



Keeping City Hall in the Loop

Strategic Government Communications for MainStreet Organizations

Who is here with us today?

While we wait to get going, introduce yourself in the chat (name and community)!



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New Mexico MainStreet Network Roundtable, June 17, 2026

Amy M. Barnhart, NMMS Revitalization Specialist in Organization & Capacity-Building
Lucas Pedraza, NMMS Project Coordinator



ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT
NEW MEXICO



Presenters/Facilitators

Lucas Pedraza

NMMS Project Coordinator

Amy M. Barnhart

NMMS Revitalization Specialist in
Organization & Capacity-Building



Agenda



The Gap: Where Most Orgs Fall Short



What to Communicate: Content That Counts



Beyond the Report: Ways to Engage



Building the Relationship, Not Just the Case



Best Practices from the Network



Discussion

The Gap

Where Most Organizations Fall Short

What most orgs do:

- Submit monthly/quarterly reports
- Make annual budget/contract request
- Present to council once a year (maybe)

What's often missing:

- Proactive, strategic communication
- Relationship-building with staff & electeds
- Visibility between required touchpoints
- Communicating impact, not just compliance

Required reporting is the floor, not the ceiling.

Make Your Required Reports Count

Before adding more touchpoints, make sure your existing ones are working hard for you.



Mirror the contract

Report on deliverables in the same order they appear in the contract. Make it easy for your reader.



Go beyond attendance

Data, narrative, and photos tell your story — not how many meetings you attended.



Include the extras

Going above and beyond your contract deliverables? Include that too.



Remember: it's a service contract

You're implementing deliverables, not spending down a grant. Report accordingly.

Never skip or miss a report. Late reports signal you don't need the money or don't have your act together.

What to Communicate

Content that resonates with municipal partners

Return on Investment

Total \$\$ brought into community via grants, NMMS TA, reinvestment stats, business revenue generated

Impact Stories

Before/after examples, business owner testimonials, resident quotes, project milestones

Contract Deliverables

Clear demonstration that you are meeting — or exceeding — what the municipality is paying for

Alignment with City Priorities

Connect your work to economic development goals, comp plans, city council priorities

Data & Metrics

Vacancy rates, foot traffic, event attendance, volunteer hours, new businesses opened

What's Ahead

Upcoming events, projects in the pipeline, goals for the next quarter or year

The Annual Presentation

Making your funding request compelling

- Start with your elevator pitch — a few sentences that clearly explain your organization, district, and purpose. Even if you've done it before, someone in the audience still doesn't fully understand what you do.
- Reiterate your mission and demonstrate how accomplishments move it forward — use data, statistics, real examples.
- Demonstrate the municipality's return on investment. Add up the dollars you've brought into the community.
- Show you've met your contract deliverables. Reference your Annual Performance Report or Impact Report.
- Include a copy of your operating budget. Show that you have — or are pursuing — other funding sources.
- If the municipality has funded you at the same level for years, consider asking for an increase. Lay out the reasons and expected results.
- Ideally, the municipal contract is only about a third of your organization's revenue.

Tip: Use your Local Program Annual Performance Report and NMMS Impact Report as the foundation.

The Mid-Year Report

A high-impact, voluntary touchpoint

- Use data from the annual accreditation process and the Local Program Annual Performance Report as your starting point.
- If you have been designated a Main Street America Accredited program, highlight that achievement!
- Provide an overview of what you've achieved in the first half of the contract and what you plan to accomplish in the second half.
- A mid-year report is not required — which is exactly why it makes an impression. It signals professionalism and accountability.

Beyond the Report

Ways to engage municipal partners outside of required reporting



Council Presentations

Request quarterly time on the agenda. If that's not possible, use public comment to share highlights.



Brief Email Updates

Short, timely updates on wins, milestones, or events — not a full report, just a pulse check.



Handouts & Leave-Behinds

One-pagers, impact snapshots, or project summaries they can share with constituents.



One-on-One Meetings

Regular check-ins with key staff and elected officials. Build rapport before you need something.



Invitations & Visibility

Invite officials to your events, ribbon cuttings, cleanups. Let them see the work firsthand.



Joint Problem-Solving

Position yourself as a partner on downtown issues. Bring solutions, not just asks.

Building the Relationship

Not just the case

Understand Their Mindset

Government partners may have different priorities and frameworks. Learn to communicate in ways that connect with their values.

Stakeholder Engagement

Build rapport with key leaders, staff, and council members. Don't wait for formal decision-making moments to start the conversation.

Collaborative Problem-Solving

Emphasize shared goals. Use your ETS, Work Plan, or Strategic Plan to connect your work to municipal priorities.

No Surprises

Plant seeds early about future projects and activities. If something is coming up for a vote, discuss it with officials individually ahead of time.

Framing Public Value

Frame your services as essential and cost-saving. Use testimonials from business owners and residents.

Data-Driven Communication

Present clear evidence of impact and cost-effectiveness. Use your Annual Performance Report and Impact Report.

Common Mistakes

Instead of this . . .

- ✗ Only showing up when you need something
- ✗ Reports that read like checklists
- ✗ Assuming officials know what you do
- ✗ Treating the contract as a grant
- ✗ Skipping or delaying reports
- ✗ Waiting for budget season to build the case

Try this

- ✓ Maintain visibility year-round
- ✓ Lead with impact and stories, back with data
- ✓ Educate consistently — turnover happens
- ✓ Report on service delivery, not grant spending
- ✓ Reliable, on-time reporting builds trust
- ✓ The case should be built all year long

Best Practices from the Network

What does strong government communication look like?

Regular Council Visibility

Organizations that present quarterly or use public comment to share brief updates report stronger relationships and smoother contract renewals.

The “Friendly FYI” Email

Short, informal emails to key staff and electeds when something noteworthy happens — a grant awarded, a business opening, an event success. Not a report, just a heads-up.

Inviting Officials Into the Work

Walk-throughs, ribbon cuttings, cleanup days, strategic planning sessions. When officials see the work firsthand, they become advocates.

Year-End Impact Snapshot

A polished one-pager that summarizes the year’s accomplishments in plain language with visuals. Easy for officials to share and reference.

May 11, 2026



MainStreet T or C - At A Glance

Work / Project Title	Work / Project Description	Project Status	Comments / Next Steps
Foch Street Great Blocks Project	Remodel of Foch Street between Main Ave and Broadway; new pavement, sidewalks, landscaping, water cachement, and other amenities. Funded by New Mexico MainStreet Capital Outlay.	In progress	Construction is moving forward on schedule. MainStreet is sending a weekly email update to affected business, and is participating in weekly check-in meetings with involved parties.
Levitt AMP Truth or Consequences Music Series	Concert Series in Ralph Edwards Park 2026-2028, funded in part by a grant from the Levitt Family Foundation. The goal of this series is to bring the community together for free, high-quality live music concerts in an outdoor family-friendly space.	In progress	Series will take place in September and October on Thursday evenings from 6-9 pm. Our headliners have been approved by the Levitt Foundation, and we are currently working on contracts with them so we can announce the bands.
Dancing in the Streetlight	A continuation of last summer's free downtown concert series, organized by MainStreet and City staff.	In progress	This year's series will be held on the First Friday of each summer month - June, July, August. There will be a free concert near Healing Waters Plaza. Music lineup is finalized and will be announced as soon as contracts are signed.
Independence Day/250 Celebration	A community celebration of the 250th anniversary of the United States	In progress	Scheduled for Friday, July 3 (to not conflict with Elephant Butte State Park celebration on the 4th). We are working on NMDOT closure application for the parade route.

Upcoming Events / Promotions	Work / Project Description	Project Status	Comments / Next Steps
Second Saturday Art Hop - monthly	Next SSAH is June 13	In progress	Each month we create a Facebook event and update a page on our website with information on what is happening at galleries/businesses during Art Hop.
Quarterly Business Breakfast	Quarterly mixers for local business owners to share information and promote cross promotion	In progress	Next event TBD
Deck of Cards	We will be auctioning off the original artwork at the Sneak Peek Party, and card decks will be available for sale.	In progress	Cards are in production and should be delivered late May 2026; Sneak Peek party and auction TBD, likely September 2026.
Projects / Events Complete 2026			
Clean & Beautiful Litter clean-up #1	Part out our joint application with the city for the the Clean & Beautiful Grant	Complete	Held on Saturday, February 14, 1 pm at Healing Waters Plaza (rescheduled from January when weather was cold and rainy)
New Mexico MainStreet State Conference	Feb 18-20 in Albuquerque	Complete	Conference with other MainStreet directors/board members with presentations on relevant revitalization topics and opportunity to learn what is working well in other MainStreet communities.
Main Street America Now Conference	National Conference April 12-15 in Tulsa, OK	Complete	National conference to learn about the work happening across the country through the MainStreet movement.
Business Legacy Planning Seminar	Free seminar to help business owners think about the future of their business when they prepare to retire, or in case of the unexpected.	Complete	Held March 24, 3-4 pm in the MainStreet office; attendees were able to scheduled a 1:1 session for the following morning as well.
Clean & Beautiful Litter clean-up #2	Part of our joint application with the city for the Clean & Beautiful Grant	Complete	Held Friday, April 24, at 1 pm in Ralph Edwards Park, in conjunction with the Sierra County Clean-up Day.

Public Meeting Attendance, Public Comment Update & Monthly At-A-Glance Spreadsheet

YOU ARE INVITED TO AN

OFFICE GRAND OPENING

SEPTEMBER 25TH 5:30 PM

1307 SAN PEDRO DR. NE | ALBUQUERQUE, NM 87110

PLEASE RSVP:



MAIN STREET AMERICA 2025 Affiliate

ONE ALBUQUERQUE economic development

INCLUDING REMARKS BY
MAYOR TIM KELLEY
COUNCILOR TAMMY FIEBELK
COUNCILOR NICHOLE RODRIGUEZ
RSPD EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ADRIAN N. CARP




Newsletters & Invites to Elected Officials

REVITALIZE SAN PEDRO PARTNERSHIP receives OUTDOOR EQUITY FUNDING



Contact: Michelle Simon
Michelle.Simon@sdd.nm.gov
 (505) 439-2320

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
 October 1, 2025

State awards \$2.2M to connect 22,000 youth with outdoor programs
Outdoor Equity Fund grants 61 programs in 17 counties

SANTA FE – The New Mexico Economic Development Department awarded \$2,178,029 through its Outdoor Equity Fund to 61 programs that will provide outdoor education and career training to more than 22,000 youth across the state, with a special emphasis on low-income communities and Tribal communities.

The Outdoor Recreation Division (ORD) is funding programs that provide hands-on outdoor education for young people from low-income families, with 14 serving Tribal communities. Recipients will provide over \$1.7 million in matching funds, multiplying the impact. Forty of the awarded programs offer workforce development that connects youth directly to meaningful careers in

NEW MEXICO
 OUTDOOR RECREATION DIVISION

Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham
 Cabinet Secretary Rob Black
 Deputy Cabinet Secretary Isaac Romero
 ORD Director Karina Armijo



A Ribbon Cutting for a New Chapter

did it. This month, we cut the ribbon on our first-ever office space on the San Pedro corridor—a home base for revitalization, collaboration, and community. It's more than just an office; it's a physical sign that the work we've been doing together is here to stay. Thank you to everyone who joined us to celebrate. If you missed it, don't worry—there's more to come. This space is ours, and we can't wait to fill it with momentum, movement, and magic.

Support our work by making a tax-deductible donation now:



Impact Report Examples

"As the Mayor of Alamogordo, I am proud to partner with Alamogordo MainStreet on their revitalization efforts. Their commitment to our community and their tireless efforts to create a vibrant, dynamic downtown area have had a tremendous impact on our city. By working together, we have been able to attract new businesses and enhance the overall quality of life for our residents. I look forward to continuing our partnership with Alamogordo MainStreet as we work to build a bright future for our community."

Mayor Susan Payne
City of Alamogordo



"With Carlsbad MainStreet and the Pearl of the Pecos Arts and Cultural District working in concert both the last rehabilitation phase of the Cavern Theatre and the state designation of the Pearl of the Pecos Arts and Cultural District will be achieved. Reaching these two goals will provide a positive impact making downtown Carlsbad a destination for arts and cultural experiences."

Ken Britt
Pearl of the Pecos Committee Member

AT A GLANCE • OUR 2022-2023 IMPACT



\$157,000 IN PRIVATE REINVESTMENT

818
VOLUNTEER HOURS



85+
BUSINESSES SUPPORTED

\$273,000
IN PUBLIC REINVESTMENT



15 NEW BUSINESSES
21 BUILDING REHABS



\$273,000 IN NMMS CAPITAL OUTLAY FUNDING
\$43,705 IN NMMS TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE SERVICES

188
NET JOBS ADDED



10,000+
EVENT ATTENDEES



\$298,000
IN GRANTS RECEIVED



1
DESIGN/PLACEMAKING
PROJECT COMPLETED





DOWNTOWN ABQ MAINSTREET AND ARTS & CULTURAL DISTRICT

Impact Summary

\$120,000 City Contract | Economic Vitality & Revitalization



D4 — Three Economic-Driven Events - In Progress (2 of 3 Complete)

- Event 1: Bands of Enchantment (Vendor Support)
- Event 2: QUANTUM Conference (Business Support)
 - Total combined attendance: 3,400
- Vendor/business participants per event:
 - Event 1: 24 small business participants
 - Event 2: 150 downtown businesses engaged
- Economic benefit: Directly strengthening the business ecosystem, building lasting relationships between event organizers and the local merchant community, and supporting downtown's long-term economic activation goals.

D5 — Technical Assistance (50 Instances) - In Progress

- Current count toward 50: 30
- Breakdown by type of assistance: Permitting 13 | Finance 2 | Grants / Funding 11 | Insurance 4
- Business demographics: Store Front 12 | Nonprofit 4 | Farmer 7 | Bakery 1 | Artist 6
- # businesses that acted on assistance received: 23
- Economic benefit: Chrisman & McMullan (2004, Journal of Small Business Management) found counseled businesses survived at a 65% rate vs. 47% for the general population. A 40-study systematic review by the Inter-American Development Bank found technical assistance improves labor productivity and job creation.

D1 — Wayfinding Outreach (8 Events) ✓ Complete

- Total attendees across all 8 presentations: 20
- Organizations engaged: Small business owners, Property owners, City staff, County staff
- Geographic reach: Downtown ABQ Mainstreet District / Metropolitan District
- Economic benefit: Successful wayfinding projects show a 10–20% increase in retail foot traffic in corridors with improved signage

D2 — Business Listings & Downtown Directory ✓ Complete

- Total businesses verified and listed: 196
- Number of records updated or corrected (accuracy improvement): 20
- Digital metrics (June 2026 – March 2026):
 - Views (directory visits): 1,151
 - Event Count (directory interactions): 4,269

Downtown ABQ Mainstreet District Contract — Impact Summary | Page 1

- Key Events (actions critical to business success—such sign-ups, or form submissions): 3,715
- Economic benefit: A study conducted in February of 2026 titled "Getting on the Map: The Impact of Online Listings on Business Performance, states that 'the results suggest that new listings increase revenues in the range of 5%–10%... Establishments that struggle to develop a reputation (e.g., nonchains or those in tourist areas) and those with a higher quality of product (e.g., larger restaurants or those with good reviews) experience larger increases after being listed.'" (<https://pubsonline.informs.org/doi/10.1287/mnsc.2024.04716>)

IMPACT NARRATIVE

Through a \$120,000 city contract, Downtown ABQ Mainstreet delivered a coordinated portfolio of economic development activities that touched every layer of the Downtown corridor including digital visibility and efforts supporting physical wayfinding to direct business support, community activation, and long-range planning.

- Downtown Wayfinding: A comprehensive wayfinding outreach campaign in partnership with the Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency (MRA) engaged civic, professional, and community groups to build the public awareness and stakeholder alignment necessary for corridor-wide navigation improvements that directly increase foot traffic and consumer spending.
- Downtown Business Directory: 196 active business in the corridor were verified and accurately listed in a digital directory, ensuring that residents and visitors can find and patronize local businesses with ease.
- 8th Street + Robinson Park Feasibility Study: A rigorous community input study was conducted, producing a documented record of stakeholder priorities, challenges, and opportunities that will guide revitalization decisions for years to come.
- Downtown Growers' Market: A detailed Downtown Growers' Market Plan was delivered complete with programming strategies, collaborative promotions, and a calendar of events designed to draw families, tourists, and repeat visitors (90,000 annually) to the heart of Downtown.
- Small Business Direct Support: 30 of contracted 50 technical assistance interactions have been provided to Downtown small businesses, offering hands-on support in areas including

CAPITAL OUTLAY PROJECTS

In the last 10 years, Carlsbad MainStreet has brought more than half a million dollars in capital outlay to Carlsbad.

Streetscape Improvements -- \$140,000

Downtown Parking Improvements -- \$25,000

Streetscape Improvements, Pedestrian Amenities, Site Furnishings & Parking Improvements -- \$38,500

City-wide Wayfinding Signage Plan -- \$46,000

Streetscape Improvements for Canal Street Construction -- \$130,000

Downtown Master Plan -- \$86,000

Halagueno Arts Park Phase IIa -- \$80,000

TOTAL -- \$545,500



Demonstrate Your Worth & Justify Your Funding Request

Reasons for Requesting Budget Increase for Operating Expenses

- To ensure that we are able to maintain an educated and professional executive director by increasing the position's salary to a competitive level
- To hire part-time staff to assist the director with office administrative duties
- To hire external bookkeeper to review financials on a monthly basis
- To cover travel expenses so staff and board members can attend advanced trainings to prepare them for their roles and provide them with innovative ideas for the organization and community
- To relocate to more suitable office and storage spaces

MainStreet Operating Expenses 2012

Salary	\$38,000
Insurance - General & Employee	\$3,500
Rent	\$3,720
Internet & Telephone	\$1,940
Meetings - Local, State & National	\$5,150
Marketing/Advertising	\$9,200
Office - Equipment, Supplies & Cleaning	\$1,550
Accounting Services	\$750
Dues & Subscriptions	\$500
Repairs & Maintenance	\$200
Postage & Shipping	\$300
Copies & Scans	\$40

Total **\$64,850**
(\$94,950 Total Budget)

Finally. . .

In addition to requesting additional funding from the City of Carlsbad, we are also looking at other ways to diversify our funding stream:

- We have introduced a new fundraising plan, utilizing annual partner packages and doing away with individual solicitations for each project
- We are looking at ways to make our Little Miss Merry Christmas fundraising contest even MORE profitable (it brought in \$8,400 last year)
- We are meeting with a NM MainStreet Program Associate to discuss fundraising events to raise additional funds for our organization, but also create a fun event for the community
- We have asked Eddy County to increase our budget amount as well
- We are leveraging our municipal funding into grants that improve the appearance and quality of life for the residents and visitors of Carlsbad

Results if Budget Allowance is Increased from \$35K to \$60K

- Salary increase ensures executive director (ED) is paid at a level comparable to peers at other local community agencies, creating less turnover and higher quality performance
- Part-time staff is able to share administrative burden currently on executive director, freeing up ED's time for other tasks such as event planning, fundraising strategy and marketing
- External bookkeeper creates a second check point for finances, ensuring that all entries are being categorized as they should be
- Advanced training for board members prepares them to serve as ambassadors for MainStreet in the community and provides them with fresh ideas for events, fundraising, design improvements and more
- An upgrade in office and storage space would result a more professional view of organization, and better space for storing holiday decorations, which are currently being stored in a city-owned shed with large holes in the roof



Discussion

What's working in your community?

What challenges are you facing with government communication?

What would help you communicate more effectively?

Thank You!

Amy M. Barnhart

NMMS Revitalization Specialist in Organization & Capacity-Building

ambconsultingnm@gmail.com | 773.368.7557

Lucas Pedraza

NMMS Project Coordinator

Lucas.Pedraza@edd.nm.gov | 505.412.3963