

Main Street Challenge Grant Scoring Criteria

The Main Street Challenge Grant program funds impactful building rehabilitation projects located in designated Main Street Iowa districts. These projects incorporate quality design and historic preservation strategies, increase economic value of the existing building, enhance district-wide revitalization efforts, and serve as quality examples for Main Streets across the state.

EXISTING BUILDING (10 points maximum)	
A Strong Application:	A Weak Application:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involves an important local building (historically/architecturally significant, highly visible, etc.). • Makes use of a vacant or underutilized property. • Provides an overview of the building’s history and its significance to the downtown/community. • Clearly describes character-defining architectural features of the building. • Clearly describes the current physical condition of the building and demonstrates it needs rehabilitation. • Clearly describes the current building use(s) on each floor. • Includes current and historic photographs that communicate current conditions and relate to proposed work areas. • Shows context surrounding the building, e.g. includes a current photograph of the block or the building’s surroundings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Represents a building of lesser local importance with limited potential impact. • Does not provide a sufficient overview of the building, its history and significance. • Does not identify significant historic architectural features. • Does not adequately describe current physical condition of the building; need for rehabilitation isn’t demonstrated. • Does not indicate current building uses, or only partially identifies use. • Does not include photographs, or includes minimal photographs that don’t provide adequate context for project scope. • Does not provide photographs of the surrounding context to show how building fits into the context of the district.

PROPOSED BUILDING IMPROVEMENT (30 points maximum)	
A Strong Application:	A Weak Application:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly and concisely describes the proposed scope of work. • Includes design drawings/plans that appropriately communicate the intended project and align with the written scope of work. • Displays appropriate design that is compatible with the downtown district and, where applicable, meets local design standards. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a vague scope of work, e.g. only describes number of housing or commercial units being added, but does not say what construction will be done to prepare the building for use. • Does not include developed design drawings or plans. • Includes designs that are unclear or inconsistent with written narratives.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates knowledge of historic rehabilitation practices and exhibits appropriate treatment of historic features. • Involves an impactful scope of work (a complete building rehab, significant visual improvement, etc.). • Exhibits a project that is well planned and shovel ready with a reasonable timeline for completion. • Shows appropriate recycling and diversion of materials from the landfill and remediation of hazardous materials. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilizes designs or materials that are not appropriate for the building or the downtown district. • Does not show appropriate treatment of historic materials and/or shows design that is inappropriate to historic features. • Includes a limited scope of work or project area. • Does not appear well planned or ready for construction. • Does not provide a project timeline. • Does not give high confidence the project scope of work can be completed within the project/contract timeframe. • Does not address abatement of hazardous materials or landfill diversion tactics.
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ECONOMIC IMPACT (30 points maximum)	
A Strong Application:	A Weak Application:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly shows and quantifies what economic development will occur because of the project. • Adds businesses and jobs to the district with new or improved commercial space or significantly impacts an existing business (through business growth, additional services, etc.). • Adds housing units to the district (upper story or rear first floor where appropriate). • Includes appropriate uses that meet a documented local market need. • Provides a boost to an underperforming area in the district or a difficult block. • Serves as a ‘best practice’ model which can act as a demonstration project for other communities. • Makes a strong case that the completed project will stimulate additional district investment. • Indicates project investment will be protected because the community has appropriate downtown ordinances in place (minimum maintenance standards, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gives little vague evidence of the economic impact with no supporting data. • Does not add new businesses or jobs to the district, or make a significant positive impact on an existing business. • Does not add new housing units to the district. • Includes uses that are unclear, inappropriate, or do not meet documented local market needs. • Provides minimal impact to the district and/or community. • Does not make a case that the project will serve as a model for future success or will stimulate additional district investment. • Does not demonstrate community has appropriate downtown ordinances in place to guide and protect project investment.

design guidelines, storefront housing bans, etc.).	
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FUNDING, BUDGET & PARTNERSHIPS (30 points maximum)	
A Strong Application:	A Weak Application:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completes financial form in its entirety, with clear, consistent and reasonable budget information. • Shows solid cost estimates of proposed work based on project plans. • Shows contingency adequate to provide cash flow in case of cost overruns. • Shows excellent local financial match. At least 50% match is required; more is better. • Shows a diverse funding package with demonstrated local support. • Includes documentation of funding sources (bank letters showing terms of financing, grant award letters, etc.). • Clearly defines and quantifies in-kind support (if applicable). • Explains what financial/feasibility analysis has been completed to justify the project. • Demonstrates the Challenge Grant fills a gap and is impactful for project completion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes insufficient budget information (financial form incomplete, sources and uses don't match, budget not realistic for project scope). • Does not include estimates, or estimates are unclear/insufficient for the project scope. • Does not provide a contingency in the budget for unforeseen conditions or project overruns. • Does not demonstrate local support or diversified funding sources. • Does not include documentation of funding sources or has unsecured funding sources. • Does not provide justification for the value of in-kind services. • Does not include justification of project financial analysis/feasibility. • Does not show need for grant funding, or grant award has little impact on total project cost.

Scores:

Existing Building (0-10 Points) _____

Proposed Building Improvement (0-30 Points) _____

Economic Impact (0-30 Points) _____

Funding, Budget and Partnerships (0-30 Points) _____

Total Score out of 100 _____