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Main Street Economic Revitalization Program Evaluation

Prepared for Destination Medical Center by Fourth Economy Consulting

June 30, 2026

Report prepared for Destination Medical Center

Destination Medical Center (DMC) is the largest public-private economic initiative in Minnesota's history. The 20-year plan to transform Rochester into a global destination for health and wellness will attract developers, investors, startups, and entrepreneurs to live, work, and play in America's City for Health. For more information, visit **dmc.mn**.

Report by Fourth Economy

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Dear Community Members, Partners, and Stakeholders,

The Main Street Economic Revitalization Program, funded by the Minnesota Legislature and administered through the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), was created to support economic recovery, encourage private investment, and strengthen commercial corridors across Minnesota.

Destination Medical Center Economic Development Agency (DMC EDA) was honored to serve as the local administrator for this program in Rochester. Working closely with DEED, businesses, property owners, and community partners, we helped deploy grant funding to support projects that invested in the future of our community.

Across three rounds of funding, the program supported a diverse range of projects, including building renovations and improvements, business expansions, property rehabilitation efforts, customer experience enhancements, and investments that strengthened the long-term sustainability of local businesses. These projects helped leverage significant private investment while supporting business and property owners committed to Rochester's continued growth and vitality.

Beyond physical improvements, the projects funded through the program contributed to broader community outcomes, including economic vitality, commercial corridor activation, business retention and growth, and neighborhood revitalization.
To better understand the impact of these investments, DMC EDA commissioned an independent assessment of the Main Street Economic Revitalization Program. The purpose of this evaluation was to examine the program's outcomes, understand participant experiences, identify successes and challenges, capture lessons learned, and inform future economic development initiatives and investments.

The assessment includes feedback and perspectives from grant recipients and stakeholders whose experiences provide valuable insight into how the program functioned and where opportunities exist to strengthen future efforts.

We extend our sincere appreciation to the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development for its partnership and investment in Rochester, to the grant recipients whose vision and commitment brought these projects to life, and to the many stakeholders who shared their time, experiences, and perspectives throughout the evaluation process.

The findings presented in this report demonstrate the value of targeted public investment in supporting small businesses, improving commercial properties, and advancing local economic development. Just as importantly, the lessons identified through this evaluation can help guide future programs designed to strengthen Rochester's business community and create lasting economic opportunity.
DMC EDA remains committed to advancing equitable economic development, supporting local businesses, and investing in initiatives that contribute to a vibrant, resilient, and prosperous community for all.

Sincerely,
Patrick Seeb
Executive Director
Destination Medical Center Economic Development Agency

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Executive Summary

The Main Street Economic Revitalization Program was authorized in 2021 to provide up to $80 million for grants and loans targeted at supporting economic development and redevelopment projects.[1] The program is administered by the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED).[2] Partner organizations used the awarded grant funds to provide 30% matching grants up to $750,000 for eligible businesses and projects that support community and economic development within defined commercial corridors and main street districts. Recipients could use awards for property repair or renovation, building construction, landscaping and street scaping, demolition and site preparation, predesign and design, engineering, non-publicly owned infrastructure, or related site amenities.[3]

Destination Medical Center (DMC) made $4.31 million of awards across the three rounds of DEED Main Street Economic Revitalization Program funding. DMC was the only partner organization awarded across all three rounds of DEED funding. In Rochester, the program has leveraged $11.57 million in private investment, with that number expected to grow as more businesses complete projects. At the time of this program evaluation, there were 46 completed Main Street Revitalization projects. **Every $1 invested in these projects has generated $3.95 dollars in private investment.**

In addition to attracting private investment, the Main Street Revitalization program prioritized small business investment, inclusive development, and a distributed funding model that resulted in a program with an average award size of $51,345. DMC targeted grant dollars towards small businesses and funded more projects with its allocation of program funding compared to other partners. Across the first two rounds of funding, **DMC received 4% of the funding, but was responsible for 12% of projects statewide.[4]**

DMC used the Community Co-Design, a shared decision-making approach that elevated the voices of residents most affected by development decisions. The framework was advanced, tested, and refined by a steering committee that included local government, nonprofit, and private-sector organizations, ensuring it was

[1] Minnesota State Statute § 116J.8749
[2] Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development | Minnesota Main Street Economic Revitalization Program
[3] DEED Launches Final Grant Round for Main Street Economic Revitalization Program Remaining Funds
[4] Main Street Economic Revitalization Program Awards | Minnesota DEED

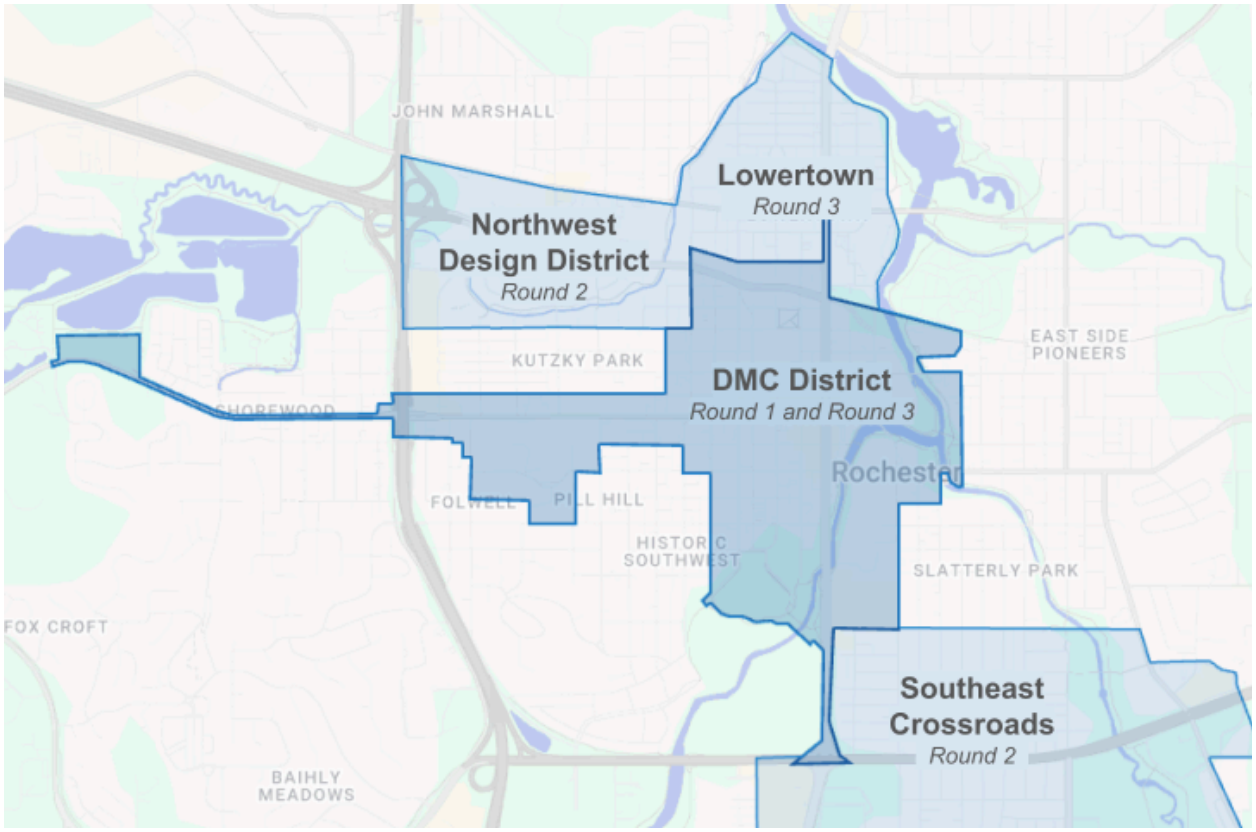
grounded in broad community expertise and practical implementation experience. The Community Co-Design process resulted in a more equitable distribution of Main Street Economic Revitalization Program funds across businesses and neighborhoods. Rather than adapting a traditional grant structure, DMC developed a delivery approach focused on reducing barriers, building trust, and supporting businesses throughout the entire grantmaking and program delivery process. Outreach increased awareness, multilingual communication expanded access, technical assistance improved readiness, and community-informed review processes strengthened trust in funding decisions. The demographics of program applicants and recipients nearly matches the population of Rochester. Combined, **DMC's activities resulted in a diverse pool of small business applicants and award recipients.**

DMC's distributed funding model meant that grants were given to main street businesses across industries that included restaurants, retail, arts and entertainment venues, service-oriented businesses and real estate development projects. DMC opted to provide partial grants to more applicants; 65% of applicants received awards but less than half received the full grant amount requested. This broad-based funding strategy meant that **within the program boundary, 1 in 10 main street businesses was awarded a grant through the program.**

This evaluation examines program design, delivery, impact, equity, and lessons learned to understand how the Main Street Economic Revitalization Program expanded access to capital and supported business investment. The findings suggest that the program's success was driven not only by the funding provided but by the way it was delivered. By embedding Community Co-Design throughout implementation, DMC created a grantmaking model that businesses consistently described as accessible, responsive, and community-centered. The evaluation suggests that this approach strengthened trust, expanded participation, and improved access to public investment for a broader range of businesses while providing a practical framework for future place-based investment programs.

Funding Rounds and Corridors

Destination Medical Center was awarded $4.86 million across the three rounds of DEED Main Street Economic Revitalization Program funding. Destination Medical Center made awards in different corridors in the three rounds, as noted below.



Source: Main Street Economic Revitalization Grant Program, DMC Announces Second Phase of Main Street Grant Funding, Main Street Economic Revitalization Grant

Round 1

DEED Award: $3,120,000
Duration: 1/6/22 - 1/6/27

Corridor: DMC District. To learn more about the vision, plans, and development progress across the DMC District, explore the DMC Sub-District Map.

Round 2

DEED Award: $988,000
Duration: 11/17/22 - 11/17/27

Corridor: Northwest Design District and Southeast Crossroads.

Round 3

DEED Award: $750,000
Duration: 3/31/25 - 6/30/27

Corridor: Lowertown Neighborhood and DMC District, with priority to developments located near the 2nd Street SW Link Bus Rapid Transit corridor.

About the Program

The Main Street Economic Revitalization Program seeks to establish economic revitalization through partnering with organizations to provide leveraged grants and guaranteed loans. These grants and loans are intended to support economic development and redevelopment projects.

The Main Street Economic Revitalization Program was authorized in 2021 to provide up to $80 million for grants and loans targeted at supporting economic development and redevelopment projects.[5] The program is administered by the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED).[6]

Rounds of Grant Funding

Up to 50% of the $80 million funding pool was made available in the first round of awards, with the remaining funds allocated through subsequent rounds. In total, three rounds of grants were distributed to partner organizations throughout the state.

Partner Organizations

DEED made grants to partner organizations under the Main Street Economic Revitalization Program. Partner organizations applied to the Department of Employment and Economic Development to be a part of the Main Street Economic Revitalization Program. Partner organizations designated a service area that included one or more commercial corridors and/or main streets within their communities that have experienced one or more qualifying conditions.

Qualifying conditions include, but are not limited to:

- Widespread property damage due to fire, flood, arson, civil unrest and/or natural disasters.
- One or more employer closures or multiple commercial space vacancies that have a significant impact on the corridor or main street.
- COVID-19 impacts on travel, tourism, retail, and accommodation.

[5] Minnesota State Statute § 116J.8749
[6] Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development | Minnesota Main Street Economic Revitalization Program

Successful efforts funded by this program are intended to result in:

- Revitalizing corridors and main streets that have an outsized impact on businesses and surrounding communities,
- Expanding the tax base of targeted communities,
- Increasing the creation and retention of jobs relative to the local economy, and
- Delivering a positive impact on diverse communities that have been most severely harmed due to conditions that have arisen since March 15, 2020

Once the grant funding was secured, partner organizations had discretion over how to make awards to recipient businesses under the program.

Recipient Businesses Eligibility and Fund Uses

Partner organizations used the awarded grant funds to provide 30% matching grants, up to $750,000, to eligible businesses and projects that support community and economic development within defined commercial corridors and main street districts. Recipients could use awards for property repair or renovation, building construction, landscaping and street scaping, demolition and site preparation, predesign and design, engineering, non-publicly owned infrastructure or related site amenities.[7]

Funding Rounds

Round 1 - In the first round of funding, DEED received 13 proposals requesting $48 million in funding for grants and $15 million in loan guarantees. DEED awarded $37.4 million to 8 partners. Destination Medical Center was awarded $3,120,000.

Round 2 - In the second round of funding, DEED received 15 proposals requesting $88 million in grant funding. DEED awarded $37.4 million to 14 partners. Destination Medical Center was awarded $988,000.

Round 3 - In the third round of funding, DEED awarded $6.2 million in awards to 9 partners. Destination Medical Center was awarded $750,000.

[7] DEED Launches Final Grant Round for Main Street Economic Revitalization Program Remaining Funds

Partner Organization DEED Funding

Partner Organization	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Total
African Career Education & Resources (ACER)	$312,000		$195,000	$507,000
Center for Economic Inclusion		$1,000,000		$1,000,000
Chinese American Chamber of Commerce		$1,000,000		$1,000,000
Destination Medical Center	$3,120,000	$988,000	$750,000	$4,858,000
Duluth Local Initiatives Support Corporation	$1,235,100			$1,235,100
Faribault Area Chamber of Commerce and Tourism		$780,000		$780,000
Greater Bemidji			$546,000	$546,000
Greater Mankato Growth Inc. Foundation		$1,990,000	$750,000	$2,740,000
Greater St. Cloud Development Corporation			$624,000	$624,000
Heartland Lakes Development Commission	$208,000	$260,000		$468,000
Initiative Foundation		$4,477,000	$500,000	$4,977,000
Latino Economic Development Center (LEDC)			$1,290,000	$1,290,000
Minneapolis Foundation	$21,260,000	$11,960,000		$33,220,000
Northland Foundation		$3,432,000		$3,432,000
Northwest Minnesota Foundation		$2,188,000		$2,188,000
Red Wing Downtown Main Street			$750,000	$750,000
Saint Paul and Minnesota Foundation	$7,280,000			$7,280,000
Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation		$2,340,000	$780,000	$3,120,000
Southwest Initiative Foundation	$2,080,000	$1,831,000		$3,911,000
Virginia Community Foundation	$1,794,100			$1,794,100
West Central Initiative Foundation		$3,482,000		$3,482,000
Winona Area Chamber of Commerce		$1,000,000		$1,000,000
DEED Reported Totals	**$37,441,600**	**$37,441,600**	**$6,185,000**	

Sources: Main Street Economic Revitalization Program 2024 Annual Report and DEED Awards $6.2 Million in Main Street Economic Development Funding

Destination Medical Center DEED Funding

Destination Medical Center was awarded $4.86 million across the three rounds of DEED Main Street Economic Revitalization Program funding.[8] **Destination Medical Center was the only partner organization awarded across all three rounds of DEED funding** and received the fourth-largest amount of funding among the 22 partners funded, surpassed only by the awards to three foundations: Minneapolis Foundation, Saint Paul and Minnesota Foundation, and Initiative Foundation.

Destination Medical Center Main Street Economic Revitalization Program Design Compared to Other Partners

Across Rounds 1 and 2, Destination Medical Center distributed DEED funding to more project recipients than other partners in the DEED Main Street Economic Revitalization Program. In these rounds, **Destination Medical Center received 4% of the funding, but was responsible for 12% of projects statewide.[9]**

Compared to Destination Medical Center, other program partners invested in fewer projects but awarded larger amounts per project. Across Round 1 and Round 2, the average project award size was $62,400 for Destination Medical Center compared to $194,480 for all other partners. Compared to its peers, Destination Medical Center funded more, smaller projects with its DEED Main Street Economic Revitalization Program award funding.

	Destination Medical Center	All Other Partners	Total
DEED Award Funding	$3,120,000	$71,763,200	$74,883,200
Percent DEED Award Funding	4%	96%	
Number of Projects	50	369	419
Percent of Projects	12%	88%	
Average Award Size per Project (Rounds 1 and 2 Only)	$62,400	$194,480	$178,719

Source: Main Street Economic Revitalization Program Awards | Minnesota DEED. Note: Statewide DEED project data is available for Round 1 and Round 2 only.

[8] Main Street Economic Revitalization Program 2024 Annual Report and DEED Awards $6.2 Million in Main Street Economic Development Funding
[9] Main Street Economic Revitalization Program Awards | Minnesota DEED

Program Design

Destination Medical Center Main Street Economic Revitalization Program Goals

The Main Street Economic Revitalization Program aligns with Destination Medical Center goals to attract private investment, create jobs, and generate additional net tax revenue.[10] The Destination Medical Center Main Street Economic Revitalization Program awards matching funds to help businesses improve their buildings. The goal is to help Rochester stay a lively, welcoming place for people to live, work, and visit.[11]

Main Street Economic Revitalization Program grant recipients can use the funds for property repair or renovation, building construction, landscaping and street scaping, demolition and site preparation, predesign and design, engineering, non-publicly owned infrastructure, or related site amenities.[12] Investments made as a result of the Main Street Economic Program build on the $1.8 billion of private investment catalyzed by Destination Medical Center in the past decade.[13]

With the goal of equitable distribution of Main Street Economic Revitalization Program funds across businesses and neighborhoods, DMC used the Community Co-Design, a shared decision-making approach that elevated the voices of residents most affected by development decisions.[14] The framework was advanced, tested, and refined by a steering committee that included local government, nonprofit, and private-sector organizations, ensuring it was grounded in broad community expertise and practical implementation experience. The guiding principles of co-design are humanity and inclusivity, leveraging assets, radical collaboration, and action-focused.[15]

[10] What is DMC? | Destination Medical Center
[11] Main Street Economic Revitalization Grant | Destination Medical Center
[12] Main Street Economic Revitalization Grant | Destination Medical Center
[13] DMC Development Plan 5-Year Update | Destination Medical Center
[14] Community Co-Design | Destination Medical Center
[15] Community Co-Design | Tools + Tactics

Community Co-Design: The Foundation of the Main Street Economic Revitalization Program

The findings presented below synthesize information from DMC's Community Co-Design Toolkit, Main Street program documentation, and interviews conducted with DMC staff and implementation partners.

One of the clearest findings from this evaluation is that the success of the Main Street Economic Revitalization Program was driven not only by the availability of grant funding, but by how intentionally the program was designed and delivered. Rather than treating community engagement as a one-time planning activity, Destination Medical Center (DMC) embedded Community Co-Design throughout implementation.

Across interviews, participants consistently pointed to this approach, along with relationship-based outreach, multilingual communication, technical assistance, shared decision-making, and ongoing support, as defining elements of the program's delivery model.

Together, these strategies created a framework that helped address common barriers to participation particularly for businesses that have historically been less likely to engage with public funding programs. Stakeholders described the Main Street Economic Revitalization Program approach as improving trust, strengthening applicant readiness, and expanding participation across Rochester's commercial districts. While this evaluation cannot conclude that these strategies alone produced the program's outcomes, they were consistently identified as what made the program feel more accessible, more relevant, and more inclusive in practice.

> *"We weren't just designing the process, we were part of reviewing applications too, bringing real knowledge of what businesses actually needed."*
> Community Partner (Co-Designer & Application Reviewer)

Building the Program with the Community

After receiving funding from the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) in October 2021, DMC launched a Community Co-Design process to determine how the program would operate in practice. With funding already secured, the challenge was designing a program that businesses across Rochester would know about, trust, and be able to navigate successfully.

As outlined in DMC's Community Co-Design Toolkit, co-design is structured as a human-centered, shared decision-making process. Rather than asking community members to react to pre-developed ideas, DMC recruited and compensated community co-designers whose lived experiences reflected the businesses and communities the program aimed to serve.

Working alongside DMC staff and partners, these co-designers helped identify barriers, define guiding principles, and shape what successful implementation should look like from a business perspective. As Community Co-Design emphasizes, the goal is to "do things with the community, not just for the community."[16]

Importantly, Community Co-Design participants defined success differently than traditional grant programs. Rather than focusing only on how many grants were awarded, they emphasized whether businesses that have historically faced barriers to capital and public funding could:

- Prioritize Inclusive Outreach: Intentionally connect with business communities that had historically been disconnected from public resources, ensuring they felt invited to participate from the start.
- Simplify Access: Streamline application requirements so the process felt like a manageable step for small, independent operators rather than an administrative hurdle.
- Embed Technical Assistance: Provide hands-on guidance as a core program feature, ensuring applicants felt "guided, not gated," throughout their journey.
- Partner for Success: Engage businesses through the entire project lifecycle to ensure they had the ongoing support necessary to carry their vision from concept to reality.

[16] Destination Medical Center, Community Co-Design Toolkit (2022), https://dmc.mn/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Community_CoDesign_Booklet.pdf.

Reflections on Equitable Delivery

The program's success hinged on a fundamental shift from transactional funding to relationship-based outreach. DMC staff recognized that traditional government grant processes often favor established businesses with large administrative teams. By meeting business owners where they were, through door-knocking, multilingual communication, multi-ethnic outreach, and trusted community partners, DMC bridged the gap between resources and historically underserved communities.

Crucially, community involvement extended beyond the design phase: community partners actively participated in application reviews during Rounds 1 and 2. This practice was not merely symbolic by embedding local lived experience into funding decisions, it ensured that diverse perspectives directly influenced how and where resources were allocated.

From Principles to Practice

The priorities established through Community Co-Design translated directly into program operations shaping outreach strategies, application design, technical assistance, and funding decisions.

In practice, five core elements defined implementation:

- Relationship-based outreach centered on trust
- Multilingual communication aligned with community needs
- Low-barrier application processes for first-time applicants
- Embedded technical assistance at every stage
- Community-informed review practices incorporating lived experience

These were not isolated strategies; they functioned as a coordinated system. Together, they lowered barriers that often prevent small businesses, immigrant-owned businesses, and first-time applicants from engaging with public funding programs.

What began as a design process became the operational backbone of the program.

Community-Based Outreach and Trust-Building

A consistent theme across both co-design sessions and stakeholder interviews was that awareness alone would not lead to equitable participation; trust was just as critical.

Many businesses, particularly immigrant-owned businesses, businesses owned by people of color, and first-time applicants are less likely to engage through traditional government outreach channels. This is not due to a lack of interest, but rather the result of prior experiences, limited access to information, and structural gaps in how programs are typically delivered.

In response, DMC adopted a relationship-based outreach strategy centered on meeting businesses where they are. Staff and partners conducted extensive door-to-door outreach, speaking directly with business owners, answering questions, and building relationships well before the application process began.

> *"You can't expect business owners to find a grant online; you have to go out, knock on doors, and meet them where they are."*
> Community Partner (Outreach)

Outreach materials were translated into the four most commonly spoken languages in the community, based on demographic data. DMC also partnered with trusted community organizations that already had strong relationships with local businesses, helping the program reach those who might not otherwise engage with a government-led initiative.

For many businesses, this approach made the difference between awareness and participation:

> *"We only participated because of direct outreach and one-on-one support, it made the difference."*
> Main Street Grant Recipient

DMC also framed participation as a series of stages rather than a single application event. This allowed the team to identify where businesses were dropping off and adjust outreach and support strategies in real time.

Participation Stages Used to Evaluate Access

Participation Stage	Evaluation Question
Program Awareness	Did intended applicants know about the program?
Application Initiation	Did interested applicants begin the application process?
Application Submission	Were businesses able to successfully complete and submit an application?
Project Closure	Did recipients receive the support needed to submit receipts, close out their projects, and receive grant reimbursement?

This stage-based approach reflects a more equity-informed understanding of access, recognizing that barriers can emerge at multiple points, not just during the application itself.

Application Design and Technical Assistance

Community Co-Design also directly shaped how the application process was structured.

Participants consistently described traditional grant applications as overly complex particularly for small businesses without dedicated administrative capacity or prior experience navigating public funding systems. These types of requirements can unintentionally exclude businesses that operate with fewer resources.

In response, DMC intentionally designed a low-barrier application. Documentation requirements were reduced, formal business plans were not required, and proof of financing was not needed upfront removing some of the typical application elements that limit participation.

At the same time, DMC recognized that simplifying the application was only part of the solution. Technical assistance was embedded as a core feature of the program, not an optional service.

Businesses received individualized support to:

- understand eligibility requirements
- shape project ideas
- complete applications
- and navigate reimbursement and documentation requirements

This support played a critical role in helping businesses move from interest to successful participation.

> *"The application itself was simple, but the financing and documentation requirements were where businesses struggled."*
> Community Partner (Technical Assistance)

> *"Co-design shaped how we communicated and reached businesses, especially through trusted partners."*
> DMC Staff Member

Implications For Program Delivery

The implementation model that emerged from Community Co-Design ultimately came to define the program.

Rather than adapting a traditional grant structure, DMC developed a delivery approach focused on reducing barriers, building trust, and supporting businesses throughout the entire process, not just at the point of application.

This role extended beyond grant administration. DMC acted as a convener, technical assistance provider, and community partner, aligning businesses, community organizations, and implementation partners around a shared approach. Participants consistently described this coordination as essential to the program's success.

Importantly, the program's strategies reinforced one another. Outreach increased awareness, multilingual communication expanded access, technical assistance improved readiness, and community-informed review processes strengthened trust in funding decisions. Together, these elements translated Community Co-Design principles into day-to-day practice.

As the program evolved, refinements, such as expanding eligibility beyond downtown and introducing award caps, helped extend access to a broader set of businesses while maintaining meaningful investment levels.

Taken together, these findings suggest that Community Co-Design was not simply an engagement strategy. It functioned as the foundation of how the program operated, shaping decisions across outreach, application design, technical assistance, and continuous improvement.

Key Insight

DMC's approach demonstrates that how a program is designed and delivered is just as important as how it is funded. By embedding Community Co-Design into every stage of implementation, DMC created a model that participants consistently described as accessible, responsive, and better aligned with how businesses actually operate, particularly those historically excluded from public funding opportunities.

At the same time, the evaluation highlights an important limitation: while Community Co-Design can reduce barriers related to awareness, trust, and navigation, it cannot fully overcome structural constraints, especially those tied to access to capital and financial capacity.

This distinction matters. Expanding participation requires not only improving program delivery, but also addressing the underlying conditions that shape who can take advantage of these opportunities.

The key takeaway is not just that Community Co-Design works, but that it works best when paired with funding structures that reflect the financial realities of small and under-resourced businesses.

In that sense, DMC's greatest contribution was not only the program itself, but the model it established, one that shows how public investment can be delivered in a way that is inclusive, responsive, and grounded in lived experience.

Program Delivery

Awards by Business Type

The types of businesses that received awards from the Destination Medical Center Main Street Revitalization Program fell into three broad categories:

1. **Storefront Industries** - The industry sectors included in this category are Retail Trade; Accommodation and Food Services; and Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation. Examples of recipients include Griot Arts, The Shoe Beverage Bar, Rochester Art Center, Rochester Repertory Theater, Green + the Grain, Jack's Bottle Shop, Anderson Wheelchair, Art Heads Emporium, and New Spin Bicycle.

2. **All Other Services** - The industry sectors included in this category are Other Services (except Public Administration); Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services; Manufacturing; and Health Care and Social Assistance. Examples of recipients include Broadway Laundromat and The Landing.

3. **Real Estate Development** - The industry sector included in this category is Real Estate Rental and Leasing. Examples of recipients include Olmsted Bank, Windsor Court Apartments, and First Ave Food Court.

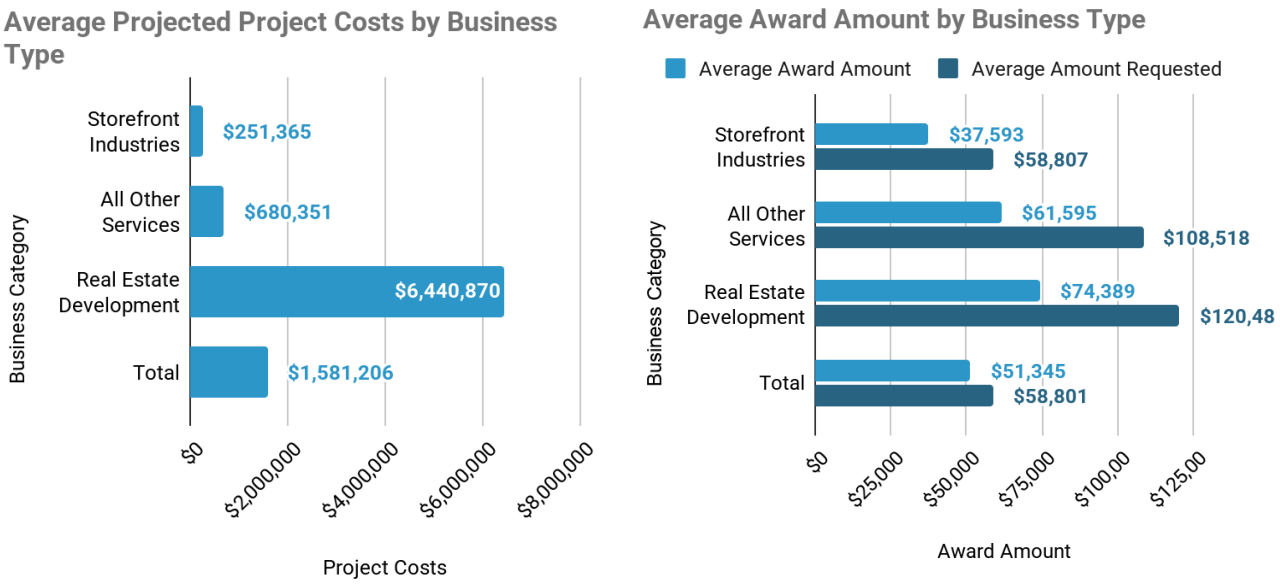
Within the Main Street Revitalization Program boundary, 1 in 10 businesses within these industries were awarded a grant through the program. The most frequently awarded businesses were storefront industries, followed by all other services and real estate development.

	All Businesses within Main Street Program Boundaries	Applicants Across All Rounds	Businesses Awarded Grants Across all Rounds
Storefront Industries	302	61	46
All Other Services	516	34	19
Real Estate Development	55	26	19
Main Street Businesses	**873**	**121**	**84**

Source: Esri Business Analyst. Destination Medical Center Main Street Revitalization Program Data as of June 2026

Award Amount by Business Type

The average grant in the Main Street Revitalization Program was $51,345, but the award amount differed by business type. On average, storefront industries projected the lowest total project costs and requested and received the smallest award amount. In contrast, real estate development businesses had the largest projected project costs and requested the largest award. Although, on average, real estate projects received the largest awards, the average awards accounted for a much smaller percentage of their total project costs than for storefront industries and all other services.



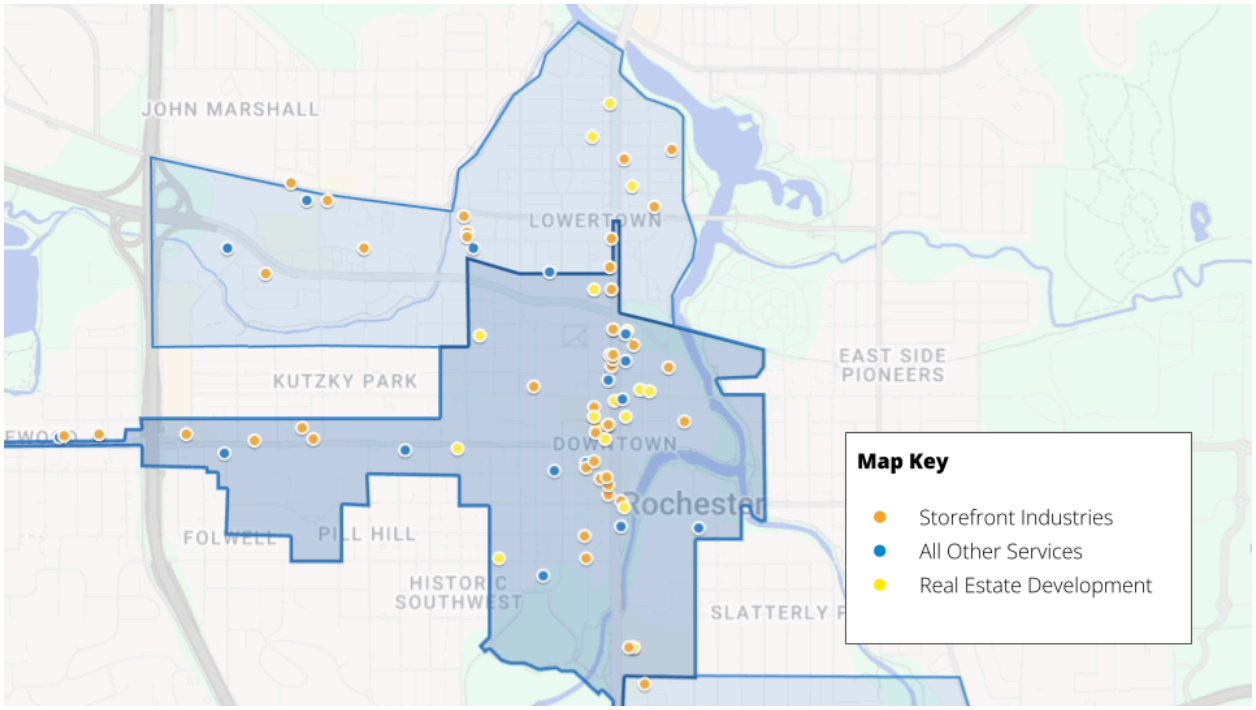
Source: Destination Medical Center Main Street Revitalization Program Data as of June 2026

Despite having the lowest average award amount, storefront industries represented the most awarded business type, by both total amount awarded and number of businesses awarded.

Business Category	Award Amount	Number of Awards	Average Award Amount
Storefront Industries	$1,729,300	46	$37,593
All Other Services	$1,170,300	19	$61,595
Real Estate Development	$1,413,388	19	$74,389
Total	**$4,312,988**	**84**	**$51,345**

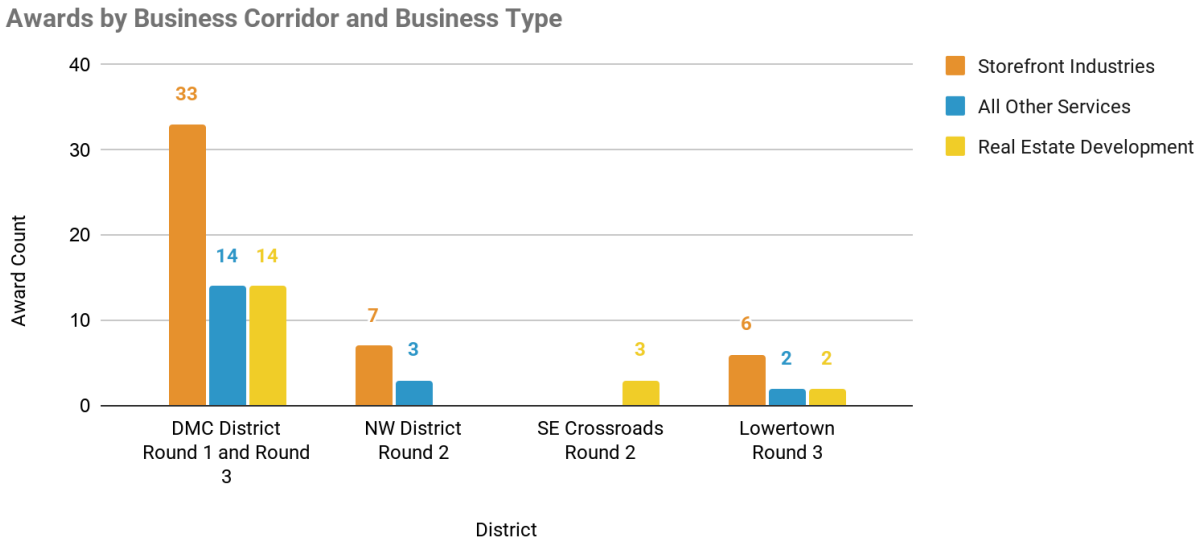
Source: Destination Medical Center Main Street Revitalization Program Data.

Awards by Business Corridor and Business Type



Source: Destination Medical Center Main Street Revitalization Program Data as of June 2026.

The majority of awards were made in the DMC District. Awards within the DMC District were clustered along Broadway Avenue, 1st Avenue SW, and along the 2nd Street SW Link Bus Rapid Transit corridor. In the Northwest Design District and Southeast Crossroads, awards were more dispersed and not as concentrated. In the Lowertown neighborhood, awards were clustered along Broadway Avenue and 6th Avenue NW.



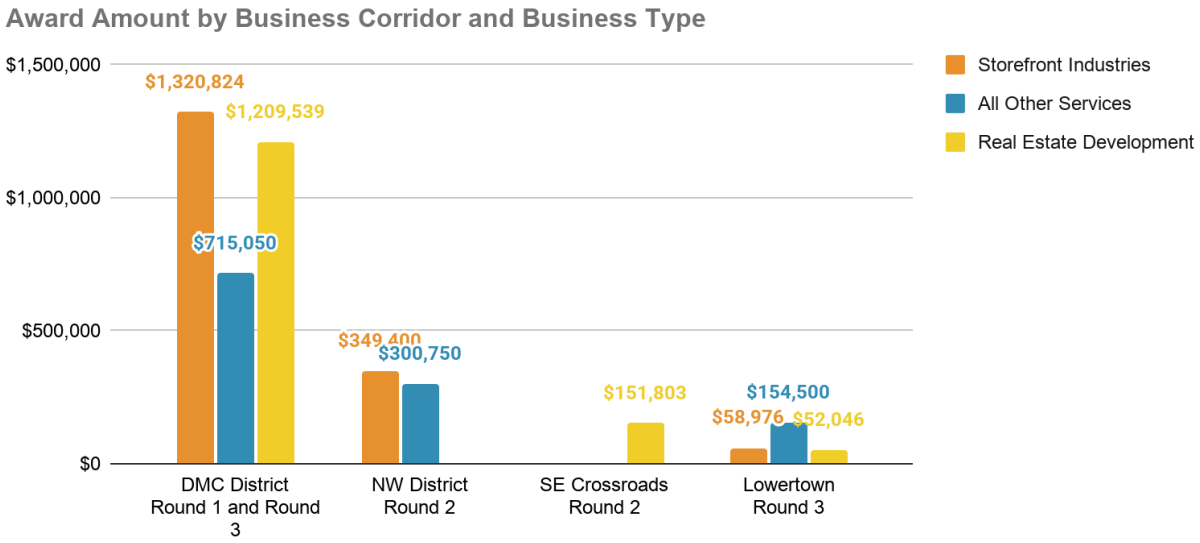
Source: Destination Medical Center Main Street Revitalization Program Data as of June 2026.

Nearly three-quarters of awards were made in the DMC District, which had 61 of the 84 awards. The DMC District had the highest share of awards across business types. Lowertown and the Northwest District corridors each had 10 awards, spanning a range of business types. SE Crossroads had 3 awards, all within real estate development.

Business Category	**DMC District** Round 1 and Round 3	**NW District** Round 2	**SE Crossroads** Round 2	**Lowertown** Round 3	**Total** All Rounds
Storefront Industries	33	7		6	46
All Other Services	14	3		2	19
Real Estate Development	14		3	2	19
Total	**61**	**10**	**3**	**10**	**84**
Percent of Total	73%	12%	4%	12%	

Source: Destination Medical Center Main Street Revitalization Program Data as of June 2026.

Award Amount by Business Corridor and Business Type



Source: Destination Medical Center Main Street Revitalization Program Data as of June 2026.

Three-quarters of the Main Street Economic Revitalization Program was awarded in the DMC District, which had $3.2 million of awards. More than one-third of the funding in the DMC District came through $1.2 million in awards for real estate development. In contrast, Lowertown had 12% of the awards but 6% of the award value.

Business Category	**DMC District** Round 1 and Round 3	**NW District** Round 2	**SE Crossroads** Round 2	**Lowertown** Round 3	**Total** All Rounds
Storefront Industries	$1,320,824	$349,400		$58,976	$1,729,200
All Other Services	$715,050	$300,750		$154,500	$1,170,300
Real Estate Development	$1,209,539		$151,803	$52,046	$1,413,388
Total	**$3,245,413**	**$650,150**	**$151,803**	**$265,522**	**$4,312,888**
Percent of Total	75%	15%	4%	6%	

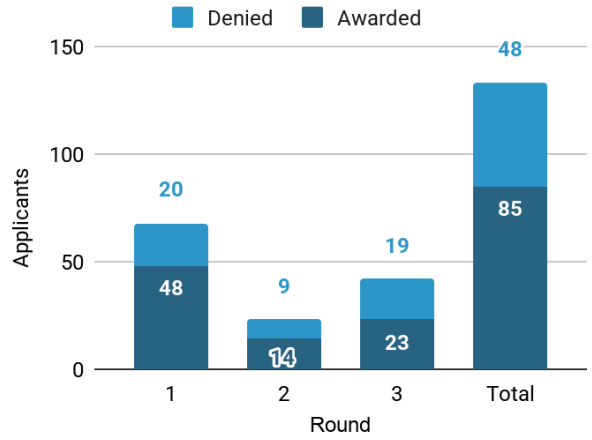
Source: Destination Medical Center Main Street Revitalization Program Data.

Grant Awards and Distribution

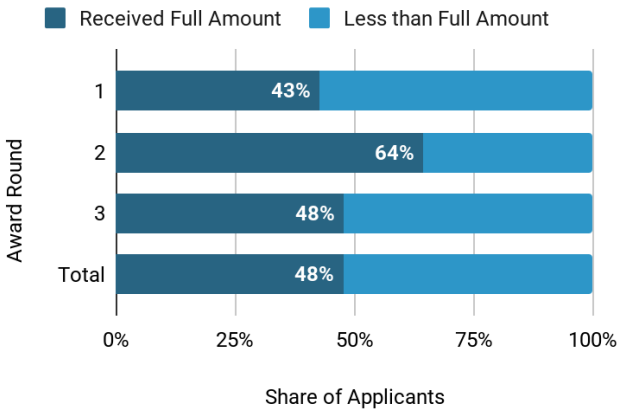
When administering a grant program, program managers have to make the challenging decision to provide full awards to fewer applicants or partial awards to more applicants. For the Main Street Business Revitalization Program in Rochester, DMC opted to provide partial grants to more applicants.

While 64% of unique applicants received at least one award through DMC, less than half (48%) received the full amount requested. While the share of applicants and share of applicants receiving the full amount requested varied by round, the trend remained fairly consistent.

Share of Unique Applicants Receiving Awards by Round and Program Total



Share of Grant Applicants Receiving Full Grant Amount Requested by Round



Source: Destination Medical Center Main Street Revitalization Program Data as of June 2026

On average, the Main Street Economic Revitalization Program awarded grants of $51,345 across the three program rounds. The average award size was more than double the median award size ($23,899) due to a few very large awards from Rounds 1 and 2, which are discussed in more detail under Awards by Business Type. Overall, the average and median award size decreased significantly from Rounds 1 and 2 to Round 3.

The median award decreased between Rounds 1 and 3 even though the median amount requested by applicants was the same. Based on interviews with DMC staff, program administrators awarded smaller grants to try to reach more businesses with the funding available.

Round	Average Award	Median Award	Average Amount Requested	Median Amount Requested
1	$58,223	$24,500	$81,944	$30,000
2	$65,854	$28,950	$136,521	$45,000
3	$27,106	$19,050	$73,302	$30,000
Total	**$51,345**	**$23,899**	**$89,319**	**$30,000**

Source: Destination Medical Center Main Street Revitalization Program Data as of June 2026

DMC staff reported that they opted to award partial grants to reach as many applicants as possible. Based on the application reviews shared with the program evaluation team, DMC primarily denied applicants that failed to meet objective award requirements, including that the applicant business was outside the eligible geographic area or the work did not involve real property. For applicants that received less than their requested funding, DMC staff reduced the award to avoid exceeding 30% of costs, but also reduced the award amounts because the project had projected limited permanent job creation, or the applicant had access to other funding sources. However, documentation for reviewers' reasons for approving full funding, approving partial funding, or denying an application was not available for all review cycles.

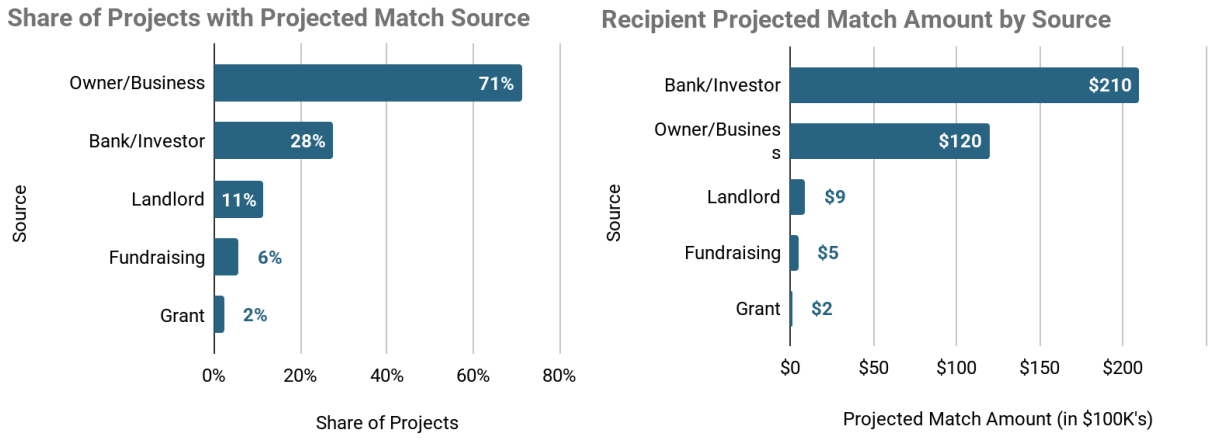
Award Financing by Source and Project Type

Matching Funds

The Main Street Economic Revitalization Program was statutorily only able to fund 30% of any project. To meet this requirement, grant applicants had to demonstrate they could fund at least 70% of their project through other sources. This section of the report reviews recipient matching funds, examining the sources of funding used to meet the matching requirement.

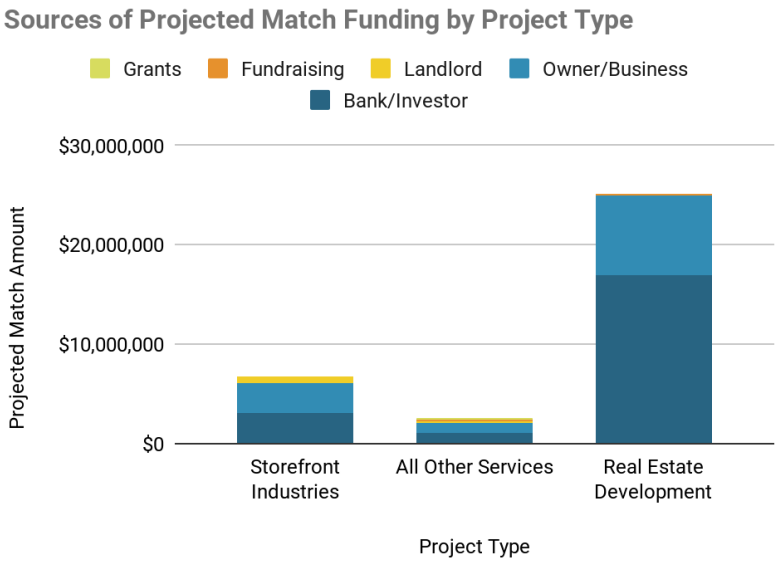
Projected Matching Funds by Source

Recipients report the sources of projected matching funds on their project agreements with DMC. While most projects only included one source of matching funds, several projected used two or even three sources of matching funds. Recipients most commonly projected using their own money to meet the match requirement, followed by a bank or investor. At the same time, banks and investors were projected to provide the largest share of matching funds, followed by owners/businesses.



Source: Destination Medical Center Main Street Revitalization Program Data as of June 2026.

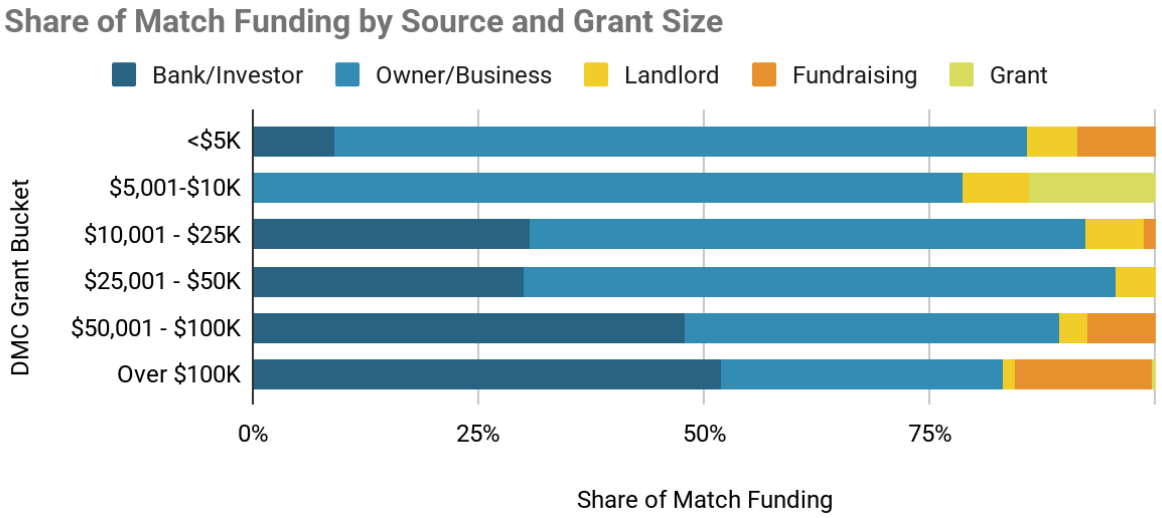
Examining the projected match source by project type shows that real estate development projects were the main users of bank and investment funding, while projects at storefront industries and all other services were more likely to use owner funding.



Source: Destination Medical Center Main Street Revitalization Program Data as of June 2026.

The share of total financing from banks was disproportionately high compared to the number of projects that used bank financing because larger projects, like real estate development, required more total match and used bank financing far more frequently than smaller projects.

Owner financing made up more than half of all projected match funding for projects below $50,000. While smaller projects likely had more owner financing because the smaller value meant they could self-finance, recipients also shared that they found the 70% match requirement challenging to meet. Given that less than half of grant recipients received less than their full requested amount, many recipients likely had to cover more than 70% of their total project costs, though the data to confirm this does not exist.



Source: Destination Medical Center Main Street Revitalization Program Data as of June 2026.

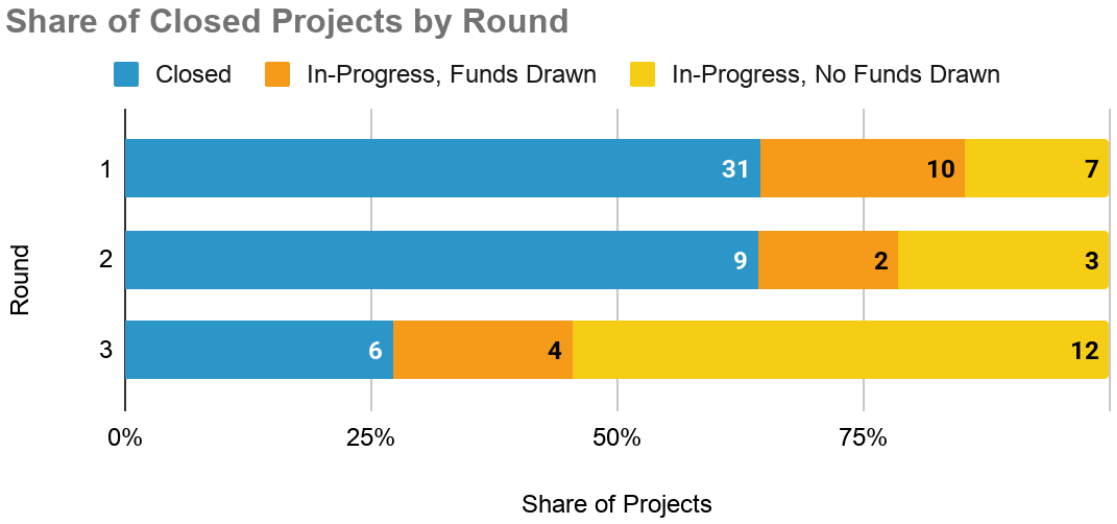
Program Impact

The following section summarizes the program's impact based on its in-progress projects and closed projects. As of June 2026, there were 46 closed projects and 38 in-progress projects.

- **Closed Projects:** Projects that have received their full Main Street Economic Revitalization grant. This evaluation uses the term closed projects rather than completed projects because many projects, particularly property development projects, are still in progress even though the grant is closed out. Project work may not be complete when the project closes, but it means the recipient has completed enough work to receive the full grant value from the Main Streets Business Revitalization program.
- **In-Progress Projects:** Projects that have not received their full Main Street Economic Revitalization grant. In-progress projects fit into one of two categories: those that have drawn down funds by submitting receipts for completed project work, and those that have yet to draw down funds.

In-Progress and Closed Projects by Round

Round 1 had the most grants, followed by Round 3 and Round 2. Rounds 1 and 2 have much higher shares of grants closed than Round 3, likely because recipients have had more time to complete projects.



Source: Destination Medical Center Main Street Revitalization Program Data as of June 2026.

Leverage: Demonstrated Match

DMC collected match amounts at two points during the project, during the application stage and reimbursement stage.

During the application stage, DMC asked applicants the total project cost and the grant amount requested. Then, in the grant award agreement, DMC subtracted the awarded grant amount from the total project cost to calculate each applicant's match amount. This report refers to this amount as the Projected Match.

During the reimbursement process, DMC collected invoices from grant recipients to confirm they had incurred sufficient eligible costs to reimburse their full grant amount. DMC then reimbursed the recipient up to the full grant amount. This report refers to the invoiced costs as the Demonstrated Match.

So far, the program's 46 closed projects have $36.50 million in projected match and $10.81 million in demonstrated match. The projected match far exceeds the demonstrated match because DMC only required recipients to submit enough invoices to cover reimbursement from the grant. Therefore, the actual match leveraged by the program is likely higher. In-progress projects with some invoices submitted have an additional $9 million in projected match and $0.75 million in demonstrated match. Together, the program has $11.57 million in demonstrated matching dollars leveraged by the program grants, with that number expected to grow as more businesses complete projects. **Every $1 invested in completed Main Street Revitalization projects has generated $3.95 dollars in private investment.**

	Cancelled Projects	In-Progress, No Invoices	In-Progress, Some Invoices	Closed	Total
Project Count	1	22	16	46	**84**
Award Amount	$46,172	$1,093,775	$340,561	$2,869,980	**$4,359,060**
Projected Match	$0	$6,001,587	$1,471,368	$38,101,592	**$45,574,547**
Demonstrated Match	$0	$0	$240,675	$11,325,402	**$11,566,078**

Source: Destination Medical Center Main Street Revitalization Program Data as of June 2026. Note: Values are rounded to the nearest dollar.

Projected Jobs Created

DMC collected jobs data during the application and award agreement process, when applicants self-reported projected job creation by the end of the grant and by the end of 2026. Recipients projected that the Main Street Business Revitalization grants would create 1,019 jobs, but this number was not confirmed.

Open Businesses

The DMC Main Street Revitalization Program supported two primary project types: small businesses and real estate development. Of the 64 small businesses supported through the project, 88% (61) were still open as of May 2026. 11% (8) had closed, and 1% (1) could not be confirmed or had other circumstances. As shown in the graph below, all the small business closures were in Storefront Industries, with no closures in businesses under All Other Services.

In 2022 and 2023, businesses in Storefront Industries had an annual survival rate of 94% and businesses in All Other Services had an annual survival rate of 93% (Business Dynamics Statistics). This analysis assumes these survival rates hold in 2024, 2025, and 2026 to compare how many businesses would be expected to close between the starting year for each grant round and 2026, the year of this evaluation, versus how many recipient businesses have closed.

Overall, the survival rate among grant recipients tracks fairly closely to the survival rate for Rochester businesses in these sectors over the past few years. However, businesses under All Other Services outperformed the survival rate and Storefront Industry grant recipients slightly underperformed the expected survival rate. This finding suggests that the program may have increased the likelihood that businesses in some industries would remain open longer, but overall the program appeared to have little impact on how long businesses remained in operation.[17]

Storefront Industries

[17] The program funded more businesses that had been in business 1-5 years at the time of application compared to the broader population of Rochester businesses (34% and 24%, respectively). Evaluators examined whether this trend would decrease the expected survival rate but found that young storefront industry businesses did not have a notably lower survival rate compared to more established businesses.

Round	Starting Year	Storefront Industry Recipients	Expected to Survive by 2026	Survived as of May 2026
Round 1	2022	24	19	18
Round 2	2023	7	6	5
Round 3	2025	15	14	14*

**The open status of the remaining business is unknown.*

Source: Destination Medical Center Main Street Revitalization Program Data as of June 2026. Business Dynamics Statistics, 2022-2023.

All Other Services

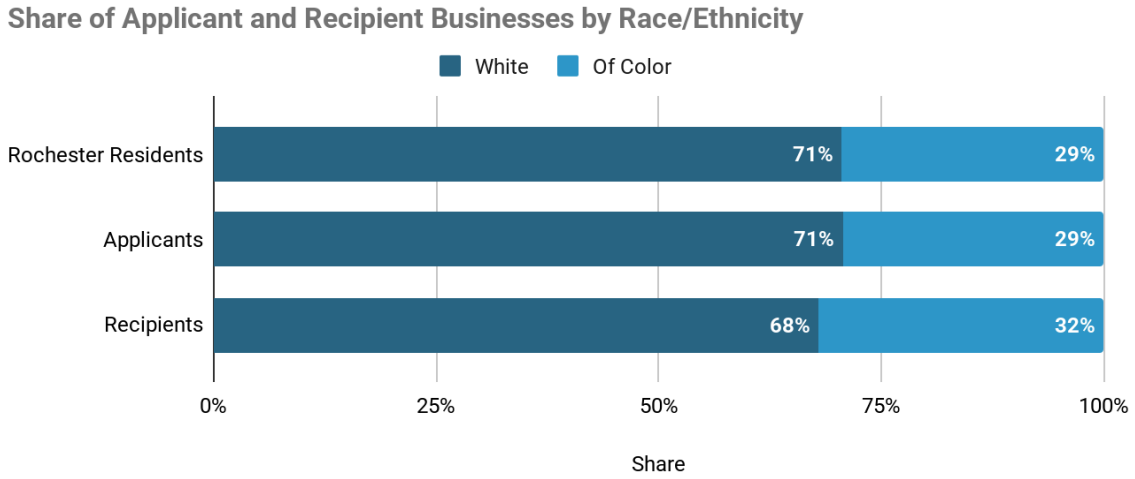
Round	Starting Year	All Other Service Recipients	Expected to Survive by 2026	Survived as of May 2026
Round 1	2022	12	9	12
Round 2	2023	4	3	4
Round 3	2025	3	3	3

Source: Destination Medical Center Main Street Revitalization Program Data as of June 2026. Business Dynamics Statistics, 2022-2023.

Program Equity

Applicant and Recipient Demographics

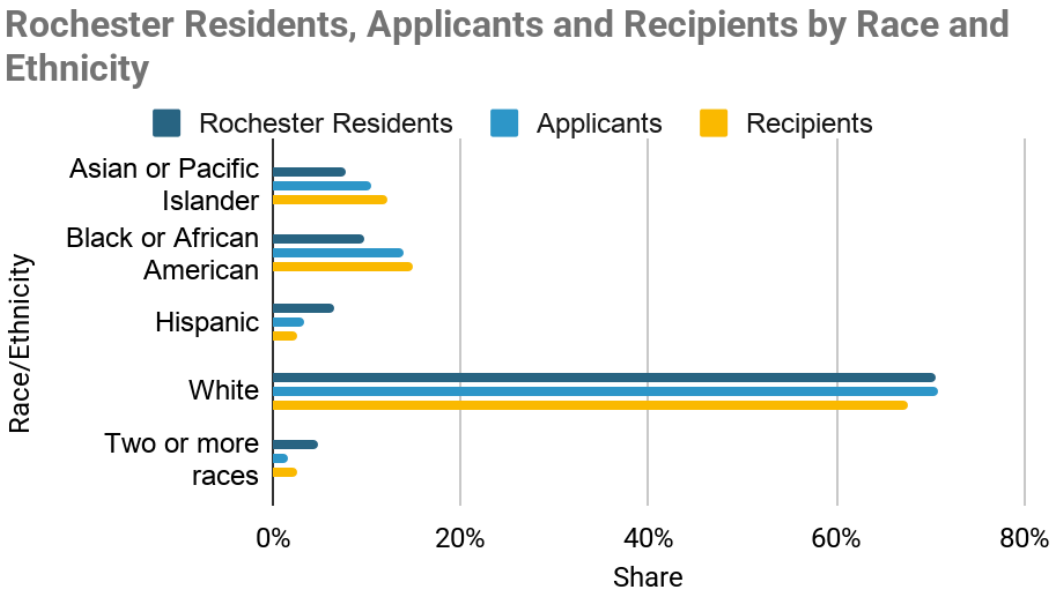
The share of Main Street Economic Revitalization applicants and recipients identifying as White or Of Color nearly matches the population of Rochester.[18] This suggests that the program's outreach successfully reflects the racial diversity of Rochester, at least at a high level.



Source: Destination Medical Center Main Street Revitalization Program Data as of June 2026. American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau, 2020-2024.

Applicants and award recipients also appear representative of the Rochester population when compared by race. Footnote 22 explains why the data sources used may cause Hispanic residents to appear to have the lowest representation.

[18] This comparison between Rochester residents, applicants, and recipients uses White and Of Color to accommodate the different ways the applications and awards classify Hispanic applicants compared to Rochester demographics data from the U.S. Census Bureau via Minnesota Compass. On Main Street Economic Revitalization Program applications and awards, applicants can identify as Hispanic without identifying a race, whereas for Minnesota Compass data, Hispanic heritage is considered an ethnicity, meaning respondents also identify a race. The chart above considers Hispanic applicants and recipients to be Of Color.



Source: Destination Medical Center Main Street Revitalization Program Data as of June 2026. American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau, 2020-2024.

When further broken out by more specific race and ethnicity categories, applicants and award recipients also appear representative of the Rochester population as a whole.

Award Size by Race and Ethnicity

The following analysis explored whether funds from the Main Street Economic Revitalization Program were awarded equitably by race and ethnicity. This analysis found that White recipients received a disproportionate share of grant funding because, on average, they received larger grants than applicants Of Color. Although both the median award size and average award size were larger for White recipients, the larger gap between the average award sizes suggest that some large awards to White recipients drove the difference.

Award Size by Racial Group, Including Real Estate Development Projects

	Average Award Size	Median Award Size	Share of Funding	Share of Recipients
White	$52,785	$21,000	21%	32%
Of Color	$38,887	$24,000	79%	68%

Source: Destination Medical Center Main Street Revitalization Program Data as of June 2026.

Awards to real estate development projects, which were the largest on average, were the main driver of this gap because 11 of the 12 awards went to White recipients. Without these outlying projects, the median and average award sizes for White recipients and recipients Of Color are much closer.

Award Size by Racial Group, Omitting Real Estate Development Projects

	Average Award Size	Median Award Size	Share of Funding	Share of Recipients
White	$41,012	$22,500	34%	32%
Of Color	$40,627	$23,250	66%	68%

Source: Destination Medical Center Main Street Revitalization Program Data as of June 2026.

Outcome and Impact Demographics

Of the small businesses that received support and have a known open status, 86% were open as of May 2026. Although the majority of businesses stayed open regardless of race, businesses owned by Black or African American business owners were the least likely to still be open. 90% of businesses with white-identifying applicants were still open, 73% with Black or African American-identifying applicants, and 100% with applicants identifying as members of all other races.

To understand why Black or African American businesses closed at a higher rate, evaluators explored the share of match funding by source for recipients from different racial groups. This exploration sought to test whether self-financing the 70% match could have strained businesses owners, causing higher closure rates. White recipients were less likely to self-financing a project than recipients from other races, but other races did not see higher rates of business closures.

Another reason Black or African American businesses may have closed at a higher rate is because the businesses were younger, and some were so young that they may have used the grant to start their business. Examining the median business founding year by race shows that the Black or African American recipients tended to be newer than the businesses funded for all race and ethnic groups other than Hispanic or Latino.

Race/Ethnicity	**Average Founding Year**	**Median Founding Year**
Asian	2019	2019
Black or African American	2019	2021
Hispanic or Latino	2022	2022
Middle Eastern or North African	2017	2017
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	2012	2012
White	2006	2014
Overall	**2008**	**2016**

Source: Destination Medical Center Main Street Revitalization Program Data as of June 2026.

Program Access, Distribution of Funds, and Barriers to Participation

One of the primary objectives of the Main Street Economic Revitalization Program was to expand access to capital for businesses and property owners impacted by economic disruption while also addressing long-standing inequities in who is able to access public investment. Across all three funding rounds, Destination Medical Center (DMC) deliberately designed the program to reduce common barriers and reach businesses that have historically been underrepresented in public funding opportunities.

The program provided matching grants covering up to 30 percent of eligible project costs, supporting investments ranging from façade improvements and site upgrades to larger-scale building renovations and redevelopment projects. This flexibility allowed businesses and property owners to pursue projects that reflected their individual needs while contributing to broader revitalization across Rochester's commercial districts.

Importantly, DMC did not rely on funding alone to drive participation. Through its Community Co-Design process, DMC worked alongside community members and implementation partners to better understand *why* many businesses do not engage with public programs. Participants consistently identified barriers related to awareness, language, trust, and the complexity of navigating government processes. These insights directly shaped how the program was delivered.

In response, DMC emphasized relationship-based outreach, multilingual communication, partnerships with trusted community organizations, individualized technical assistance, and a streamlined application process. Taken together, these strategies made the program easier to understand, easier to access, and more responsive to businesses that may not have previously pursued public funding opportunities.

As the program matured, DMC expanded its geographic reach across successive funding rounds, while maintaining a consistent and cohesive delivery model.

Funding Round	Geographic Focus	Program Evolution
Round 1	Downtown DMC District	Focused on stabilizing businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic.
Round 2	Expanded Commercial Corridors	Extended investment into neighborhood-based business districts.
Round 3	Downtown and Lowertown	Broadened eligibility to reach previously underserved areas.

While the program's geographic footprint evolved, the underlying implementation strategy remained constant. Across all three rounds, the program was grounded in Community Co-Design, relationship-based outreach, multilingual communication, and hands-on technical assistance.

Interview findings suggest that this delivery model was effective in lowering many of the informational and procedural barriers that typically limit participation in public grant programs. Most participants described the application as clear and manageable, and many credited DMC staff and partners for providing responsive, one-on-one guidance. Businesses often learned about the program through direct outreach, trusted organizations, or referrals rather than traditional marketing channels. As one grant recipient stated, *"The application process was clear and easy to navigate, and that part worked really well."*

At the same time, participants drew a clear distinction between being able to apply and being able to participate.

While the process itself was accessible, the evaluation shows that completing an application did not necessarily mean a business was financially positioned to move forward with a project. As another award recipient explained, *"The application was manageable, but being able to meet the match requirement was what determined whether we could actually participate."*

Across interviews, the 70 percent match requirement emerged as the most significant barrier. For small businesses, startups, nonprofit organizations, and culturally rooted enterprises, assembling those funds often required drawing on personal savings, securing financing, or postponing other investments. In practice, this created a divide

between businesses that could move forward and those that could not regardless of need or project quality.

Participants also pointed to a broader set of structural challenges that shaped participation. These included reimbursement requirements, limited access to traditional lending, permitting timelines, landlord–tenant coordination, language differences, and constraints related to property ownership. In particular, reimbursement requirements created cash flow challenges, as businesses needed to front project costs before receiving grant funds making otherwise eligible projects difficult for smaller or undercapitalized businesses to execute.

Taken together, these findings suggest that DMC was largely successful in reducing barriers related to awareness, trust, and program navigation. Relationship-based outreach, multilingual communication, and individualized technical assistance made the program more accessible than many public funding opportunities participants had encountered previously.

However, these implementation strategies could not fully overcome structural barriers tied to access to capital. Financial capacity, not the application process itself remained the primary factor influencing who could ultimately participate.

Overall, the program expanded participation across a broader range of geographies, industries, and business types while introducing many businesses to public funding opportunities for the first time. It improved awareness, strengthened applicant readiness, and helped businesses successfully navigate the process.

At the same time, the findings highlight a critical distinction: improving access to a program is not the same as improving access to capital.

DMC's approach made the opportunity easier to find, easier to understand, and easier to apply for. However, participation still depended on whether businesses had the financial resources to meet matching and reimbursement requirements. This suggests that while program design can reduce many traditional barriers, it cannot fully address the underlying financial realities businesses face.

Looking ahead, expanding equitable participation will require building on DMC's strong delivery model while aligning funding structures more closely with those realities. This could include more flexible financing approaches, deeper coordination with lenders and property owners, and mechanisms that reduce or offset upfront capital requirements.

Ultimately, the program's greatest contribution may not be the dollars distributed, but the model it established, which is one that shows how public investment can be delivered in a way that is more accessible, more responsive, and more grounded in the lived experience of the business community.

Lessons Learned

The Main Street Economic Revitalization Program demonstrates that expanding equitable access to public investment requires more than making funding available. It requires designing and delivering programs in ways that reflect how businesses experience public funding opportunities from first learning about a program to successfully completing a funded project.

One of the clearest findings emerging from this evaluation is that the program's strengths did not stem from any single strategy. Rather, interview findings suggest that Community Co-Design, as well as relationship-based outreach, multilingual communication, embedded technical assistance, community-informed decision-making, and continuous program refinement worked together to create an implementation model that businesses described as accessible, responsive, and community-centered.

The lessons below synthesize the evaluation's major findings and highlight implementation practices that may inform future place-based grant programs.

Community Co-Design Is Most Effective When It Shapes Implementation

One of the strongest findings from this evaluation is that Community Co-Design remained embedded throughout implementation rather than ending once the program was designed. Community input informed outreach strategies, application design, technical assistance, community review, and ongoing program refinements across all three funding rounds. Participants consistently described this approach as a defining characteristic of the program because it allowed DMC to adapt implementation based on community experience rather than relying solely on assumptions established during program planning.

The evaluation suggests that Community Co-Design is most valuable when it functions as an ongoing implementation strategy rather than a one-time planning exercise.

Trust Creates the Conditions for Participation

Interview findings suggest that awareness alone was often insufficient to encourage participation. Businesses consistently described learning about the opportunity through trusted community organizations, referrals, direct outreach, and existing relationships rather than through traditional marketing channels. Those relationships

helped establish credibility about the program and connect businesses with individualized support throughout the application process.

The evaluation suggests that relationship-based engagement is particularly important when seeking to reach businesses that have historically had limited participation in public funding opportunities. In practice, trust building activities helped transform awareness into program participation.

Accessible Programs Combine Simplicity with Embedded Support

Participants consistently described the application process as straightforward and well supported. That experience reflected more than a simplified application. It reflected DMC's decision to pair streamlined processes with individualized technical assistance throughout the application, award, and grant administration process.

The evaluation suggests that simplifying program requirements and embedding technical assistance are complementary strategies. Together, they reduced administrative barriers, strengthened applicant readiness, and improved businesses' ability to successfully navigate the program.

Program Accessibility and Financial Accessibility Are Not the Same

Perhaps the most significant finding emerging from this evaluation is the distinction between program accessibility and financial accessibility.

Interview findings suggest that DMC successfully reduced many of the informational and procedural barriers that often limit participation in public grant programs. At the same time, matching fund requirements, reimbursement structures, and broader constraints related to access to capital continued to shape which businesses were ultimately able to participate.

The evaluation suggests that expanding equitable participation requires attention to both dimensions. Accessible program design can increase participation, but funding structures must also reflect the financial realities facing smaller and undercapitalized businesses.

Continuous Learning Strengthens Program Delivery

Another defining characteristic of the Main Street Economic Revitalization Program was DMC's willingness to refine implementation over time. Across successive funding

rounds, eligibility expanded into additional commercial corridors, outreach strategies evolved, funding approaches were refined, and implementation continued to reflect lessons learned from both operational experience and community feedback.

Rather than treating implementation as fixed at launch, DMC approached program delivery as an iterative process. This allowed the program to broaden its geographic reach while maintaining a consistent commitment to accessibility, trust, and community partnership.

Implementation Is a Strategic Function

Taken together, these findings suggest that how a grant program is delivered can be just as important as how it is funded.

Participants consistently identified Community Co-Design, relationship-based engagement, multilingual communication, technical assistance, community-informed decision-making, and continuous refinement as defining characteristics of the Main Street Economic Revitalization Program. While this evaluation cannot conclude that these implementation strategies alone produced the program's outcomes, interview findings consistently suggest that they shaped businesses' experiences and influenced the program's ability to reach a broader and more diverse group of participants.

The evaluation suggests that implementation should be viewed not simply as program administration, but as a strategic function that directly influences accessibility, participant experience, and equitable participation.

Principles for Future Place-Based Grant Programs

Taken together, the findings point to an integrated implementation framework rather than a collection of independent strategies. Each element reinforced the others, creating a delivery model that participants consistently described as accessible, responsive, and community-centered.

Future place-based grant programs may benefit from the following principles:

- Design with the community, not simply for the community.
- Invest in trusted relationships alongside outreach and communications.
- Embed technical assistance throughout implementation rather than treating it as an optional service.

- Recognize that reducing administrative barriers does not eliminate financial barriers.
- Build opportunities for continuous learning and adaptation into program delivery.
- Treat implementation as a strategic function that shapes participation, accessibility, and program outcomes.

Final Reflection

This evaluation began by examining how effectively the Main Street Economic Revitalization Program expanded access to capital and supported business investment. The findings ultimately point to a broader conclusion.

DMC's most significant contribution extends beyond the projects that received funding. The program demonstrated how intentional implementation can reduce barriers, strengthen trust, and expand participation in public investment. Although structural barriers related to access to capital remain, the evaluation suggests that thoughtful implementation can meaningfully improve who is able to access public funding and how businesses experience the process.

Future grant programs will differ in purpose, scale, and funding structure. However, the implementation principles demonstrated through DMC's experience provide a practical framework for designing place-based investment programs that are more accessible, more responsive to community needs, and better positioned to expand equitable participation over time.

Appendix

Glossary

- **Closed Projects:** Projects that have received their full Main Street Economic Revitalization grant. This evaluation uses the term closed projects rather than completed projects because many projects, particularly property development projects, are still in progress even though the grant is closed out. Project work may not be complete when the project closes, but it means the recipient has completed enough work to receive the full grant value from the Main Streets Business Revitalization program.
- **In-Progress Projects:** Projects that have not received their full Main Street Economic Revitalization grant. In-progress projects fit into one of two categories: those that have drawn down funds by submitting receipts for completed project work, and those that have yet to draw down funds.
- **Community Co-Design**: This is the central methodology used by the Destination Medical Center to design the delivery of the program. Defining this ensures readers understand it as a specific, structured approach to prioritize the inclusion of diverse populations rather than just general community engagement.
- **Demonstrated Match:** The total costs paid through matching dollars as documented in submitted project invoices during the reimbursement process.
- **Projected Match:** The total matching dollars projected on a company's award agreement based on the difference between their Main Street Economic Revitalization grant and their projected total project cost.
- **Undercapitalized**: Lacking the financial resources to front project costs.

Evidence and Limitations

This evaluation uses program data provided by DMC and external research conducted by the evaluators to generate program outcomes, observations, and findings.

Framework

The strength of the analysis varies by the available data and documentation, with results falling into one of four classifications, defined in the table below.

Evidence Classification	Meaning
Verified	Supported by documentation or reliable third-party/public records.
Self-reported	Based on recipient or stakeholder statements without independent documentation.
Directional	Suggestive evidence exists, but not enough for a firm conclusion.
Not verifiable	Available data are insufficient to support the claim.

Goals Analysis

The following sections compare the projected results to the verifiable outputs for each metric reported by DMC to DEED during reporting. It also categorizes each result by evidence source using the framework outlined above. This report omits one tracked metric, net increase in tax base, due to a lack of reliable data, but includes the data below.

Job Creation

Analysis Area	Evidence Source	Evidence Classification	Explanation
Projected Job Creation	DEED Reporting as of February 2026; Leverage Grant Approval Form	Self-reported	Evaluators used the projected jobs created for each project as reported to DEED by DMC. DMC's reporting used job numbers self-reported by applicants before receiving the grant.
Actual Job Creation	N/A	Not verifiable	DMC did not collect data on the actual jobs created through the grant program.

Round	DEED Projection	Actual Result	Goal Met Status
1	664	N/A	Not Verifiable
2	230	N/A	Not Verifiable
3	126	N/A	Not Verifiable
Overall	1,019	N/A	Not Verifiable

Funding Match and Leverage

Analysis Area	Evidence Source	Evidence Classification	Explanation
Projected Match	DEED Reporting as of February 2026; Leverage Grant Approval Form	Self-reported	Evaluators used the projected match amount as reported to DEED by DMC. DMC's reporting used the match self-reported by applicants before receiving the grant.
Projected Match Source	Leverage Grant Approval Form	Self-reported	Evaluators used the projected match sources and values self-reported by recipients on their Leverage Grant Approval Form before award receipt.
Demonstrated Match	Invoices submitted by recipients requesting reimbursement.	Directional	Evaluators calculated the demonstrated match amount by summing invoices award recipients submitted for reimbursement. However, DMC program administrators only collected enough invoices to ensure the grant only covered 30% of documented expenses, while many projects projected committing more than 70% match. Without full documentation of project costs, evaluators know the minimum match provided by recipients, but they cannot verify the full match provided by recipients. At the same time, many projects, particularly in Round 2 and 3 are still underway, meaning many recipients have submitted no invoices or only partial invoices. The more open projects in a round, the less certain the actual result for that round is.

Round	DEED Projection	Projected from Closed Projects	Projected from Ongoing Projects	Actual Result (as of June 2026)	Goal Met Status	Notes
1	$33,671,952	$31,656,359	$2,015,593	$5,576,419	Unlikely, Not Verifiable	Based on the projected match from closed projects and the actual results (demonstrated match) so far, it appears unlikely that DMC will meet the match it projected in DEED reporting. However, as described in the table above, the actual result is the minimum amount that DMC could have leveraged in matching funds, and the actual value may be much higher.
2	$6,587,578	$4,526,471	$2,061,107	$4,640,326	Likely, Not Verifiable	Based on the projected match from closed projects and the actual results (demonstrated match) so far, DMC appears on-track to meet its projection in DEED reporting. However, with around 30% of projected match coming from ongoing projects, the result is not verifiable.
3	$5,266,017	$1,918,762	$3,347,255	$1,349,333	Not Verifiable	Based on closed projects, DMC appears slightly behind its DEED projection, but with more than 60% of the match projected to come from ongoing projects, the result is not verifiable.
Overall	$45,525,547	$38,101,592	$7,423,955	$11,566,078	Unlikely, Not Verifiable	With so much of the projected match funding coming from projects in Round 1, which is unlikely to meet its DEED projection, it is unlikely that the program will meet the projection across the three rounds.

Net Increase in Tax Base

Analysis Area	Evidence Source	Evidence Classification	Explanation
Projected Net Increase in Tax Base*	DEED Reporting as of February 2026; Leverage Grant Approval Form	Unverified	Evaluators did not use the net increase in tax base as an outcome metric because too many recipients left the field blank and the data available appeared unreliable, with net increases in tax base that often vastly exceeded the total projected investment.
Actual Net Increase In Tax Base	N/A	Unverified	DMC did not collect data on the actual net increase in tax base created through the grant program.

Round	DEED Projection	Actual Result	Goal Met Status
1	$42,530,647	N/A	Not Verifiable
2	$1,684,116	N/A	Not Verifiable
3	$27,639,314	N/A	Not Verifiable
Overall	$71,854,077	N/A	Not Verifiable

Businesses Open (not reported to DEED)

Analysis Area	Evidence Source	Evidence Classification	Explanation
Business Open Status	Desktop research using company websites, Google Maps, and input from DMC	Directional	Evaluators determined businesses' open status based on desktop research supplemented with input from DMC. However, evaluators did not collect explicit documentation demonstrating that the businesses were open at the time of the evaluation.

Round	DEED Projection	Actual Result	Goal Met Status
1	N/A	85%	N/A
2	N/A	82%	N/A
3	N/A	100%	N/A
Overall	N/A	88%	N/A

References

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