

MAIN STREET *Two Rivers*

What is the Main Street Program?

THE MAIN STREET PROGRAM is a comprehensive revitalization program designed to promote the historic and economic redevelopment of traditional business districts in Wisconsin. The Wisconsin Main Street Program was established in 1987 to encourage and support the revitalization of downtowns in Wisconsin communities. Each year, the Department of Commerce selects communities to join the program. These communities receive technical support and training needed to restore their Main Streets to centers of community activity and commerce.

The results in Wisconsin have been impressive. Wisconsin Main Street Programs have brought significant numbers of new businesses and jobs to their respective downtowns. Façade improvements and building rehabilitation projects have upgraded the image of Main Street. Promotional activities bring the community together in a positive way.

MAIN STREET BENEFITS

Investment

In the first five years of a local Main Street program, the state of Wisconsin invests approximately \$125,000 in on-site visits, training, and technical assistance. The Wisconsin Main Street Program, the National Main Street Center, and private consultants spend more than 80 days in each new community during the start-up phase. After the start-up phase, the state annually invests approximately \$5,000 in each Main Street community to provide quarterly volunteer and director training sessions, design assistance, business consultations, and town-specific technical assistance. Other benefits are an annual awards ceremony, cooperative marketing opportunities, and an extensive library of slides, videos, and printed materials. In addition, scholarships are available for local Main Street program directors to attend the National Town Meeting on Main Street.

Results

Together, Wisconsin Main Street communities have impacted the heart and soul of our communities—the downtowns. A significant number of new jobs have been created; many new businesses have been attracted; and millions of dollars have been privately invested in the communities.

Successful applicants are committed to the following key principles:

- Establishment of a volunteer board of directors
- Procurement of stable, local funding
- Development of public/private partnerships
- Commitment to hire a program manager
- Commitment to the four-point approach
- Establishment of a well-defined commercial district
- Commitment to historic preservation
- Willingness to work and succeed over time