



Speak Up for Main Street

Urge your Members of Congress to include additional funding for the Economic Development Administration in the next stimulus package to support the critical work of Main Street organizations that provide on-the-ground economic assistance to our nation's downtowns. Main Street America recommends including a \$100 million competitive grant to support the vital work of Main Street coordinating programs, local Main Street programs, and small businesses in commercial districts.

How can you help?

1. Uncover and utilize connections to Senate and House offices.
 - Many Main Street programs have strong existing connections to Congressional offices, whether through a previous advocacy effort, partner networks in the district, or close personal connections. Now is a key time to find “grasstops” connections to offices.
 - Grasstops connections are people who have the ear of the Congressional office, such as a mayor with a close connection to a Senator or a board member who meets regularly with a District Director.
 - Reach out to your grasstops connections and ask the individual to help you elevate the Main Street proposal by arranging a call with the Member of Congress or their staff.
 - Remember: never underestimate a meeting with staff.
2. Make the case for Main Street in a call with a Congressional office. Here's a call “script” to walk through key points:

Give Background:

- Introduce yourself and your Main Street organization.
- Give examples of the effectiveness of your program. Utilize your revitalization statistics!
- Talk about your organization's role in supporting small businesses during this crisis. Cite specific examples of projects or businesses helped.
- Explain your concerns for businesses, your local Main Street organization and your coordinating program.

Introduce the Proposal:

- We are seeking a \$100 million dollar competitive grant program through the Economic Development Administration's (EDA) Economic Adjustment Assistance program (EAA).
- This COVID relief proposal would support Main Street coordinating programs that provide needed technical assistance and also small businesses for operational changes necessitated by the pandemic.
- *Please make sure to review [Talking Points](#) and a [Frequently Asked Questions](#) prior to the call to be prepared for questions.*



Reiterate the Need:

- Technical assistance provided by Main Street programs is essential to helping small businesses survive the pandemic.
- Local Main Street programs are funded primarily through business contributions, fundraising, and municipal support. All three sources of funding are threatened.
- Funding from other programs – specifically CARES Act Relief to States and Municipalities and CARES Act EDA funding – has broadly not made its way to small local revitalization programs.
- Using an existing nationwide network, funding to support downtowns and small businesses can be deployed efficiently.

Ask the Office for Support:

- Request that the Congressperson support this proposal in negotiations for the next COVID-19 response package.
- Ask them to express their support to Senate or House Leadership (as appropriate).
- Ask them to connect with their party staff lead on EDA appropriations.

3. Report back to Main Street America with any updates.

If you arrange a call with a Congressional office, please report back to Kelly Humrichouser at Main Street America (khumrichouser@savingplaces.org). Please include information on who you met with and any questions that you received.