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**MAIN STREET  
AMERICA®**

## **GM on Main Street Grant Program**

Community Placemaking Grants

# **Funding Innovative Placemaking**

# Initiatives

The GM On Main Street grant program will award five (5) \$50,000 grants to nonprofit organizations and municipal government entities to implement innovative placemaking initiatives in their local commercial districts.

## Program Overview

This year, the GM on Main Street grant program is awarding five \$50,000 grants to nonprofit organizations and municipal government entities to implement innovative placemaking initiatives in their local districts. Applicants must be located near a General Motors facility to be eligible. [See the list of eligible counties here.](#)

Made possible by General Motors, this grant program prioritized applications that were place-making focused, innovative, inclusive, feasible, and replicable or easily scalable for other Main Street programs.

### Criteria

- **Placemaking-focused:** Proposed idea must be a local placemaking initiative located in a publicly accessible location in the downtown or commercial district. [What we mean when we say placemaking.](#)
- **Innovation:** Proposed idea represents innovative, experimental, creative and/or entrepreneurial approaches to placemaking on Main Street.
- **Inclusive:** Main Street America believes that [Main Streets are for everyone.](#) Proposed idea must be

### Program Terms and Conditions

*Grantee will be required to:*

- Report periodically to MSA on the implementation of the projects and their local impact. Note: report format and further instructions will be provided after grantees are selected.
  - Monthly, Grantee will report program progress status.
  - For the Final Report, Grantee will report:
    - Local dollars raised or leveraged as a result of the

considerate and intentionally inclusive of the whole of the local community, regardless of race, age, ability, gender, religion, socioeconomic status etc., in both its design and execution.

- **Feasibility:** Proposed idea is feasible given grant amount.
- **Replicability:** Proposed idea is something that could be modeled and/or scaled for other Main Street programs to adopt and implement.
- Project must be able to be completed by August 31, 2024.

Applicants must be:

- A 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(6) organization or a municipal government entity.
- Located near a General Motors facility. See the list of eligible counties here.

## GM On Main Street Grant Program

- New partnerships created as a result of the GM On Main Street Grant Program
- Any replication of their grant-winning ideas in other communities.

## Non-performance

- Grantees will have until August 31, 2024, to complete their respective projects.
- The GM On Main Street Grant Program will be paid to Grantees up front and in full upon award.
  - If a Grantee does not complete its project by August 31, 2024, the completion date may be extended at the sole discretion of Main Street America, or Main Street America may request that the Grantee return funds.

## Timeline

- **Application period:** Monday, November 13 - Wednesday, December 13 at 12 p.m. CT (*NOTE: Extended from Monday, December 11 at 10 a.m.*)
- **Project award:** January 2024
- **Project implementation period:** February – August 2024

# How to Apply

Review the eligibility and grant criteria below to ensure your community meets application requirements. Applicants must be located near a General Motors facility to be eligible. [See the list of eligible counties here.](#)

The grant application is now closed.

## Informational Webinar

Learn more about the GM on Main Street grant program application process, eligibility requirements, and other criteria in the informational webinar below.

GM on Main Street Grant 2023 | Informational Webinar





# Supporting Partner



General Motors (NYSE:GM) is a global company focused on advancing an all-electric future that is inclusive and accessible to all. At the heart of this strategy is the Ultium battery platform, which will power everything from mass-market to high-performance vehicles. General Motors, its subsidiaries and its joint venture entities sell vehicles under the Chevrolet, Buick, GMC, Cadillac, Baojun and Wuling brands. More information on the company and its subsidiaries, including OnStar, a global leader in vehicle safety and security services, can be found at <https://www.gm.com>.

## Contact Us

P 312.610.5613

E [info@mainstreet.org](mailto:info@mainstreet.org)

Main Street America

53 West Jackson Blvd., Suite 350

Chicago, IL 60604

## About Us

Main Street America has been helping revitalize older and historic commercial districts for more than 40 years. Today it is a network of more than 1,600 neighborhoods and communities, rural and urban, who share both a commitment to place and to building stronger communities through preservation-based economic development. Main Street America is a subsidiary of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

### WHO WE ARE

About Us  
Our Approach  
Strategic Plan  
Partners & Supporters  
Meet Our Team

### OUR NETWORK

The Movement  
Main Street Programs  
Main Street Impact  
Main Street Awards  
2023 GAMSA Winners  
Success Stories  
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### HOW WE CAN HELP

New! Business Insights Podcast  
Main Street Housing  
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# What is Placemaking?

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## What if we built our communities around places?

As both an overarching idea and a hands-on approach for improving a neighborhood, city, or region, **placemaking** inspires people to collectively reimagine and reinvent public spaces as the heart of every community. Strengthening the connection between people and the places they share, placemaking refers to a collaborative process by which we can shape our public realm in order to maximize shared value. More than just promoting better urban design, placemaking facilitates creative patterns of use, paying particular attention to the physical, cultural, and social identities that define a place and support its ongoing evolution.

With community-based participation at its center, an effective placemaking process capitalizes on a local community's assets, inspiration, and potential, and it results in the creation of quality public spaces that contribute to people's health, happiness, and well being.

When Project for Public Spaces surveyed people about what placemaking means to them, we found that it is a crucial and deeply-valued process for those who feel intimately connected to the places in their lives. Placemaking shows people just how powerful their collective vision can be. It helps them to re-imagine everyday spaces, and to see anew the potential of parks, downtowns, waterfronts, plazas, neighborhoods, streets, markets, campuses and public buildings.





Placemaking begins at the smallest scale.

**Placemaking is not a new idea.** Although Project for Public Spaces began consistently using the term "placemaking" in the mid-1990s to describe our approach, some of the thinking behind Placemaking gained traction in the 1960s, when our mentors like Jane Jacobs and William H. Whyte introduced groundbreaking ideas about designing cities for *people*, not just cars and shopping centers. Their work focuses on the social and cultural importance of lively neighborhoods and inviting public spaces: Jacobs encouraged everyday citizens to take ownership of streets through the now-famous idea of "eyes on the street," while Holly Whyte outlined key elements for creating vibrant social life in public spaces. Applying the wisdom of these (and other) urban pioneers, since 1975 Project for Public Spaces has gradually developed a comprehensive Placemaking approach.

Throughout our experience working with over 3,500 communities—in all 50 U.S. states and in over 50 countries—Project for Public Spaces continues to show by example how adopting a collaborative community process is the most effective approach for creating and revitalizing public spaces. For us, placemaking is both a process and a philosophy. It is centered around observing, listening to, and asking questions of the people who live, work, and play in a particular space in order to understand their needs and aspirations for that space and for their community as a whole. With this knowledge, we can come together to create a common vision for that place.



The vision can evolve quickly into an implementation strategy, beginning with small-scale "Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper" improvements that bring immediate benefits both to the spaces themselves and the people who use them.

## When you focus on place, you do everything differently

Unfortunately, the rigid planning processes of the 20th century have become so institutionalized that community stakeholders rarely have the chance to voice their own ideas and aspirations about the places they inhabit. Placemaking can break down these silos by showing planners, designers, and engineers the broad value of moving beyond the narrow focus of their own professions, disciplines, agendas. Experience has shown us that when developers and planners welcome this kind of grassroots involvement, they spare themselves a lot of headaches. Common problems like traffic-dominated streets, little-used parks, and isolated or underperforming development projects can be addressed—or altogether avoided—by embracing a model of placemaking that views a place in its *entirety*, rather than zeroing in on isolated components.



Even though cities ultimately fail or succeed at the scale of "place," this is the scale that is so often overlooked.



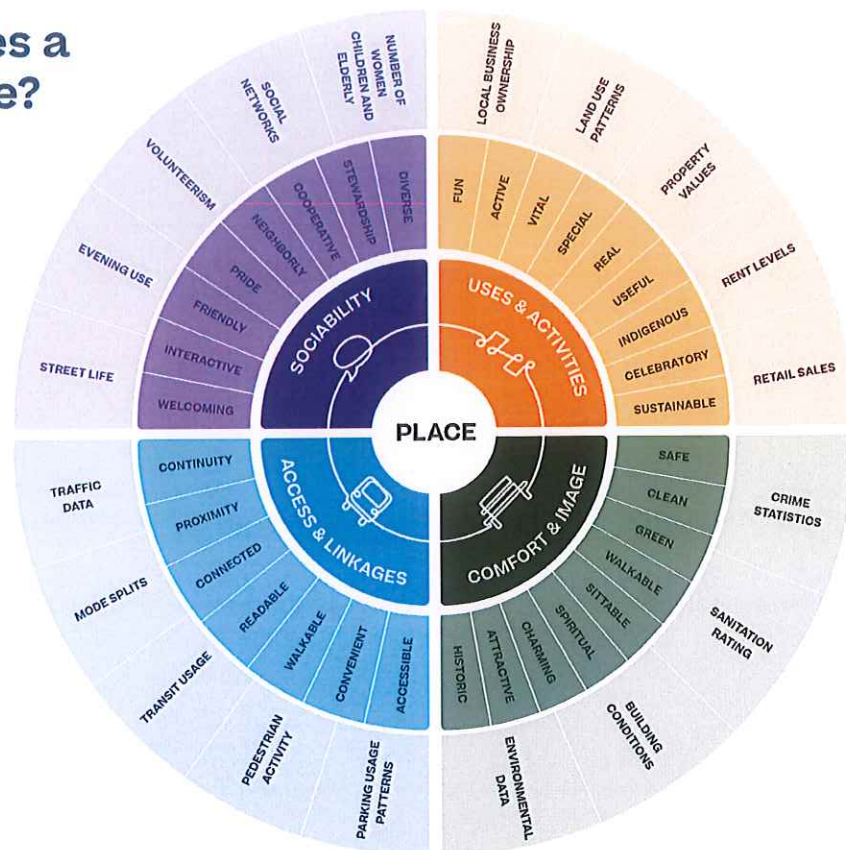
## Key Principles of Placemaking

The Project for Public Spaces placemaking approach can be a springboard for community revitalization. Emerging from forty years of practice, our 11 Principles of Placemaking offer guidelines to help communities (1) integrate diverse opinions into a cohesive vision, (2) translate that vision into a plan and program of uses, and (3) ensure the sustainable implementation of the plan. Turning a shared vision into a reality—into a truly great place—means finding the patience to take small steps, to truly listen, and to see what works best in a particular context.

Just as community input is essential to the placemaking process, it is equally important to have a mutual understanding of the ways in which great places foster successful social networks and benefit multiple stakeholders and initiatives at once. The 11 Principles, along with and other tools we've developed for improving places (such as the Power of 10), have helped citizens bring immense changes to their communities—changes that are often far more extensive than the original vision had imagined.

### What Makes a Great Place?

**Project  
for Public  
Spaces**



The Place Diagram is one of the tools Project for Public Spaces has developed to help communities evaluate places. The inner ring represents a place's key attributes, the middle ring its intangible qualities, and the outer ring its measurable data.



## From theory to practice: Placemaking grows into an international movement

Placemaking is at the heart of Project for Public Spaces's work and mission, but we do not trademark it as our property. It belongs to anyone and everyone who is sincere about creating great places, and who understands how a strong sense of *place* can influence the physical, social, emotional, and ecological health of individuals and communities everywhere. We do feel a responsibility to continue protecting, practicing, and advocating for the community-driven, bottom-up approach that placemaking describes. To be successful, this process requires great leadership and action on all levels. Leaders need not, and certainly should not, have all the answers, and by acknowledging this, and providing space for experimentation and collaboration, Placemaking allows an even bolder process to unfold.

Learn more about Placemaking and how it can help transform public spaces. Download the [booklet](#).

Today, the term "placemaking" is used in many settings—not just by citizens and organizations committed to grassroots community improvement, but also by planners and developers who use it as a "brand" to imply authenticity and quality, even if their projects don't always live up to that promise. But using "placemaking" in reference to a process that isn't really rooted in public participation dilutes its potential value. Making a place is not the same as constructing a building, designing a plaza, or developing a commercial zone. As more communities engage in placemaking and more professionals come to call their work "placemaking," it is important to preserve the meaning and integrity of the process. A great public space cannot be measured by its physical attributes alone; it must also serve people as a vital community resource in which function always trumps form. When people of all ages, abilities, and socio-economic backgrounds can not only access and enjoy a place, but also play a key role in its identity, creation, and maintenance, *that* is when we see genuine placemaking in action.

Placemaking pays close attention to the myriad ways in which the physical, social, ecological, cultural, and even spiritual qualities of a place are intimately intertwined, and we continue to be inspired by the visionary placemakers who have worked to promote this vision for generations.

**Placemaking belongs to everyone:** its message and mission is bigger than any one person or organization. As a "backbone organization," Project for Public Spaces remains dedicated to supporting the movement, growing the network, and sharing our experience and resources with placemakers and allies everywhere.



## **Placemaking *is***

- Community-driven
- Visionary
- Function before form
- Adaptable
- Inclusive
- Focused on creating destinations
- Context-specific
- Dynamic
- Trans-disciplinary
- Transformative
- Flexible
- Collaborative
- Sociable

## **Placemaking *is not***

- Top-down
- Reactionary
- Design-driven
- A blanket solution or quick fix
- Exclusionary
- Car-centric
- One-size-fits-all
- Static

- Discipline-driven
- One-dimensional
- Dependent on regulatory controls
- A cost/benefit analysis
- Project-focused

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**Citation (MLA 8):** "What Is Placemaking?" *Project for Public Spaces*, 2007,  
<https://www.pps.org/article/what-is-placemaking>  
**Comments**

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## Related Articles

## Contact Us

Want to unlock the potential  
of public space in your  
community? Get in touch!

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**Main Streets Are for Everyone**



# What We Believe

**We believe Main Streets are for everyone. At the core of our approach to revitalization is a commitment to creating places of shared prosperity, equal access to opportunity, and inclusive engagement. Main Street America models and champions this vision through our actions and programs.**

## Creating Places of Shared Prosperity

A broad constituency of stakeholders - including residents, visitors, entrepreneurs and customers - produce a thriving Main Street district. As centers of economic and social opportunity, commercial districts impact the health and prosperity of all stakeholders, and thus they should be reflective of and in service to all members of the community.

Despite this, we know that barriers - direct and indirect, historic and current - have prevented this vision of full participation in communities and commercial districts from becoming a universal reality. From land-use policies to business finance practices, our systems have intentionally excluded marginalized groups while bolstering prosperity for those with power. And, many of the forces driving change on our Main Streets today, especially rapid demographic shifts and technological innovations, are deepening existing inequities.

## What We're Doing

The staff of Main Street America recognize that first step towards our vision is prioritizing team training and development. Our plan includes annual staff training in areas of diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism and expanding opportunities for diverse representation in our staff, board, and partners. We aim to share our learning and experience with the network, while inviting new voices to guide our work.

## What You Can Do

Everyone who is part of the Main Street movement can take an active role in shaping an inclusive future. No matter your background or experience, embracing change can create discomfort. Educating yourself and creating conversations around these important topics is essential.

## Next Steps Together

*Join the conversation.* We encourage you to send us your feedback and use Main Street member resources, including [The](#)

This history, and our collective role in shaping the future of communities, positions our movement at the center of some of the most pressing issues in our society today: Who belongs? Who's represented? Who thrives?

To fulfill our mission, we must recognize inequity and embrace change. The Main Street Approach, with its emphasis on community engagement as a core element of district strategy, can offer a path forward. But creating places of shared prosperity, equal access, and inclusive engagement requires sustained commitment to education and action.

There's important work for us to do to fully realize this vision. We're excited to embark on taking next steps together and hear what you are doing to shape an inclusive future.

Point, to share your approaches, resources and challenges.

*Share your story.* Great places happen due to a dedicated and diverse group of people. Use the #WeAreMainStreet campaign to share the individuals and ideas that power your community.

*Build your knowledge.* It's incumbent upon each of us to expand our understanding of ourselves and others. Check out the resources below to educate yourself and see a comprehensive set of anti-racist specific resources here.

## Resources

### Suggested Reading (or Listening)

Please consider purchasing at your local book store.

- *Biased: Uncovering the Hidden Prejudice that Shapes What We See, Think and Do* by Jennifer L. Eberhardt, PhD
- *White Like Me: Reflections on Race from a Privileged Son* by Tim Wise
- *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America* by Richard Rothstein



- *Invisible Women: Exposing Data Bias in a World Designed for Men* by Caroline Criado Perez
- *Accessible America: A History of Disability and Design* by Bess Williamson
- Code Switch (NPR)
- Uncivil (Gimlet Media)
- "7 Things You Can Do to Improve the Sad, Pathetic State of Board Diversity" by Vu Le
- "20 Ways Majority-white Nonprofits Can Build Authentic Partnerships with Organizations Led by Communities of Color" by Vu Le

## Organizations

**Check-out these groups with innovative tools for engagement.**

- National Trust for Historic Preservation - We share a commitment with the National Trust for Historic Preservation to tell the full American story. We encourage you to explore their work in this area, especially recent efforts to protect and restore places of significant African American history through the African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund.
- Welcoming America - Through a social entrepreneurship model, Welcoming America offers resources to communities and non-profit organizations interested in becoming more inclusive of immigrants, refugees and all residents. Look through their resources and stories on engagement and inclusive economies.
- PolicyLink - A national research and action institute that advances racial and economic equity through data-driven tools and advocacy, prioritizing the voice of those traditionally absent from policy processes. Check-out their National Equity Atlas to discover data on your local area.
- Americans for the Arts - We encourage you to read about Americans for the Arts process for adopting a Cultural Equity statement, which was helpful in crafting our own.

**Have a resource you would like to see added to this list?** Please share with Kelly Humrichouser at [khumrichouser@savingplaces.org](mailto:khumrichouser@savingplaces.org).

## **Meet Our Staff**

Get to know the National Main Street Center staff and board.

[LEARN MORE](#)

## **Get to Know the Network**

Explore the communities that make up the Main Street America network.

[LEARN MORE](#)

## **Join the Movement**

Become a member to gain access to resources, tools, networking opportunities and more.

[LEARN MORE](#)

Contact Us  
P 312.610.5613  
E [info@mainstreet.org](mailto:info@mainstreet.org)



Main Street America  
53 West Jackson Blvd., Suite 350  
Chicago, IL 60604

## About Us

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About Us  
Our Approach  
Strategic Plan  
Partners & Supporters  
Meet Our Team

### OUR NETWORK

The Movement  
Main Street Programs  
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**GM On Main Street Grant Program 2023-2024**  
**Eligible Counties**

**Georgia**

Barrow, GA  
Carroll, GA  
Cherokee, GA  
Clayton, GA  
Cobb, GA  
Coweta, GA  
DeKalb, GA  
Douglas, GA  
Fayette, GA  
Fulton, GA  
Gwinnett, GA  
Henry, GA  
Morgan, GA  
Spalding, GA  
Forsyth, GA

**Indiana**

Whitley, IN  
Allen, IN  
Marion, IN  
Howard, IN  
Lawrence, IN

**Kansas**

Johnson, KS  
Leavenworth, KS  
Wyandotte, KS

**Kentucky**

Allen, KY  
Warren, KY  
Edmonson, KY  
Butler, KY

**Michigan**

Eaton, MI  
Ingham, MI  
Lapeer, MI  
Livingston, MI  
Oakland, MI  
Ottawa, MI  
Shiawassee, MI  
Kent, MI  
Clinton, MI  
Macomb, MI  
Genesee, MI  
Saginaw, MI  
Bay, MI

**Missouri**

Cass, MO  
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Franklin, MO  
Jackson, MO  
St. Charles, MO  
St. Louis, MO  
City of St. Louis, MO

**Ohio**

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Lorain, OH  
Medina, OH  
Cuyahoga, OH  
Geauga, OH  
Trumbull, OH  
Mahoning, OH  
Montgomery, OH  
Greene, OH  
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Lucas, OH  
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Fulton, OH  
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**Tennessee**

Dickson, TN  
Maury, TN  
Rutherford, TN  
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