



2023 ILLINOIS MAIN STREET CONFERENCE

NOVEMBER 14 – 16, 2023



ILLINOIS
MAIN STREET

Keynote Speakers



Malcolm Crawford



Corey Dooley



Akwi Nji



Jennifer Zach



Ilana Preuss



**Lt. Governor
Juliana Stratton**

"I'm thrilled to attend this year's Illinois Main Street Conference in Pontiac. Main Streets across our state showcase the best of small businesses and the revitalization of downtowns," said *Lt. Governor Juliana Stratton*. "The Illinois Main Street Conference brings together civic leaders, business professionals and community champions to collaborate and further enhance our Main Street districts. Growing these communities is an economic driver that's good for business and all of Illinois."

Guests & Guest Speakers



Honorio Torres



Wesley Ordoñez



Leanne Tingay



Jason Neises



Dionne Baux



Frankye Payne



Kathy La Plante



Gustavo Ustariz



Tasha Sams



Joi Cuartero Austin



Tucker Lee



Joe Lawniczak



Beth Walker



Kristen Desler



Lindsey Dunn



Guests & Guest Speakers



Donna Pepper



Janna Groharing



Liz Vincent



Aaron Holverson



Ashely Sarver



Jim Miller



Jarid Jones



Jennifer Johnson



Judy Tighe



Tanya Smith



Jessica Dempsey



Misty Bell



Andrea Shultz Winter



ILLINOIS

MAIN STREET

2023 STATE CONFERENCE – PONTIAC, IL NOVEMBER 14 – 16, 2023

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 13

Late afternoon	Setup for application workshop	Courthouse Classroom
----------------	--------------------------------	----------------------

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 14

9:00 am – 3:00 pm	Conference Setup	All venues
9:00 am	Application Workshop Registration	Courthouse Classroom
10:00 am	Application Workshop Morning Session	Courthouse Classroom
12:00 – 1:30 pm	Application Workshop Lunch on your own	Throughout District
1:30 pm	Application Workshop Afternoon Session	Courthouse Classroom
By 3:00 pm	Application Workshop Complete	Courthouse Classroom

3:00 – 6:00 pm	Conference Registration	Pontiac Museum Complex
6:00 – 8:00 pm	Conference Community Reception	Pontiac Museum Complex

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 15

8:00 – 9:30 am	Conference Registration	Eagle PACC
9:15 am	Conference Welcome	Eagle PACC
9:30 – 10:30 am	Wednesday Opening Keynote Session Malcom Crawford & Corey Dooley	Eagle PACC
10:45 – 11:45	Breakout Sessions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Crunchin' the Nums' ▪ Keeping Small Towns on the Map ▪ If You Build It, Will They Come? ▪ Equitable Entrepreneurial Ecosystems ▪ <i>HOLD FOR BACKUP</i> 	All venues Courthouse Main Courthouse Classroom Eagle PACC City Hall Council Chambers City Library Classroom
11:45 – 1:00 pm	Lunch on your own	Throughout District
1:00 – 2:00 pm	Breakout Sessions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Building Facades ▪ Ilana Preuss with Chicago cohort (1-315) ▪ Crunchin' the Nums' – Office Hours BONUS ▪ Creating Community Through Identity ▪ Main Street: Social & Economic Challenges 	All venues Courthouse Main Courthouse Classroom City Library Classroom Eagle PACC City Hall Council Chambers

2:15 – 3:15 pm

Breakout Sessions

- Signage Design Principles
- Ilana Preuss with Chicago cohort (1-315)
- Crunchin' the Nums' – Office Hours
- WEPA! Mercado del Pueblo Business Incubator
- Supporting Entrepreneurs: The Missing Link

All venues

Courthouse Main
 Courthouse Classroom
 City Library Classroom
 Eagle PACC
 City Hall Council Chambers

3:30 – 4:30 pm

**Wednesday Closing Keynote Session
Akwi Nji**

Eagle PACC

3:00 pm – 6:00 pm

Awards and Dinner Setup

The Elks Lodge

6:00 pm

Awards and Dinner Social

The Elks Lodge

7:00 pm

Awards and Dinner

The Elks Lodge

8:30 pm

Awards and Dinner Compete

The Elks Lodge

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 16

9:00 – 10:00 am

**Thursday Opening Keynote Session
Jennifer Zach**

Eagle PACC

10:15 – 11:00 am

Breakout Sessions

All venues

(Courthouse main and classroom NOT available on Thursday)

- Community Heart & Soul (10:15 – 11:45)
- Libertyville MainStreet: 35 Strong Years
- The Power of Collaboration
- District Walking Tour

Eagle PACC
 City Hall Council Chambers
 City Library Classroom
 TBD

11:15 am – 12:00 pm

Breakout Sessions

All venues

(Courthouse main and classroom NOT available on Thursday)

- Community Heart & Soul
- 501c3/c6/City Panel
- From Data to Development : AI's Role in Community Transformation
- District Walking Tour

Eagle PACC
 City Hall Council Chambers
 City Library Classroom
 TBD

12:00 – 1:00 pm

Lunch

TBD

1:00 – 2:00 pm

**Thursday Closing Keynote Session
Ilana Preuss**

Eagle PACC

2:00 pm

Conference Closing

Eagle PACC



**Lt. Governor
Juliana Stratton**



2023 Illinois Main Street Conference Sessions

Pontiac, Illinois – November 14 - 16

Tuesday Pre-Conference – Daytime November 14

Illinois Community Application Workshop

Presented by Kathy LaPlante, Joi Cuartero Austin and Gustavo Ustariz

Join Main Street America staff members as they review the world of Main Street 101, funding, partnerships, community initiatives and dive into the upcoming 2024 new community application cycle. (The physical and online application will be available following the state conference, with a tentative application deadline of February 2, 2024, and tentative community designation announcement by March 15, 2024.)

Tuesday Registration and Evening Community Reception – November 14

Hosted by City of Pontiac, Pontiac Main Street and Illinois Main Street

Find your name tag and don't forget your goodie bag full of Pontiac treasures! Join your friends, colleagues and Pontiac hosts at our opening reception, held at the Pontiac Museum Complex. We'll have great food and beverage to welcome you with an open house inside the museum complex, with fun and entertainment outside.

Wednesday Morning Keynote – November 15

When Soul City Met Black Wall Street

Presented by Malcolm Crawford and Corey Dooley, Austin African American Business Networking Association (AAABNA)

Prepare for an extraordinary journey as Malcolm and Corey share compelling insights from their historic bus trip. Discover the connections and inspirations that link the Soul City Corridor in Chicago to the renowned Black Wall Street in the Greenwood District of Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Wednesday Afternoon Keynote – November 15

From Studio to Main Street: Unleashing Arts and Culture's Economic Potential

Presented by Akwi Nji, Akwi Nji Studio

Discover the incredible power of creativity, arts, and culture in driving economic growth and vibrant communities. Akwi Nji, with her unique blend of corporate and creative experience, will share actionable steps for community leaders, entrepreneurs, and artists.

Thursday Morning Keynote – November 16

Leadership Resilience: Mastering the Art and Science of Listening to Our Bodies and Managing the Fight-Flight-Freeze Response

Presented by Jennifer Zach, Zach Coaching, LLC

Prepare to be inspired and empowered as Jennifer shares her expertise on harnessing the power of resilience and understanding the intricacies of how our bodies respond in challenging situations. Her insights promise to be enlightening and invaluable, offering a fresh perspective on leadership and personal growth.

Thursday Afternoon Keynote – November 16

The Civic Infrastructure of Action and Getting Stuff Done

Presented by Ilana Preuss, Recast City, LLC and author of Recast Your City

The success of a Main Street district is dependent on property owners, business owners, and elected officials believing in the potential and the importance of Main Street. These people are the civic infrastructure that makes projects succeed and places flourish. But what happens when you don't have that buy-in? What happens when you don't have that personal infrastructure in place? How do you create a Main Street that is loved, with businesses that thrive, and more access to business growth for people from all different parts of your demographics? This session will wrap up the conference with concrete actions to inspire and help you build this capacity right now, with a method that every participant can take home.

2023 Illinois Main Street Awards – Evening November 15

Join us on Wednesday evening as we present awards for exceptional community revitalization projects and outstanding community volunteers. We are thrilled to announce that Illinois Lt Governor Juliana Stratton and Main Street America Vice President Dionne Baux will both be joining us for this special conference event. (Ticket required)

Wednesday – Thursday Workshops (schedule to be finalized) – November 15 and 16

Presented by Featured Consultants, Community Partners and Main Street America staff

WEPA! Mercado del Pueblo Business Incubator

Presented by Honorio Torres and Wesley Ordoñez

If You Build It, Will They Come? Creating a Successful Incubator Space

Presented by Beth Walker and Kristen Desler, Batavia MainStreet

Opening in June 2020, Batavia Boardwalk Shops have quickly grown and succeeded over the past four years. With strong sales, focused training, community marketing and growth of the community's entrepreneurial ecosystem, this addition to Batavia serves as a creative model and inspiration to other communities.

Building Facades: Design Improvements for Every Size and Style

Presented by Joe Lawniczak, Wisconsin Main Street

Joe has created designs for over 1,700 façade renovations in the past 22 years. He will highlight many of these in this fun and highly visual presentation. He will include examples of every size, shape, and style, as well as delve into elements such as storefronts, windows, cornices, masonry, paint colors, and more.

Creating Community Through Identity

Presented by Tanya Smith, Jessica Dempsey and Lauren DiSandro, Addelise Design Studio

Designed to attract businesses, sponsors, and donors, join Addelise for a comprehensive review to craft and implement a personalized marketing strategy. Resources include how to share information with the community, as well as how to engage and bring your community together through events and initiatives. Case study will include Batavia MainStreet, a 25-year-old designated Illinois Main Street community.

The Power of Collaboration

Presented by Gustavo Ustariz, Main Street America

Main Street America leads a movement with the mission of advancing shared prosperity. This session covers the power of collaboration in achieving shared goals between location Main Street districts. In today's competitive economic market with interconnected communities, success often depends on the ability to build strong relationships, foster teamwork and bridge diverse perspectives. Participants will gain an understating of the power of collaboration with practical insights and examples.

Crunchin' the Nums'

Presented by Ashley Sarver, Urban Planner, and Aaron Holverson, AIA, Studio GWA

This session will review the basics of evaluating a development's financial feasibility and common incentive tools to integrate into the capital stack. Participants will be doing some light math (crunchin' the nums') with their phone's calculator to determine the financing gap. The goal is to leave participants with a few tools to evaluate potential new projects in their community and help advocate and bring partners together to make it happen.

Crunchin' the Nums' BONUS – Office Hours

Hosted by Ashley Sarver and Aaron Holverson, Studio GWA

Facing design and financial challenges in your downtown building stock? Join Ashley and Aaron to problem solve during open office hours! Whether you want to spitball strategies and design or bring questions on renovation, Historic Tax Credits or façade improvements – Ashley and Aaron are your resource to overcome project challenges. To make the best use of time, please bring photos, maps, plans, financials and any other items that will help describe your project.

Keeping Small Towns on the Map

Presented by Lindsey Dunn, Aledo Main Street and Donna McGuire Pepper, Paxton Main Street

Two Illinois communities, Aledo and Paxton, will discuss the process of initiating and scaling their local Main Street program. Each will discuss vital developments and improvements that are occurring in their respective downtowns and community partnerships. There is not a 'one size fits all' model when it comes to small towns. Find out what Aledo and Paxton are doing and what you could do too, to keep your small town on the map.

Equitable Entrepreneurial Ecosystems: Centering Your Main Street

Presented by Tasha Sams, Main Street America

Does your entrepreneurial ecosystem reflect your community at large? Are there groups or communities who aren't represented in your downtown? In this session, we'll cover what this phrase means, the basic framework needed for understanding and evaluating your community's existing entrepreneurial ecosystem, and how to intentionally center DEIA as you develop and build upon your ecosystem.

Design Principles for Signage on Main Street

Presented by Joe Lawniczak, Wisconsin Main Street

Signs on Main Street can portray an image (either good or bad) of the quantity and quality of businesses within a district. In this highly-visual presentation, Joe will discuss sign types to avoid, and design strategies for effective and appropriate signage in typical Main Street districts.

Community Heart & Soul: What's It All About?

Presented by Leanne Tingay and Jason Neises, Community Heart & Soul

Community Heart & Soul is a four-phase, step-by-step process that brings residents together to identify and honor the unique character of their town and the emotional connection of the people who live there. We help people to shape the future of their communities, ultimately strengthening the social, cultural, and economic vibrancy of each place. Learn more about this organization and community process.

From Data to Development: AI's Role in Community Transformation

Presented by Tucker Lee, Partner, Romain Berg Digital Marketing Agency

Let's explore AI's pivotal role in revitalizing downtown communities. Delving into real-world examples, we will discuss how machine learning and data analytics drive economic growth, enhance public services and foster cultural richness. Together, we can understand how AI can be integrated into urban development to create vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable communities, blending technology and human-centric approaches seamlessly.

Libertyville MainStreet: 35 Strong Years

Presented by Jennifer Johnson, Libertyville MainStreet

Founded in 1989, Libertyville MainStreet is one of the longest designated and nationally-accredited Illinois Main Street communities. In addition, they were awarded the Great American Main Street Award (GAMSA) in 1997. With over 50 days of community and retail events per year, this community and organization is a model for other communities as they continue to operate this highly successful program. Happy 35th to Libertyville!

501c3? 501c6? City Led? Stand Alone? What Organizational Structure Makes Sense

Presented by Andrea Schultz Winter, Greater Freeport Partnership; Judy Taylor Tighe, Jacksonville Main Street; Liz Vincent, City of Pontiac; and Janna Groharing, Sterling Main Street

If you ask 50 communities what structure makes sense and what works, you'll likely have 50 answers to that question. With community populations ranging from 11,000 – 24,000, learn about four different models that successfully work in current Illinois Main Street communities.

Supporting Entrepreneurs: The Missing Link in Place-Based Economic Development

Presented by Tasha Sams, Main Street America

Supporting entrepreneurs is crucial to the element of Place and to building upon the asset (both human and non-human) that speak to the authentic character of your community. This session takes a look at the lifecycle of small business ownership and how to support entrepreneurs at each stage, while creating a welcoming downtown culture that is uniquely your own.

Main Street's Role in Addressing Social and Economic Challenges

Presented by Gustavo Ustariz, Main Street America

Main Street America commercial districts and their surrounding communities are not isolated from the realities of the modern world, and in many cases face numerous social and economic challenges that demand innovative solutions that stretch beyond our core focus of place-based economic development. We will explore the role that local Main Street programs as the center of commercial activity can play in addressing pressing social issues. The session will explore ways the Main Street framework must evolve and adapt to effectively tackle social and economic challenges in collaboration with other key stakeholders in the community.

