



North Carolina
MAIN STREET

2026 NC Main Street Champion Submissions

The NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center recognizes individuals who make exceptional contributions to the success of local downtown programs across North Carolina. The NC Main Street Champion designation is a non-competitive honor given to people who demonstrate extraordinary dedication to their downtown. Each Champion will be recognized with a video presentation and commemorative certificate during the Annual NC Main Street Conference.

Key Dates

Entry Deadline: September 24, 2026, at 5:00 p.m.

Recognition Ceremony: March 11, 2027, during the NC Main Street Conference in Morganton

Eligibility to Nominate

Only designated NC Main Street communities may nominate a Champion. DAC and Small-Town Main Street communities may submit nominations once they have moved up to the NC Main Street program and have completed one full year as a Designated Main Street Community.

Why Nominate?

Naming an NC Main Street Champion is a meaningful way to recognize individuals who have gone above and beyond to support the success of their downtown. This designation also offers a positive public relations opportunity for local programs.

Who Can Be a Champion?

Nominees must be individuals who have made a significant impact on the downtown or downtown program. Their contributions should ideally have taken place within the past year and should clearly exceed typical job or volunteer expectations. Once someone is named an NC Main Street Champion, that honor is permanent. A person previously recognized by your community may not be nominated again. However, a Champion from another community may be nominated by your program if they have also made major contributions to your downtown.

Submission Instructions

Text may not exceed 200 words. Text must be written in a storytelling style with no bullet points. Focus only on the nominee's contributions to downtown. Do not include family, civic, or religious information. Provide specific details that help readers understand the nominee's role and impact. Proofread for content, grammar, and spelling before submitting. The NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center may edit submissions for length and clarity.

Champion Photo Requirements

Photos must be 1024 × 768 pixels, at least 1 MB in file size, taken in good lighting, and include only the Champion(s). Avoid Photoshop alterations, borders, labels, or date stamps. File names should follow the format: Garner John Doe, Edenton Jane Doe, or Lenoir Jill Doe.

Notification and Ceremony

You will need to notify your Champion so you can gather information for their story. A Champion letter will be sent in January. The designation is not official until after the Awards Ceremony, and public announcements must wait until that time. Champions may privately share the news with family and friends so they may attend the ceremony.