

## **2025-2026 INDIANA MAIN STREET**

### **ASPIRING IAMS 1-YEAR PROGRAM**

#### **Applicant Process**

#### **Indiana Main Street Overview**

Since 1985, the Indiana Main Street Program (IMS) has been helping communities revitalize the economy, appearance, and image of their downtown commercial districts using the National Main Street Center's successful Main Street Approach. Main Street is a comprehensive, incremental approach to revitalization built around a community's unique heritage and attributes. Using local resources and initiative, the state program helps communities develop and provides support for the implementation of their own strategies to stimulate long-term economic growth and pride in the heart of the communities' downtown or commercial core.

In 2005, the IMS Program transitioned to the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA), where it is currently managed. IMS provides access to information, help getting focused, and community support and guidance to individuals and organizations interested in downtown revitalization. It also serves as a general clearinghouse for the latest tools and techniques in downtown development. General information, project development assistance information, and other resource materials are also available. The state program is a partner, but true revitalization success is built squarely on local commitment, initiative, and follow-through.

In 2019, the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs partnered with National Main Street and the Indiana Main Street Council to evaluate the IMS program, per Main Street America accreditation standards. In November 2020, OCRA announced updates to the program that add additional value to new and existing Main Street organizations alike. At the core of this improvement process is the development and implementation of the new Levels System.

# Aspiring IAMS 1-year Program – 2025-2026

## ASPIRING IAMS 1-YEAR PROGRAM

### APPLICANT PROCESS

Applicants interested in participating in the Aspiring IAMS 1-year Program are qualified as those with capacity or working to build capacity to execute the Main Street Four Point Approach, Baseline Requirements Indiana Accredited Main Street Standards.

Communities who are interested in applying should proceed with the following steps.

*STEP ONE: Review the website for applicant process and foundational requirements and criterion.*

All interested parties should review the [OCRA website](#) to make sure you are ready to proceed with the application process for Aspiring-IAMS.

*STEP TWO: Contact your community liaison.*

All interested parties should contact their [Community Liaison](#) to express interest.

*STEP THREE: ODAN for at least one year*

Communities are required to have at least one full year at the ODAN level at the time of application. CL will verify with IMS.

*STEP FOUR: Review IAMS Baseline Requirements and Accreditation Standards.*

Communities should review the **Baseline Requirements and Accreditation Standards** and ensure that they are achievable within the 1-year trial period.

*STEP FIVE: Complete Self-Assessment*

Communities can use this tool to help strengthen the application before the application's due date. This document will be included in the application process.

*STEP SIX: Submit the Letter of Intent and application*

Through this state link fill-out and submit the Aspiring-IAMS application: (INSERT LINK)

**Deadline: December 31, 2025 at 12:00 p.m., ET.**

*STEP SEVEN: Review and Determination*

Communities will be reviewed and invited or declined by Indiana Main Street program staff by **February 6, 2026**.

If declined, IMS will provide feedback to the community.

*STEP EIGHT: Begin 1-year process*

## INVITED COMMUNITIES – PROCESS

**Begins: March, 2026**

*The Aspiring IAMS community is not an accredited Indiana Main Street program and therefore is unable to represent itself as an accredited program. The community will continue to represent itself as an OCRA's Downtown Affiliate Network (ODAN) member through the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA).*

## 1-YEAR PROCESS

### Month 1/March 2026

- Prep visit – IMS meets with community to explain expectations.
- Accreditation Standards
  - o Go over submitted scoresheet and discuss lower areas.
  - o Work planning
- Reporting
  - o Go over requirements with reporting.
    - Who
    - What
    - Why
    - When
    - How
- Training requirements
  - o Staff expectation
  - o Board expectation
- Logos usage
- Staffing
- Accreditation time and expectations

### Months 2-12

Communities should develop work plans for each of the 4-points keeping in mind the six IAMS accreditation standards.

Establish goals for each of the four points and board of directors – Use SMART goal approach

*Work plans include: the project, expected (measurable) outcomes, specific tasks needed to accomplish the project, assignments of those tasks showing volunteer and staff responsibilities, timelines, and budgets. Note: some projects can take multiple years to achieve*

Include work plan progress (upload copies) in each quarterly reporting period.

### Required quarterly reporting:

Quarterly reporting will be required during the 1-year trial period. Reporting requirements will be shared during the Prep session.

## AT THE END OF 1-YEAR:

- The Aspiring IAMS community will be reviewed for IAMS Accreditation.