# The Main Street Refresh

Originally launched as a program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 1980, the National Main Street Center pioneered an incremental, volunteer-driven strategy to help flagging downtowns counteract booming suburban growth. By tapping two important community resources, citizen participation and historic buildings, the Main Street Four-Point Approach® has helped historic downtowns and urban commercial districts regain their stature as centers of America’s culture, commerce, and economy while preserving their unique character. In 2016, the National Main Street Center, in partnership with its network of 45 State, City, and County-level Main Street Coordinating Programs, launched a refreshed methodology to ensure that Main Streets are equipped to deal with new market forces and economic challenges facing downtowns and commercial districts today. This approach emphasizes having one or two overarching economic (or ‘market-based’) goals/strategies that provide a unifying direction and focus to align the strategies and work of the four points: Economic Vitality, Promotion, Design and Organization. Toward that end, the Refresh process helps communities address the fundamental questions:

* What are we working toward? What is our vision for success?
* What is our greatest chance for economic success?
* How do we pull in the same direction?
* What is our primary focus that will unify all activities across our Main Street organization?

Information about the Main Street Refresh can be found on the National Main Street Center’s website at: [www.mainstreet.org](http://www.mainstreet.org).

## main street Refresh technical assistance

Oregon Main Street will be selecting up to five pilot communities to receive technical assistance to help organizations focus their downtown revitalization efforts through the refreshed model. Oregon Main Street technical assistance will focus on helping communities articulate (or build on an existing) community vision for success and develop a set of Transformation Strategies to catalyze long-term change. With a set of strategies in place, the organization will then assess the kinds of activities, resources, people-power across the Four Points (Design, Economic Vitality, Promotion, and Organization) will be necessary to bring that strategy to life. Progress will be measured by economic metrics and on qualitative outcomes.

For example, a rural community may decide that its vision is to become a regional hub for arts and culture. Oregon Main Street will help develop a series of strategies that will help achieve that vision. Local leaders may identify as key strategies: working with local artists to develop a co-op gallery, supporting the rehabilitation of buildings on Main Street to become home to arts-related uses, and implementing a series of arts-related events that draw out and engage the community.

We envision this process taking a community 3 to 4 months to develop a vision, identify Transformation Strategies, and update work plans. The goal is to have the framework that is developed have time to take root and energize local Main Streets to thrive. An outline of the service elements is below.

### Elements of the Main Street Refresh Initiative include:

##### Month 1: pre-site visit

* Webinar to introduce the Main Street Refresh to board, staff, and committee members
* Data gathering (market data, community & leadership surveys)

##### month 2: Site visit - community Vision development

* Community visioning workshop(s)
* Reconnaissance/economic and market assessment
* Preliminary identification of Transformation Strategy(ies)

##### month 3: site visit – select transformation strategies

* Review key findings and vision statement
* Select Transformation Strategy(ies) and discuss metrics for each

##### month 4: site visit – work plan development

* Work session with the local organization to develop a comprehensive work plan and key initiatives using the selected Transformation Strategy(ies)
* Follow-up memo from Oregon Main Street and consultant team summarizing the conclusions of the site visits, with particular emphasis on implementation.

##### follow-up

* Conducting periodic conference calls with local program participants to review progress and provide guidance. OMS staff will also provide additional on-site support as needed.

### Selection Process

##### Criteria

* Level of board commitment to participate fully in the process and willingness to implement recommendations
* Ability of program to engage the community in the process
* Ability to use social media to distribute community surveys
* Ability to meet the financial commitment
* Program has participated in the OMS Network for a minimum of two years

##### Priorities

* Programs participating at the Performing Main Street and Transforming Downtown levels. Communities at the Exploring Downtown level will also be considered if there is staff support.
* Programs that have attended Main Street Refresh training either at the 2017 OMS Network Meeting in Pendleton, at NMSC Main Street Now Conference, or via webinar.

# Main Street Refresh Application

Main Street Organization: 

Contact Person: 

Email: 

Phone: 

City: 

Website for applicant community/program: 

Organization Tax Status:

Nonprofit 501(c)(3)

Nonprofit 501(c)(6)

Nonprofit other (please indicate) 

Government entity

If other organizations are involved in the proposal, please list them here: 

What is the population of your commercial district? 

How do you classify your district? (Urban, Suburban, Rural, other) 

Do you have a current business inventory of your commercial district? 

## Financial Commitment

The Main Street Refresh will be conducted by Oregon Main Street staff and a consultant mutually agreed upon by OMS staff and the local community. The local community agrees to underwrite a portion of the consultant’s time to participate on the team. OMS staff will help the community develop a plan to fund the visit. By applying for this service, the community agrees to raise **$2,500**.

## Essay Questions

* Tell us about your community today, what it looked like 10 years ago, and what you envision it will look like 10 years from today. (1,000 words or less)
* Tell us about the work you have been doing to revitalize your downtown. What are your greatest achievements, and how do you measure success? (1,000 words or less)
* Why are you applying for this program? What are the barriers to revitalization that you hope to overcome by participating? (1000 words or less)
* Community involvement in the revitalization process is critical to the success of the Main Street Approach. How do you plan on incorporating your community throughout the process? (500 words or less)
* Who are the 5-7 individuals who agree to serve as the steering committee for the Main Street Refresh process?
* Who are your key organizational partners? Who are the major players in revitalization with which you intend to partner? (500 words or less)

## Supplemental Documents

Please include the following supporting documents:

* Recent organizational work plan (if applicable)
* Downtown/commercial district plan (if applicable)
* Last year’s organizational budget
* Two to three letters of support that demonstrate community commitment and support from key public/private partners

## submittal information

Due date: Applications are due February 23, 2018.

How to submit: Please email or send completed applications with supporting documents to:

Email: [sheri.stuart@oregon.gov](mailto:sheri.stuart@oregon.gov)

Mail: Sheri Stuart, Coordinator

Oregon Main Street

725 Summer Street NE, Suite C

Salem, OR 97301

Questions: Sheri Stuart: [sheri.stuart@oregon.gov](mailto:sheri.stuart@oregon.gov) or

Katie Henry: [Katie.henry@oregon.gov](mailto:Katie.henry@oregon.gov)