***Taking Care of Main Street*: Operating Support Grant Program Guidelines**

**About the Program**

Taking Care of Main Street provides organizational support for the activities and administrative functions associated with achieving the new accreditation standards for State and Nationally Accredited Indiana Main Street programs and will provide up to $150,000 in total awards. With the new accreditation standards, communities will be evaluated on more rigorous standards that may require some financial capacity. This program is administered by the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA) which works with Indiana communities to build relevant and economically thriving places where people want to live, work and grow. OCRA works with local, state and national partners, including Main Street America, to provide resources and technical assistance to aid communities in shaping and achieving their vision for community and economic development.

**Objectives**

To support Indiana Main Street organizations that provide quality activities to the public following the Main Street Approach™, with special attention to organizations and communities who are currently Indiana Accredited or Nationally Accredited and need financial assistance for program capacity building in order to stay at their current level or move to the Nationally Accredited level. By providing this financial assistance, Main Street organizations will be able to provide direct assistance to the economic development growth in their community, including business retention and recruitment, organizational growth, transformation strategy implementation and more. Awarded communities will be required to send back measurable tracked statistics.

**Award Amount:** $5,000- $25,000 with a 50/50 match requirement (match must be cash, not in-kind)

**Timeline**

* Applications open: **February 20, 2023** and will be on a competitive basis with other completed applications in alignment with eligible requirements and expectations.
* Application close: **March 23, 2023**, at 12 p.m. ET
* Expected Announcement: **April 13, 2023**

**Applicant Eligibility Requirements**

Applicant must meet all the following eligibility requirements:

1. Be a current designated Indiana Main Street program at the National Main Street level or the Indiana Accredited level whose primary purpose is executing the Main Street Approach™ as demonstrated by:
	1. Significant evidence it is viewed as a functioning Main Street organization by its community;
	2. The majority of its activities occur with regular, scheduled frequency throughout the year;
	3. Facility space, if applicable, is utilized predominantly as a Main Street office;
	4. A proportionate amount of operating budget is allocated to direct Main Street activities; and
	5. Provide significant, verifiable Main Street-focused programming and activities.
2. Be a private, nonprofit tax-exempt agency with 501(c) status from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).
3. Must be physically located in Indiana, have an address in the region to which the organization is applying, with its activities taking place in the designated Main Street district.
4. Must have an operating history as an Indiana Main Street organization for at least one year before applying to the Taking Care of Main Street: Operating Support Grant Program.
5. Must have a governing body that is representative of the organization’s service demographics.
6. Must annually implement program planning and evaluation processes with input from the community to be served.
7. And be a registered bidder in the State of Indiana (see below).

**Eligible Expenses**

Funds awarded by OCRA may be used to support the following:

* New staff salaries;
* Current staff salaries that are being given more tasks and/or hours worked;
* Administrative fees;
	+ Accounting/Auditing fees
	+ New technology
		- Computers
		- Phones
		- Printers
		- Monitors
	+ New non-profit accounting software
* Staff development and training;
	+ Continuing education
* Marketing and communication costs;
* Business training;
* Volunteer recruitment and retention; and
* Organizational consultant fees.
	+ Business attraction and recruitment
	+ Volunteer recruitment planning
	+ Strategic planning
	+ Capital campaign
	+ Organizational sustainability
	+ Others as determined by Indiana Main Street

**Ineligible Expenses**

Funds awarded by OCRA may not be used to support any of the following:

* Cash reserves, deficit reduction; or deficit elimination;
* Events and activities excluding volunteer recruitment and retention appreciation;
	+ Excludes food and beverage
* Capital acquisition, equipment, restoration, or new construction of buildings;
* Capital expenditures;
* Travel outside of Indiana;
* Projects to be delivered outside of the State of Indiana;
* Project expenses outside of the grant period;
* Activities that are solely for the purpose of fundraising;
* Downtown revitalization planning;
* Historic preservation planning;
* Private functions, religious services, lobbying activities or any non-public activity; and,
* Costs of entertainment, including amusement and social activities such as receptions, parties, galas, dinners, etc. and any associated costs including catering, alcohol, etc. are unallowable.

\*These activities although not eligible for funding may be used as part of match criterion.

**Review Process**

Each eligible application will be reviewed and awarded by OCRA staff on a competitive basis. Information submitted in the application will be reviewed according to the following evaluation criteria:

* **Organizational Excellence**: The extent to which the applicant organization can demonstrate sound fiscal management and administrative policies and a demonstrable commitment to continuous improvement and development of the Main Street organization.
* **Community Engagement:** Extent to which there is an ongoing relationship between applicant and community in the planning, participation and evaluation of executed activities.
* **Work Plan Quality:** Relative to the budget size of the organization, the extent to which the applicant demonstrates a committed effort to provide its audience meaningful, impactful, quality programs and assistance. All activities must include measurable and impactful goals using smart goals.

**Grant Award Determination**

Grants between $5,000 - $25,000 will be awarded to programs based on demonstration of the following:

* Program is designated by Indiana Main Street;
* Program is either a Nationally Accredited Main Street (NAMS) or Indiana Accredited Main Street (IAMS);
* Explanation of how funds will assist the organization and what future funding will support;
* Demonstrated 1:1 cash match of requested funds;
* A current work plan; and
* A current budget.

**Financial Reimbursement Procedures**

Upon receiving a fully executed grant agreement, the grantees that were awarded between $5,000-$10,000 will receive 100% of the grant award upon request. Grantees that were awarded between $10,001 - $25,000 will receive 50% of the grant award upon request and the remaining 50% at grant closeout. All reports outlined in the grant agreement, including financial, must be received in a timely manner, throughout the duration of the grant. The grantee will be expected to maintain supporting documentation of grant expenditures sufficient to enable an audit by the State of Indiana and for monitoring by OCRA and as outlined in the grant agreement.

All records should be maintained for three years beyond the receipt of the final payment for the project. OCRA may monitor these records at any time throughout the duration of the project and the records retention period.

**Ready to Apply?**

Only applications submitted online will be accepted. To access the application, [click here](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/TCOMS). For additional information, contact Abby Huff ahuff1@ocra.in.gov.

Once you have submitted your application, please send a confirmation email to indianamainstreet@ocra.in.gov

**Required Forms and Uploads**

**Bidder Registration and Financial Forms**

In order to receive state funds, applicants must be a registered bidder with the state. This is a critical step that must be taken for your Taking Care of Main Street: Operating Support Grant Program application. Please register at [www.in.gov/idoa/2464.htm](http://www.in.gov/idoa/2464.htm) and include your confirmation e-mail with your application. If awarded an IMS Operational Grant, you will need your registration username and password to access your grant agreement, so please keep these on file. If your community/organization is already registered as a bidder, please include a memo that expresses this. Finally, a W/9 and Direct Deposit Form are included with this application. These forms must be completed and returned with your application using the same EIN number and address you used to register as a bidder. If you have any questions about this portion of the application, please contact Adam Moschell with Grant Services at (317) 232-8772.

**Other Required Forms and Uploads:**

* [Direct Deposit Authorization Form](https://forms.in.gov/Download.aspx?id=11695)
* [W-9 Form](https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw9.pdf)
* Proof of IDOA Bidder number
* Copy of most recent board meeting minutes
* Main Street America accreditation self-assessment scorecard
* Organizations board and committee members with affiliations
* 2023 work plan
* 2023 operational budget
* Project budget proposal
* Proof of 1:1 cash match
* Grant execution timeline
* Board member resolution of support with member signatures