

BUILDING A SMALL BUSINESS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

While economy has improved, many businesses are still struggling to deal with a new reality that includes tightened credit, greater competition and a new consumer lifestyles choices that is changing demand for goods and services. While downtown organizations often play an important role in assisting small businesses, it is not always easy to identify those activities that would have the greatest impact or have business support. During this session, Hilary Greenberg (Greenberg Development Services) will review how Main Street organization can evaluate their business district and provide new resources and technical assistance to help businesses flourish in these challenging times. During this session, we also will discuss ways to engage stakeholders and build the support and buy-in necessary to be avoid common pitfalls and mistakes that can derail your organization's efforts.

GROWING YOUR BUSINESS DISTRICT: BEST PRACTICES FOR ATTRACTING RETAIL

With the economy rebounding, communities once again are refocusing their efforts on filling vacant storefronts and developing underutilized properties. While coming up with a list of desired tenants is not difficult, determining the best approach to take to attract tenants is challenging for even the strongest revitalization programs. During this session, we will explore best practices from across the country that local governments can use to successfully attract new businesses. Topics to be covered during this session include destination tenants, compiling a realistic prospect list, tips for "cold calling" and canvassing leads, strategies for working with realtors and property owners as well as incentives or financial tools that can help close the deal.

FILLING VACANCIES AND STRENGTHENING BUSINESSES

Successful Main Street communities are ones that have both strong business retention and recruitment programs. While the economy has improved and new businesses are locating in the downtown again, many businesses continue to struggle and attracting the "right" business is not easy. What are the keys to building a successful business recruitment and retention program? During this fast-past workshop, nationally recognized economic development consultant Hilary Greenberg of Greenberg Development Services (Charlotte, North Carolina) will review effective strategies that can be used to build stronger downtown business retention and attraction programs. Using a combination of case studies and experience working with communities across the country, the speaker will review practical tips for identifying emerging market opportunities, building upon existing business clusters, strategies for soliciting new businesses and investment as well as ways to avoid common mistakes that could derail your efforts. Quote from the Speaker: "Rather than waiting for the market to rebound, Main Street communities can take an active role in reshaping their community's retail mix by implementing a simple but effective business recruitment and retention program."