

## 2025–2026 MAIN STREET ECONOMIC VITALITY PROGRAM

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Enhance your capacity to undertake collaborative and impactful economic development initiatives and provide strong ongoing support to your local small business entrepreneurs.

### Why participate?

This economic vitality, capacity-building program is delivered by Rural Development Initiatives in partnership with Idaho, Oregon, and Washington Main Street coordinating programs and aims to enhance the role of Main Street organizations in increasing local economic vitality. This program supports Main Street and community-based organizations **to think, learn, question, plan, and build** fundamental skills for **economic recovery and resiliency**. We'll work together to help you navigate the challenges and opportunities of your specific community through a series of virtual trainings. **This program offers:**

1. A foundation in economic development approaches in small and rural communities
2. Network-building strategies to form partnerships with local businesses as well as local and regional support partners
3. Connection with resources to support your team in moving to action
4. Technical assistance is available with additional funding. If you're interested, please reach out to discuss potential opportunities for funding sources.

*For questions or interest in participating, please contact:*

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### Who should participate?

Representatives of Main Street communities or those considering the Main Street approach, including the following:

- Main Street Staff Members & Volunteers
- Board Members
- Economic Vitality Committee Members
- Property Owners
- Elected Officials
- Community Organizational Partners
- Economic Vitality Champions in Your Community
- Business Owners

### What does it cost?

This program is offered at no cost to communities. However, we do ask that your Main Street organization commits time to participating in all workshops and collaborative team work necessary to implement lessons learned.

To maximize the benefit of this program to your community, we ask that:

1. At least one member (preferably two) of your Main Street team or representative from your community participate and engage in all of these interactive workshops. Note: Participants do not need to be the same community members at each workshop, and more than two members are welcome to attend.
2. The participating representatives from your community complete the interim homework assignments, which require approximately 2–8 hours per month.
3. Throughout the program, participating representatives will provide feedback via short online evaluations.

## 2025–2026 Tentative Virtual Training Workshops

Eight to ten virtual topic-based workshops are aimed at building local leadership, translating theory into practice, moving to action, and developing deeper relationships throughout your regional economic ecosystem.

### Year 1 Virtual Workshops

- **March: Economic Vitality 101:** Learn about asset and values-based approaches to economic vitality, and the importance of network building with your regional economic development ecosystem for addressing the complex challenges in our communities.
- **April: Leadership 101:** Understand best practices, roles, and skills for team development, catalytic leadership, and appreciative inquiry.
- **June: Business and Property Owner Engagement:** Gain strategies for gathering data to inform and expand economic vitality initiatives and existing business support efforts.
- **July: Key Mindsets for Inclusive Engagement:** Understand current and future demographic trends, develop inclusive programming, and increase levels of collaboration.
- **September: Place-Based Economy Building:** Learn how working with your local assets and gaps in mind could inform entrepreneurship and business retention, expansion, and attraction strategies to keep wealth closer to home.
- **November: Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Rural:** Hear about models of innovation hubs, kick-starting entrepreneurial ecosystems, importance of fostering innovation, and ecommerce and community marketplace options that serve small businesses and entrepreneurs.

### Year 2 Virtual Workshops

- **February: Energy on Main:** Hear from experts about issues related to energy efficiency and historic preservation and ways these can work together and help to benefit your community.
- **March: Resilience:** Explore the Main Street role in partnering for community resilience, and learn about a tool for customized community assessments and action plans.
- **April: Leadership in Action:** Learn to develop reasonable work plans, tips for running meetings, and strategies for effective outreach.
- **September: Funder Panel:** Meet foundation representatives and discover funding opportunities to help support downtown associations, small businesses, and entrepreneurs.

