



ORGANIZATION

Involves Creating a Strong Foundation For a Sustainable Revitalization Effort, Including Cultivating Partnerships, Community Involvement, and Resources for the District

Downtown Associate Community Program Requirements

Downtown Associate Community Program Information and Requirements:

The Downtown Associate Community program was created under the NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center of the Rural Economic Development Division, NC Department of Commerce, to better assist communities in developing two areas of work prior to designation as a NC Main Street community. The DAC program is designed to:

- ⇒ Build a sustainable downtown organization that will support Main Street initiatives.
- ⇒ Complete a full asset-based strategic planning process to help the community fully understand its economic development strategies and the actions for implementation.
- ⇒ Create an economic positioning/vision statement with up to four economic development strategies
- ⇒ Create a plan of work focused on implementation of the economic development strategies that will transform downtown.

The Downtown Associate Community (DAC) is a **two year process**. Only communities that **fully participate** in the DAC program and **meet the outlined benchmarks within two years** will be eligible to move up to designated Main Street status. Our NC Main Street (NCMS) staff will work directly with the local DAC Coordinator and a core team of volunteers to help each community create a program that will lead to designation. The Director of the NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center reserves the right to deny designation at the end of the two-year process or to withdraw services of the NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center to the community if the DAC community is not completing the outlined work or demonstrating interest in completion of outlined work. Likewise, the local DAC program may at any time during the two-year process elect to terminate this relationship with the NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center.

The next three pages outline the expectations and requirements of the Downtown associate Community program. In addition there is a **Basic Best Practices Guide** that we strongly encourage each committee to follow. The more a community puts into place these best practices the more likely a community will succeed. Moving up to NC Main Street status ties your community to the National Main Street/Main Street America® program as North Carolina is the coordinating program for this prestigious program that began in 1979.

“Main Street is a business, and the more you treat the Downtown Associate Community program and subsequently the Main Street program as a business through the establishment of basic best practices, the more successful your downtown will be because you will be prepared for opportunities when they arise.”

Liz Parham, Director, NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center

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The following are the requirements that each community is expected to complete before becoming a designated NC Main Street community. These expectations must be completed within two years of the time a town is designated a Downtown Associate Community Program.

- ♦ **Budget:** the town must budget **annually a minimum of \$5000** upon acceptance into the DAC program. This is to cover the travel of NCMS staff to your community as well as your coordinator's training and attendance at the annual NC Main Street conference and Director's meeting. There should also be some funding for smaller implementation projects during this two year time frame as well.
- ♦ **A Downtown Associate Community (DAC) Coordinator will be in place** at the time of acceptance to the DAC program.
- ♦ A **coordinator must be hired** before becoming a designated NCMS community. Communities with a population 5,000 to 9,999 may hire a full-time equivalent (20 hours Main Street and 20 hours in another department). If the community is 10,000+ in population you are required to hire a full-time 40 hours a week Main Street Director. Communities with 50,000 or more are not accepted into the DAC program, but if your populations surpasses 50,000 after being accepted, your city remains in the program.
- ♦ **Join the National Main Street Center as soon as notified of acceptance** in the DAC program, <http://www.mainstreet.org/getinvolved/membership>
- ♦ **Sign up and attend virtual NCMS orientation** for new directors/coordinators within the **first two months**.
- ♦ **Provide the DAC Coordinator's contact's email for NCMS Listserv:** ONLY the primary contact for your program will be added and must be changed with each new DAC program coordinator. Coordinator will learn more about the NCMS Listserv during orientation.
- ♦ **Attend the mandatory four Main Street Basic Trainings within the first 18 months of DAC participation and will not move up if trainings are not completed.** If there is a change in Coordinator during the two-year DAC program period, the **new Coordinator is required to attend all four trainings**. Any time there is a change with the coordinator position the new coordinator must attend the basic trainings. These trainings cover the Main Street Four-Point Approach™ to revitalization's Best Practices in-depth.
 - ◇ Organization—held annually in August the day before the Directors Meeting
 - ◇ Design—held in the fall
 - ◇ Promotion— held in the winter
 - ◇ Economic Vitality—held in the spring
- ♦ **Directors Meeting:** Is mandatory for the **Coordinator**. Attendance is **required for the entire 2.5 days**. This training, held once a year in August typically the first full week beginning on a Wednesday, is invaluable to the coordinator. Please make sure to block this time on the coordinator's calendar prior to accepting the position and does not schedule vacation, or other training during this time. **Non-attendance will negate** the community's standing in the DAC program.
- ♦ **Regional Meetings:** Held the first full week of May and November is mandatory for new DAC Coordinators. If the coordinator is unable to attend due to illness or an emergency, a substitute may attend. We also encourage one of the Core Team members to attend as well. These are held virtually until further notice.
- ♦ **NC Main Street Conference:** The **DAC Coordinator is required to attend** the annual NC Main Street Conference. It is recommended that at least one community volunteer also attend the conference. Once moved up to designated status it is required that a board member or volunteer attend the conference.

*Note: all of the trainings and conference information may be found at: <https://ncmainstreetandplanning.com> and

Non-attendance will negate the community's standing in the DAC program.

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- ◇ **DAC Meeting Expectations:** NC Main Street Staff to coordinate a virtual meeting schedule that suits both parties. In order to move communities to Main Street designation within the two year time frame **communities will meet with NCMS Staff on a monthly basis for the first six-eight months.**
- ◆ **Virtual Meetings:** 1.25 hours per month unless otherwise specified or agreed that a longer time frame is needed.
 - ◆ **Public presentation:** 15-20 minutes dedicated to presenting information on one of the four-points to the general public. Following that presentation the public can either stay on line or they may elect to leave the meeting.
 - ◆ **Following the public presentation:** 30-40 minutes of strategic planning with the core team.
 - ◆ **Time with coordinator:** One-on-one with the coordinator and the NCMS staff to review progress on information gathering and any other information that needs to be shared. 15-20 minutes.
- ◆ **Downtown Associate Community (DAC) Kick-Off** will be a public 1.5 hour meeting to inform the public of the DAC program and benefits of the Main Street program.
- ◆ **Prior to Kick-Off:** the NCMS team will meet with the coordinator and core team as well as tour the downtown district and surrounding neighborhoods.
- ◆ **Vision Forum:** NCMS Staff will come in person to facilitate this two hour public meeting after the strategic planning with the Core Team/Steering Committee has been completed.
- ◆ **DAC Program Coordinator is responsible for** publicizing, promoting, and inviting the public to the presentation portion of the meeting.
- ◆ **DAC Program Coordinator will work with and respond to NCMS Staff** member(s) to create an agenda for the DAC meeting. The NCMS staff takes the lead on creating an agenda for all DAC meeting within the first two years, but expects the DAC Coordinator to review, respond, make copies, and publicize the meetings.
- ◆ **When meeting in person:** DAC Coordinator is responsible for establishing a regular meeting place large enough for the public meetings, and space for the Core Team Members following the public meeting.
- ◆ **DAC Coordinator may be responsible for providing as needed** materials for meetings: flip charts, markers, and easels for meetings and **must provide a screen or other appropriate place** to show PowerPoint presentations. NCMS Staff will provide the projector.
- ◆ **All lodging for NCMS Staff will be pre-arranged and paid for one week prior** to NCMS Staff traveling to the town. **Business class lodging is required;** however, in cases where lodging may be a challenge, a Bed and Breakfast or an Inn may be considered, but please confirm with NCMS Staff before booking. **Separate rooms for each NCMS staff is required.** Lodging confirmation should be sent to NCMS Staff one week prior to the meeting. **We will email the travel guidelines two weeks before the initial in person visit.**
- ◆ **Mileage and Meals for NCMS Staff travel:** Towns will be invoiced for NCMS Staff mileage and meals within one week after traveling to your community. Communities are charged at the current state rate for mileage and meals. Payment to the NC Department of Commerce is **due within 30 days from receipt of invoice.**

*When meeting in person we ask that all CDC/Health guidelines be followed to insure the safety of the public.

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Required Materials/Documentation List:

- ♦ **An annual budget** one **due with application**, one due **by July after the first full year** of the program demonstrating the city's commitment to fund the program at a sustainable level
- ♦ **Proof of National Main Street membership** sent to NCMS Staff within **first month**. Go to this website to join: <http://www.mainstreet.org/getinvolved/membership>
- ♦ **Past studies of the downtown district such as:** Market studies, strategic plans and development plans **within first two months preferably sent with the DAC application.**
- ♦ **National Register or Study List documentation** within **first two months preferably sent with the DAC application.**
- ♦ **If a non-profit will be managing the DAC program** please provide a copy of the following within the **first two months**.
 - ◇ Articles of Incorporation for the organization
 - ◇ Bylaws for the downtown organization
 - ◇ Policy and Procedures for the organization
 - ◇ Tax exemption status for the organization
- ♦ **Final map of the downtown district** which include if applicable clear identification of National Register or Local Historic District, Municipal Service District or Downtown Overlay District and include key downtown anchors and any physical natural boundaries to the downtown (highways, railways, rivers, etc.) within **first three months**. *A map is sent with the application, but there are times the boundary isn't finalized at the time of the application.
- ♦ **Submit: Walk Score for Downtown—** <https://walkscore.com> within **first three months**.
- ♦ **Submit: AARP Livability Index-**<https://livabilityindex.aarp.org> within **first three months**.
- ♦ **Complete a property, building and parking inventory** within the **first six months** of selection in the DAC program. NCMS staff will provide a template for adding the information.
- ♦ **Core Team/Steering Committee** names should be finalized and submitted to the NCMS Staff within **the first six months** of DAC selection.
- ♦ **Complete the Economic Development Work Plan** within the **first 12 months** of DAC selection. *The NCMS staff will guide this process.
- ♦ **Complete the Consumer Survey** within the **first 12 months**. Survey is provided by NCMS Staff. The exception to this is if one has been done within two years of acceptance into the DAC program.
- ♦ **Vision forum** held within the first 18 months of being accepted into the DAC program.
- ♦ **Complete the Plan of Work following the Forum:** this may be done either in person or virtually depending on best use of time. Will require the full Core Team/Steering Committee. In person it typically takes 3-4 hours. Virtually it is broken into three to four 1.25 hours per meeting. NCMS Staff will facilitate this process, but DAC Coordinator is responsible for finalizing and submitting an approved final plan of work to the NCMS Staff. **Complete within the first 20 months** of DAC designation.