



Policy on the Use of the Name "Main Street"

The National Trust for Historic Preservation owns the trademark for the phrase "Main Street"¹ as it applies to the revitalization of traditional and historic commercial districts. The Trust allows local, regional, state, and citywide organizations involved in the revitalization of these commercial districts to use the name "Main Street" to describe their programs, according to the following guidelines:

Local Main Street Programs' Use of "Main Street" Name

- Local non-profit or government-based Main Street programs may use the Main Street name if the Main Street revitalization methodology² is the fundamental organizational framework of the organization using the name "Main Street." In particular, the organization *must* work comprehensively in all four areas of the [Main Street Four-Point Approach](#)TM, with historic preservation as a key principle and practice, have a volunteer governing board and volunteer committees corresponding to Main Street's Four Points, and have paid staff.
- [Main Street coordinating programs](#)³ have sole discretion in determining whether a community may claim to be part of that Main Street coordinating program, designating communities as such through a selection process. See *Enforcement*, below.
- A "self-initiated" or "independent" local program (defined as an organization that utilizes the Main Street Four-Point Approach but has not been selected to participate in a statewide or citywide Main Street program) *may not* use "Main Street" in its organizational name without the express written permission of the National Trust. The Trust may grant permission for the organization to use "Main Street" in its name if it is able to determine with confidence that the local organization works comprehensively in all four areas of the Main Street Four-Point ApproachTM, with historic preservation as a key principle and practice, has a volunteer governing board and volunteer committees corresponding to Main Street's Four Points, and has paid staff.
- While "self-initiated" or "independent" local programs *may not* use "Main Street" as part of their organizations' names without permission from the National Trust, they may state that they utilize or follow the Main Street Approach in their commercial district revitalization efforts. This claim is subject to the same rules of enforcement as using "Main Street" in the organization's name.
- Use of the name "Main Street" by a local revitalization program does not necessarily mean that the program is part of a state, city, or regional coordinating program or that it meets the 10 criteria necessary to be an accredited National Main Street Program.
- Statewide, citywide, and regional Main Street coordinating programs are responsible for determining which communities within their geographic jurisdiction meet the 10 criteria of the National Trust Main Street Center's National Accreditation for local Main Street programs.
- Purchase of National Trust Main Street Center Network Membership has no relevance or relationship with local Main Street program selection/designation, and does not convey permission for any organization to use the name "Main Street" or to call themselves such.

Coordinating Main Street Programs' Use of the Main Street Name

- The National Trust permits only officially recognized state, city, and regional Main Street coordinating programs to use the Main Street name to describe the organization.
- Statewide, citywide, and regional coordinating Main Street programs must meet [national criteria](#) established by the National Trust for Historic Preservation in order to use the name "Main Street."
- Use of the "Main Street" name by a coordinating Main Street program does not necessarily mean that the program meets the standards required for coordinating program accreditation.

Enforcement

The National Trust places tremendous value on the Main Street brand and vigorously protects its trademark rights. When informed of examples of misuse of the Main Street name, the Trust actively pursues a cessation of use of the name by the offending organization and is prepared, when required, to take the appropriate legal action to uphold the above standards and policies.

Statewide, citywide, and regional coordinating programs should alert the National Trust to any local organizations that use "Main Street" in their name but *do not* make the Main Street revitalization methodology the fundamental organizational framework of their programs. Statewide, citywide, and regional coordinating programs should also alert the National Trust to any local organizations that claim to follow the Main Street Approach but are not actually using any or all of Main Street's Four Points. The National Trust will contact these communities and ask that they discontinue use of the name "Main Street."

Statewide, citywide, and other coordinating Main Street programs³ are permitted to deny local Main Street organizations the privilege of using the name "Main Street," if the local organization is an active participant in the coordinating program but has ceased to follow the guidelines established by the coordinating program. The coordinating program has the authority to request that the offending organization immediately cease use of the Main Street name, and the coordinating program may also determine the conditions under which the organization may be allowed to resume use of the Main Street name. The coordinating program does not have the authority to deny the use of the Main Street name to organizations outside its selected/designated participants. That responsibility rests solely with the National Trust, which will examine and act accordingly upon reported instances of misuse of the Main Street name.

Footnotes

1) This includes variations on the phrase "Main Street," such as "Mainstreet," "Main Streets" or "MainStreet."

2) Fundamental elements of the Main Street methodology include:

- working simultaneously and comprehensively in all four areas of the Main Street Four-Point Approach™ (Organization, Promotion, Design, and Economic Restructuring);
- using historic preservation as a key principle and practice in commercial district revitalization;
- having a broad-based volunteer governing board;
- having volunteer committees corresponding to Main Street's Four Points; and
- having paid staff whose job focuses exclusively on commercial district revitalization.

(3) A Main Street Coordinating Program is a government or non-profit organization that provides structured technical assistance and training to a group of local commercial district revitalization programs, which are usually selected through a competitive selection process. Statewide and citywide Main Street programs, and regional programs that focus on a specific multi-community area, e.g. a county, are all examples of coordinating Main Street programs.