



ILLINOIS
MAIN STREET

Illinois Main Street Local Program Self-Assessment Tool

What is the Self-Assessment Tool?

Welcome to the Illinois Main Street Self-Assessment Tool. This tool is intended to help local organizations review their progress and plan for the future. The tool incorporates evaluation techniques currently in use by a variety of non-profit organizations. As local organizations work through the indicators, they will cover the National Main Street Ten Standards of Performance required for accreditation. These are listed below.

National Main Street Program Ten Standards of Performance

1. Broad-based community support
2. Vision and mission statements
3. Comprehensive work plan
4. Historic preservation ethic
5. Active board and committees
6. Adequate operating budget
7. Paid professional staff
8. Program of ongoing training
9. Reporting of key statistics
10. Main Street Network membership

While all Main Street organizations are expected to comply with these standards, each organization is composed of unique individuals and operates within a unique community. Therefore it is expected that organizations will differ in the extent to which they meet each of the standards. These standards are levels that all local Main Street organizations should strive to attain. However, there is room to work toward them in different ways.

Use of the IMS Self-Assessment Tool will not result in a pass or fail grade. It is designed for internal use. The IMS State Coordinating Office can review the completed self-assessment in order to develop statewide training programs and provide targeted assistance to individual local organizations. Completion of the self-assessment is a condition of the local organization's letter of agreement.

How Does It Work?

The self-assessment tool describes each of the Ten Standards in more detail. This is followed by a series of indicators to help you determine the extent to which your organization meets this standard. Use the table below each list of indicators to indicate your progress, as follows:

Yes-we have accomplished this indicator

Partly-we have made progress in accomplishing this indicator but have not completed it

No-we do not meet this indicator and have not made significant progress

Self-Assessment Standards

Standard 1. Has broad-based community support for the commercial district revitalization process, with strong support from both the public and private sectors.

At its best, a local Main Street program represents and involves organizations, agencies, businesses, and individuals from throughout the community — not just those who own property or businesses in the commercial district or who have a direct economic tie to it, but all members of the community who are interested in the district's overall health. By actively involving a broad range of interests and perspectives from the public and private sectors in the revitalization process, the Main Street program leverages a community's collective skills and resources to maximum advantage.

The local organization should work to develop a common goal of revitalizing and maintaining the downtown as an economic, social and historical center in the community. The support of government officials, residents, business and property owners, and other organizations is key to attracting the funding and volunteers necessary to achieve program success.

Indicators

1. Board members include city government officials and employees, downtown business owners, downtown property owners, residents, other relevant local organizations such as the chamber, historic preservation organization, school district, park district, churches or others. Efforts should be made to have the board reflect the age, income, racial and ethnic mix of the community.
2. Organization recruited 10 new volunteers in the past year.
3. Organization actively works to recruit new members and retain existing members.
4. Organization regularly briefs city council members on downtown activities and organization projects.
5. Organization maintains an active public relations campaign that includes press releases, an updated website, social media accounts such as Facebook and Twitter.
6. The organization recognizes and thanks donors and volunteers in at least two ways each year.
7. The organization collaborates with other local organizations regularly.
8. Local government has a philosophical commitment to downtown revitalization.
9. Organization has a current list of media contacts.
10. Organization has and distributes informative, current, well-designed marketing materials.

Indicators	Yes	Partly	No
1. Broad representation on the board			
2. New volunteers			
3. New and retained members			
4. City council informed			
5. Active public relations			
6. Donor and volunteer recognition			
7. Collaboration with other organizations			
8. Local government committed to downtown			
9. Current list of media contacts			
10. Organization has informative, well-designed marketing materials			

Standard 2. Has developed vision and mission statements relevant to community conditions and to the local Main Street program's organizational stage of development.

A *mission statement* communicates the Main Street organization's sense of purpose and overall direction. A *vision statement* communicates the organization's long-term hopes and intentions for the commercial district. It is the desired outcome of the mission statement. Both should be developed with broad participation by the board, committees, volunteers, and community input. *At a minimum*, the Main Street organization should have a mission statement in place and review it annually (and update, if appropriate). If the organization does not have a vision statement at the beginning of the revitalization process, it should have plans to develop one. It is important that the mission of the Main Street organization is different from those of other local organizations. This distinction must be clear and communicated to other organizations, city government and the public.

Indicators

1. Organization has a current mission statement.
2. Organization has a current vision statement.
3. The mission and vision statement have been reviewed within the past year.
4. All board members are familiar with the mission and vision statements.
5. Organization promotes the mission and/or vision statement to the public.
6. The organization's mission does not duplicate those of other organizations.

Indicators	Yes	Partly	No
1. Mission statement			
2. Vision statement			
3. Both statements reviewed by board			
4. Board members familiar with statements			
5. Board promotes the mission and vision to the public			
6. Mission is different from those of other local organizations			

Standard 3. Has a comprehensive Main Street work plan.

A comprehensive annual work plan provides a detailed blueprint for Main Street program activities; reinforces the program's accountability both within the organization and also in the broader community; and provides measurable objectives by which the program can track its progress. Downtowns change regularly along with the economy, business successes or closings, leadership changes, downtown improvements or deterioration, and other factors. The organization must consider the changing environment and adjust its work plan accordingly to remain relevant. Strengths and weaknesses of the organization should be addressed and incorporated into the plan.

Indicators

1. The work plan should include projects in each of the four points-organization (membership and development), promotions, design and economic restructuring. Projects to be carried out by other organizations that support one or more of the four points should be indicated.
2. Lead responsibility for each project is identified. Not all projects must be led by Main Street. Collaborative projects are encouraged.
3. The work plan should contain measureable objectives and identify how success will be determined.
4. The work plan should distribute activities among a wide range of volunteers, board members and other organizations.
5. There has been significant progress in completing the prior year's work plan.
6. The work plan reflects changes occurring or anticipated in the downtown environment.
7. The work plan reflects the organization's strengths and weaknesses, addressing weaknesses where possible.

Indicators	Yes	Partly	No
1. All four Main Street points addressed in work plan			
2. Leaders designated for each project			
3. Work plan has measures for success			
4. Work is widely distributed			
5. Significant progress in completing prior plan			
6. Work plan reflects changes in environment			
7. Strengths and weaknesses of the organization are considered			

Standard 4. Possesses an historic preservation ethic.

Historic preservation is central to the Main Street program's purpose and is what makes historic and traditional commercial districts authentic places. Historic preservation involves saving, rehabilitating, and finding new uses for existing buildings, as well as intensifying the uses of the existing buildings, through building improvement projects and policy and regulatory changes that make it easier to develop property within the commercial district.

A historic preservation ethic involves more than carrying out historic preservation activities. It includes the process of adopting planning and land use policies and regulations that encourage full use of existing commercial centers before new development takes place.

Indicators

1. Representatives of the organization have reviewed local policies and regulations and understand how they relate to historic preservation.
2. Funding is in place to assist with downtown building improvements.
3. Organization is capable of providing design and building maintenance expertise or referring building owners to assistance.
4. Organization provided a preservation education opportunity for the local community during the past year.

Indicators	Yes	Partly	No
1. Local policies reviewed			
2. Downtown improvement funding			
3. Design and maintenance assistance			
4. Preservation education			

Standard 5. Has an active board of directors and committees.

Main Street revitalization by nature is a community-driven process. Therefore, community members must take an active role in leading and implementing positive change. While the executive director is responsible for facilitating the work of volunteers, he/she is not tasked with single-handedly revitalizing the commercial district. The direct involvement of an active board of directors and committees are critical to long term success. Board member turnover should result in both consistency and new perspectives. A plan for orderly turnover on the board should be in place. All board members are informed of conflict of interest policies and signed statements are obtained from each member annually.

If a Main Street organization is housed within another entity (e.g., a community development corporation, chamber or city government), it is still important to have a separate board of directors and committee structure.

Indicators

1. Board is active in fundraising for the organization.
2. Organization achieved 100% board giving in the past year.
3. Board met regularly and had a quorum for at least 80% of meetings.
4. Each board member serves as either an officer or committee member.
5. Organization has by-laws, board member commitment document, board member job description and formal board member orientation.
6. All board members participate in Board Training within the first year of serving on the board.
7. There is a committee structure or a Illinois Main Street approved alternative to address the four points.
8. Board meetings have formal agendas and minutes.
9. Board members attend organization events.
10. Board turnover results in consistency and new perspectives.
11. Board turnover occurs in an orderly manner.
12. Board members sign conflict of interest statements.

Indicators	Yes	Partly	No
1. Board fundraising			
2. Board giving			
3. Regular board meetings			
4. Board members are officers or committee members			
5. Board documents			
6. Board training			
7. Committee structure or alternative			
8. Meeting agendas and minutes			
9. Board members attend events			
10. Board turnover results in both consistency and new perspectives			
11. Board turnover occurs in an orderly manner			
12. Board members sign conflict of interest statements annually			

Standard 6. Has an adequate operating budget.

A sustainable Main Street program has financial resources to carry out its annual and evolving program of work. The size of a program's budget will change as the program matures (in its early years, it may need less money than in its growth years). A financial plan should be in place and reviewed regularly for progress. Fundraising should not consume so much of the board and executive director’s time that the mission of the organization is compromised.

Indicators

1. Board has an active treasurer who makes monthly reports to the board.
2. Board has adequate safeguards in place to ensure that all funds are properly accounted for.
3. Organization has a reserve fund of at least three months operating expenses.
4. If the Main Street program is housed within another organization, the funds for the program are distinct and separate from those of the host organization.
5. The organization actively pursues a sustainable source of funding if not currently in place.
6. The city government is a financial supporter of the organization.
7. Funding is drawn from at least four different sources such as the city government, individual donations, downtown business and property owners, special districts, sponsorships, corporate donations, earned income and grants.
8. Organization has a funding plan.
9. Funding plan is reviewed regularly and goals met.

Indicators	Yes	Partly	No
1. Active treasurer			
2. Fund safeguards			
3. Reserve fund			
4. Dedicated budget if within another organization			
5. Sustainable funding			
6. City financial support			
7. Funding from multiple sources			
8. Funding plan			
9. Funding goals achieved for the past year			

Standard 7. Has a paid, professional executive director.

Coordinating a Main Street program requires a trained, professional staff person. Ideally, the Main Street executive director's position is full time (usually 35+ hours per week). In small towns without the resources to hire a full-time executive director, a part-time director may be acceptable (typically 20+ hours per week). The executive director should be fairly compensated and provided with opportunities for personal growth. A plan should be in place for orderly turnover of the executive director so that the organization does not falter.

Indicators

1. The Main Street executive director is paid a salary consistent with those of other community development and Main Street professionals within the city, state, or region in which the program operates.
2. The executive director is a full-time position. In some cases for small towns, a part-time director may be acceptable. In no case should the executive director be paid for less than 20 hours per week. Communities with part-time directors should have a plan in place to increase the hours paid to those of a full-time position.
3. The executive director attended new director training within 6 months of starting the position.
4. The executive director has a written job description which has been reviewed within the past year.
5. The executive director underwent an employee evaluation within the past year.
6. The executive director and board have agreed upon policies for staff management.
7. A plan is in place for orderly turnover of the executive director.

Indicators	Yes	Partly	No
1. Executive director salary is consistent with comparable positions			
2. Full-time executive director			
3. Executive director training			
4. Executive director job description			
5. Executive director evaluation			
6. Staff management policies			
7. Plan in place for executive director turnover			

Standard 8. Conducts a program of ongoing training for staff and volunteers.

As the Main Street program evolves, staff and volunteers will need to sharpen their skills to meet new challenges. As the program matures, new skills will need to be cultivated to tackle more complex projects. Program staff and volunteers should stay current on issues that affect traditional commercial districts and on new revitalization techniques and models. New staff and volunteers will require training to become familiar with their responsibilities.

Indicators

1. All board members have participated in basic training.
2. The executive director has completed ten units of continuing education during the past year, as outlined in the letter of agreement.
3. The organization is represented at the annual state or regional Main Street conference.
4. The executive director attends the National Main Street Conference at least once every two years.
5. The organization provides training for volunteers as necessary.

Indicators	Yes	Partly	No
1. Board training			
2. Executive director training			
3. Attend state conference			
4. Attend National Main Street Conference			
5. Volunteer training			

Standard 9. Reports key statistics.

Tracking statistics — reinvestment, job and business creation, and so on — provide tangible measures of the local Main Street program's progress and are crucial to garnering financial and programmatic support for the revitalization effort. Statistics must be collected on a regular,

ongoing basis. Events and projects should support the organization’s mission whether they are designed to generate exposure for the downtown, educate the public, increase downtown retail sales, or another objective. A means to measure the success of events and projects should be in place. Direct results (attendance, dollars spent, etc.) and indirect results (knowledge of the downtown, positive public relations, etc.) should be considered.

Indicators

1. Organization has filed statistics reports in accordance with IMS requirements.
2. Organization has prepared and made available to the public an annual report that includes a summary of the required statistics for the past year.
3. Organization evaluates events and projects for importance in achieving the mission and impact on downtown. Quantitative and qualitative measures are used.

Indicators	Yes	Partly	No
1. Statistics filed regularly			
2. Annual report			
3. Measurement of results			

Standard 10. Current member of the National Trust National Main Street Network.

Participation in the National Trust Main Street Network membership program connects local programs to their counterparts throughout the nation, providing them with valuable information resources and creating a sense of community.

Indicators

1. Organization has a current membership in the National Trust Main Street Network.

Indicators	Yes	Partly	No
1. National Trust Main Street Network membership			