

IMS COVID-19 Call Notes

Thursday, May 14, 2020 9:38 AM

- **Lieutenant Governor Suzanne Crouch:** I am so glad we have continued to do these calls, I get a lot of questions about Main Streets as I am out and about and it is great to reassure them that we are doing everything we can to take care of our downtowns.
- **Matt Crouch (OCRA):**
 - Max (Musicant, Principal Placemaker at The Musicant Group: *Creating Places Where People Want to Be*)
 - Thank you for letting us be here today! It is tumultuous times here, especially those who are in place based support. It's a unique opportunity for Main Street orgs to step into the breach and provide critical support. There has never been a more important time for Main Street orgs to be around, and your communities are lucky to have those set up.
 - We know that given the unique challenges of COVID presents and the regulations and restrictions that are in place for health reasons, we know that places and spaces are more regulated.
 - That being said, we have rolled out a series of **FREE toolkits** to navigate this ever changing world. In the midst of the current circumstances but also the lasting affects.
 - We would love feedback as well as wanting to help walk alongside you in your communities.
 - In our first toolkit we are focused on three main strategies:
 - The first issue is that businesses were not prepped to move to ecommerce or sidewalk side business - so we have resources for Main Streets for that.
 - The second is that two of the biggest industries are struggling which is restaurants and arts and entertainment organizations. So we have offered some alternatives for these businesses to still provide their services. Examples would be converting to drive in theaters, or outdoor seating at restaurants. This also can be helpful to using parking lots or blighted areas that are empty.
 - The third idea that we put out there is also as a way to generate additional sales for small biz is to look at the community's supported agriculture model (CSA) and having individual businesses or collections of businesses to ban together and provide a basket of goods and services that people can sign up to get over a longer period of time (subscription based type of idea.)
 - There are a number of communities that have started to launch some of these ideas and there are a lot of online resources and help for downtowns to launch these.
 - Our next toolkit will cover how to reboot your events and how to readjust those and how to dig into the underlying why of those events. It is a unique opportunity to analyze why we do the events we do and getting clear about why we are doing something and then create those adjustments or maybe pivot or change these events to make them more impactful for your downtown strategy.
 - Our third toolkit is looking at outdoor commerce and so how do we take our right of way or parking lots or public spaces and reconfigure them so that they support small businesses. This can be outdoor seating, but also a lot of other types of reconfiguration.
 - There have also been an explosion of biking and walking activities and we have

some research about how could you do street closures that become safe pedestrian focused promenades that then still encourage people to come to your downtown.

- We will continue to add to these toolkits. I would love to hear your feedback or hardships that you are walking through so we can brainstorm some ways to come out better than we were before. I encourage everyone to think about some of these ideas and initiatives or visions for their downtown that maybe this could spur.
- <http://www.musicantgroup.com/free-ideas.html> - find the free toolkits here
- Questions/Feedback

- **Abby Chapman (OCRA):**

- We are excited to let you all know that after some planning we are in the works of developing a new executive directors orientation.
- What many other coordinating programs do is have an orientation with a new director as soon as they are hired on - and we will begin doing that.
- That being said, we are first working to develop a sign up for any of our new executive directors that have come on within 2019-2020 timeframe and we would like to have a virtual one on one with you giving you a high level orientation to Indiana Main Street and our role as well as some different resources to help you in your role.
- From there, we are working with NMSC to develop a training that will be required for all of those new executive directors but also recommended to directors with 2+ years of experience as well. That training will be led by NMSC staff, but Jackie and I will obviously be there to help and listen and guide conversation.
- In the future, it would be ideal to have that training once a year and preferably in person - but obviously this year it is looking more likely we will do it virtually.
- This is all still in the works so details will change but new directors please keep an eye out for the sign up sheet for our 1o1 with you and all directors be looking for another interest form to gauge who would be interested in taking place.
- If you have any questions you can always feel free to reach out to me and I can get you answers on those.
 - **Nancy Eckerele (Jasper Chamber):** Will this be open to board members too? Because we see a great need for orientation for our board members as well.
 - **Abby:** As for this training, it is more exclusive to our executive directors. But, we are working to get something developed for our board members as well because we know how important that is. We will keep you updated as we find out more about that as well!

- **Jackie Swihart (OCRA): Preserving Women's Legacy Grants ARE OPEN!**

- As Indiana and the nation celebrate 100 years of women's right to vote, we are pleased to be partnering with Indiana Humanities to offer Preserving Women's Legacy Grants.
- The Preserving Women's Legacy Grant is available only to designated Indiana Main Street organizations.
- The purpose of the grant is to catalyze Main Street communities to discover, preserve and activate locations that tell stories about women's contributions in Indiana.
- Grant amounts are between \$15,000 and \$40,000. The grant does require at least a 1:1 cash, in-kind match.
- Even though we are all very busy with our focus being on economic development in response to COVID-19, I did want to remind you all that this grant:

- May serve as a way to **employ creatives** in your community who have been effected by the COVID-19 crisis.
 - Depending on your proposed project, may **support local businesses, community building, and placemaking efforts**– even if it feels like a really strange time so to do, *we can't forget the importance of design, organization, and promotion in the Main Street 4-point approach.*
 - May serve as a way to **strengthen or create new partnerships** within your community – further elevating your organization's leadership role and impact.
 - Will leave a **lasting legacy in your downtown** for years to come, even after COVID-19 has passed.
- Feel free to reach out to myself or Indiana Humanities with any questions or visit any of the three websites: OCRA's, Indiana Humanities, or IndianaSuffrage100.org for more information
- **Jackie Swihart (OCRA):** What questions do you have for OCRA or the group?
 - **Heidi Peterson (Main Street Marion):** We are wanting to put in an application for PWLG but the building where we want to put the mural for our project, the owner is not interested in having our mural on there wall.
 - **Abby Chapman (OCRA):** I would really find a specific way to tell the story so that the building owner is invested in the ethos behind what his building wall will be holding.
 - **Mayor Vonderhide (Mayor of Jasper):** Our ideal building owner was also not interested, but we went through online platforms and our downtown merchants associations. We had about five different locations that were interested, so framing it more as an application process.
- **Matt Crouch (OCRA):** Thank you for your time and thank you for everything that you are doing during this time. Our Main Streets are the hearts of our communities so without the work you are doing, the economic recovery efforts would take longer. It means a lot to us to work alongside you.
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 - **Community Liaisons are always available to you**
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	https://www.in.gov/ocra/2330.htm - you can find contact information for them here
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- **For further resources:**
 - <https://www.in.gov/ocra/3010.htm>