



Virginia Main Street 2019 Annual Report

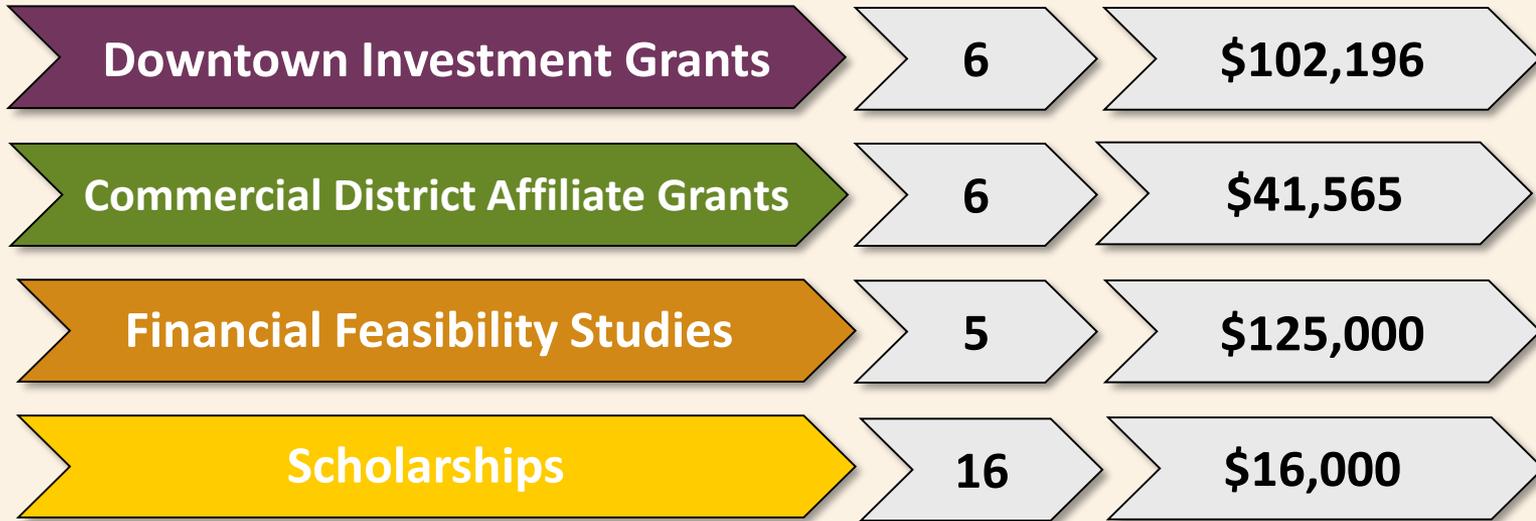


Program Overview

- Virginia’s historic commercial districts, commonly known as “downtowns,” have served as the social, commercial and cultural centers of our communities for over 400 years, and they still provide the center around which most of Virginia’s communities revolve! The Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development’s (DHCD) Virginia Main Street (VMS) program provides opportunities for growth while continuously refining its services to offer contemporary assistance to make our vital and historic downtowns thrive!
- In 2019, DHCD sought to strengthen their impact, working with designated and commercial affiliate communities to employ the Main Street Approach™ by utilizing community vision and market understanding to create qualitative and quantitative outcomes through targeted design, economic, organization and promotional strategies and activities. Through grant opportunities, training and technical assistance on the latest in economic development, entrepreneurship, place-making and fundraising, DHCD endeavored to provide each community individualized support and services throughout the year to further strengthen the revitalization work taking place across the state!

In 2019, the Virginia Main Street (VMS) program recognized 26 Designated Main Street Communities, one Virginia Downtown and over 80 Commercial District Affiliates.





"Attracting private investment continues to be a goal for all of our Main Street communities, and through this funding, we are encouraging new investment in the community and creating sustainable downtowns for all to enjoy."
 - Secretary of Commerce and Trade, Brian Ball

Abingdon:
Held a creative public art project/fundraiser called *The Abingdon Wolf Project*

Altavista:
Designed and installed a unique new LOVEwork at English Park

Ashland:
Worked diligently to re-brand Ashland as a popular day-trip destination

Berryville:
Continued to revitalize downtown and strengthen community engagement

Blackstone:
Received a \$25,000 DIG award for the program's *Railway Parking Project*

Bristol:
Hosted two new downtown FUNdraisers, *Wing War* and *Bristol Pepper Fest*

Culpeper:
Established \$15,000 low interest revolving loan fund for small businesses

Danville:
Conducted inaugural *Dream Launch Challenge*, creating two new and two expanded businesses

Farmville:
The 4th Annual Farmville SOUP Event funded three new community projects that enhanced downtown

Franklin:
Created "Saturday Works" program to encourage Saturday business hours

Fredericksburg:
Won VMS Merit Award for Outstanding Fundraiser, recognizing the popular *A Downtown Affair* event

Gloucester:
Initiated new membership campaign that welcomed 45 businesses/community members, raising \$12,000+

Harrisonburg:
An alley beautification project transformed a dark alleyway into a beautiful and buzzworthy space

Hopewell:
Acquired \$50,000 EPA grant to help offset the rehab costs of an historic downtown building

Lexington:
Gift certificate program has helped keep \$25,000+ in the local economy

Luray:
Completed large street improvement project to replace and reopen the West Main Street Bridge

Lynchburg:
New fundraising event, *Speakeasy*, increased organizational revenue and donor engagement

Manassas:
Installed new wayfinding signage on the outlying areas of downtown

Marion:
Upgrades were made to the Downtown Crosswalk at the Lincoln Theatre

Orange:
Became one of the first Community Heart & Soul programs in Virginia

South Boston:
Successfully launched the *SoBo Keep Entrepreneurs* program to inspire, assist, and retain entrepreneurs

St. Paul:
Won the 2nd Annual Main Street Idea Pitch to complete gateway murals

Staunton:
Completed \$25,000 fundraising campaign that supported the upgrade of 44 downtown lamp posts

Warrenton:
Successful First Friday series supported local businesses and raised over \$20,000

Winchester:
Monthly "lunch n' learn" webinar series engaged downtown merchants and gained community interest

Wytheville:
Encouraged youth entrepreneurship through the INVEST Youth Business Scholarship Program

"Downtown revitalization combined with the development of strong local entrepreneurial ecosystems are important components of creating bustling commercial districts that attract residents and visitors alike."
— Governor Ralph Northam





The **city of Winchester** was awarded a \$10,000 Downtown Investment Grant (DIG) to help fund a wayfinding signage system update for the historic commercial district and gateway corridors to correct and improve inaccuracies on existing signage, worn out frames and other issues. Qualified consultants were hired to design, produce and install the wayfinding systems. Grant activities have effectively provided accurate directional information, created an inviting community image and increased visitor attraction to Old Town Winchester’s Main Street district.

Destination Downtown South Boston (DDSB) was awarded a \$15,000 DIG to fund DDSB’s Keep Entrepreneurs Program, an initiative to educate, inspire and retain entrepreneurs and their small businesses through mini-grants, peer-to-peer round table focus groups and more. The program has helped create and retain businesses by providing services and financing to keep them healthy and thriving. LaKisha Jackson (pictured above), owner of KJ’s Cake Creations, was able to secure a new ice cream freezer through the program that took her business to the next level.

Luray Downtown Initiative (LDI) was awarded \$24,850 to conduct a Financial Feasibility Study (FFS) for the Artisan Grill property (pictured above) that included a market study for the Main Street district as a whole. The study focused on the importance of the building to the community’s economic restructuring strategy, potential reuse, estimates for rehab costs, funding sources and more. It was determined that a niche retail or restaurant business should be successful if it offers a concept, good or service that taps both the local and secondary markets and attracts tourists to the area.

Fredericksburg VA Main Street (FVMS) was awarded a \$25,000 DIG to help establish a zero-interest revolving loan fund for new and existing businesses. The fund has stimulated further revitalization and enhanced the physical appearance of the district by making improvements to historic commercial properties or businesses. Brianne Lopex (pictured above), owner of Xquizit Coffee Roasters, used funds to buy k-cups and hot press printing equipment to add new product lines for retail and e-commerce sales.



The **city of Galax** received a \$3,300 Commercial District Affiliate (CDA) grant to fund the Galax Main Street Banners Project. The public submitted banner designs, as well as voted for their favorite amongst 70-plus entries. Three asset banners, five event banners and six designs were approved. In total, 98 new banners were printed and are currently on display throughout the year. The new banners add vibrancy, promoting the community's cultural heritage, events and unique arts while creating an incredibly strong sense of pride and community identity.

Project Glade Inc. received a \$5,900 CDA grant to help fund the Glade Spring Town Square Mural Project. Project Glade selected a design representing the Blue Ridge Mountains to showcase the region, and a barn-quilt sub project that engaged businesses and other community organization was formed by an inspired business owner, further enhancing the town square entrance. The mural and barn-quilts have enhanced the Glade Spring commercial core, helping to greatly increase traffic and spur a renewed interest in business ownership, as well as downtown revitalization.

Columbia Pike Revitalization Organization received a \$7,000 CDA grant to help fund the Columbia Pike Banner Program. Overall, 70 new place-making banners were designed and installed along "The Pike" corridor, a four-mile stretch of major development areas, public spaces and diverse neighborhoods. Daily, it carries thousands of commuters to jobs in Arlington County and Washington, D.C. The banners have helped to visually unify the four-mile stretch, and they have contributed to the vibrancy of such a unique community, Arlington's "Oldest and Newest Main Street."

The **town of Narrows** was awarded a \$7,000 CDA grant to create a regional mechanism to advance commercial district development in Giles County's towns, including Narrows. The Giles County Hometowns Program developed the "Communities of the New" designation system, created promotional materials and facilitated partnerships with regional organizations to provide services to designated towns in support of downtown development. It established a coordinated, county-wide approach to revitalization, allowing each town to pool needed resources and thrive.

The Four Points

- **Economic Vitality** focuses on capital, incentives and other economic and financial tools to assist new and existing businesses, catalyze property development and create an environment for entrepreneurs and innovators that drives local economies.
- **Design** supports a community's transformation by enhancing the physical and visual assets that set the commercial district apart.
- **Promotion** positions the downtown or commercial district as the center of the community and hub of economic activity, creating a positive image that showcases a community's unique characteristics.
- **Organization** involves creating a strong foundation for a sustainable revitalization effort, including cultivating partnerships, community involvement and resources for the district.



The Eight Principles

1. **Comprehensive:** Downtown revitalization is complex and cannot be accomplished through a single project.
2. **Incremental:** Small projects and simple activities can generate momentum and build support for larger efforts.
3. **Self-Help:** Long-term success depends on the involvement and commitment of the community.
4. **Public-Private Partnership:** The public and private sector both have an interest in community and economic development, and each has a role to play in the community's success.
5. **Identifying and Capitalizing on Existing Assets:** Each community has a unique character and assets that provide the foundation for revitalization.
6. **Quality:** Quality must be emphasized, applying to each element of the program, from storefront designs to promotions to educational programming
7. **Change:** Changes in attitude and practice are necessary to improve current economic conditions. Public support for change will build as the program grows.
8. **Implementation Oriented:** Frequent, visible changes are a reminder that the revitalization effort is underway. Small projects pave the way for larger activities as the program matures.

Community Development: How to Apply Workshops

01/06 (South Boston) 01/08 (Norfolk) 01/14 (Luray) 01/16 (Marion) 01/21 (Richmond)

Jan. 28-30: VMS Director's Retreat | Farmville

Feb. 20: Webinar (Public Spaces, Community Places) | Noon-1 p.m.

April 16: Webinar (Communicating to Main Street during Crisis) | 11 a.m.-Noon

April 22, 29: Two-Part Webinar (Upper Story Housing Development) | 11 a.m.-Noon

- Understand the Field (April 22)
- Explore the Opportunities (April 29)

June 9: Webinar (Basic Principles of Main Street Promotion) | 11 a.m.-Noon

July: Downtown Intersections | **Updates Forthcoming**

Sept. 24: Webinar (Grassroots Fundraising and Advocacy) | 11 a.m.-Noon

Oct. 20-22: Regional Rev Ups (Small Scale Manufacturing on Main Street | *Locations TBD*)

Nov. 11: Webinar (Building Entrepreneurial Ecosystems through Community Business Launch) | 11 a.m.-Noon

VMS trainings serve as an important opportunity to gain new skills, network with other communities and learn more about revitalization. Visit viriniainmainstreet.com to view upcoming training events, and check out the site to learn more about best practices, trends and Main Street work across Virginia!





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