



State of Wisconsin  
2025 - 2026 LEGISLATURE

LRB-1031/P1

MDE:amn

DOA:.....Quinn, BB0104 - Main street program modernization

**FOR 2025-2027 BUDGET -- NOT READY FOR INTRODUCTION**

**AN ACT ...; relating to:** the budget.

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*Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau*  
**COMMERCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**  
**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

***Changes to the state main street program***

Under current law, WEDC is required to establish and administer a state main street program to coordinate state and local participation in programs offered by the national main street center to assist municipalities in planning, managing, and implementing programs for revitalization of commercial areas having historic significance.

Under current law, a recipient of assistance under the state main street program must be a city, village, or town. Under this bill, eligible recipients include tribal governments, chambers of commerce, and nonprofit organizations.

The bill repeals the requirements that WEDC contract with the national main street center for services related to revitalizing commercial areas having historic significance and develop a plan describing the objectives of the state main street program and the methods by which WEDC will carry out certain responsibilities specified by law.

The bill also repeals the requirements that, in developing criteria for use in selecting participants in the state main street program, WEDC include the following:

1. Local organizational and financial commitment to employ a program manager for not less than 5 years.
2. Local assistance in paying for the services of a design consultant.
3. Local commitment to assist in training persons to direct activities related to business areas in municipalities that do not participate in the state main street program.

Under the bill, in selecting participants in the state main street program, WEDC must evaluate and consider the potential in the business area selected by the applicant to retain small businesses, attract new businesses, generate new economic activity and grow the local tax base, and create new employment opportunities. The bill also retains the current law requirement that WEDC consider private and public sector interest in and commitment to revitalization of

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the business area selected by the applicant and potential private sector investment in the business area selected by the applicant.

Finally, the bill changes the definition of “business area” for the purposes of the state main street program from “a commercial area existing at the time services under the state main street program are requested and having historic significance” to “a downtown area or historic commercial district.”

For further information see the state fiscal estimate, which will be printed as an appendix to this bill.

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***The people of the state of Wisconsin, represented in senate and assembly, do enact as follows:***

**SECTION 1.** 238.127 (1) (a) of the statutes is renumbered 238.127 (1) (bm) and amended to read:

238.127 (1) (bm) “Business area” means a ~~commercial area existing at the time services under the state main street program are requested and having historic significance~~ downtown area or historic commercial district.

**SECTION 2.** 238.127 (1) (b) of the statutes is renumbered 238.127 (1) (am) and amended to read:

238.127 (1) (am) “~~Municipality Applicant~~” means a city, village ~~or~~, town, tribal government, chamber of commerce, or nonprofit organization.

**SECTION 3.** 238.127 (2) (intro.) of the statutes is amended to read:

238.127 (2) (intro.) The corporation shall establish and administer a state main street program to coordinate state and local participation in programs offered by the national main street center, created by the national trust for historic preservation, to assist ~~municipalities~~ applicants in planning, managing and implementing programs for the revitalization of business areas. The corporation shall do all of the following:

**SECTION 4.** 238.127 (2) (a) of the statutes is repealed.

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**SECTION 5.** 238.127 (2) (c) of the statutes is repealed.

**SECTION 6.** 238.127 (2) (d) of the statutes is amended to read:

238.127 (2) (d) Coordinate with other state and local public and private entities which provide services to ~~municipalities~~ applicants undertaking projects for the revitalization of business areas.

**SECTION 7.** 238.127 (2) (e) of the statutes is amended to read:

238.127 (2) (e) Annually select, upon application, up to 5 ~~municipalities~~ applicants to participate in the state main street program. The program for each ~~municipality~~ applicant shall conclude after 3 years, except that the program for each ~~municipality~~ applicant selected after July 29, 1995, shall conclude after 5 years. The corporation shall select program participants representing various geographical regions and populations. ~~A municipality~~ An applicant may apply to participate, and the corporation may select ~~a municipality~~ an applicant for participation, more than one time. In selecting ~~a municipality~~ an applicant, however, the corporation may give priority to those ~~municipalities~~ applicants that have not previously participated.

**SECTION 8.** 238.127 (2) (f) (intro.) of the statutes is amended to read:

238.127 (2) (f) (intro.) For use in selecting the participants in the state main street program under par. (e), ~~develop objective criteria relating to~~ evaluate and consider at least the following issues:

**SECTION 9.** 238.127 (2) (f) 1. of the statutes is amended to read:

238.127 (2) (f) 1. Private and public sector interest in and commitment to revitalization of a business area selected by the ~~municipality~~ applicant.

**SECTION 10.** 238.127 (2) (f) 2. of the statutes is amended to read:

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238.127 (2) (f) 2. Potential private sector investment in a business area selected by the ~~municipality~~ applicant.

**SECTION 11.** 238.127 (2) (f) 3. of the statutes is repealed.

**SECTION 12.** 238.127 (2) (f) 3m. of the statutes is created to read:

238.127 (2) (f) 3m. Potential to retain small businesses in the business area selected by the applicant.

**SECTION 13.** 238.127 (2) (f) 4. of the statutes is repealed.

**SECTION 14.** 238.127 (2) (f) 4m. of the statutes is created to read:

238.127 (2) (f) 4m. Potential to attract new businesses to the business area selected by the applicant.

**SECTION 15.** 238.127 (2) (f) 5. of the statutes is repealed.

**SECTION 16.** 238.127 (2) (f) 5m. of the statutes is created to read:

238.127 (2) (f) 5m. Potential to generate new economic activity and grow the tax base in the business area selected by the applicant.

**SECTION 17.** 238.127 (2) (f) 6. of the statutes is created to read:

238.127 (2) (f) 6. Potential to create employment opportunities in the business area selected by the applicant.

**SECTION 18.** 238.127 (2) (h) of the statutes is amended to read:

238.127 (2) (h) Provide training, technical assistance and information on the revitalization of business areas to ~~municipalities~~ applicants which do not participate in the state main street program. The corporation may charge reasonable fees for the services and information provided under this paragraph.

**(END)**