



# GUIDE TO STATS REPORTING

Main Street programs around the state are working hard to make their downtown districts more vibrant places that support thriving small businesses, historic preservation, and community cohesion. But how do you know if you're making an impact? It can be difficult to attribute direct causality, since the work of a Main Street program is, by nature, comprehensive and incremental. However, tracking statistics – reinvestments, job and business creation, and so on – provides a tangible measurement of long-term progress and is crucial to garnering financial and programmatic support for revitalization efforts, both statewide and locally. Submitting quarterly stats is required of all Main Street Communities under [WAC 25-50-050-2a](#).

On a state level, Washington Main Street uses cumulative and featured data from your quarterly reports to share with legislators and other stakeholders the value of Main Street – the state network and the Main Street Tax Credit Incentive Program, both of which support local programs – in Washington State. Through business and job creation, public and private investment, and other indicators, we can show that Main Street is a strong economic development and historic preservation tool!

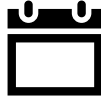
Meaningful data can help you tell your story. Consider your own city – who are your stakeholders and how can you use data to explain the value your Main Street program brings to the local economy and community? Stats collected for the Washington Main Street quarterly reports can and should be used by your organization on a local level to show progress and impact. Pair the data with additional quantitative and qualitative indicators and you have a well-rounded and compelling story!

## **In this guide you will find:**

**The Basics:** Submitting Your Report, Deadlines + Tracking Your Data

**Glossary of Terms** + Where to Find the Data

**More Meaningful Data:** Baseline Data and Deeper Dive Data Points



## 2020 REPORTING DEADLINES

Submit your report at the end of each fiscal quarter (e.g. the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter report should be based off data from January 1 – March 31, 2019).

2019 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter*	<b>January 15</b>
2020 1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter	<b>April 15</b>
2020 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter	<b>July 15</b>
2020 3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter	<b>October 14</b>
2020 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter*	<b>January 20, 2021</b>

\*Once a year, during your 4<sup>th</sup> quarter report, you'll be asked to share certain annual totals and averages.



## SUBMITTING YOUR REPORT

1. Visit [www.preservewa.org/mainstreetstats](http://www.preservewa.org/mainstreetstats)
2. Select your community name
3. Enter your own name and email address
4. Select the appropriate year and quarter (reference deadlines below)
5. Fill out your report
  - a. You can save your report along the way and come back to it, if needed:
    - i. Click “Save and Continue Later”
    - ii. Have the generated link emailed to you so you can pick up where you left off, from any device
6. Submit your report
7. Save a copy of the report, which will be emailed to you upon submission



## BEST PRACTICE

Create a database to keep track of your stats. This document should live on your own computer so that you have easy access to your local stats throughout the year, as well as when you input them into the quarterly reporting form and your annual report. Contact WSMSP for a template.



## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

(+ WHERE TO FIND THE DATA)

### Required Quarterly

Though every program/city is different, here are some likely sources for various reporting items:

- **Business Movement** (*City – business licensing*)
  - **New Business:** List the new businesses that have opened in your district. This will include new business startups or a business that was previously located outside the city limits of your community and moved to your district.
  - **Business Expansion:** List the number of businesses that have expanded within your district. Expansion can include square footage, number of employees, or major addition to business mix (e.g. bookstore opens a coffee shop in back room).
  - **Business Closure:** List the number of businesses that have closed within your district. This will also include businesses located in your district that move outside the city limits or to another community.
- **Jobs** (*City – business licensing - business starts*)
  - **Created:** Total number of full-time people (or full-time equivalent) employed by each new business. If a business has expanded within the district, new jobs will be created only if additional people are employed after the move or expansion.
  - **Lost:** Total number of jobs lost to business closure, consolidation, or downsizing. Jobs lost to a business relocation outside the district will be zero unless the business decreases the number of its employees with the move.
- **Community Investment**
  - **Private Investment** (*City - building permits, owner or building manager, contractor, neighbors, or best estimate*) The amount of private improvement dollars spent within the district, i.e. individuals or private sources of money spent on building rehabilitations, public space improvements, or new construction. A project can be as minimal as the removal of an inappropriate sign, or at the other extreme, a major restoration project or new construction.
  - **Public Investment** (*City – public works, building permits, parks, etc.*) The amount of public improvement dollars spent within the district, i.e. city, county, state, or federal money spent on building rehabilitations, public space improvements, or new construction. Types of public improvement projects include improvements to public buildings, street lighting, street and sidewalks, parking amenities, public signage, and landscaping.
- **Volunteer Hours** (*Tracked by your Main Street program*) The total number of volunteer hours contributed to the organization in the last quarter. This includes hours spent in board and committee meetings, executing projects, and special events. (The total number of individuals who volunteer for your organization will be asked only on an annual basis, in your 4<sup>th</sup> quarter report – see below.)

### **\*Required Annually (4<sup>th</sup> Quarter Report Only)**

The following items, focused on totals and averages, will no longer be asked quarterly, but WILL show up on your Q4 report each year as required fields. *You may be able to find this information by working with your city (planning department), or you may need to conduct a manual inventory by walking the district and speaking with business and property owners.*

- **Commercial spaces** – Total number of commercial spaces (all floors) in your district.
- **Vacant commercial spaces** – Total number of vacant commercial spaces in your district.
- **Residential units** – Total number of residential units (currently occupied or available for lease) in your district.
- **Rehabilitation projects completed** – Total number of rehabilitation projects (construction work such as repairing, renovating, modifying, reconstructing) that were *completed* in the last year.
- **New construction projects completed** – Total number of new construction projects that were *completed* in the last year.
- **Public improvement projects completed** – Total number of public improvement projects that were completed in the last year. May include, but not limited to, streetscape, lighting, public signage, parks, transportation.
- **Average rental rate** – The average rental rate for commercial spaces in your district, in terms of price per square foot. Take a sample if you can't pull the information from all buildings. This will vary depending on the size of your downtown, but consider calculating the average based on information gathered from two commercial spaces per block.
- **Total number of volunteers** – The total number of volunteers that have contributed to the organization. Count volunteers only once, even if they donated time to more than one committee or project.



## **MORE MEANINGFUL DATA**

### **Baseline Data**

Every Main Street program should have baseline data about their district to allow you to track changes over time as a result, in part, of your Main Street activities. The stats you gather for Washington Main Street, such as vacancy rates, also serve this purpose. Depending on the state of your organization, you may need to develop or maintain additional data, such as:

- **Building inventory** – square footage, year built, ownership and contact info, vacant/occupied status, rental rates, historic photo, current photo.
- **Business inventory** – location, product/service, target customers, ownership and contact info, own or lease space, how long they have owned the business, business hours.

- **Pedestrian counts** – use volunteers to collect numbers of pedestrians in your district during a finite period (consistency, both in location and timing, is key).
- **Downtown events** – the number of events occurring downtown each year, both those hosted by your organization and by others, as well as attendance at the events you host.

## Deeper Dive into Data

Strengthen your understanding of the local market and your community, and tell a better story about your impact by gathering, analyzing, and sharing additional data, such as:

### Economic Indicators

- **Sales Tax Revenue** (*City licensing, but more likely direct from business owners*)

While it can be difficult to collect this information wholesale, a voluntary sampling of year-over-year sales tax data from a finite and consistent number of businesses in your district can help paint a picture of business vitality and tax revenue impact.

- **Property Tax Values** (*City or County licensing/assessing office*)

In addition to tracking district changes and tax revenue impact, assessing property tax values can be a meaningful way of tracking changes in your district over time. Additionally, you can track the revenue generated by property taxes, particularly in terms of value per acre, to show the value of the downtown district compared to other retail districts.

### Qualitative Indicators

How are perceptions and opinions changing as a result of your work? Consider using tools such as **surveys**, **focus groups**, and **testimonials** (from business owners, employees, and community members) to gauge qualitative changes in your district. As with any data collection, consider consistency if you are hoping to compare results over time.

Washington Main Street conducts an annual **District Trends Survey** that assesses confidence in business and property owners from around the state. You are encouraged to pass on the survey link to your stakeholders and are welcome to use the data from your respondents in your own data analysis.

### Key Performance Indicators

What are the specific strategies your organization is deploying and how can you evaluate their success? These indicators will be specific to your work plan.

*Example:* Your community is home to many people in their 20s and 60s, the two age groups most closely following the trend of downtown living. Your organization decides to focus its efforts on encouraging property owners to develop currently-vacant upper floors for housing. Key performance indicators for you to follow in this long-term effort could include the number of available upper floor residential units in your district, the number of downtown residents, and per square footage rental rates for residential units.