

EMPOWERING
Community Revitalization

September 8, 2020
PRESS RELEASE

Five Communities Selected for Community Resiliency Grants from Missouri Main Street Connection and AARP

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Missouri Main Street Connection Inc. (MMSC) in partnership with AARP Missouri, is excited to award this grant opportunity to five Missouri communities. AARP Missouri is investing in projects that inspire change and improve communities for all ages. The five selected communities will receive \$5,000 each to implement their proposed Community Resiliency Project as well as the opportunity to receive design assistance to make their resiliency project a reality. It is important for small businesses to activate spaces in new ways to meet the changing business climate as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The awarded projects will be accessible for all ages to ensure the entire community can utilize them as well as provide new spaces for small businesses to use. This grant is specifically designed to be implemented for the betterment of a downtown area by including community input and implementation while celebrating and encouraging inclusivity.

The five communities selected for this grant are Clinton, Dutchtown (St. Louis), Independence, Jackson, and Lee's Summit.

Clinton Main Street proposes for improvements to their current JC Smith Park to make it more useful to the community and local businesses. The goal of this project is to improve the park's function and accessibility while ensuring it meets new social distancing standards and be more appealing for citizens and visitors.

Downtown Dutchtown (St. Louis) aims to transform their NIC (Neighborhood Innovation Center) Parking Lot into a multi-functional outdoor event space. It's underutilized and can be transitioned into a flexible, but multi-purposed outdoor space for downtown businesses, non-profit organizations, and families.

Independence Square Association plans to create Liberty Lounge. It will be a place that provides adequate physical distancing while being an outdoor venue to gather. Plans call for painted activity zones for different ages and repurposing a vacant lot into a programmable zone that will function for years to come. The area will tie in local eateries, pop-up shops, music, and games.

Uptown Jackson Revitalization Organization intends to modify a trailer to create a mobile "ped-let" or event space and pop-up market. The mobile trailer will accommodate seating and flexible arrangements with bar top tables and an umbrella covering that can become a pop-up market or include a combination of all uses.

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Downtown Lee's Summit Main Street envisions an alley activation project that will create a safer space for the public to gather for both small events and informal interactions. The goal of the alley activation project is to take the next step in creating a more pedestrian friendly environment that can serve as flexible pop-up event space for special events, activities, and informal interactions.

State Director, Gayla Roten stated, "We are so thrilled to be partnering with AARP Missouri to bring this grant opportunity to our Missouri communities. We are excited to see these projects become realities and make such a positive impact in the communities after a difficult year. It's important to showcase how resilient downtown can be now more than ever."

These projects will provide other communities with concrete examples of how they can utilize Main Street principles to create resiliency in their communities. Work on these projects are set to begin in September and be completed by November. The projects proposed by these five communities emphasized creative, physical solutions to the evolving business climate of downtowns.