



Local Coordinating Program Board Handbook

Montana Main Street Program

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Montana Department of Commerce
P.O. Box 200523
Helena, MT 59620-0523
Phone: 406-841-2700 | Fax: 406-841-2701
commerce.mt.gov
Montana 711: montanarelay.mt.gov

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Montana Main Street Program Overview

The organizational structure for each Montana Main Street is uniquely adapted to fit each community's needs. This handbook provides general guidance but is mostly applicable to nonprofit organizations.

The Montana Main Street Program, housed in the Montana Department of Commerce, serves as a statewide coordinating program with the authority to designate communities and use the trademarked Main Street methodology through a licensing agreement with Main Street America. MMS was established by Montana's 59th legislature in 2005. MMS serves up to 40 communities that are part of the network. Two of those communities, Great Falls and Butte, also perform at the highest standards set forth by MSA and are recognized as either an affiliate or accredited community with MSA.

MMS communities are locally driven programs which focus on implementing the nationally recognized Main Street Approach in their commercial historic districts. The communities within the MMS network are committed to addressing the community-based approach of sustainable revitalization. Each community is responsible for developing the framework from which the organization will be delivered locally, including the board that will direct the organization, the staff that will manage the organization and the partnerships needed to secure the long-term viability of the organization.

Over the last 20 years, MMS communities have:

- Generated more than \$4.5 million in public and private reinvestment
- Produced more than 3,150 net new jobs for Montana's economy
- Leveraged more than 660,000 volunteer hours
- Assisted in the development of more than 1,070 net small businesses

The communities that make up the network of MMS represent some of the strongest historic business districts in the state. The MMS Program offers resources for your place-based economic development toolkit.

The MMS Program offers a variety of tools and resources, including but not limited to:

- New Local Coordinating Program Director/Leader Handbook
- Monthly 60 Minutes with Main Street networking calls
- Technical assistance and brainstorming sessions
- Site visits
- In-person and virtual workshops on topics catered to the community's needs

The MMS Program is here to be a resource for the local coordinating program.

Main Street Board Member Job Description

Collectively, the Main Street board assumes legal responsibility for all activities of the Main Street organization. The board is solely responsible for establishing program policies, approving the annual budget and determining the goals of the organization. Members are usually expected to serve on one task force or standing committee of the Main Street organization.

We understand that each community will be locally driven, which can mean there may not be a dedicated annual budget. However, MMS communities who perform at the highest level annually will have annual work plans/goals that help determine the organization's vision and direction.

Job Requirements of the Board

Each board member should have or provide one or more of the following:

- A demonstrated interest in the program's purpose and its goals
- Specific experience or knowledge of administration, finance, program development, advertising, public relations, grant management, event planning, district business activity, communications, design or economic development
- Representation of a public or private sector organization in the designated district
- Four to 10 hours per month of available time

Major Responsibilities

The board members are jointly responsible for:

1. Policy administration
 - Establishing and/or continuing the legal existence of the program
 - Ensuring that the program fulfills legal requirements in the conduct of its business and affairs

- Adopting and administering a code of regulations
- Adopting policies which determine the purposes, governing principles, functions and activities and course of action for the program
- Assuming responsibility for internal policies governing the program
- Working with the project manager or executive director to develop an annual work plan of goals, objectives and activities for the program

2. Funding and financial management

- Approving and monitoring the finances of the program
- Helping raise sufficient funds to ensure that the program can meet its objectives
- Authorizing and approving an annual audit
- Assuming responsibility for all expenditures necessary for the operation of the program, other than those responsibilities delegated by the board to the project manager or executive director

3. Public relations and advocacy

- Understanding and interpreting the program's work to the district
- Relating the services of the program to the work of other organizations and agencies
- Serving as advocates for economic development through historic preservation in the district area
- Maximizing volunteer involvement in the district revitalization effort

4. Planning and evaluation

- Setting direction for the organization and providing measurable objectives to get there
- Regularly reviewing and evaluating the program's operations and maintaining standards of performance

- Monitoring the program's activities
- Counseling and providing good judgment on plans of committees and of the project manager

5. Committee oversight

- Ensuring that committees are working on programming that meets the organization's goals and objectives
- Approving work/action plans
- Monitoring to ensure committees are on track with approved projects and activities

6. Personnel management

- Selecting, hiring and evaluating the project manager
- Approving policies governing personnel administration
- Participating in recruitment, selection and development of board members as advised by the nominating committee

Individual Standards

A responsible Main Street board member:

1. Supports board decisions, even when he or she may differ personally with the majority decision
2. Understands the mission of the local Main Street organization and promotes the goals and activities of the organization to his or her own constituent groups and to the designated district
3. Attends board meetings
4. Actively participates in task forces as necessary as well as at least one standing committee

5. Actively participates in specific activities or projects promoted by the board which may include fundraising, membership recruitment and representation on behalf of the organization at meetings and/or events
6. Attends as many training programs and workshops as possible provided by MMS and/or MSA
7. Contributes knowledge, financial resources and/or labor to the Main Street organization
8. Respects the need for the local coordinator to report to only one boss
9. Understands that the day-to-day operations of the organization beyond volunteer opportunities fall to the local coordinator
10. Offers opinions honestly, without reservation and in a constructive way
11. Does not commit more time to the Main Street organization than he or she can realistically afford
12. Delegates responsibilities to committees when appropriate
13. Promotes unity within the organization and seeks to resolve internal conflicts
14. Encourages orderly, systematic and incremental implementations of the local program's work plan, discouraging the board from being distracted by secondary issues or projects not included in the program's annual agenda
15. Encourages staff and other board members to express their opinions openly in board meetings

Sample Board Member Self Evaluation

Listed below are the five areas which best describe a board member's role in a nonprofit organization. Below each of those areas are statements which will allow you to look at your participation critically. On a scale of one (do not do) to five (do on a regular basis), rate yourself on your participation level. Be frank and honest with your answers.

A Board Member Sets Policy

1. I stay well informed of the program's objectives.
2. I have read and understand the bylaws and articles of incorporation.
3. I keep informed of city council and other agency actions which may affect the operations of this program.
4. I attend meetings regularly.
5. I contribute at meetings openly and honestly.
6. Prior to voting, I am considering whether my decision may flag a conflict of interest.
7. I read all reports sent to my attention.
8. I try to participate in training sessions offered locally or at the state level.
9. I initiate action rather than responding to repeated requests.

A Board Member Supervises the Executive Director

1. I am sensitive to the executive director's responsibilities outside of the organization.
2. I support the executive director in controversial situations.
3. I review the executive director's performance on a regular basis.
4. I provide the executive director with candid appraisal of his or her performance.
5. I am accessible to the executive director by phone or visitation.
6. I allow the executive director to handle all office staffing decisions.

A Board Member Represents the Agency in the District

1. I attend meetings outside of the agency as a representative of this agency.

2. I wear my affiliation with this agency proudly.
3. I am loyal and retain confidentiality.
4. I serve as a spokesperson for this agency.
5. I am committed to the mission and vision of this organization.

A Board Member Evaluates the Organization Regularly

1. I am prompt for all scheduled meetings.
2. I am well prepared for all scheduled meetings.
3. I contribute to a waiting list of prospective board members, therefore filling vacancies more readily.
4. I review the work plan and goals frequently.
5. I make and follow through on agreements.
6. I recruit volunteers for the organization.

A Board Member Gives and Raises Money

1. I give money to the best of my ability.
2. I attract financial resources and am willing to make contacts for funding.
3. I wear the hat of a volunteer at fundraising events.
4. I understand the budget thoroughly.
5. I review the budget regularly.

Now that you have candidly responded to the above statements with a rating number, look at those numbers. If you have mostly fours and fives, you are a productive, committed board member. If you have mostly threes, you're above average, and with a little extra effort, you can be rated higher. Twos and ones are in the majority: Take a second look at why you are serving on this board.

Board Members Checklist

Every new board member should be given an orientation packet that includes information about the local Main Street Coordinating Program. Materials every board member should receive include:

- Articles of incorporation
- Bylaws
- Board roster, including board position, term of office, address and phone
- Committee roster
- Executive director job description
- Job description/responsibilities of a board member
- Job description/responsibilities of a committee member
- Board member letter of commitment/agreement
- Written office policies and procedures
- Local, state and national program brochures, if applicable
- Minutes of board meetings for the previous six months
- Copies of progress visit reports or other assessments by MMS
- Copy of the annual work plan
- Short historical perspective of the local program
- Explanation of funding sources and fundraising methods
- Legal consideration of the program: insurance, IRS status, etc.
- Calendar of meetings and events
- List of reading materials or media available
- Tour of office and board room
- Tour of district area
- Letter of welcome from the program manager/executive director
- Mission statement

- Current budget and financial reports, including year-end statement from preceding year
- Long-range plan
- Latest newsletters
- Letter of agreement with MMS

Executive Board Job Descriptions

President

The president serves as a link between the board of directors and the executive director. He or she assists the executive director in defining priorities and directions based on the published goals of the organization, committee recommendations and board policies. The president is a link between the organization and the district and oversees the organization in a functional way, guiding and facilitating the working relationships within the organization.

Job Requirements

- Good leadership, team building and management skills
- Strong verbal and written communication skills, along with good listening skills
- Flexible and open-minded
- A good understanding of the Main Street Approach and willingness to be an ambassador of the concept

Job Functions

- Supervising the performance of the executive director
- Assisting the executive director in determining the board meeting agenda
- Communicating with the board, district and executive director
- Chairing board meetings
- Calling special meetings when necessary
- Monitoring the accountability of the organization

Expectations of the President

- Understands and articulates the organization's mission
- Speaks publicly and to the press on behalf of the organization
- Advocates on behalf of the organization to the district
- Takes a major role in fundraising for the organization
- Appoints committee chairs
- Keeps in touch with committee chairs to make sure work is on target
- Talks to the executive director on a regular basis and communicates concerns of committee chairs
- Develops the meeting agenda in cooperation with the executive director
- Conducts the meetings
- Makes sure that the executive director fulfils all governmental requirements
- Leads a yearly evaluation of the executive director
- Encourages increased volunteer involvement in the organization
- Makes sure new board members are oriented to the organization and that an annual board retreat is held
- Prepares the way for new leadership by encouraging the work of the nominating committee and involving people with leadership potential on committees
- Leads the planning process and keeps the goal the board has set as benchmarks of progress for both board and staff

Vice President

The vice president's role is to support the president. He or she shares the presidential responsibilities as delegated by the president, working in whatever capacities the president and vice president deem to be most beneficial to the organization. The capacities should be written as a job description on a year-by-year basis. The vice president performs the duties of the president when the president is unable to do so.

Job Requirements

- Good leadership, team building and management skills
- Strong verbal and written communication skills along with good listening skills
- Flexibility and open-mindedness
- A good understanding of the Main Street Approach and willingness to be an ambassador of the concept

Other job elements: determined each year

Reports to: the board president

Secretary

The secretary serves as the primary record keeper of the organization. He or she is responsible for transcribing the minutes at each board meeting and preparing an official copy for approval by the board of directors.

Job Requirements

- Good leadership, team building and management skills
- Strong verbal and written communication skills, along with good listening skills
- Flexibility and open-mindedness
- A good understanding of the Main Street Approach and willingness to be an ambassador of the concept

Major Job Elements

- Recordkeeping
- Transcribing minutes at board meetings
- Preparing an official copy of the minutes for the executive director within two weeks of the board meeting

- Maintaining these documents in a form which is always accessible to board members and the executive director, and which is carried to board meetings for use as a historical reference of the organization's discussions and actions

Other job elements: determined each year

Reports to: the board president

Treasurer

The treasurer is responsible for fiscally monitoring the program. This includes keeping all financial records up to date. The treasurer is ultimately responsible for seeing that the bills of the organization are paid in a timely manner.

Job Requirements

- Good leadership, team building and management skills
- Strong verbal and written communication skills, along with good listening skills
- Flexibility and open-mindedness
- A good understanding of the Main Street Approach and willingness to be an ambassador of the concept
- Experience with fundraising, budgeting and QuickBooks

Major Job Elements

- The timely payment of any organizational debts incurred, including all taxes due
- Preparation of a monthly financial report to the board, which should be submitted within two weeks of the following monthly board meeting to the executive director for inclusion with the minutes of the meeting for the month following the reporting period
- Maintain all financial books and records in an auditable format, according to standard accounting practices

Other job elements: Providing financial information on request

Reports to: the board of directors through the executive board

Hiring an Executive Director

Coordinating a successful and comprehensive downtown or neighborhood commercial district revitalization program requires a trained, professional staff person. While executive directors come from a broad range of academic and professional backgrounds, the most successful executive directors are good communicators who can motivate volunteers, create a team and juggle many activities at once and who have good project management and organizational skills. Being able to keep the revitalization program's many activities moving forward on schedule and within budget is also key. In most instances, the executive director's position is full time.

The executive director should be paid a salary consistent with those of other community development professionals within the city or region in which the program operates. His or her salary should also be consistent with other commercial district revitalization programs in the state. This amount may seem like a significant portion of the program's budget, but keep in mind that most private sector businesses spend the bulk of their budget on payroll. It's no different here.

Before hiring staff, it's important for the organization to determine both current and future needs in addition to defining what knowledge, skills and characteristics an ideal candidate should possess.

Steps in Hiring a Main Street Director

1. Form a selection committee.
2. Identify the desired skills of a candidate.
3. Develop a position description.

4. Determine the salary range and include it in the job posting.
5. Advertise the position. Determine if you require a resume, application, samples of work or a portfolio, etc.
6. Develop evaluation criteria and interview questions.
7. Decide how you will narrow down candidates; how many interviews you will conduct; if you will conduct phone interviews, virtual or in-person interviews; and if you will cover travel expenses for the interview, etc.
8. Conduct interviews.
9. Hold a committee discussion of candidates.
10. Hold a committee decision on the top two to three candidates.
11. Send an invitation to the second interview.
12. Conduct the second interview.
13. Hold a committee discussion of candidates.
14. The board decides on a candidate and a back-up candidate, if desired.
15. The board grants approval of job offers.
16. Extend a job offer.
17. Negotiate the terms of employment.
18. Come to a final agreement of terms of employment.
19. Send notification to other candidates.
20. Announce staff selection.
21. Begin the manager training process and introduction to the community.
22. Write a form for conducting performance evaluations. See the sample in the attachments.
23. Write an employment contract. See the sample in the attachments.

The Interview Format

One successful format includes setting up an initial application selection committee made up of two to three board members (including the president), the city manager or administrator, the chamber president (in most cases, not the executive director), a

downtown businessperson not on your board and someone from the financial community or local utility company. Politically, it's important to get some of these people involved in the process. If they help select the executive director, they will be more apt to work closely with the executive director rather than be antagonistic towards him or her.

Ask this committee to screen applications, select five to seven of the best ones, check references and conduct initial interviews. The selection committee should then schedule in-person interviews with the top two to three candidates.

The Interview

The applicant will focus on making a good first impression in the first interview. During the second interview, he or she is considerably more confident and comfortable. An effective way to get past the first impression is to ask each of the semi-finalists to respond to two or three essay questions prior to their interview. Questions should be phrased to encourage specific examples of how the applicant has dealt with a situation or organized an activity, i.e., it doesn't engender just a statement of personal philosophy.

Questions Might Include

1. Give some reasons why a business/property owner should fix up or make an investment in his or her building.
2. How would you approach recruiting a new business? What would you anticipate being the major factors?
3. Why should we bother with downtown? What makes it worth the time and money we're about to spend?

Look for the applicant's natural, personal characteristics to come through.

A set of standard questions, the same for every applicant, should be prepared ahead of time for each interview and allocated to the various team members. These questions should not, however, dissuade follow-up questions from anyone during the process.

Following the interview, team members need to rate or make notes about the candidate and perhaps discuss the interview. Make sure that your comments get to the issues: Did I like this person? Will our town like him or her? What characteristics did I perceive? Get past the applicant's skills and experience.

Pre-Exposed Question

1. Why does this job interest you? Give an overview of the position.
2. Before we begin, do you have any questions about the job?
3. What do you currently know about our program, if anything?

Provide a general preview of the job, including information about night and weekend hours, occasional overnight travel, Main Street Approach, etc. and then proceed with questions.

- Now that we've described the job in a little more detail, do you have any hesitancy about any part of it that makes you feel like you may not be able to perform some of the basic functions of the job?

Background/Job Knowledge

1. Can you tell us about the most rewarding job you've ever had?
2. To the best of your understanding, please tell us how your previous experience and education relate to this position.
3. Why are you interested in downtown revitalization?

Motivation

1. Please describe one or two of your most important accomplishments, whether personal or work related.
2. What motivates you in your job and career?
3. Do you work best in an independent or group situation?
4. If selected for this position, what would your plans be for your first month on the job?

Communication/Teamwork

1. As executive director, you would be in a high visibility position. What kind of public speaking experience do you have? Please describe your experiences and the audience.
2. Tell me how you increased teamwork among a previous group with whom you worked.
3. Describe what you liked and disliked about how you were managed in previous positions.
4. The executive director must work with many people, from government officials to media representatives to merchants to property owners to volunteers. Can you provide examples from your experiences that demonstrate your ability to work productively with others?
5. Describe a specific time when you disagreed with a workmate or someone else on how to accomplish a task. What did you end up doing to get the task done, and how successful were you?
6. Every manager must learn to delegate well. Describe a work situation in which you delegated responsibility successfully. Tell me about a time when your delegation of responsibility did not work out well. How did you handle that situation?

Decision Making/Multitasking

1. Tell us about a specific time when you were required to complete multiple tasks and assignments during the same timeframe. How did you handle the situation? Please

be specific about the number of assignments, the actions you took, the reasons for the actions and the result. Potential follow-up question: How did you prioritize?

2. What was the biggest mistake you made at your last job? How did you correct it?
3. Tell me about a work emergency or crisis of some kind in which you were involved. What was your role? What did you do?

Dependability

1. If we were to call a good friend of yours and ask them to describe your personality, what would they say — both the good and the not so good?
2. In your opinion, what is your best work trait or quality?
3. What is your least desirable work trait?

Technical Knowledge/Skills

1. What do you think are the most important skills and traits necessary to succeed in this job?
2. Please tell us about your writing and editing skills. What kinds of documents have you written? What kinds of documents have you edited? How would you rate yourself: excellent, pretty good or not so good?
3. Please describe your social media experience and the types of programs you're comfortable using.
4. Do you feel comfortable working in a fast-paced environment?

Closure

1. To a large degree, the success of our organization depends on a consistent, diligent effort over several years. If hired, do you feel you could commit at least three years to this position?
2. Are there any questions you wish we would have or should have asked you, or is there anything you'd like to ask us about the job?
3. If offered the job, when is the earliest you could begin?

Useful Probes for Interviewing

Although probing for more extensive answers from candidates is not allowed in strictly structured interviewing environments, the practice is still widely used. It can be applied fairly if each candidate is given the advantage of approximately the same degree of probing by interviewers.

- Please clarify what you mean by...
- How did you feel when that happened?
- Why do you think you reacted as you did?
- Did you consider other options at the time?
- Please give me more details about...
- How do you think others felt about your actions at the time?

A job description and information about your community and organization, perhaps even a copy of the committee report(s), are all worth providing prior to the second interview. Follow-up questions might reference these materials to see how much the candidate picked up about your community, the job and the revitalization approach being taken.

Final selection should be based on consensus. Depending on the size of the group, you won't make everyone happy. Nonetheless, if the hiring team is not satisfied with their final choices, they need to go back through the resumes and interview further. Do not hire someone you don't feel very good about.

Common Mistakes Communities Make in the Hiring Process

- Being too hasty in getting a person on board and not waiting for the best person for the job

- Hiring someone who is overly skilled in only one area of the Main Street Four-Point Approach and not familiar with organizational development or other components of the program
- Hiring a local who may already have established ties, cliques and biases
 - Although there are exceptions to the rule, it is sometimes better for programs in communities with populations over 5,000 to bring in someone from the outside who can take a fresh look at your downtown. The executive director should also be willing to consider establishing residency in the community in which they will be working.
 - Small town programs may find that it doesn't matter if they hire a local person or someone from out of town. They may also be surprised at the quality of the people who send in applications for the position. In other states, many small-town programs who took the time to advertise in local and regional papers have found very qualified people for their part-time positions.

Advertising Strategy

- Place a running ad in the local paper or the nearest major newspaper.
- Post the website online in applicable places.
- Inform the state coordinating program and request the job announcement be sent through the MMS listserv.

Executive Director's Area of Responsibilities

The executive director has a variety of job functions. Major areas of responsibility include:

- Ensuring communication is established
- Coordinating volunteers to accomplish activities of the downtown revitalization program

- Coordinating activity of downtown revitalization program committees
- Providing ongoing volunteer support and encouragement
- Managing administrative aspects of the program
 - Record-keeping and accounting
 - Budget development, jointly with board and/or president and treasurer
 - Purchasing
 - Preparing and filing reports
 - Filing legal documents, jointly with board and/or president and secretary
 - Supervising other regular or contractual employees
- Developing, in conjunction with the board, appropriate downtown revitalization strategies
 - Identification of unique assets and resources
 - Identification of concerns and issues
 - Development of a work plan that focuses on all four points of the Main Street Approach
- Developing and conducting, in conjunction with the board and organization committee, ongoing public awareness and education programs
 - Fostering public understanding of the downtown revitalization program's mission and goals
 - Keeping the program in a positive light in the eyes of the public
 - Developing a cooperative relationship with the media
- Assisting business and property owners with business and property improvement projects
 - Providing ongoing communication, advice and guidance
 - Coordinating consulting services of the state or local program
 - Personal consulting or finding additional professional consultation as appropriate
- Encouraging a cooperative climate with other downtown or community organizations

- Building opportunities for partnership with the local chamber and other economic development and tourism organizations
- Identifying and maintaining contact with other key downtown/neighborhood organizations
- Helping to build productive relationships with appropriate public entities
 - Developing and maintaining relationships within city government
 - Identifying and maintaining contact with other important public entities, elected and staff
- Developing and maintaining a data system to track the progress of the local program in a form called the Quarterly Update, which includes the following information about the Main Street district (the geographic area as set by the local Main Street Program):
 - Net full-time and part-time jobs
 - New businesses created
 - Rehabilitation projects completed
 - Public improvement projects completed
 - Dollar amount of public investment
 - Dollar amount of private investment
 - Number of events held
 - Volunteer hours contributed
- Serving as an advocate for downtown issues at the local and state level
 - Familiarity with, and understanding of, local concerns and issues
 - Speaking effectively on the program's goals, issues and results
 - Working to improve public policy relating to issues affecting downtown
- Working toward developing skills as a downtown management professional related to each of these major functions

The executive director has several more specific areas of responsibility that include:

- Taking advantage of training opportunities provided through the state program

- Identifying other opportunities for personal and professional growth
- Attending three annual MMS network meetings

Executive Director's Role

Committee Development

- Helps the committees and the chair learn the mechanics of committee management
- Provides expert advice and concise information on revitalization and the Main Street Approach
- Collaborates with committee members and chair as a strategist/planner

Work Plans

- Assists committee members in developing work plan documents
- Helps committee members complete their projects but does not assume responsibility for those activities
- Integrates his or her own work plan with the committee's work plan

Fundraising Activities

- Coordinates fundraising campaigns, newsletter production, volunteer communications and financial systems
- Helps members coordinate projects

Promotional Projects

- Coordinates production of PR, graphic image and other promotional materials
- Helps members coordinate special events, retail promotions and advertising activities

Rehabilitation and Design Projects

- Coordinates information on design assistance and financial incentives for building owners
- Acts as the first contact for the public on preservation issues in the commercial district

Economic Restructuring Projects

- Coordinates data collection, analysis, financial incentive programs and other economic development activities
- Help members coordinate business improvement seminars and workshops

Volunteer Management

- Helps the chair develop good systems for recruitment, supervision and reward of volunteers
- Helps develop volunteer capacity of committees by participating in recruitment efforts

Committee Meetings

- Attends most meetings to provide technical information and professional opinions
- Helps strategize and develop solutions
- Works with the chair to ensure that decisions and assignments are made and completed

Executive Directors Do Not...

- Run committee/board meetings or take minutes
- Have authority over the committee or its structure

- Take on many tasks in the work/action plans
- Take the lead on donor solicitation and fundraising
- Take the lead on organizing or running events and projects
- Report on committee updates at board meetings
- Sign his or her own paycheck
- Manage the accounting, which is the treasurer's responsibility
- Write a newsletter
- Voice organizational opinions without the approval of the board of directors

After the Main Street Executive Director Arrives

- Review the budget and program accounting procedures and responsibilities.
- Give the executive director thorough tours of the community.
- Develop a performance plan for the executive director based on the organization's plan of work, specifically the job duties on which he or she will be evaluated.
- Set up individual interviews for the executive director with all the board members and other key people in the community.
- Check with the executive director to make sure all office needs are met.
- Hold a reception for the executive director.
- Publicize the executive director's arrival. Send press releases with the executive director's photo to all local media.
- Give the executive director time to review existing materials about the downtown and community.
- Connect the executive director to the MMS coordinator.

Sample Examples

The following are examples and may not be relevant or valid for all situations. If a contractual agreement is to be entered, any such agreement should be drafted only after consultation with an attorney.

Sample Ad

Ourtown, Any state (pop. 6,700) is seeking its first executive director to coordinate downtown revitalization activities for this pristine rural community along the Dreamy River. Job duties include managing the downtown revitalization program and budget, working with other groups on downtown development strategies and reporting to the downtown revitalization program's board of directors.

Qualifications: Ideal applicants for this position will have professional experience and/or education in one or more of the following areas: architecture, marketing, historic preservation, planning, urban design, volunteer and/or nonprofit management, economic development or small business development. Applicants must be energetic, entrepreneurial, work well with volunteers and be well organized and capable of functioning effectively in an independent environment. Good written and verbal communication skills are essential to this position. The salary range for this full-time position is \$36,000-\$40,000 per year, depending on qualifications.

To apply: Send a cover letter, resume and three references by April 26, 2026, to:

Ourtown Downtown Association
170 S. Oak
Ourtown, AS 33333
Attn: Susan Johnson

Sample Ad

Ourtown Downtown Association, located in a pristine rural community along the Dreamy River, is seeking an executive director to coordinate downtown revitalization activities using the Main Street Four-Point Approach. Applicants should have excellent communication, public relations and managerial abilities, with a strong administrative background. Previous nonprofit experience is desired, with a background in the areas of special event planning, small business development or volunteer recruitment and management a plus. This position requires a dynamic, outgoing team player with the proven ability to multitask and work in an independent environment. It requires the ability to work with both the public and private sectors. Please submit a resume, cover letter and three references with salary requirements by June 15, 2026, to the Ourtown Downtown Association, 170 S. Oak, Ourtown, AS 33333.

Timeline Sample

A sample timeline is below. As you can see, finding a competent manager won't happen overnight, so be patient.

April 25-May 9	Run ads in newspapers.
May 10	Job applications are due.
May 13-14	Screen applications.
May 19	Call five to seven applicants for interviews.
May 27-28	Conduct interviews.
May 28-29	Call three applicants for a second interview.
June 8	Conduct second interviews.
June 9	Thoroughly check all references on candidates, if you haven't already, and make a final selection.
June 10	Call the successful candidate and then call the unsuccessful candidates.
July 10 or earlier	This is the start date.

Executive Director Job Description Sample

1. Work objectives

The executive director coordinates activity within a downtown revitalization program utilizing historic preservation as an integral foundation for downtown economic development. He or she is responsible for the development, conduct, execution and documentation of the downtown association. The executive director is the principal onsite staff person responsible for coordinating all program activities locally as well as representing the community regionally and nationally as appropriate.

2. Full range of duties to be performed

- a. Coordinates the activities of downtown association committees, ensuring that communication between committees is well established; assists committees with implementation of work plan items
- b. Manages all administrative aspects of the association, including purchasing, record keeping, budget development and accounting; prepares all reports required by the MMS Program and by the MSA; assists with the preparation of reports to funding agencies and supervises part-time employees or consultants
- c. Develops, in conjunction with the downtown association's board of directors, strategies for downtown economic development through historic preservation utilizing the community's human and economic resources; becomes familiar with all people and groups directly or indirectly involved in the downtown commercial district; mindful of the roles of various downtown interest groups, assists the downtown association's board of directors and committees in developing an annual action plan focused on four areas: design, promotion, organization and economic vitality

- d. Develops and conducts ongoing public awareness and education programs designed to enhance appreciation of the downtown's architecture and other assets and to foster an understanding of the downtown association's goals and objectives through speaking engagements, media interviews and public appearances, keeping the association highly visible in the community
- e. Assists individual tenants and property owners with physical improvement programs through personal consultation or by obtaining and supervising professional design consultants; assists in locating appropriate contractors and materials; when possible, participates in construction supervision; provides advice and guidance on necessary financial mechanisms for physical improvements
- f. Assesses the management capacity of major downtown stakeholder groups and encourages participation in activities such as promotional events, advertising, uniform store hours, special events, business recruitment, parking management and so on; provides advice and information on successful downtown management; encourages a cooperative climate between downtown interests and local public officials
- g. Advises downtown merchants' organizations and/or chamber of commerce retail committees on program activities and goals; assists in the coordination of joint promotional events, such as seasonal festivals or cooperative retail promotional events, to improve the quality and success of events to attract people downtown; works closely with the local media to ensure maximum event coverage; encourages design excellence in all aspects of promotion to advance an image of quality for the downtown
- h. Helps build strong and productive working relationships with appropriate public agencies at the local and state levels.
- i. Utilizes the Main Street Approach and develops and maintains data systems to track the process and progress of the local association, including economic

monitoring, individual building files, thorough photographic documentation of all physical changes and information on job creation and business retention

- j. Represents the community at the local, state and national levels to important constituencies; speaks effectively on the association's directions and findings, and is always mindful of the need to improve state and national economic development policies as they relate to smaller communities

3. Resource management responsibilities

The executive director supervises any necessary temporary or permanent employees as well as professional consultants. He or she participates in personnel and program evaluations. The executive director maintains local association records and reports, establishes technical resource files and libraries and prepares regular reports for the MMS Program and MSA. The executive director monitors the annual program budget and maintains financial records.

4. Job knowledge and skills required

The executive director should have education and/or experience in one or more of the following areas: architecture, historic preservation, economics, finance, public relations, design, journalism, planning, business administration, public administration, retailing, volunteer or nonprofit administration and/or small business development. The executive director must understand the issues confronting downtown businesspeople, property owners, public agencies and community organizations. The executive director must be entrepreneurial, energetic, imaginative, well organized and capable of functioning effectively in an independent situation. Excellent verbal and written communication skills are essential. Supervisory skills are desirable.

 **COMMERCE**

The foregoing is an accurate and complete description of this position as jointly agreed upon and signed by a representative of the downtown organization and the executive director.

President

Date

Employee

Date

Employment Agreement Sample

Ourtown Downtown Association

Employment Agreement

Between [name of contracting organization] and [name of employee]

This contract for professional services, made this _____ day of _____, 20____, by and between [the contracting organization], hereinafter referred to as the Main Street board, and [name of employee], hereinafter referred to as the executive director.

Witnesseth that:

Whereas the Main Street board desires to engage the executive director to render professional services hereinafter described in this document, including Attachment 1, entitled "Executive Director Job Description," which is attached hereto and made a part hereof for all purposes.

Now, therefore, the parties do mutually agree as follows:

1. Employment of the executive director

The Main Street board hereby agrees to engage the executive director, and the executive director hereby agrees to perform the services set forth in the job description, included here as Attachment 1. The executive director will report directly to the Main Street board president.

2. Time of performance

The services of the executive director are to commence no later than _____, 20____ and shall continue for one year from this date.

3. Renewal of agreement

At the time of this agreement's natural termination, the Main Street board shall review the performance of the executive director. Should the performance of the executive director be found satisfactory regarding the job description in Attachment 1, the Main Street board may, at its option, elect to renew this agreement with the executive director for an additional year or _____ years.

4. Method of payment

The executive director shall be a salaried employee of the Main Street board and shall receive an annual salary of \$_____, payable in [24 semi-monthly installments]. The Main Street board shall be responsible for withholding and payment of local, state and federal taxes, Social Security payments, workers' compensation contributions and other such payments and contributions required by local, state or federal law.

5. Obligations of the Main Street board

The Main Street board will provide the following items:

- a. A benefits package as outlined in Attachment 2
- b. A private office for the executive director located at [address]
- c. Office equipment as follows: a computer system, photocopier (or access to one), telephone and answering machine (or service) and other items as reasonably necessary to perform the duties of this job

6. Performance review and salary adjustments

Six months after the commencement date of this agreement, the Main Street board shall review the performance of the executive director. Performance reviews will occur annually during the anniversary month of hire. At this time a salary review will occur, with a possible salary adjustment based on the execution of the executive director's job description.

7. Changes

The Main Street board may require changes in the job description as requested by the executive director. Such changes, including any increases or decreases in the executive director's salary, which are mutually agreed upon by and between the Main Street board and the executive director, shall be incorporated as written amendments to the agreement.

8. Termination of agreement by Main Street board

If, through any cause, the executive director shall fail to fulfill in a proper manner the obligations under this agreement, or if the executive director shall violate any of the covenants, agreements or stipulations of this agreement, the Main Street board shall thereupon have the right to terminate this agreement by giving written notice to the executive director of such termination and specifying the effective date thereof, at least 14 calendar days before the effective date of such termination. The Main Street board will be obligated to make payments only for the services performed by the executive director prior to the effective date of termination of this agreement.

9. Termination of agreement by the executive director

The executive director shall have the right to terminate this agreement by giving written notice to the Main Street board of such termination and specifying the effective date thereof, at least 14 calendar days before the effective date of such termination. The executive director will be eligible to receive payments only for the services performed prior to the effective date of termination of this agreement.

In witness whereof, the Main Street board and the executive director have executed this contract as of the date first written above.

Main Street board by:

Name/title

Name/executive director

Program Benefits Sample

The Main Street board will provide the following benefits to the executive director:

1. Leave time/time off with pay

The executive director will receive 10 days of leave per year beginning with the effective date of this agreement. Leave time must be approved in advance by the Main Street board president. Should the executive director terminate the position, no payment will be made for accrued but unused leave time. The executive director will be allowed five days off for consulting, either paid or unpaid.

2. Sick leave

The executive director will receive five days of sick leave. When ill, the executive director must make every effort to contact the Main Street board president early in the day.

3. Holidays

The executive director will receive the following as paid holidays: the Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, the day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Day and Memorial Day.

4. Mileage

Business-related mileage will be reimbursed, with proper documentation, at the current rate allowable by the IRS per mile. Reimbursement shall be made monthly, based upon the submission of the appropriate mileage documentation.

5. Expenses

Subject to review by the executive committee, expenses shall be reimbursed for travel subject to appropriate documentation. An allowance of \$200 per year will be provided for membership due to service clubs.

6. Health care benefits

The Main Street board shall reimburse the executive director for participation in a health care plan jointly approved by the executive director and the executive committee.

7. Compensation time

The executive director will receive compensation time for meetings scheduled outside of normal work hours, to begin after the compensation time has accrued to 15 hours. All compensation time must be taken within three months of being earned.

Reference Checklist Sample

1. In what way and for how long have you worked with or known _____?
2. How would you describe _____'s ability to handle his or her job and your level of satisfaction? Or, if this is a personal reference, ask the reference about any skills or experiences that would convince you he or she has the skill set for this job.
3. Did _____ work independently or with a team? If with a team, was _____ a good team member? How was _____'s interaction as part of a team or the team leader?
4. Our position entails travel to national and statewide Main Street trainings, evening meetings and events on the weekends. Have you known _____ when he or she has had to work long or irregular hours, and did he or she maintain a good stamina level?
5. Are you able to pinpoint one or more significant contributions _____ made to your organization/company? Or, if a personal reference, "in your community"?
6. On a scale of one (lowest) to 10 (highest), could you rank _____ on:
 - ____ Leadership
 - ____ Ability to motivate people or create enthusiasm for projects
 - ____ Ability to access a problem and come up with a solution
 - ____ Ability to think outside the box
 - ____ Tolerance for frustration when things begin to go wrong
 - ____ Ability to get tasks completed on time
 - ____ Punctuality

7. No matter how glowingly you would like to depict _____, we all know that no one is perfect. In what way would you say that _____ could still grow personally or professionally?
8. On a scale of one to 10, how highly would you recommend _____ for this position?
9. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about _____ that I haven't asked that would help us in our decision about hiring him or her?

Hire Letter Sample

Date

Executive director name

Address

Ourtown, USA

First, let me say congratulations on being selected as the Ourtown Downtown Association's new executive director. I am sure you will be able to contribute significantly to our downtown team as well as the programs and projects planned as part of our downtown revitalization efforts.

The basic conditions of your employment are:

1. Beginning salary: \$2,500 per month
2. Moving expenses: \$500
3. Medical insurance provided by the Ourtown Downtown Development Association
4. Vacation: 10 working days per year
5. Performance reviews upon completion of three months, six months and first year on the job; thereafter, reviews completed annually

Your first day of work will be Monday, Jan. 5, 2026.

On behalf of the board of directors, we look forward to working with you.

Resources

Though not an inclusive list, these are some of the publications maintained in hardcopy at Commerce. You can find some of them on MSA's website, mainstreet.org.

Publications

- National Main Street Center publication
- The Main Street Board Members Handbook
- Main Street America committee handbooks
- Navigating Main Streets as Places: A People-First Transportation Toolkit from Main Street America
- “Strong Towns” by Charles L. Marohn, Jr.
- “Revitalizing Main Street: A Practitioner’s Guide to Comprehensive Commercial District Revitalization Paperback” by National Trust Main Street Center
- “The Economics of Historic Preservation: A Community Leader’s Guide” by Donovan D. Rypkema
- “What’s Your Signage (How On-Premise Signs Help Small Businesses Tap Into a Hidden Profit Center)” by Darrin Conroy, published by the New York State Small Business Development Center
- “Building Small: A Toolkit for Real Estate Entrepreneurs, Civic Leaders, and Great Communities” by Jim Hied of the Urban Land Institute
- “Main Street’s Comeback: And How It Can Come Back Again” by Mary Means and Randall Mason

Websites

- [Board Source](#)
- [Census](#)

- International Downtown Association
- International Economic Development Council
- Montana Community Foundation
- Montana Department of Commerce
- Montana Economic Developers Association
- Montana Historical Society
- Montana League of Cities and Towns
- Montana Main Street
- Montana Nonprofit Association
- Montana Small Business Development Center
- Montana.edu/extension and Local Government Center
- National Main Street Center
- National Trust for Historic Preservation
- Saveyour.town
- Secretary of Interior Standards
- Strongtowns.org

Suggested Newsletters

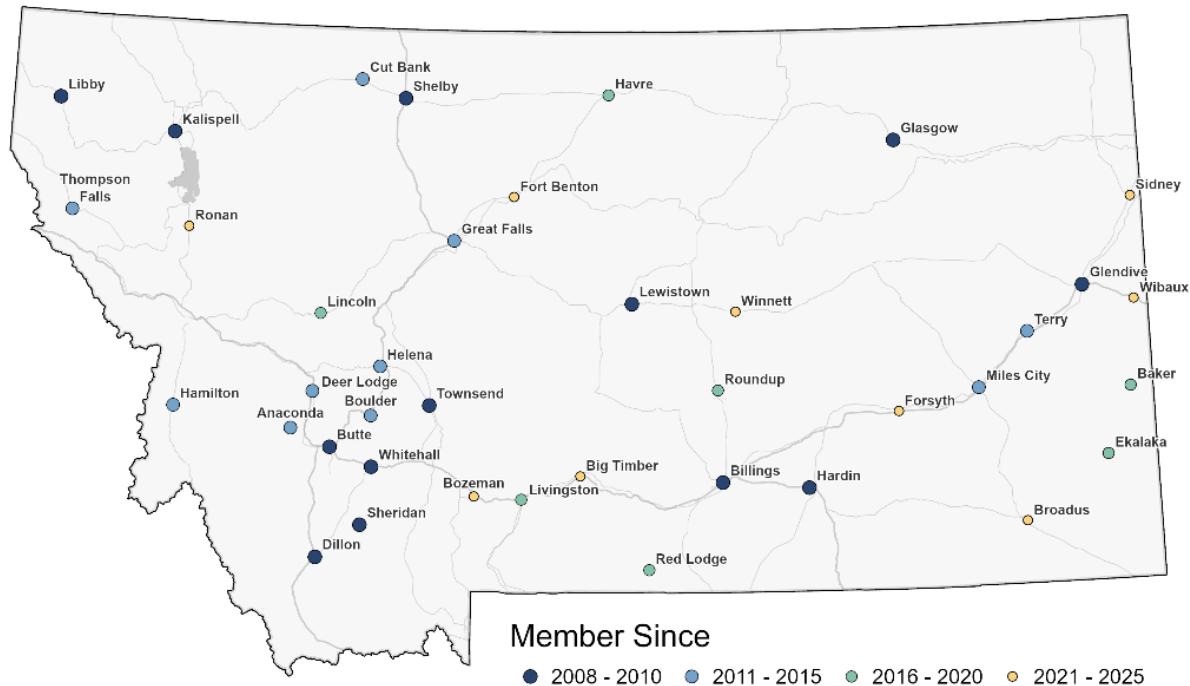
- Most communities have a weekly or monthly newsletter. Reach out to the network and get signed up so you can emulate what others are doing.
- Sign up [here](#) for Commerce's "Weekly Roundup" email.
- Sign up [here](#) for the municipal bulletin from the Montana League of Cities and Towns.



Current Montana Main Street Communities

A full list of the network can be found at commerce.mt.gov.

Montana Main Street Members



Map produced on 5/29/2025

Map Credit: Commerce.