guidance, be a connector and convener, but not the authority.

☐ Develop your District Recovery Plan.

See planning graphic below.

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**Main Street FORWARD**

**PLANNING FOR RECOVERY: AN OVERLAY TO THE MAIN STREET APPROACH**

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| POST COVID-19 RECOVERY STRATEGY |
| DESIGN | ORGANIZATION | ECONOMIC VITALITY | PROMOTION |

<table>
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Learn more at mainstreet.org/mainstreetforward.