

MY MAIN STREET  
MA RUE PRINCIPALE

# COMMUNITY ACTIVATOR APPLICANT GUIDE



Canadian  
Urban  
Institute

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# WELCOME APPLICANTS!

We are currently taking applications for **high-impact community activation projects implemented between December 1, 2023 and December 31, 2024.**

Applications will be open from February 22, 2024 to midnight on March 31, 2024. Applicants are strongly encouraged to attend an [Information Session](#). Information Sessions will provide an overview of the intake process, provide guidance on developing a project application, and outline helpful tips for completing the application process.

The My Main Street [Community Activator stream](#) is set to provide funding quickly and efficiently for placemaking projects that will help strengthen the connection between people and places in areas of community and commercial importance or untapped potential. Funded projects will include initiatives such as such as events and festivals, community enhancements and streetscape improvements and those that better the economic position of main street communities by attracting and retaining jobs, increasing revenues, attracting investment or new businesses, and bringing in visitors. As resources are limited, applicants are encouraged to apply as early as possible.

A list of example projects previously funded through the Community Activator stream is posted on our [Success Stories](#) page.

## MY MAIN STREET OVERVIEW

My Main Street is a \$15-million investment from the Government of Canada through the [Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario](#) (FedDev Ontario) to spur local economic recovery. My Main Street is delivered by the [Canadian Urban Institute](#) (CUI) to help support the revitalization of neighbourhoods across southern Ontario. The program features two streams, the [Business Sustainability stream](#), and the [Community Activator stream](#).

## COMMUNITY ACTIVATOR STREAM OVERVIEW

The My Main Street Community Activator provides support for community projects in southern Ontario, including events and activities, community enhancements, and streetscape improvements designed to draw visitors, encourage business development and growth, and increase local vibrancy. This stream provides funding support for local groups to revitalize neighbourhoods and reimagine public spaces, with a focus on main streets or downtown strips and plazas, as vibrant and inclusive places that work for everyone.

My Main Street supports placemaking, an approach that asks people to collectively reimagine and reshape public space to maximize its shared value. Placemaking can take the form of events that draw people into a community, murals that brighten neglected streetscapes and celebrate local artists, seating and temporary patios that allow people to gather outdoors, or new uses for neglected or empty spaces, and more.

Funding will be prioritized for projects that support sustainable placemaking strategies for their geographic area and that are designed to support economic and social benefits for equity-deserving groups, including Francophone, women, Indigenous, racialized groups, Black communities, newcomers, youth (39 and under), people living with disabilities, unhoused, low-income people, Trans or non-binary people, and/or 2SLGBQIA+.

## STREAM FEATURES

Administered by the Canadian Urban Institute, the Community Activator will provide approximately \$6.5 million to communities in southern Ontario, for placemaking and activator work that is completed between December 1, 2023, and December 31, 2024.

Funding up to \$250,000 will be available and will be provided as reimbursements against completed work. Successful applicants can request up to 25% of their approved project costs in advance, to help bring their vision to reality.

## CATEGORIES

My Main Street Community Activator funds are available for projects in the following categories:

- **Events and Activations**

Short, limited or repeating community events or activations which intend to draw an audience, respond to an underserved market demand, enhance community connection or create an appealing destination, positioning the area as a center of community and economic activity.

- **Community and Streetscape Improvements**

Above grade enhancements to streetscape, design, landscaping, and amenities that supports the transformation of a specific geographic area by enhancing the physical and visual assets that can set the area apart. Projects will facilitate a focused, deliberate path to revitalizing or strengthening a downtown or commercial district's economy through intentional and creative placemaking.

## ELIGIBILITY AND CRITERIA

### WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR THE COMMUNITY ACTIVATOR STREAM?

- Applicants from communities located within southern Ontario. Enter your community in our [Measuring Main Streets mapping tool](#) to determine if you fall within an eligible community. A full list of eligible regions is included at the bottom of this guide in Appendix A.
- Representatives of the following groups:
  - Municipal, local or regional government;
  - Business Improvement Areas (BIAs);
  - Indigenous governing body or development corporations;
  - Federally or provincially incorporated not-for-profits;
  - Other community organizations that apply with another organization that is listed as eligible.
- Applicants who can confirm that they have or will obtain all necessary licences and permits in relation to their project, satisfying the requirements of all regulating bodies of their appropriate jurisdiction.
- Applicants whose project is focused on a defined geographic area and neighborhood, including main streets, downtown strips, and plazas. Funding cannot be used to support programming across a municipal jurisdiction.
- Applicants who can identify how their work will contribute to sustainable economic and social vibrancy.
- Applicants who are working collaboratively with other local community delivery partners.
- Applicants who can identify how their project will support the inclusion, safety and prosperity of equity-deserving groups including Francophone, women, Indigenous, racialized groups, Black communities, newcomers, youth (39 and under), people living with disabilities, the unhoused, low income, Trans or non-binary people, and/or 2SLGBTQIA+.
- Applicants who are willing to participate in announcements, events and storytelling initiatives related to their project, its impact on community vibrancy and its funding through the My Main Street program.

## ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

My Main Street Community Activator recipients will have to provide documented expenses for their completed work, and funding will be made in the form of reimbursements. The funds must be used to cover costs (net HST) related to the following categories:

- Labour Costs\*
- Consultants
- Communications, Marketing & Promotion
- Program Costs related to equipment, materials, evaluation, insurance, permits & approvals, program honoraria, project measurement/analytics costs etc.
- Depreciation or amortization expenses
- Capital expenditures
  - Above grade enhancements to streetscape, design, landscaping and amenities such as murals, seating, temporary installations, lighting are eligible.

\* Funds cannot be used to cover owner, management, or existing employee labour costs. Funds can be applied to support costs of project related labour.

## INELIGIBLE EXPENSES

Expenses that are not eligible for reimbursement through My Main Street Community Activator:

- Purchasing land and/or buildings, real estate fees and related costs.
- Capital expenditures
  - Ineligible capital expenditures include new construction and renovation of existing infrastructure and buildings.
- Indirect costs/overhead
- Purchasing a vehicle.
- Depreciation or amortization expenses
- Payments to any member or officer of the Recipient's Board of Directors
- Costs of individual membership in a professional body
- Construction of new buildings or facilities, or renovations to existing buildings.
- Legal fees related to litigation.
- Partisan, political or election related activities.
- Research projects where findings are not, or are not intended to be, tangibly applied as an outcome of the project. For example, carrying out a feasibility study without intending to carry out the work.
- Projects that benefit only private interests.
- Events and activities that do not abide by local and provincial Public Health guidelines.
- Expenses incurred outside the eligibility window (December 1, 2023 and December 31, 2024).

## APPLICATION PROCESS

The Community Activator is for local groups to revitalize neighbourhoods and reimagine public spaces including main streets, downtown strips and plazas, as vibrant and inclusive places that work for everyone. Submission of an application is not a guarantee of funding. To make informed funding decisions, applicants will be required to review eligibility, attend one of the Information Sessions, complete the application and submit required supporting documentation.

Documents you will need to provide:

- Project budget (in the template provided)
- Organization's most recent financial statements (audited if available).  
Financial statements generally include all of the following:
  - Balance Sheet
  - Income Statement
  - Cash Flow Statement
  - Statement of Retained Earnings

*The Community Activator, while competitive, supports organizations of all capacities. If you do not have the financial statements in the formats listed above, you may still submit an application, but must provide equivalent documentation of your organizations finances. If you have any questions about what is required, please email us at [placemaking@mymainstreet.ca](mailto:placemaking@mymainstreet.ca)*

- One piece of documentation confirming your organizational status as an eligible organization. This can include, but is not limited to **Articles of Incorporation, Business Number Registration, Charitable Status**, etc.

## APPLICATION INTAKE

To ensure the efficient and timely distribution of funding to support community revitalization efforts, the program will launch for intake as follows:

- **Intake Period 1: February 22, 2024-March 31, 2024**
- **Intake Period 2 (if required): May 30, 2024-July 15, 2024**
  - This intake period will only move forward if the entirety of the fund is not committed during Intake Period 1.

**We are anticipating heavy demand for this program. As resources are limited, applicants are encouraged to apply as early as possible.**

To ensure funding will reach across all of southern Ontario, and effective engagement of underrepresented groups, a minimum of 25% of funding (\$3.25 million) will be committed toward rural communities with populations less than 100,000, and up to 50% of funding (\$6.5 million) to participants from traditionally underrepresented and equity-deserving groups.

## APPLICATION TIMELINE

Project activities can begin December 1, 2023, but must complete a Final Report and submit all eligible expenses for reimbursement to My Main Street before December 31, 2024.

| ITEM   | DESCRIPTION   | DATE                   |
|--|---|------------------------|
| <b>Applications Open</b><br>(Intake Period 1)                  | There will be an open application process for communities within southern Ontario for project expenses incurred between December 1, 2023 and December 31, 2024. | February 22, 2024      |
| <b>Applications Close</b><br>(Intake Period 1)                 | Applications must be submitted within the open period.  | March 31, 2024         |
| <b>Project Selection</b><br>(Intake Period 1)                  | Successful applicants for funding will receive notification.  | April 1 - May 30, 2024 |
| <b>Applications Open</b><br>(if required)<br>(Intake Period 2) | This intake period will only move forward if the entirety of the fund is not committed during Intake Period 1.  | May 31, 2024           |
| <b>Applications Close</b><br>(Intake Period 2)                 | Applications must be submitted within the application open period.  | June 30, 2024          |
| <b>Project Selection</b><br>(Intake Period 2)                  | Successful applicants for funding will receive notification.  | July 31, 2024          |
| <b>Final Reports</b><br>(Intake Period 1 & 2)                  | Deadline for submission of reports and eligible expenses for the project.   | December 31, 2024      |

## HOW WILL APPLICATIONS BE ASSESSED?

Applications to the Community Activator stream will be confirmed for eligibility, and evaluated based on the following categories:

- **Vision**

- The project has a well described scope and objective.
- The project contributes to a sustainable placemaking strategy for the location.
- The project has the potential to benefit people from equity-deserving communities.
- The project is innovative or offers reimagination of tested activations

- **Capacity**

- The organization has the capacity and appropriate partners to deliver the project.
- The organization has outlined a clear plan and budget to deliver the project within the required timelines.
- There is a clear plan to measure the project’s success.
- There is a strong team in place, with a well thought out plan for successful implementation
- There is a fully costed budget and a clearly articulated plan to measure success

- **Community need**

- The project outlines how it will address a community need

## PANEL ASSESSMENT

The My Main Street Community Activator selection process will be adjudicated on vision and capacity through a 2-step assessment process involving a Selection Committee comprised of:

- Representatives who are both internal and external to the My Main Street Program, with demonstrated experience in community placemaking, local economic development, successful implementation, and project management.
- Representatives from a cross section of geographic communities across southern Ontario.
- Representatives with the above experience who identify as members of equity-deserving communities from across southern Ontario.

Before initiating their scoring process, the Selection Committee(s) will be required to participate in a training session facilitated by the Canadian Urban Institute that will outline the project's vision, objectives and requirements, and address issues of systemic bias.

All applications will be scored based on a standardized Scoring Form measuring the evaluation criteria above.

## PROGRAM REQUIREMENT LENS

Once applications have been scored against vision, capacity and need, CUI will finalize the decision process factoring in necessary requirements related to:

- Funding available for program year;
- Allocation of 25% of available funding to areas with populations of less than 100,000;
- Ensuring additional consideration is given to traditionally underrepresented and equity-deserving groups
- Regional distribution of program funds.

## PAYMENT AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

To receive payment, recipients will be required to submit their expenses and attest to eligible costs through a reporting process facilitated by CUI.

Capital costs are not eligible for reimbursement. Instructions on eligible costs are included in the [Project Budget template](#).

Successful applicants will also be required to provide other reports in the form of project updates, success stories and supporting documents.

## APPENDIX A: ELIGIBLE LOCATIONS

The full list of eligible regions surrounding municipalities can be found below, however, you can directly enter your address in our [Measuring Main Streets mapping tool](#) to determine if you are located in an eligible region.

|                          |                              |   |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|---|
| Brant County             | Hastings County              | Peel Region                             |
| Bruce County             | Huron County                 | Perth County                            |
| Chatham-Kent             | Kawartha Lakes               | Peterborough County                     |
| Dufferin Region          | Lambton County               | Prescott and Russell Counties           |
| Durham Region            | Lanark County                | Prince Edward County                    |
| Elgin County             | Leeds and Grenville Counties | Renfrew County                          |
| Essex County             | Lennox and Addington County  | Simcoe County                           |
| Frontenac County         | Middlesex County             | Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry Counties |
| Grey County              | Niagara Region               | Toronto Region                          |
| Haldimand-Norfolk County | Northumberland County        | Waterloo Region                         |
| Haliburton County        | Ottawa Region                | Wellington County                       |
| Halton Region            | Oxford County                | York Region                             |
| Hamilton Region          |                              |   |

