

NORTH Dakota Be Legendary.

2024 MAIN STREET INITIATIVE VIBRANCY GRANT PROGRAM

Purpose: The Main Street Initiative (MSI) Vibrancy Grant Program supports local efforts to increase community vibrancy by providing seed funding for a small project that will build momentum and inspire additional projects. Community vibrancy improves quality of life, helps attract and retain workforce, and enhances community pride.

Mission: The Department of Commerce leads the efforts to attract, retain and expand wealth and improve the quality of life for the people of North Dakota. The Main Street Initiative, housed in the Department of Commerce, supports local efforts to develop a healthy, vibrant community with smart, efficient infrastructure that will attract and retain a 21st Century Workforce.

Program Objective: Any community in North Dakota could benefit from adding a spark of activity and energy to a part of your community. Whether your community wants to add public art, activate underutilized space, or promote walking and biking, this program may interest you. By starting small and supporting an initial community vibrancy project, this grant program can inspire others in your community to engage and contribute to community vibrancy, improving quality of life for visitors and residents.

What Type of Projects are Eligible? The Main Street Vibrancy Grant Program will support the following projects:

1. Public Event

- The event funded with this grant can be ongoing (i.e. annual) or a one-time event.
- If used for an existing event (i.e. annual street fair) applicant must explain how this event will be different from previous events.

2. Public Art or Cultural Celebration

- Example: art in the park event, creation/updating public mural, musical performance, local theater production.

3. Activating Underutilized Space

- Example: turning a vacant space into a small park (parklet), adding plants or trees, adding benches or upgrading lighting.

4. Community Gathering Space

- Having a space where community members can gather for events and conversations, especially if centered around food, can be a vital element of vibrancy.
- Private businesses are not eligible to receive funding. The recipient of funds must be a not-for-profit or public entity or facility.
 - Example: upgrade or expansion to existing community hall or community/not-for-profit cafe, restaurant, or grocery store.

5. Promoting Active Transportation

- Example: painting temporary bike lanes, adding decorative cross walks, adding lighting to walking spaces, making a walking path interactive or interpretive.

6. Mitigating the Impact of Vacant or Deteriorated Infrastructure in a Public Area

- Many communities have at least one building or lot that is in disrepair. While it can be expensive to tear down or renovate buildings, there may be creative things your community can do to mitigate the potential negative impacts.
- Private businesses are not eligible to receive funding. The recipient of funds must be a not-for-profit or public entity or facility.
 - Example: paint the windows of an empty building, fix up the façade of a vacant storefront.

7. Other

- Does your community have a great idea for a small-scale vibrancy project that isn't included on the list above? Give it a shot! Explain your project and how it will bring vibrancy to your town.

How much funding is available? Main Street Vibrancy Grant funds are from the North Dakota Department of Commerce Momentum Funds. A total of \$30,000 is available over the 2023-2025 biennium, (\$15,000 available each year).

There will be up to two funding cycles per year. *The maximum grant award is \$1500 per community per biennium.*

Matching Requirements: This grant requires a community match, and all grant payments are made on a reimbursement basis. Matching dollars cannot be from other State of North Dakota funds. Match requirements vary by community.

Non-Main Street Community: a 1:1 match is required (100% of the requested amount must be matched); 100% of the match must be financial.

Example: \$3000 total project = \$1500 Vibrancy Grant + \$1500 community cash match

Main Street Community: 100% of the requested amount must be matched by the community; 50% of the match can be in-kind.

Example: \$3000 total project = \$1500 Vibrancy Grant + \$750 community cash match + \$750 local community in-kind allowance

Main Street Champion Community: 100% of the requested amount must be matched by the community; 75% of the match can be in-kind.

Example: \$3000 total project = \$1500 Vibrancy Grant + \$375 community cash match + \$1,125 community in-kind allowance

Match funds are required to be recorded and submitted for approval at the time of reimbursement. Match funds can be allocated from any private or public source and in-kind contributions will be considered. Pledges for future donations will not be considered part of a cash match.

Eligibility: Not-for-profit community organizations are eligible to apply as are local political entities. Non-governmental entities must be registered with the North Dakota Secretary of State's office to be eligible to receive funding.

Activities in the outlined budget must not have commenced prior to grant approval or submission of application for grant.

2024 Timeline: Grants may be awarded in multiple rounds. The timeline is as follows:

Round 1

- **OPEN** – January 22, 2024
- **CLOSE** – March 1, 2024
- **AWARD** announcement March 19, 2024

Proposed projects must be completed by **June 30, 2025**. A project summary report, with photos of completed work, must be submitted to the Department of Commerce within two months of the completion of the project. This is a reimbursement grant. Funds will not be reimbursed until a completed project summary report is submitted to Department of Commerce.

The Main Street Initiative (MSI) community advantage

	Points on App.	Maximum Award	Minimum Award	Match Required	Match Details
Non-Main Street Community		\$1,500	\$500	1:1	100% cash
MSI Community	+2 bonus	\$1,500	\$500	1:1	50% in-kind
MSI Champion	+5 bonus	\$1,500	\$500	1:1	75% in-kind

Granting Agency Involvement: The Department of Commerce maintains the right to be involved in the activities awarded as a result of the grant.

1. **Collateral Material:** The Department of Commerce reserves the right for editorial comment on all aspects of the materials. At minimum, the following statement needs to be included in collateral materials produced with Vibrancy Grant funds: *"Produced in partnership with the North Dakota Department of Commerce."* We also request placement of the Commerce logo on materials or as a link on web sites.
2. **Partner Advertising:** The Department of Commerce reserves the right for editorial comment on all aspects of advertising materials.
3. **Presentations/Poster Boards** The award recipient may be asked to help share their story at an event during the year. This would require gathering photos and if possible, being at the event in person to answer questions or provide a presentation.

What makes for a strong application? Applications that indicate commitment and participation from city leadership as well as other local partners (school board, park board, JDA) will be scored more favorably. The applicants financial need will be considered during the scoring process (i.e. could they complete the project without grant funding from the Department of Commerce?). The incorporation of Main Street Initiative principles into the final project will make for a stronger application. The creativity of a proposed project will add to its strength (i.e. have other North Dakota communities completed a similar project or is this one new and unique?).

Application Questions: Please briefly address the following in a separate, typewritten document. **(175 points total)**

I. About the Project and Your Community (50 points)

- a. Applicant name and contact information
- b. Name of community and/or organization
- c. Briefly provide background on your organization and/or community.
- d. Briefly describe the activity to be supported by this grant.
- e. Does this project align with your community's overall vision/goals for building local vibrancy? How?
- f. How could this project bring value to the community? How will you measure the success of this project?

II. Community Involvement (20 points)

- a. What community organizations will be involved in the planning and/or execution of this project?
- b. Were youth (*21 and under*) involved in the planning of this project? Will they be involved in the execution? Did they play a leadership role?

III. Project Budget and Timeline (20 points)

- a. Please include a detailed project budget, making sure to show all expenses and expected revenue (including grant funds, matching funds, and in-kind contributions).
- b. Does your community have the financial resources to complete this project without grant funding from the Department of Commerce?
- c. If part of the provided match is in-kind, please describe what this is and associated value or unit cost.
- d. Please include a detailed project timeline indicating when grant funds will be used.

IV. Project Sustainability (20 points)

- a. If funded, will this project be sustained (managed or maintained) after the initial grant funding is spent? If so, how?
- b. Do you envision this activity will inspire other projects in your community? If so, please explain.

V. Main Street Initiative (25 points)

- a. Is your community engaged in the Main Street Initiative?
 - i. No
 - ii. Yes – we are a Main Street Community (we have signed up, had a visit from the state, and have agreed to share updates)

- iii. Yes – we are a Main Street Champion Community (we have done all the above plus we have issued a formal Main Street Proclamation and submitted our Main Street Action Plan)
- b. Please describe how, if awarded, your community project will address the following elements:
 - i. Smart, efficient infrastructure development
 - ii. Healthy, vibrant community
 - iii. 21st Century workforce

VI. Winter Placemaking (25 points available)

- a. How does your project contribute to vibrancy in your community during the winter season?

Supplemental Materials (15 points available):

1. Main Street Initiative Engagement

- a. If your community is a Main Street Champion Community, along with your completed application please submit the following:
 - i. Signed Main Street Community Proclamation issued from the City Council/Commission
 - ii. Completed Main Street Action Plan

2. Letters of Support from Partner Organizations

- a. Please include up to three letters of support from other organizations in your community, especially if you may partner with them to complete this project.

Application Deadline: Please ensure that you address each of the questions above in your application *on a separate document*. All application materials must be received at the Department of Commerce office no later than **5:00 pm CT on March 1, 2024**. Applications received after the deadline will not be considered by the review committee.

For more information:

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