

2022 MSI Award Categories

Main Street Excellence Award: Two awards (one rural [2,500 residents or below], one urban) are given to recognize communities OR “Community Champions” (individuals) within that community whose efforts embody all four pillars of the Main Street Initiative: Smart, Efficient Infrastructure; 21st Century Workforce; Economic Diversification, and Healthy, Vibrant Communities.

Criteria: The nominee must demonstrate activities that cross all four pillars and showcase innovative efforts to enhance the livability, health and attractiveness of their community while demonstrating fiscally-sound planning and sustainability. Submissions must include at least one of the following criteria:

- Demonstrate successful public-private partnerships
- Reflect community-centered efforts and benefit
- Engage youth to remain or return to North Dakota through career exploration or leadership
- Demonstrate efforts that show fiscally-sound planning and infrastructure development
- Demonstrate efforts that increase community livability to attract and retain people of all ages

Examples: *Example: Economic driven vibrancy work, individuals who have volunteered themselves or allow staff to volunteer for community development, community who has engaged youth in decision making and project development, well planned infrastructure programs that include vibrancy and diversification of economies.*

21st Century Workforce Award: Two awards (one rural [2,500 residents or below], one urban) are given in this category to recognize excellence in EITHER (1) Efforts to attract or retain workforce OR (2) Efforts to train existing workers in a community. Excellence in workforce attraction and retention can be demonstrated through the implementation of a strategy that encourages people to move to and stay in your community. Excellence in workforce development can be demonstrated through efforts to engage students in leadership development or workforce exploration.

Criteria: Community must have implemented a project that either seeks to enhance local workforce development opportunities or attract and retain workforce. Nominees must also meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Implement a creative strategy to attract and retain workforce

- Build the professional skills of youth and seek to connect them with local employment opportunities
- Work with employers or economic/community development groups (public-private partnership)

Examples: *Workforce development programs; programs that aim to attract or retain workers; community driven projects that have new/diverse community members as their primary audience*

Healthy, Vibrant Community Award: This award recognizes communities or groups that have made investments in projects that enhance the health and vibrancy of communities. This award emphasizes efforts to engage and empower people of all ages and abilities, helping North Dakota improve its health, economy, and connectivity.

Criteria: Community must have completed a project that includes public art, a project that revolves around public space and vibrancy, a project that revitalizes a historic place, and/or a project that enhances the health or walkability of a community. Nominees must also meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Demonstrate successful public-private partnerships
- Reflect community-centered efforts and benefits
- Engage youth and/or people from diverse backgrounds in the project
- Demonstrate accessibility to people of all ages and abilities
- Create increased activity in the community

Examples: *Efforts to create walkable neighborhoods; projects that encourage walkability and/or multimodal use like trails; efforts to increase accessibility; programs that promote recreational activity; new programs for youth and/or seniors.*

Smart, Efficient Infrastructure Award: This award recognizes a community that has made sound planning decisions by investing in spaces with existing infrastructure (such as a vacant lot or dilapidated building) or has effectively engaged the community in developing plans to do so. Nominated projects should infuse existing infrastructure with new and innovative ideas to ensure the most efficient use of public resources.

Criteria: Community must have completed a project that revitalizes an existing building or structure or is an infill project, making use of existing infrastructure. Submissions must include at least one of the following criteria:

- Demonstrate successful public-private partnership

- Reflect community-centered efforts and benefit
- Demonstrate effective use of existing infrastructure
- Showcase revitalized structure and highlight preserved historic elements
- Demonstrate innovation in use of spaces or buildings

Examples: *Infill projects or new programs encouraging infill and/or mixed-use projects; repurposing underutilized spaces; creating or utilizing planning documents.*

Economic Diversification Award: This award recognizes a community or organization that have contributed to community resiliency by finding its unique strength, community asset or niche while using it to attract business, workforce, visitors and enhance resident's quality of life. Nominated responses should recognize organizations who find innovative ways to strengthen community connections, diversify local businesses or build local morale.

Criteria: Organizations must be able to identify its unique differentiator and what makes it a selling point for the community, and how it has impacted residents and been used in an attraction of workforce or business environment or have initiated a project that clearly seeks to support the local economy, strengthen community ties, or otherwise promote local resilience. Nominees must meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Demonstrate successful public-private partnerships
- Reflect community-centered efforts and benefit
- Showcase community pride in differentiator as a factor in retaining/attracting residents
- Reflect community-centered efforts and benefit
- Engage youth and/or people from diverse backgrounds in the project
- Showcase a unique or innovative approach to strengthening community in times of challenge

Examples: *Diversification and innovation in business resilience during/post COVID; alternative industries to maintain community and workforce; adding value to existing production or products; a local grant program to support businesses in adapting to a new business model, program to incentivize shopping with local businesses; event to promote community connections while maintaining social distancing practices; or communication methods that keep community members connected.*

Future Leaders Empowerment Award: This award recognizes a community that seeks to engage students in creating a healthy, vibrant community through leadership development, community planning or workforce exploration in community industries.

Criteria: Community must demonstrate student engagement within the community. Nominees must meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Demonstrate successful public-private partnerships
- Reflect community-centered efforts and benefit
- Showcase students involved in community planning or community-based learning activities
- Demonstrate leadership development opportunities for students
- Showcase use of student ideas, innovations, and support in community efforts
- Exposure to students of workforce opportunities in the community

Examples: *Connections with local businesses and students; students engaged in community improvement or development; engage students and young professionals in policy development and leadership.*

Deadline for nominations is: September 2nd, 2022.