



Miles City 

Photo credit: Keely Perkins

Excellence On Main Street Awards Guidelines

Montana Department of Commerce

Montana Main Street Program

August 2025

Excellence on Main Street Awards

Nomination Deadline: March 15, 2026

General Information

Eligible Applicants

The Excellence on Main Street Awards are open to all local coordinating programs participating in the Montana Main Street Program.

To be eligible, local coordinating programs must:

- ✓ Submit an annual agreement for the current calendar year;
- ✓ Be current with quarterly updates; and
- ✓ Have a recertification letter from the Montana Department of Commerce.

Nomination Instructions

Follow instructions as described for each award option.

Awards

Awards reflect the Main Street Four Point Approach™. Award categories include:

- Organization – Outstanding Local Coordinating Program Award;
- Promotion – Life is Downtown Award;
- Design – Downtown Community Award; and
- Economic Vitality – Small Business of the Year.

Winners

Award announcements will be made at the annual Downtown and Main Street Conference April 29-May 1, 2026 in Glasgow, Montana.

Award Categories

Organization

Outstanding Local Coordinating Program: Awarded to the Main Street local coordinating program that exemplifies the Four-Point Approach “Organization” standards. This awardee is selected by Commerce staff and is based on the above eligibility plus any additional Commerce interactions, including but not limited to, site visits, technical assistance calls, grant management, etc.

Nominations outside Commerce are not accepted for this award.

Promotion

Best Event (Life is Downtown Award): This award recognizes excellence in downtown events or promotions. Examples: summer music series, art walks, holiday strolls, Ladies Night Out, marketing, social media reaches, etc.

To nominate an event or series:

- Describe the event and its goal/target audience.
- Describe the results of the event, such as attendance, regional recognition, etc.
- Describe the impact of the event or series on the Main Street district and associated revitalization efforts.
- Provide information regarding the budget of the event or series, as well as how funding was secured.
- Include photographs or other relevant supplementary materials.

Design

Best Education Project or Activity (Downtown Community Award): This award recognizes an exemplary historic preservation/interpretation project, façade project, rehabilitation project or placemaking project. Please indicate which of the four categories best fit the nominated project. Examples: historic walking tours/brochures, a completed Montana Historic Preservation Grant project, safety plan for events,

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maintenance guide for beautification efforts, renovation of building or floors of a building, façade improvements to a building or aesthetic improvements to a downtown public area.

To nominate a project or activity:

- Describe the project/activity and its goal/target audience (scope of work).
- Describe the results of the project/activity and the impact on downtown.
- Provide information regarding the budget, as well as how funding was secured.
- Include photographs or other relevant supplementary materials.
- Describe the role of the Main Street organization in facilitating the project or activity.
- Identify any public and/or private entities or key groups/individuals involved in the implementation of the project.
- Describe how the project fits within the overall Main Street revitalization efforts.

Economic Vitality

Small Business of the Year: This award recognizes an outstanding, locally owned downtown business.

To nominate a business:

- Identify and provide a full description of the business, including its operation.
- Describe the impact the business has on the downtown.
- Describe the successes and contributions of the business owner(s) and staff.
- Describe the physical appearance of the business, as well as its footprint.
- Describe the business' customer service, promotional efforts and staff/owner engagement with the Main Street organization and other community or civic partners.
- Describe any jobs created or the number of full-time employees and part-time employees.