

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY[261]

Adopted and Filed

Rulemaking related to main street Iowa program

The Economic Development Authority hereby rescinds Chapter 39, “Main Street Iowa Program,” Iowa Administrative Code, and adopts a new Chapter 39 with the same title.

Legal Authority for Rulemaking

This rulemaking is adopted under the authority provided in Iowa Code sections 15.106A and 15.108(3).

State or Federal Law Implemented

This rulemaking implements, in whole or in part, Iowa Code sections 15.106A and 15.108(3).

Purpose and Summary

Pursuant to Executive Order 10, the Authority is rescinding Chapter 39 and adopting a new chapter in lieu thereof. The chapter describes the policies and procedures applicable to the Main Street Iowa Program. Communities selected by the Authority for participation in the program may receive technical assistance and financial assistance that enable the communities to revitalize traditional commercial districts.

The updated chapter is more concise throughout. A new definition of “designated main street Iowa community” is incorporated and will contribute to added clarity throughout the chapter. The definition of “eligible applicant” is updated to allow for the possibility of a combined application submitted by two or more cities, if invited by the Authority. References to the “National Main Street Center” are replaced with the current name of that organization, “Main Street America.”

Public Comment and Changes to Rulemaking

Notice of Intended Action for this rulemaking was published in the Iowa Administrative Bulletin on January 21, 2026, as **ARC 9975C**. A public hearing was held on the following date(s):

- February 10, 2026
- February 12, 2026

No one attended the public hearings. No public comments were received. No changes from the Notice have been made.

Adoption of Rulemaking

This rulemaking was adopted by the Authority Board on March 20, 2026.

Fiscal Impact

This rulemaking has no fiscal impact to the State of Iowa.

Jobs Impact

After analysis and review of this rulemaking, no impact on jobs has been found.

Waivers

Any person who believes that the application of the discretionary provisions of this rulemaking would result in hardship or injustice to that person may petition the Authority for a waiver of the discretionary provisions, if any, pursuant to 261—Chapter 199.

Review by Administrative Rules Review Committee

The Administrative Rules Review Committee, a bipartisan legislative committee which oversees rulemaking by executive branch agencies, may, on its own motion or on written request by any individual or group, review this rulemaking at its [regular monthly meeting](#) or at a special meeting. The Committee's meetings are open to the public, and interested persons may be heard as provided in Iowa Code section 17A.8(6).

Effective Date

This rulemaking will become effective on May 20, 2026.

The following rulemaking action is adopted:

ITEM 1. Rescind 261—Chapter 39 and adopt the following **new** chapter in lieu thereof:

CHAPTER 39
MAIN STREET IOWA PROGRAM

261—39.1(15) Purpose. Communities selected by the authority for participation in the main street Iowa program pursuant to this chapter will receive technical assistance from the authority's main street Iowa staff, professional staff of Main Street America, and other professional consultants to facilitate the communities' local main street programs and may receive financial assistance from the authority.

261—39.2(15) Definitions. The following definitions apply to the main street Iowa program unless the context otherwise requires:

"Authority" means the economic development authority created in Iowa Code section 15.105.

"Designated main street Iowa community" means a community that has been selected for participation in the program pursuant to this chapter.

"Director" means the director of the economic development authority.

"Eligible activity" includes organization, promotion, design, and economic vitality activities to create a positive image and an improved economy in a city's traditional commercial district.

"Eligible applicant" means a city in Iowa that files a joint application with a local nonprofit organization established by the community to govern the local main street program. Two or more cities may submit a combined application if invited to submit such combined application by the authority.

"Main Street America" means a nonprofit subsidiary of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, a nonprofit organization chartered by the United States Congress. Main Street America owns the licensed, trademarked Main Street Four-Point Approach™ (main street approach).

"Program" means the main street Iowa program established in this chapter.

"Traditional commercial district" means a downtown or neighborhood area that is walkable and is dominated by historic or older commercial architecture and contiguous commercial uses. A traditional commercial district defines the target area of the local program efforts.

261—39.3(15) Program administration.

39.3(1) Subcontracting. The authority may contract with Main Street America for technical and professional services, as well as with other appropriate consultants and organizations.

39.3(2) Advisory council. The director may appoint a state main street advisory council composed of individuals knowledgeable in traditional commercial district revitalization to advise the authority on the various elements of the program.

261—39.4(15) Application and selection process.

39.4(1) The authority will make standard application forms available only to prospective applicants that have attended an application workshop conducted by the authority. A completed application shall be

submitted to the authority no later than the date specified in the application and contain the information requested in the application.

39.4(2) The director will determine the number of applicants to be selected for inclusion in the program.

39.4(3) The authority will select applicants for participation in the program based on the criteria in rule 261—39.5(15).

39.4(4) The authority will notify applicants selected for participation in the program in writing.

261—39.5(15) Selection criteria. The authority will consider the following factors to select applicants for participation in the program:

39.5(1) The applicant has a well-planned budget demonstrating sustainable funding for ongoing operations and evidence of adequate local sources of funding to support the traditional commercial district revitalization organization and its programming.

39.5(2) The applicant has garnered broad-based financial and philosophical community support for the local program, including support from the city.

39.5(3) The applicant has provided evidence of willingness by local stakeholders to get involved in the effort.

39.5(4) The applicant has demonstrated its commitment to the main street approach and has hired or will hire an executive director to manage the local program.

39.5(5) The applicant is committed to historic preservation and preservation-based economic development, has a track record of preservation planning, and has a commitment to future preservation projects.

39.5(6) The applicant has provided evidence of traditional commercial district planning efforts and clearly defined goals.

39.5(7) The applicant has defined an organizational structure to manage local program efforts.

39.5(8) The applicant demonstrates an eagerness to learn and implement traditional commercial district revitalization strategies and techniques.

39.5(9) The applicant has clearly defined the boundaries of the proposed traditional commercial district and has articulated the reasons behind the location of the boundaries.

39.5(10) The applicant has identified a traditional commercial district that has clear potential for success, as demonstrated by the presence of the following elements:

- a.* Existence of historic character of the traditional commercial district.
- b.* Plans for the traditional commercial district demonstrate a recognition of traditional commercial district trends and address the challenges unique to that district.
- c.* Present market capacity defined by a current business environment upon which the district can build its revitalization efforts.
- d.* Present physical capacity defined by building stock and built environment upon which the district can build its revitalization efforts.

261—39.6(15) Reports. Designated main street Iowa communities shall submit performance reports to the authority as required that document the progress of the program activities.

261—39.7(15) Program agreement and noncompliance. Each designated main street Iowa community shall enter into a standard program agreement with the authority. The program agreement will describe the obligations of the authority and the designated main street Iowa community. If the authority finds that a designated main street Iowa community is not in compliance with the requirements of the program or the terms of the program agreement, the authority may terminate the program agreement.

These rules are intended to implement Iowa Code sections 15.106A(1) “i” and 15.108(3).

[Filed 3/25/26, effective 5/20/26]

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EDITOR’S NOTE: For replacement pages for IAC, see IAC Supplement 4/15/26.