

Candidate Program Outline

Program Overview

Communities interested in getting started in implementing and forming a Main Street program can begin the process by applying and participating in the Candidate program. Candidate-designated programs spend **one year** building their organizational structure and learning about the Four-Point Main Street Approach.

The Candidate level is intended to help programs understand the basics and become integrated with the Wyoming Main Street network through participation in regular activities. [Your Wyoming Business Council regional director](#) plays a crucial role in advising you through the process, and should be your first connection as you consider or undergo the Candidate program. Once your year in the Candidate program is complete, you are encouraged to move up to the Affiliate level.

To Enter in the Program (pre-qualifications)

- Assemble group to lead a Main Street program (*5 people recommended*)
- Watch Main Street 101 - we recommend [Oregon Main Street's overview](#)
- Designate point of contact to liaison with Wyoming Main Street

Application Process

Complete Candidate application online by *February 1*

Attend advisory board meeting - *February/March*

Be prepared to give a short (up to 10 min.) overview of community and desire for a Main Street program

The advisory board will make a final decision on acceptance or denial of application and final notification with next steps (if applicable) will be by email.

Timeline

Exact dates are subject to change, but this timeline provides an example of the process.

February 1: Applications for Candidate and Affiliate are due

Last week of February: Advisory board meeting to review applications and make final decisions

March 1: Final letter of establishment is sent to community (if applicable)

January 1 of following year: All Candidate milestones completed; begin Affiliate application

Milestones

These serve as guideposts to integrate your program into the network and offer organizational basics. They may be completed in any order, as long as all are completed and can be demonstrated by the end of the year. Your work may focus heavily on the organization building, but you are encouraged to also begin exploring other projects across the Four Points, integrated into a work plan.

- Undergo Main Street Foundations Series
 - [Economic Vitality](#) - video
 - [Getting Started Guide](#)
 - [Design](#) - video
 - [Getting Started Guide](#)
 - [Promotion](#) - video
 - [Getting Started Guide](#)
 - [Organization](#) - video
 - [Getting Started Guide](#)

- Start attending monthly leadership meetings
*Hosted the 4th Thursday of each month via Zoom
An invite will be provided by state staff*
- Undergo Board Development Training
 - *The [Wyoming Nonprofit Network](#) offers several scheduled board trainings across the state and has many organizational resources available.*
 - *The [UW extension office](#) offers several community development education programs.*
 - *You may also reach out to your regional director to inquire about availability*
- Formalize group into a board of directors and elect officers
If this has not been done prior to application.
- Develop a workplan
Approved template is located [here](#).
- Develop a fundraising plan
No specific template required - your fundraising plan should include who's responsible, possible revenue sources, financial goals, specific initiatives, and a timeline. You can find further resources below in the "Other Resources" section.
- Visit an Accredited or an Affiliate community
*Reach out to state staff or your regional director for recommendations on communities that will be most relevant to you.
Prepare insights to share with the local board & state advisory board after visit.*
- Attend Wyoming Working Together conference
A joint conference held between Wyoming Economic Development Association (WEDA), Wyoming State Chamber of Commerce (WSCC), and Wyoming Main Street. Typically held in early autumn, with the location moving around each year. Conference information will be provided when available by state staff.
- Participate in Small Business Saturday
Host or market on behalf of your downtown businesses; feel free to implement and duplicate ideas from other Main Street programs for your own benefit.

Other Resources

Board Resources

<https://boardsource.org/>

<https://www.joangarry.com/>

Fundraising Resources

[Donorly's fundraising plan template](#)

[Aly Sterling's fundraising plan template](#)

[Board Source fundraising list](#)

FAQ's

Can the process be accelerated if I meet criteria for the next level?

If a community has already completed the Candidate milestones and have met the prerequisites checklist for the Affiliate program, you are welcome to complete the Affiliate application and demonstrate your completion of requirements at the advisory board meeting review. We ask that you maintain contact with your regional director and state staff however you proceed.

What if I complete the milestones sooner than the one year period?

If a program finds themselves completing the milestones earlier than that January 1 deadline, that's great! We encourage you to turn your efforts towards the projects you've mapped out in your work plan in design, economic vitality, and promotion. You may also look ahead to the Affiliate program requirements and start determining what you can get a head-start on from the list.

What happens if I don't meet the milestones in the one-year period?

If a program isn't able to meet the milestones, we'll ask you to go through an exit interview to find out what constrained you or kept you from achieving the milestones. If you'd like to give it another try, there's a one-year ineligibility period before you can re-apply to the Candidate program.

Removal Policy

If a community fails to meet regular requirements or milestones and does not maintain communication with Wyoming Business Council staff, they may be subject to removal from the Wyoming Main Street program with due notice.