



National Main Street Center

a subsidiary of the
National Trust *for* Historic Preservation

Press Release

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NATIONAL MAIN STREET CENTER RECEIVES \$225,000 IN FUNDING FOR COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION IN HISTORIC DOWNTOWNS IN CHICAGO AND ACROSS ILLINOIS

Chicago (December 12, 2017) – The National Main Street Center announced the re-launch of a statewide initiative to reinvigorate local economies and support historic downtowns in Illinois. Funds for the program are being provided by The Richard H. Driehaus Foundation in Chicago.

In 2015, the Illinois Main Street Program, a 25-year-old state-funded program charged with overseeing Main Street revitalization efforts in the state, lost all state funding. With a three-year, \$225,000 grant from the Driehaus Foundation, the National Main Street Center is relaunching the program, offering training, technical assistance, and Main Street America certification directly to communities across the state of Illinois, including neighborhood districts in Chicago.

“Downtown revitalization work in small towns is extraordinarily challenging, particularly in light of the decline in employment in rural communities and significant changes in the retail sector,” said Patrice Frey. “We are grateful for the Driehaus Foundation’s leadership in supporting the rebirth of the Illinois Main Street program, which will again be able to provide tools and training to communities to develop and implement strategies to grow their local economies and enhance the quality of life for residents.”

Since its inception, community-based organizations taking part in the Illinois Main Street Program have been extraordinarily effective at rehabilitating older and historic buildings and bringing economic revitalization to towns across the state. Collectively, these organizations have secured nearly \$1.2 billion in public and private reinvestment, added nearly 11,000 jobs, created over 2,000 new businesses, and rehabilitated 800 buildings in Illinois.

“We believe in the mission of the National Main Street Center and with this funding, Illinois communities throughout the state will again have the necessary support to strengthen small businesses, attract visitors, and enhance the quality of life for citizens,” said Richard H. Driehaus.

Illinois communities previously supported by Illinois Main Street include: Aledo, Alton, Batavia, Beardstown, Bloomington, Canton, Carbondale, Chester, Chicago, Crystal Lake, Dixon, Dwight, Elizabethtown, Freeport, Jacksonville, Libertyville, Lombard, Moline, Momence, Monticello, Mt. Vernon, Orion, Pontiac, Quincy, Rock Island, Silvis, Springfield, Sterling, and Waukegan.

In addition, specialized services will be offered to selected neighborhood districts in Chicago through a new program, UrbanMain, launched earlier this year by the National Main Street Center. The UrbanMain initiative provides support to older and under-resourced historic commercial districts in urban centers.

More information is available at: mainstreet.org

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About the National Main Street Center

The National Main Street Center has been helping revitalize older and historic commercial districts for more than 35 years. Today, its Main Street America network of more than 1,600 neighborhoods and communities, rural and urban, share both a commitment to place and to building stronger communities through preservation-based economic development. The organization is a non-profit subsidiary of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

About the Richard H. Driehaus Foundation

Through strategic grantmaking, The Richard H. Driehaus Foundation seeks to improve Chicago's built environment, to support cultural stewardship in the arts, to strengthen democracy through investigative journalism, and to advance economic opportunity for the working poor. The Foundation works to ensure the preservation and improvement of historic urban built environments and to ensure that new built environments are designed to meet the needs of the humans who inhabit them. The Foundation also makes grants that: cultivate a robust and diverse arts ecosystem, encouraging collaboration, advocacy, and knowledge sharing; support investigative reporting that fosters greater transparency, accountability, and effectiveness in government institutions at the local level; and support system-wide change to improve economic opportunity for the working poor that reside in urban areas by funding nonprofits active in public policy and advocacy.