



Self-Assessment and Accreditation Platform FAQs

Q. What is the Accreditation Platform?

- A. The Main Street America Accreditation Platform is a new online platform that provides a one-stop portal for local programs to complete self-assessments for designation and access accreditation-related resources. Coordinating Programs and Main Street America will also utilize the platform to submit assessments of programs.

Q. How do I access my account on the Accreditation Platform?

- A. Visit <https://mainstreetreporting.org/login>, then enter the email address associated with your account and your password. Please see below for details about login credentials:
- **Email:** Use the email address to which the automated welcome email was sent on December 15, 2023. If you did not receive this email or for troubleshooting assistance, please reach out to your Coordinating Program to confirm your program's login email. (*Note:* Account details for platform users were provided by Coordinating Programs.)
 - **Password:** If you experience issues using your password, click "Forgot Password" and follow the instructions provided by the platform.

Q. Can I request additional user accounts?

- A. No. A maximum of one (1) user account is available for each program. Additionally, it is highly encouraged that only one login session be active at any one time in order to ensure that responses are saved properly.

Q. How can I learn more about the Accreditation Platform and how to use it?

- A. There are many ways to become more familiar with the platform!
- **Training Webinar:** On January 10, 2024, Main Street America staff and the Accreditation Platform developer, The Relish Jar, hosted a training webinar for local programs. The webinar featured a preview of the platform, helpful information about completing the self-assessment, troubleshooting tips, and more. [Watch the recording here >](#)
 - **User Manual & Video Tutorials:** Check out the user manual and video tutorials available through the platform. While logged in to your account, click the "Help" tab on the left-hand side of your dashboard, then browse and select tutorial materials under the "Documentation" section.
 - **Request Support:** For additional support, send a support request ticket by clicking the "Create New Ticket" button (located at the top of the Help section) or the "Get Help" button (located in the Support Requests section of the Dashboard). Make sure to complete the form, providing detailed information about the issue, and click "submit." Your request will be sent to platform administrators.

Q. Who completes the self-assessment process? Who completes the self-assessment through the Accreditation Platform?

- A. Completion of the self-assessment is a shared responsibility of the Main Street program's Board of Directors and executive director. Using the self-assessment worksheet, [available here](#), is



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strongly encouraged. Once the Board has discussed the scoring, the executive director should complete the self-assessment by entering responses and scores in the Accreditation Platform.

Q. Will Board members be able to use the Accreditation Platform to provide their input on the self-assessment?

A. No. Board members will not provide their input on the self-assessment through the Accreditation Platform. Rather, we recommended that Board members use the self-assessment worksheet to record their scores. Copies of the self-assessment tool and worksheet are available for download on the [MSA website here](#). We recommend that the Board of Directors utilize a board meeting to discuss each members' input and determine final scores.

Q. Will we be able to print the self-assessment form and mail it in?

A. No. All programs must use the Accreditation Platform to submit their self-assessment.

Q. How is a program's final score determined?

A. A program's final score is determined by their Coordinating Program's assessment. In cases where Main Street America conducts the assessment, their scores in consultation with the Coordinating Program, will be used.

Q. Why are programs required to complete the self-assessment?

A. Annual program self-assessments are an important opportunity for local Main Street leaders, volunteers, partners, and Coordinating Programs to come together to reflect on the progress of a program's efforts and identify opportunities to build and grow. The self-assessment process and tool has been developed to help Main Street leaders recognize how their program's efforts already align with the new Standards and identify areas for deeper focus and prioritization. The self-assessment also serves as a basis for local leaders to work with their Coordinating Program on identifying areas for capacity building, program development, and training needs.

Q. How are Accredited and Affiliate designations through Main Street America determined?

A. To achieve Accreditation, programs will need to meet the baseline requirements and achieve an average score of at least three (3) points per each Standard. Programs that do not meet the baseline requirements will not be eligible for the Accredited designation, though they may qualify for designation at the Affiliate level.

Q. Do programs have to meet all of the Baseline Requirements?

A. In order to achieve the Accredited designation through Main Street America, a program must meet all of the Baseline Requirements.



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Q. Is there any flexibility with the scoring?

- A.** In this first year with the new Community Evaluation Framework and Accreditation Standards, Coordinating Programs will have some flexibility in scoring. This is to provide communities and coordinators with a grace period for understanding the new metrics and aligning work to this new framework and process.

Q. Are all activities listed under each Indicator requirements?

- A.** No. The Self-Assessment Tool provides examples of how Main Street programs can meet each Standard. These example activities are not an exhaustive or prescriptive list, rather they are included to provide guidance and inspiration. Programs are invited to count these and other related activities towards each Indicator. For City-hosted programs, equivalent or comparable activities as allowed by the local government's charter and policies may also be counted.

For example, under Standard 5: Preservation-Based Economic Development, we list nearly twenty (20) examples of the types of work that aligns with this Standard. Engaging in work related to each of these examples would indicate an exceptionally strong preservation approach, but it is not necessary for a program to do so in order to achieve high marks.

Q. Will programs that receive most of their funding from municipalities be penalized?

- A.** The new Standards reflect the importance of broad-based community support for Main Street programs. However, we recognize that city-sponsored programs may derive most of their operational funding from this single source. In these instances, programs may use income generated from sponsorships, grants, event revenue, merchandise sales, etc., as well as partnerships with other non-profit or civic organizations to demonstrate a diverse funding plan.

The establishment and management of a companion 501(c)(3) organization for acquiring privately-sourced funds to allow for special project funding may also be counted towards efforts to create a more sustainable organization. Additionally, city-based programs may also show broad-based community commitment through its committees and volunteer program.

Q. In addition to responding to the questions in the Baseline Requirements and Standards sections, do programs need to provide anything else in order to complete their self-assessment?

- A.** Yes. Programs will need to upload documents related to three Baseline Requirement questions:
- *Question 1 – Board Composition:* Listing the organization's current Board of Directors and detailing their affiliations, strengths, commitments, certain demographic information, and term information.
 - *Question 4 – Detailed Work Plan:* Showing expected outcomes, responsibilities, tasks, dates, etc., for each project that your program has undertaken in the last year.
 - *Question 5 – Program Budget:* The program's operating budget that shows actual income and expenses for the review year.



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Sample templates are available for download via the Accreditation Platform and [MSA website here](#). Programs may use these templates or their own materials that satisfy this upload requirement.

Please note that some Coordinating Programs will also require additional materials; this information will be provided on the platform's dashboard. Programs are advised to contact their Coordinating Program with any questions about these additional documentation requirements.

Q. Is attendance at the Main Street Now Conference a requirement of Main Street America designation?

- A.** Attending the Main Street Now Conference is not a requirement for Main Street America designation. However, programs are required to demonstrate the ways in which their staff, Board, and volunteers are engaging in ongoing training, education, and professional development related to downtown revitalization. Qualifying activities include participation in national, regional, and local industry-related conferences, quarterly trainings offered by Coordinating Programs, Main Street America webinars, Main Street America Institute courses, etc.

Please note: Some Coordinating Programs require their communities to attend the conference as a part of their letters of agreement or memorandum of understanding; programs must adhere to these and any other requirements.

Q. Do I still have to report reinvestment impact statistics to my Coordinating Program?

- A.** Yes. All programs will continue to report their reinvestment impact statistics to their Coordinating Program separate from the self-accreditation process. Coordinating Programs will also continue to send information and instructions about this reporting process and deadlines to programs.