

## What is the Purpose of Main Street Morgantown?

Main Street Morgantown is a non-profit organization dedicated to the continued revitalization of downtown Morgantown. It was established in January 1984 to promote the economic and aesthetic revitalization of our downtown through a comprehensive self-help process. Our program is modeled after the National Main Street Program which utilizes a four point approach:

Organization  
Design  
Promotion  
Economic Restructuring

## Introduction

Public information and private business signs have a significant impact on the downtown's visual image. Like other design elements, signs should reinforce the district's style in terms of size, scale, color, materials and placement. Signage is a source of information and communication for both residents and visitors to our city. When it is done properly and in a restrained fashion, signage can be both effective and attractive. Large garish signage, which attempt to compete for our attention through "one-up-manship" with existing signage can be disastrous. Uncontrolled increases in size, color and lighting intensity of signage create visual clutter, which is unacceptable.

## What is Main Street's Sign Grant Program?

Main Street Morgantown has developed a grant program to assist businesses in purchasing new signs. In February 1995, Morgantown City Council passed an ordinance to provide for design review on any signage

over 12 square feet in the pedestrian zone in the B-4 Business District. Design Review requires all new businesses to select signage that complement the building, existing business signs and the character of the downtown district. **All existing business signs were grandfathered and exempt from design review.** The purpose of this grant program is to assist financially in purchasing new signage for new or existing businesses.

## Who is Eligible to Apply for Sign Grant Program?

- \*New businesses
- \*Existing businesses
- \*Property owners

\*This program only provides for new signage within the pedestrian zone designed in the new ordinance. A copy of the ordinance can be obtained through the Main Street office.

## Why Should I Apply?

**New Main Street Business** – You can receive financial assistance with your new business sign. Also, we can provide you with free design assistance. It is essential as a new business that your sign directs customers to your location. Your sign will be your calling card and will reflect your personality, taste and the quality of your goods or services.

**Existing Main Street Business** – You can receive financial assistance to replace your current sign. An excellent opportunity to update your sign and receive free design assistance. Your new sign will give your storefront a fresh new look and attract new customers.

## How Do I Apply?

Contact the Main Street Morgantown office at 292-0168 for an application, MSM Design Guidelines and a copy of the current sign ordinance. The Main Street program can arrange for free design assistance. The application, design plans, cost estimates and construction schedules must be filed with the Main Street Morgantown office.

## Program Guidelines

- \***Grant Amount:** Any amount up to \$500.
- \***Business Match:** The match will be based on a dollar for dollar ratio.

Example:

New sign's purchase price	\$600
MSM grant program will pay	\$300
Business owner will pay	\$300

\***Approval:** All signs will be reviewed by the MSM Sign Grant Review Committee. All projects must be approved by this committee to be eligible for the sign grant. The application, design plans, cost estimates and construction schedules will become the property of Main Street Morgantown. All new signs must be installed within 90 days of grant approval.

\***Special Conditions** – If the applicant, at any time, deviates from the requirements set out by the Review Committee, the grant will not be awarded. Applicants must agree to follow Main Street Morgantown Design Guidelines and additional recommendations of the Review Committee to insure a good sign. A final inspection will be conducted by the Review committee and the applicant before grant payments are issued.

## Additional Incentives

\*Low Interest Loan Pool – Main Street Morgantown and The City of Morgantown have a low interest loan program available for façade renovation. Eligible projects include:

- Signage
- Lighting
- Awning
- Façade rehabilitation
- ADA improvements (doors, etc.)
- Windows
- Painting
- Masonry Cleaning & Repairs

This program provides for loans effectively **3% below traditional bank financing rates.**

\*Tax Credits – Certain costs that are incurred with the rehabilitation of an old structure are eligible for tax credits. Also, tax credits are available for ADA improvements. Inquire at the Main Street office.

Executive Director can provide free design assistance through the WV State Architect. Resource materials are also available in the areas of design, historic preservation, ADA issues and façade rehabilitation.

## The Design of a Downtown Sign is Important

To preserve the distinctive historic character and quality of life in the downtown Morgantown Business District.

To allow downtown businesses to convey their messages and be able to compete effectively without the interference of a chaotic overabundance of signs, and without having to install ever larger and more garish signs.

To protect downtown property values and promote economic development by enhancing the attractiveness and harmoniousness of the area.

To avoid traffic and other accidents due to excessive advertising distractions.

Please provide the following items:

- ⇒ Photo of existing building showing current signage on entire primary façade of the building.
- ⇒ Sketch of new sign and/or catalogue pages for detail information on materials, size, etc. This must include information about colors being used on the sign (paint chips are helpful).
- ⇒ Contractor's quotation and any additional information regarding this project.

Estimated Cost: Materials	\$ _____
Labor	_____
TOTAL	\$ _____

I, \_\_\_\_\_, fully understand the special conditions and requirements set forth in this program and agree to follow Main Street Morgantown's Design Guidelines to insure sensitive rehabilitation of this property.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of owner or manager



## SIGN IMPROVEMENT GRANT

