



WASHINGTON STATE
MAIN STREET
PROGRAM

Day 2 Highlights + Insights Board Management and Best Practices

2026 REGIONAL RETREATS



BUILDING STRONG MAIN STREET BOARDS

MAIN STREETS NEED BOARD MEMBERS TO...



- Bring people together and build sense of ownership
- Stay true what we do and who we are
- Foresight - potential, valuable assets, etc.



- Maximize time
- Develop an environment where people can succeed
- Finances & assets



- Forge action-driven programming and impact
- Working shoulder-to-shoulder

BUILD UP A BOARD LEADERSHIP PIPELINE

As board leaders you know you're here because you care about your community, believe in the mission and vision of your Main Street, and want to make a difference and leave a legacy — part of your legacy is an organization others would be excited to join! Keep in mind these best practices:

- Build relations that foster understanding, confidence, trust.
- Bring people together (from all sectors) with a unified purpose (mission) and vision for the future.
- Foster a strong sense of ownership (internal & external) that instills a culture of active engagement and investment.
- Empower stakeholders to lead all aspects of revitalization. Inspire and motivate people to action.
- Promote strategy-driven mindset in decision making (beyond ideas, projects), informed by community & market opportunities.

Looking for more resources?
Check out our Main Street Board Hub at
preservewa.org/main-street-board-hub



FUNDRAISING IS NOT A SOLO SPORT

Main Street organizations are most commonly nonprofits. In any nonprofit organization, the board is responsible for a well-funded organization and board members must take an active role in budget setting and fundraising. Even after raising funds to hire staff, boards continue to hold responsibility for financial management of the organizations they steward, including:

- **Developing an annual budget for the organization**
- **Approving and monitoring the finances of the organization**
- **Raising sufficient funds to ensure that the organization can carry out mission-aligned work**

FINANCES DEVELOP AS MAIN STREETS DEVELOP

Catalyst Phase

Catalyst Phase organizations' fundraising goal is to work toward predictable operating budgets — especially in terms of investors, sponsors, and fundraising events — in preparation for the capacity needed to hire an inaugural executive director as well as expand programs and projects in the Growth Phase.

Growth Phase

Growth Phase organizations' overall financial goal is to have a stable core operating budget and work to diversify funding as more projects and programs develop. In the Growth Phase organizations often see an increase in the scale of funding, like applying for larger grants after successfully managing small grants.

Management Phase

Management Phase organizations need money for larger operating budgets, including an executive director and likely more staff, as well as recurring and new project budgets. By this phase an organization should have a robust, diverse fundraising plan with both public and private sector sources with a 3-6 month reserve. A Management Phase organization should be able to weather unexpected disruptions in a single revenue stream without entering a funding crisis.

ATTENDEE NOTES