



Support for Retaining Current Funding Levels for the Washington State Main Street Program

The 2009-2011 Governor's budget proposes to eliminate funding for technical support and reduce Main Street Program staff by 1.5 FTE. The Washington Trust for Historic Preservation supports retention of current funding and staffing levels for the Washington State Main Street Program for the following reasons:

- The Main Street Program is a tremendously successful downtown revitalization program that stimulates locally owned businesses and jobs that are tied directly to communities. Since 1991 the Washington Main Street Program has helped local communities leverage more than \$388 million in private reinvestment, generated 3,534 new and expanded businesses, and created 11,390 new jobs.
- Main Street is the state's only program that focuses on commercial revitalization and small business retention, expansion and development in those areas. Since it started in 1986, the program's annual Downtown Revitalization Training Institute has helped equip more than 2,300 community leaders with the knowledge and tools needed to create vibrant, sustainable local economies.
- The Main Street Program is a low cost program that generates an extremely high return on the State's investment in the form of local business development. For example, the Main Street community of Ellensburg ended 2008 with a net increase of 13 new locally owned businesses in its downtown core.
- The Main Street Program was codified in 2005, adding 1.5 FTE to provide technical support to meet the expanding community demand for the program. As a result of this recent investment in the Main Street Program, three new cities became Main Street communities: Chelan, Mount Vernon, and Olympia, bringing the total number of Main Street communities to 12. Additionally, four more communities are now able to participate at the Start Up level, Gig Harbor, Coupeville, Prosser, and Colfax.
- These new Main Street communities are just now beginning to take advantage of program benefits that spur businesses development. The proposed elimination of funding for technical support could result in elimination of all training and workshops in Main Street communities and the proposed reduction of 1.5 FTE will cripple the program's ability to work with the cities recently added to the program.
- The demands for timely services and practical technical assistance from local small businesses are increasing during this economic downturn. **Now is not the time to reduce support to local downtown revitalization groups.**

The Washington Trust for Historic Preservation is Washington's statewide, non-profit historic preservation advocacy organization dedicated to saving the historic places that tell our collective stories and to promoting sustainability, economic development, and community vitality through the adaptive reuse of historic buildings. Since our founding in 1976, the Washington Trust has provided critical support to local communities as they work to save the places that matter to them.

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