



Main Street Community Recovery and Revitalization Program

Request:

Provide no less than \$100 million to fund a Main Street Community Recovery and Revitalization program to support the recovery of America's Main Streets through:

- **Support for Main Street Coordinating programs (\$75 million);** a federal match program will provide \$1 for every \$1 invested by state and local governments in their state-, county-, or city-wide Main Street program up to \$1.5 million per state or locality. Funding will support Main Street Coordinating programs and may be used for training and technical assistance to local entities and direct grants to local entities to support operations or professional development. The match requirement may be waived or reduced based on a state or locality's financial condition. Matching funds may also be used to launch Main Street coordinating programs in the states, tribal territories, and other U.S. territories that currently lack an established program.
- **Direct Support of Main Street Businesses (\$25 million)** to revitalize companies through direct support, facilitated by local Main Street programs, to small businesses transitioning operations to align with needs resulting from COVID-19, including online retailing, marketing, and implementing social distancing guidelines.

Issue:

Communities across the United States will face unprecedented challenges recovering from the Covid-19 pandemic. Nowhere will these struggles be more apparent than America's Main Streets, where local leaders and small business owners are likely to encounter a sluggish restart of local economies, given continuing concerns for Covid-19 transmission and lasting impacts of the overall economic decline. This slow return to "normal" will jeopardize the survival of hundreds of thousands of restaurants, local retailers and service businesses, whose financial resources have dwindled as a result of revenue losses caused by stay-at-home orders.

Background:

For the last 40 years, a robust nationwide network of state and local Main Street programs has supported the economic revitalization of America’s downtown and neighborhood commercial districts by offering a time-tested framework for community-driven revitalization. Currently, 39 states have Main Street Coordinating Programs, and more than 1,200 downtowns and districts participate in the program. Local Main Street programs work to create and sustain wealth in economically distressed areas—approximately 80% of Main Street programs are located in rural areas, and 80% of Main Street programs are located in low- to moderate-income census tracts.

Since 1980, the National Main Street Center’s Main Street America program has helped create 640,000 net new jobs and supported the launch of 144,000 net new businesses. Dollar for dollar, it is the most fiscally efficient local economic development program in the country.

The Main Street America framework offers a comprehensive pathway to guide the recovery of communities today, and as it has been developed to support communities in distress, it is particularly well suited to supporting pandemic recovery. Our “Main Street Approach” focuses on creating a supportive environment for businesses and making sure business owners—especially those with fewer than 20 employees—have the resources needed to thrive. Our approach also helps to strengthen local economies by stimulating consumer demand through the marketing of local Main Streets and through community events and activities.