

Taking Care of Main Street: Operating Support Grant Program Guidelines Round II

About

The Taking Care of Main Street: Operating Support Grant Program provides operating support for the ongoing activities and administrative functions of designated Indiana Main Street programs of up to \$200,000 in total awards. 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 have been significantly impacted by the effects of COVID-19. This is an excellent opportunity to support Main Street organizations who have been forced to cancel major fundraising events due to the pandemic or who have lost funding from local municipality due to reallocation of resources for COVID-19. By providing this financial assistance, Main Street organizations will be able to coordinate programming and direct technical assistance locally for small businesses, including shifts and business model changes such as online retail or social distance store layout. Round II is also intended to encourage and support advanced programs looking to implement mid- to long-term recovery strategies related to the economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Timeline

- Applications open: **January 11, 2021** on a competitive basis based on completion of application and alignment with eligibility requirements and expectations
- Applications close: **February 12, 2021**
- Notify awardees: **February 26, 2021**
- Expected payment: **Spring – early summer 2021**

Applicant Eligibility Requirements

Applicant must meet all the following eligibility requirements:

1. Be a current designated Indiana Main Street program whose primary purpose is executing the Main Street Approach™ as demonstrated by:
 - a. Significant evidence that it is viewed as a functioning Main Street organization by its community;
 - b. The majority of its activities occur with regular, scheduled frequency throughout the year;
 - c. Facility space, if applicable, is utilized predominantly as a Main Street office;
 - d. A proportionate amount of operating budget is allocated to direct Main Street activities;

- e. Provide significant, verifiable Main Street-focused programming and activities.
2. Be a private, nonprofit tax-exempt agency with either 501(c)(3) status from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) OR be an Indiana public entity (part of a city or county).
3. Must be physically located in Indiana, have an address in the region to which the organization is applying, with most of 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 two consecutive years 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 area;
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:

- Salaries;
- Administrative fees;
- Staff development and training;
- Space and equipment rental;
- Personnel and production costs, and supplies needed to support the organization activities;
- Business training;
- PPE costs;
- Small business support;
- Consultant fees.

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 in private dwellings or other locations not open to the general public;
- Promotional or marketing costs;
- Capital acquisition, equipment, restoration, or new construction of buildings;
- Capital expenditures;
- Travel outside of the United States;
- 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;
- 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.

Review Process

Each eligible application will be reviewed and awarded by OCRA staff. 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. **(30 points)**
- **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. **(30 points)**
- **Measurable Outcome/Goals:** Please provide measurable outcomes or goals that the grant would help your organization achieve. In other words, what would success look like and how are you going to measure that success? **(20 points)**
 - **Please include any relevant objective community data that demonstrates need for your specific organization (i.e. Vacancy rates in Main Street district, business closures due to COVID-19, number of Ecommerce platforms utilized by downtown businesses, etc.)**
- **Community Engagement:** Extent to which there is an ongoing relationship between applicant and community in the planning, participation, and evaluation of executed activities. **(10 points)**
- **Discretionary:** Points may be awarded if application signifies notable representation of need; replicability of best practices; preservation or economic development effort; or innovation that goes beyond the minimum request in the application. **(10 points)**

Grant Award Determination

Grants of at least **\$5,000** will be awarded to around five (5) **OCRA's Downtown Affiliate Network** programs based on demonstration of the following:

- Program is designated by Indiana Main Street as an OCRA's Downtown Affiliate Network program;
- Demonstrated impact of COVID-19 on their downtown community;
- Provided explanation of how a reduction of funds has impacted the program's activities;
- Explanation of how funds will assist the organization and what future funding will support;
- Demonstrated operating costs in excess of \$10,000;
- A current work plan;
- Statewide and rural/urban representation of applicants.

Grants of at least **\$15,000** will be awarded to around (10) **Indiana Accredited Main Street** programs and/or **Nationally Accredited Main Street** programs based on demonstration of the following:

- Program is designated by Indiana Main Street as an either Indiana Accredited or Nationally Accredited;
- Demonstrated impact of COVID-19 on their downtown community;
- Provided explanation of how a reduction of funds has impacted the program's activities;
- Explanation of how funds will assist the organization and what future funding will support;
- Demonstrated operating costs in excess of \$30,000;

- A current work plan;
- Feasibility of project and the extent to which the grant will help address an acute need or help the program implement innovative solutions to address COVID-19-related challenges;
- How the grant would improve the viability of the organization and/or downtown;
- Statewide and rural/urban representation of applicants.

One grant of **\$25,000** may be* awarded to one (1) **Nationally Accredited Main Street** program.

- Program is designated by Indiana Main Street as an either Indiana Accredited or Nationally Accredited;
- Demonstrated impact of COVID-19 on their downtown community;
- Provided explanation of how a reduction of funds has impacted the program's activities;
- Explanation of how funds will assist the organization and what future funding will support;
- Demonstrated operating costs in excess of \$50,000;
- A current work plan;
- Statewide and rural/urban representation of applicants;
- Proposal for funds is creative, innovative, and impact driven;
- Ability to leverage funds;
- Feasibility of project and the extent to which the grant will help address an acute need or help the program implement innovative solutions to address COVID-19-related challenges;
- How the grant would improve the viability of the organization and/or downtown during and beyond COVID-19;

**The \$25,000 may be reallocated as additional \$5,000 or \$15,000 grants at the discretion of OCRA, depending on quality and quantity of applications received.*

Financial Reimbursement Procedures

Upon receiving a fully executed grant agreement, the grantee will receive 100% of the grant award upon request, except for the \$25,000 bonus grant. If awarded, the bonus grant will be paid out 50% at time of award and 50% mid-way through the project timeline, with appropriate financial documentation. 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.

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 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 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](#)
- [W-9 Form](#)
- 2021 (or most current) Work Plan
- Proof of IDOA Bidder number
- 2021 (or most current) Annual Operating Budget
- Copy of most recent board meeting minutes

Ready to Apply?

Only applications submitted online will be accepted. To access the application, [click here](#). For additional information, contact Jackie Swihart jswihart@ocra.in.gov or Abby Chapman abchapman@ocra.in.gov.