

No. 2002-39

AN ACT

HB 1935

Providing for a commercial downtown enhancement program to be administered by the Department of Community and Economic Development.

The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania hereby enacts as follows:

Section 1. Short title.

This act shall be known and may be cited as the Main Street Act.

Section 2. Definitions.

The following words and phrases when used in this act shall have the meanings given to them in this section unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

“Department.” The Department of Community and Economic Development of the Commonwealth.

“Established commercial downtown.” A defined geographic area which has:

- (1) historically consisted of buildings and structures constituting the community core; and
- (2) existed as a commercial downtown for at least 40 years.

“Main Street area.” The established commercial downtown of a municipality.

“Manager.” A full-time, professional downtown coordinator.

“Municipality.” A city, borough, township, county or home rule municipality.

“Program.” The Main Street Program established in section 3.

Section 3. Program.

(a) Establishment.—There is established a Main Street Program in the department. The department shall administer the program to help a community’s downtown economic development effort through the establishment of a local organization dedicated to downtown revitalization and management of downtown revitalization.

(b) Requirements.—The program shall at a minimum include the following components:

- (1) Basic grants, for up to five years, for administrative costs associated with the hiring of a manager.
- (2) Commercial downtown reinvestment grants for infrastructure and structural improvements, including streets, streetlights, trees, housing, commercial facades and sidewalks or other pedestrian-oriented features.
- (3) Plans for marketing and promoting the established commercial downtown within the Main Street area.

(4) Plans to leverage additional private and public investment in the Main Street area.

(5) Plans to address social or economic concerns within the Main Street area.

(6) Plans, to the greatest extent possible, to achieve consistency with existing revitalization efforts.

(7) An assessment of the potential need for the following components:

(i) The establishment of a neighborhood improvement district as defined in the act of December 20, 2000 (P.L.949, No.130), known as the Neighborhood Improvement District Act.

(ii) A review of local comprehensive plans and zoning and other land use ordinances to foster the viability of the Main Street area.

(c) Eligibility.—Municipalities or their designated agencies must meet the following criteria to participate in the program:

(1) Have a clearly defined established commercial downtown in need of a manager.

(2) Have demonstrated support by local residents, merchants and government officials.

(3) Have ability to provide up to a 50% match for department grants in financial or in-kind support from other public or private sources based upon departmental guidelines. The department may waive matching requirements if it determines that the requirements would constitute an unusual hardship upon the municipality or its designated agency.

(d) Limitations.—In no case shall the aggregate amount of grants in any fiscal year exceed the amount of the appropriation to the department for the program in that fiscal year. The provision of grants under this act shall in no way constitute an entitlement derived from the Commonwealth or a claim on any other funds of the Commonwealth. The department shall establish limits on the amount of money available to each applicant so as to distribute the available funds as fairly as possible throughout this Commonwealth.

Section 4. Effective date.

This act shall take effect immediately.

APPROVED—The 23rd day of April, A.D. 2002.

MARK S. SCHWEIKER