



2025 MAIN STREET AWARDS

NOMINATION INSTRUCTIONS & DESCRIPTIONS

The NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center presents the annual NC Main Street Awards recognizing the hard work, dedication, and success of our NC Main Street communities and their achievements in the Four Points of the Main Street Approach® to downtown revitalization: Economic Vitality, Promotion, Organization, and Design.

Entry Deadline: September 25, 2025 | 5pm

Awards Ceremony: March 11, 2026 | 2025 NC Main Street Conference | New Bern

Eligibility:

- Any active NC Main Street community that met the statistics deadline for the most recent fiscal year.
- Projects must have been completed within the past two years of the submission date.

Guidelines:

- Each community may submit up to **four nominations** for downtown district projects.
- A project may only be submitted in one category.
- The jury reserves the right to move a submission to a different category if there is a more appropriate fit.
- Any previously nominated project that did not receive an award and meets the two-year time limit may be resubmitted. We strongly suggest you speak with the NC Main Street Director or Program Manager to find out why the previous nomination did not win before re-submitting.
- **All** award-winning projects must **preserve key architectural features and finishes of a building**. The NC Main Street Awards represent the best examples of economic development within the context of historic preservation, as well as the best practices of the program beyond the Main Street Awards ceremony. The NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center does not recognize projects that do not meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, regardless of whether or not historic preservation tax incentives are used as a funding mechanism to complete the project.
- The jury reserves the right to withhold an award in any category or to designate more than one winner, if deemed appropriate.

Instructions:

- Watch the [How to Submit an Award Winning Nomination Video](#) to submit a strong nomination.



- Thoroughly review awards categories below to determine the best fit for your submission.
- You will be asked to provide the following:
 - High resolution of the local Main Street Program's logo
 - Project Name
 - Project beginning and completion dates
 - Nomination category
 - Specific partners
 - Describe the project. Include the goal(s) of the project and the outcome. Describe how the project supported your vision for downtown and furthered your economic development strategies.
 - Location of the project or event and map of the project area
 - How did your organization and/or partners accomplish this project?
 - **Describe the economic impact of the project.** Specific examples are provided for each nomination category.
 - **High quality photos.** Minimum of 10. Maximum of 20. These photos are used in the award presentation. If available, include photos with people. Do not label or put borders around the photo. Include active and engaging photos. If the photos are NOT of the quality to be shown on a large screen or in a video, the project may be disqualified.
 - A script for each photo including where the photo was taken. Provided details! The script and the photos must follow the story of the project. Organize them from start to finish.
 - Budget – revenue and expenses. Include in-kind sources and their estimated monetary value. Revenue and expenses are limited to 20 line items each. Example can be found at the end of this document.
 - Additional documents to support your nomination -up to 3.
- Before submitting your nomination, have someone proofread your submission.

Economic Vitality and Design Nominations:

- **If the project involved construction or alterations to a building, include as much documentation as possible.** Building rehab and design projects **must** meet the Secretary of Interior's Standards; therefore, we need excellent documentation. **Without excellent documentation confirming this to be within acceptable standards, the jury may reject the nomination.**
- Provide a photo key/script showing where each photo of the building was taken (exterior and interior). The script and the photos must follow the story of the project. Organize them from start to finish. Include **Before and After** photos, as applicable.
- Include any schematic renderings, designs by UNCG Main Street Fellows, architects, engineers, or other design professionals.
- Include historic photos, as applicable, but especially for a tax credit project.
- Include photos of the building in context with other buildings and surroundings.



How to submit your nomination online:

- You will need to create a free Submittable account or sign in with Google or Facebook credentials to submit to these forms. You can find the link on www.ncmainstreetandplanning.com under NC Main Street Conference/NC Main Street Awards.
- You can [save a draft](#) of your work if you would like to finish filling out the form at a later date.
- Submittable works best on Google Chrome, Firefox, and Safari. Internet Explorer is not supported. Please make sure you are using a supported browser.
- We will follow up with you about your submission by email. Please be sure to [safelist](#) notification emails from Submittable and check the email you used to sign up for your Submittable Account regularly.



Award Categories

Economic Vitality

Best Adaptive Reuse Project

Best Infill Building Project

Best Upper Story Redevelopment

Best Endangered Properties Rescue Effort

Best Business Retention, Expansion, or Recruitment Effort

Authentic Promotion

Best Downtown Special Event or Event Series

Best Image-Building Campaign

Sustainable Organization

Best Public-Private Partnership in Downtown

Best Healthy Community Initiative

Best Volunteer Recruitment, Training, and Recognition

Quality Design

Best Facade Rehabilitation Project

Best Public Building Improvement

Best Outdoor Space Improvement

Best Historic Rehabilitation Project



The following are descriptions of each award category and intended to help you determine the best fit for your project. It will also guide you on how to write an economic impact statement. You MUST include an economic impact statement, or your project will not be considered.

ECONOMIC VITALITY: BEST ADAPTIVE REUSE PROJECT

This award recognizes the best adaptive reuse of a building. The project includes the reuse of an underutilized building to meet current needs in the downtown district. Describe the economic impact of the project and include a detailed budget for the redevelopment project. Include a description of the scope of the work, project use, any energy efficiency component of the project, names of person(s) responsible and project architect as well as the local program's role, if any. Projects must meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and the nomination narrative must include a statement attesting to that fact. If possible, include documentation from the State Historic Preservation Office that verifies that the project meets the Secretary of Interior's Standards.

Measuring Economic Impact: Demonstrate the economic impact standards as applicable: The increased number of occupied square footage and the increased rental rate for the building, the increased number of businesses, upper story-residential units or jobs created due to the project, and the increased tax base and utilities generated as a direct result of the rehabilitation.

Previous Winners:

[2024 Monroe's Piedmont Lofts](#)

[2024 Salisburys' Bell Block Building](#)

[2023 The Salisbury Building](#)

[2023 Asheboro's Church Street Lofts](#)



ECONOMIC VITALITY: BEST INFILL BUILDING PROJECT

This award recognizes a local municipality, individual, or business involved in an outstanding new building project within the downtown district. The project should exhibit exceptional design quality and an appropriate relationship to its surrounding architecture. The nomination should include a project description, history of the site, economic impact of the project downtown, and a detailed budget. Projects that are additions to existing historic structures must meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and the nomination narrative must include a statement attesting to that fact. If possible, include documentation from the State Historic Preservation Office that verifies that the project meets the Secretary of Interior's Standards.

Measuring Economic Impact: Demonstrate the economic impact as applicable: Newly created square footage, rental rate for the building, increased number of downtown businesses, upper story-residential units or jobs created because of the project, and the increased tax base and utilities generated as a direct result of the project.

Previous Winners:

[2024 Pittsboro's Doherty's Irish Pub & Restaurant](#)

[2024 Fuquay-Varina's The Q](#)

ECONOMIC VITALITY: BEST UPPER STORY REDEVELOPMENT

This award honors the best example of upper story redevelopment. Projects in this category will be judged on design quality as well as their ability to fill an existing need in the community. For the project to be eligible, the converted space must be occupied. The nomination should include the economic impact of the project downtown, a detailed budget, a description of the scope of work, project use, any energy efficiency component of the project, names of person(s) responsible and project architect as well as the local program's role, if any. Projects must meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and the nomination narrative must include a statement attesting to that fact.

Measuring Economic Impact: Demonstrate the economic impact as applicable: The increased number of occupied square footage, the increased rental rate for the building, the increased number of businesses, upper story-residential units or jobs created, and the increased tax base and utilities generated due to the project.

Previous Winner:

[2023 Edenton's 415 South Broad Street Project](#)

ECONOMIC VITALITY: BEST ENDANGERED PROPERTIES RESCUE EFFORT

This award recognizes an organization or community-wide effort that saved a structure of historical or architectural value from impending demolition. The structure must have been returned to a productive use that serves the community's current needs, whether that use is different from or the same as the original. Both public and private properties are eligible, and the building must be in either the defined downtown district or an adjacent historic residential or historic commercial district. The nomination should include the economic impact of the project downtown, a detailed budget, a description of the scope of work, project use, any energy efficiency component of the project, names of person(s) responsible and project architect as well as the local program's role, if any. Projects must meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and the nomination narrative must include a statement attesting to that fact.

Measuring Economic Impact: Demonstrate the economic impact as applicable: The direct impact downtown such as job creation, investment, and other projects leveraged as a direct result of the project. Identify the dollars raised to save this property and/or the partners and volunteers involved with the rescue effort.

Previous Winners:

[2023 Goldsboro's The View at Wayne National](#)

ECONOMIC VITALITY: BEST BUSINESS RETENTION, EXPANSION, OR RECRUITMENT EFFORT

This award recognizes the best initiative directed at retaining, expanding, or recruiting a business. It must involve the identification of a need and the development of a comprehensive plan for securing or retaining a business or type of business. The nomination must describe the elements of the plan and the steps taken to achieve the goal. Eligible projects must be the result of an organized effort to gain or save a business and not the result of chance relocation.

Measuring Economic Impact: Demonstrate the economic impact as applicable: The increased number of occupied square footage, the increased number of businesses or jobs retained or created, and the increased tax base and utilities generated. Identify additional projects or efforts that were spurred as a result of the program.

Previous Winner:

AUTHENTIC PROMOTION: BEST DOWNTOWN SPECIAL EVENT OR EVENT SERIES

This award recognizes an outstanding creative downtown special event or event series. Your promotion event or series must be authentic! New and previously held events are eligible. Nominations should describe the theme and activities of the event or series. Projects will be judged on creativity, originality, authenticity, economic impact of the project downtown, participation of the organizing team, and value for the investment. Describe the economic impact of the project downtown and include a detailed budget for the event or series. Include electronic images of any event-related promotional materials including posters, flyers, brochures, social media, etc.

Measuring Economic Impact: Demonstrate the economic impact as applicable: The number of event attendees, the increase in downtown foot traffic, increased retail sales activity, the number of hotel rooms occupied, the increase in visitors, automobile traffic counts or gasoline sales generated, downtown articles, ads, publications, or website interactions, any other measurables for increased interest in downtown investment or business activity as a result of the special event or series.

Previous Winners:

[2023 Pilot Mountain's Outdoor Adventure Festival & Expo](#)

[2023 Goldsboro's NC Freedom Fest](#)

[2022 Belmont's Moonlight on Main](#)

AUTHENTIC PROMOTION: BEST IMAGE-BUILDING CAMPAIGN

This award honors the best image-building campaign for downtown. It must be a comprehensive effort with a clearly defined message and target audience. The campaign may include the creation and implementation of a new downtown brand, a comprehensive approach to image advertising or collateral materials, or the creation of downtown image building events. The nomination should include the results of the effort. If outside consultants were used, they must be identified in the nomination. Include electronic images of all visual elements of the campaign.

Measuring Economic Impact: Demonstrate the economic impact as applicable: The increase in marketing images and materials and any increase in consumer/visitor traffic generated because of the campaign. Measure any increase in retail sales activity generated from the campaign and any increase in public/private investment that is a direct result of the campaign.

Previous Winners:

SUSTAINABLE ORGANIZATION: BEST PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP IN DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION

This award recognizes a creative and positive partnership between the local government and the private sector. The nomination should thoroughly describe the project, goals, and outcomes as well as how the public and private sectors worked together, how the project has made a significant contribution to the downtown area and demonstrate the positive economic impact it had downtown. If this is a rehabilitation project, it must meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

Measuring Economic Impact: Demonstrate the economic impacts as applicable: The number of public/private partnerships, dollars leveraged from the effort, additional projects spurred, increase in downtown activity generated, and any additional increase in investment, businesses or jobs created directly from the effort.

Previous Winners:

[2024 Belmont's East End Facade Transformation](#)

[2024 Bessemer City's Bessemer City Juneteenth Festival](#)

[2024 Concord's Cabarrus County Courthouse](#)

SUSTAINABLE ORGANIZATION: BEST HEALTHY COMMUNITY INITIATIVE

This award recognizes worthy examples of improving the health of the community through innovation downtown. Healthy communities are places where all individuals have access to healthy constructed, social, economic, and natural environments that give them the opportunity to live their fullest potential regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, income, age, abilities, or other socially defined circumstance. Examples may include an effort to offer healthier food options, an increase in physical activity downtown after infrastructure improvements, or the creation of workforce housing. Define your goals and outcomes and demonstrate the initiative's positive economic impact on downtown. Nominations will be judged on their level of originality, inventiveness, and effectiveness.

Measuring Economic Impact: Demonstrate the economic impacts as applicable: The physical, economic, and social benefit to downtown created by the initiative.

Previous Winners:

[2023 Manteo's Downtown Market](#)

[2023 Waxhaw's Pedestrian Improvements](#)

SUSTAINABLE ORGANIZATION: BEST VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT, TRAINING, AND RECOGNITION

This award recognizes the most creative volunteer recruitment, training, and recognition program. The nomination should describe the goal of your volunteer program and the plan for execution as well as your training methods and volunteer recognition plan. Board and committee members may be included in your volunteer effort, but the program must also have a component dedicated to the individuals who assist in tasks such as putting together your newsletter, assisting with event setup, judging a contest, helping in your office, etc. Explain the outcomes of the program and the impact created.

Measuring Economic Impact: Demonstrate the economic impacts as applicable: The increase in the number of volunteers and hours served, the increased dollar value of the volunteers, and any direct measurables such as increased programs or projects that the organization was able to manage because of the volunteers.

Previous Winner:

[2022 Belmont's Volunteer Meeting & Appreciation](#)

QUALITY DESIGN: BEST FAÇADE REHABILITATION PROJECT

This award recognizes the best façade rehabilitation project in the downtown district. The physical design of the façade should enhance the commercial district in appearance or function and encourage further design improvements. The project must meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and the nomination narrative must include a statement attesting to that fact. Include a description of the scope of work, project use, any energy efficiency component of the project, names of person(s) responsible and project architect as well as the local program's role, if any. Projects will be judged on design quality, proper preservation techniques, creativity, and economic impact within budgetary and other constraints.

Measuring Economic Impact: Demonstrate the economic impact as applicable: The increased number of occupied square footage, the increased rental rate for the building(s), the increased number of businesses, upper story-residential units or jobs created, the increased retail sales activities generated for the tenant businesses, the increased tax base and utilities generated, and any additional projects that were spurred as a direct result of the rehabilitation.

Previous Winners:

[2023 Elkin's Frazier Building \(Best rehab for less than \\$15,000\)](#)

[2023 Manteo's Pioneer Theater \(Best rehab for more than \\$15,000\)](#)

QUALITY DESIGN: BEST PUBLIC BUILDING IMPROVEMENT

This award recognizes the municipality or Main Street organization that has designed and improved a public building in the downtown district. Projects must meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and the nomination narrative must include a statement attesting to that fact. Describe the economic impact of the project, include a detailed budget, a description of the scope of work, project use, any energy efficiency component of the project, names of person(s) responsible and project architect as well as the local program's role, if any. Entries in this category must contain a photo of ADA- accessible entrances.

Measuring Economic Impact: Demonstrate the economic impact as applicable: The increased number of occupied square footage, the increased services offered by the public entity and jobs created, and any additional projects that were spurred as a direct result of the project.

Previous Winners:

QUALITY DESIGN: BEST OUTDOOR SPACE IMPROVEMENT

This award goes to the individual, municipality or Main Street organization that has designed and improved a public or private outdoor space in the downtown district. Describe the economic impact of the project, a detailed budget, description of the scope of the work, project use, any energy efficiency component of the project, names of person(s) responsible and project architect as well as the local program's role, if any.

Measuring Economic Impact: Demonstrate the economic impact as applicable: The increased number of downtown activities and services offered in the space, increased foot traffic, customer traffic, automotive traffic, retail sales activity generated, and any additional projects that were spurred as a direct result of the project.

Previous Winners:

[2024 Mooresville's Liberty Park](#)

[2024 Waxhaw's Downtown Park](#)

[2023 Pittsboro's SoCo Patio](#)

[2023 Reidsville's Sky's the Limit All-Inclusive Park](#)



QUALITY DESIGN: BEST HISTORIC REHABILITATION PROJECT

This award highlights the work of an individual or business that has completed an outstanding historic rehabilitation project in the downtown district. The project must include exterior rehabilitation, and though not required, may include interior rehabilitation. Describe the economic impact of the project, include a detailed budget, a description of the scope of work, project use, any energy efficiency component of the project, names of person(s) responsible and project architect as well as the local program's role, if any. Projects must meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and the nomination narrative must include a statement attesting to that fact.

Measuring Economic Impact: Demonstrate the economic impact as applicable: The increased number of occupied square footage, the increased rental rate, the increased number of businesses, upper story-residential units or jobs created, and the increased tax base and utilities generated as a direct result of the project.

Previous Winners:

[2023 Elkin's Royall's Building](#)

[2023 Mount Airy's Coca-Cola Bottling Plant](#)

Be sure to go to www.ncmainstreetandplanning.com AWARDS to watch videos of award-winning projects. **TIP:** the best projects include good details on "Who, What, When, Where, Why, & How". The Economic Impact statement is **KEY!**

Budget - example

Revenue for the Project	Amount
20 lines to itemize revenue	
Total Project Revenue	(auto calculated)
Expenses for the Project	Amount
20 lines to itemize expenses	
Total Project Revenue	(auto calculated)