

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

Did you know:

Volunteerism improves health by strengthening the body, improving mood, and lessening stress!

HOURS AND CONTACT INFORMATION

City of Eaton Rapids DDA
200 S. Main Street
Eaton Rapids, MI 48827

517-663-8117 x8157

smithj@cityofeatonrapids.com

Monday – Friday 8:30am – 4:00pm or by
appointment.

Positioning Statement (PROPOSED)

Eaton Rapids Main Street and **DDA** are dedicated to community, with partners and volunteers of all ages and backgrounds working together to create a vibrant downtown.

We believe in embracing innovation while holding the history of Eaton Rapids in high regard to promote the downtown economy and utilizing investment from all corners to create an experience unlike any other.

Eaton Rapids is a close-knit community, centered around pride and a spirit unrivaled. Our efforts combine the uniqueness, innovation, and creativity of our stakeholders to elevate Eaton Rapids now, and for all those who come in the future.

Mission Statement

COMING SOON

Vision Statement

By 2029, Downtown Eaton Rapids will be an active, vibrant district, with residents and visitors shopping and dining.

The historic storefronts are renovated and filled with thriving and unique small businesses. The upper floors are active with new apartments and several office spaces.

The river and surrounding parks are full with people kayaking, canoeing, and enjoying nature and the outdoors. There is a thriving arts and culture scene.

Downtown Eaton Rapids will be seen as an asset to not just the city, but to the entire region.

The City of Eaton Rapids utilizes both the Michigan Main Street Program and the Redevelopment Ready Communities Program.



The Main Street Approach® is a unique, historic preservation based economic development strategy that focuses on leveraging existing social, economic, physical and cultural assets to energize community revitalization efforts and help manage success for the long term. The approach leads to tangible outcomes that benefit the entire community through encouraging communities to enact long-term change while also implementing short-term, inexpensive and place-based activities that attract people to the commercial core and create a sense of enthusiasm about the community.

The Main Street Program has a four-point approach:



- **ECONOMIC VITALITY:** Economic vitality strengthens the existing economic assets while diversifying the economic base of the Main Street District to support and improve profitability. The goal is to build a strong commercial district that creates a supportive environment for small businesses, entrepreneurs and consumers.
- **DESIGN:** Design capitalizes on and enhances the visual aspects of a Main Street District to create a safe, appealing and inviting atmosphere for people to shop and spend time. The physical elements such as the storefronts and building architecture, streetscape, public art, street furniture, parking areas, and public spaces are used to convey a positive image for the downtown.
- **ORGANIZATION:** A successful Main Street organization builds consensus between the many vested stakeholders throughout a Main Street District to ensure everyone is mobilized and working toward a shared vision for the future of the district. Organizational structure can take many forms depending on community capacity.
- **PROMOTION:** Effective promotion creates a positive image of the Main Street District to instill community pride and encourage commercial activity and investment in the area. Promotions can be used to communicate the unique characteristics of a Main Street District to spark interest in shopping, dining, living or investing in the community.

The City of Eaton Rapids has selected **Small Town, USA** as our transformation strategy. During the implementation process, the Eaton Rapids DDA Board selected three broad-based goals that serve as a baseline for all of the DDA Programming and volunteer activities:

1. Create safe, accessible, walkable, and attractive entry points into and throughout the downtown.
2. Develop and coordinate intentional business retention and development processes and systems.
3. Develop a welcoming and inviting culture that attracts and retains families and young professionals.

The **Redevelopment Ready Community Program** aids cities in identifying potential development properties, create a business-friendly environment, and work to attract potential tenants and developers.

In today's competitive economy, we know developers and businesses can invest anywhere. Certified Redevelopment Ready Communities® (RRC) signal that locating a new business or growing an existing one within their municipality is straightforward and streamlined.



Certified communities have removed barriers to development by implementing best practices that:

- Target specific areas for reinvestment
- Regulate for development that supports the vision of a master plan
- Assist officials and staff to understand their role in redevelopment
- Allow for mixed-use by right in specific zoning districts
- Provide development materials easily accessible online
- Proactively market redevelopment opportunities
- Create a business-friendly environment

The RRC Program has identified properties in the community that are considered the most ready and desirable to be developed. The Main Street and RRC programs working together helps to accomplish the goals of both programs at the same time. Throughout this handbook and the programming that you're engaged in, you'll see how the two work together.

Elevate Eaton Rapids understand that collective success cannot be accomplished without community support and active volunteerism. As a volunteer-driven organization, Elevate Eaton Rapids, the DDA, and the Eaton Rapids Main Street/RRC programs accepts and encourages volunteer involvement at all levels, from all walks of life, to help grow the downtown. Staff, as well as volunteers, are encouraged to assist in the creation of productive volunteer roles, aid in the raising of fundraising dollars, and recruitment of other volunteers.



A volunteer is defined as an individual who performs their specified job duties willingly at the discretion of the DDA/Main Street Board and Staff without expecting compensation. Although volunteers are not considered employees, they are expected to maintain the same level of accountability and be respected as such. Organizational rules and expectations apply to anyone volunteering.

VOLUNTEER POLICIES & ENGAGEMENT GUIDELINES

The purpose of these policies and engagement guidelines is to provide overall guidance and direction to staff and volunteers. These policies are intended for internal management guidance only, and do not constitute, either implicitly or explicitly, a personnel agreement. The policies are intended to provide direction for volunteers and the Executive Director on how to effectively work with one another. The program reserves the right at any time to change this policy. The Executive Director (ED) or a designated representative of the DDA/Michigan Main Street is the only person with the ability to grant changes to or make exceptions to these policies. These policies and practices pertain solely to Eaton Rapids DDA/Main Street volunteers only, and are not intended for application to any other department within the city.

Minor Volunteers

We welcome and encourage the involvement of minors. Individuals under the age of 18 must complete an adolescent application form signed by their legal guardian. If the applicant is participating in a volunteer referral program, such as a student community service program or an intern project, a special agreement must be established with the program regarding management. The referral program must assume and identify responsibility for management and care for the

volunteer. If the volunteer is not with a referral program, a supervisor will be appointed by the ED.

Becoming a Volunteer

Volunteer applications are accepted in person at Eaton Rapids City Hall, 200 S. Main St, Eaton Rapids, MI 48827. Additionally, electronic applications can be submitted via the Google Form, or by emailing smithj@cityofeatonrapids.com. Once an application is received, the volunteer will participate in a general orientation and a specific introduction to their choice of committee and/or area of interest. Volunteers are vital to what we do, and are extended the right to meaningful duties, fair treatment, and full participation. In exchange, volunteers are expected to perform their assigned duties to the best of their ability and conduct themselves in accordance with the mission, goals, and procedures of the program.

Role of Volunteer Management

Volunteer program success requires a planned and organized effort, which is done by the Organization Committee. The Board of Directors oversees the Organization Committee and ensures they are working efficiently and effectively together. The Organization Committee is responsible for maintaining a cohesive, functional environment for staff and volunteers and is also responsible for promoting the volunteer program, recruitment, evaluating, and recognizing the contribution of volunteers to the program.

Access to Program Property and Materials

As deemed appropriate, volunteers will have access to program property, materials, and as needed, training essential to fulfil their duties. Volunteers may utilize City of Eaton Rapids/Eaton Rapids DDA property and materials only when required for program purposes.

Attire

As representatives of the program, staff and volunteers are responsible for presenting a good, clean, and professional image to the community. Volunteers are expected to dress appropriately for the conditions and performance of their duties.

Recording Time

It is encouraged that all volunteers track the time they participate in Main Street and DDA programming. This allows the Main Street and DDA Program to accurately report volunteer contributions to our joint success, and estimate the value our volunteer program is bringing to the community.

Absenteeism/Substitutions

The Volunteer must notify the ED if they will be unable to complete the assigned task or will be absent from the activity. Volunteers are encouraged to find a substitute who is qualified for the position and seek approval from the Volunteer Administrator (VA) or the ED, as they are the only individuals who have the authority to grant substitution approval.

While volunteering with the program, individuals must consider the magnitude of their actions and comments while working alongside outside personnel. Although the volunteer may be an expert in a given field, they are not qualified to give advice or opinions to business owners, unless that is part of their position description. Volunteers may not speak with the media unless previously authorized by the ED. Volunteers are required to act as representatives of the program as indicated within their job descriptions.

Liability and Insurance

All program volunteers must sign a release before participating in a project or joining a committee. The release language is as follows:

The undersigned desires to participate as a volunteer in a program operated by the City of Eaton Rapids Downtown Development Authority (“DDA”), Elevate Eaton Rapids (“EER”) or Main Street Program (“MS”); collectively known as the “program”. In consideration of the program allowing my volunteer participation, I do hereby agree to hold the program, its officers, agents, and employees, free and clear of any liability for injuries or damages that may occur to my person or property while participating in the program. It is my understanding that the program consents to having me participate in the program on public property. In the event entry is to be on private property, the program will first obtain the consent of the appropriate party to allow entry on private property. It is my understanding that I am to provide my own transportation and supervision. In the event of any media coverage, it will be my personal responsibility to advise reporters whether or not I will agree to the pictures or publication of my participation.

I understand that the volunteer work will require some physical effort (bending, lifting, walking, kneeling, etc.) and the use of small hand tools; supplies will be provided by the program. I am in good health and able to acknowledge these conditions. I understand I shall receive no compensation for participating in the program, and that work will be completed under the direction of the program personnel. I will be provided with a specific location or locations where work is to be done. To protect myself, my co-workers, and the public, I will follow safety precautions to the best of my ability.

Photo Release

All program volunteers are required to sign a Photo Release Form. The language of the agreement is as follows:

I hereby grant the City of Eaton Rapids Downtown Development Authority (“DDA”), Main Street Program (“MS”), and Elevate Eaton Rapids (“EER”), collectively known as “the Program” to use my likeness in a photograph in any and all of its publications, including website entries, without payment or other consideration.

I understand and agree that these materials will become property of the Program and will not be returned.

I hereby irrevocably authorize the Program to edit, alter, copy, exhibit, publish, or distribute this photo for purposes of publicizing the Program or for any other lawful purpose. In addition, I

waive the right to inspect or approve the finished product, including written or electronic copy, wherein my likeness appears. Additionally, I waive any right to royalties or other compensation arising or related to the use of the photograph.

Discrimination/Sexual Harassment

It is the policy and commitment of the program not to discriminate based on race, color, sex and/or gender, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability, religion, and/or familial status in admission of its volunteers or its programs and services. All volunteers and employees will be held accountable and failure to comply with this policy may result in termination.

The program is committed to providing volunteers with a safe, productive, and enjoyable environment and experience while volunteering. The program will not tolerate any form of sexual harassment among its employees and volunteers; and encourages volunteers to bring any incident of sexual harassment to the immediate attention of the ED or proper authorities.

Volunteer Background Checks

We value the safety of those involved in the program. To this end, we background check all volunteers who will be working with minors or who will be involved with finances. Applicants are checked through the county court clerk's office in their county of current and former residences for misdemeanor and felony history.

Convictions for the following crimes make an applicant ineligible to volunteer with the Program:

- Any crime involving force or threat of force against a person
- Any crime involving controlled substances
- Any crime involving cruelty to animals
- Any crime of a sexual nature
- Any financial crime

All other information arising from the background check will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. If an applicant fails to clear the background check, they will be notified by regular or electronic mail. You are entitled to copies of any public records obtained by the program.

The Executive Director and the Main Street/DDA Board will be the final authority on background check review. If you feel the circumstances around any conviction precluding you from volunteering needs further review, the applicant may call the Executive Director's Office at 517-663-8118 x8157 or email smithj@cityofeatonrapids.com.

Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest

Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all proprietary and/or privileged information to which they are exposed while serving as a volunteer, whether this information involves a staff member, volunteer or other person, or overall program business. Designated and authorized volunteers will have exposure to confidential information that is defined as inside, personal, or sensitive information and may include contact information, business credentials, or personal experience stories. Acceptance of duties in the program also bars volunteers from the

sharing or disclosing of this information for any unauthorized purposes, including personal benefit.

No person who has a conflict of interest with any activity or program, whether personal, philosophical, or financial, shall serve as a volunteer with the activity/program. Examples of this could be, but are not limited to: volunteers, such as subcontractors or landlords, who will receive monetary wage as result of a project; a person trying to obtain a preoccupied space for themselves. If there is a concern that there may be a Conflict of Interest, the volunteer is asked to direct the concern to the ED.

Maintenance of Records

The program will maintain a database of information of all volunteers. They shall be responsible for submitting all appropriate records and information to the ED in a timely and accurate fashion.

Media Policy

It is the goal of Elevate Eaton Rapids to present a positive image of the program to the community via social and print media avenues. It is the objective to present materials in the correct format, correct and effective spelling and grammar, politically correct content, and all applicable sponsorship information.



Facebook content is managed by the administrators of the Elevate Eaton Rapids Facebook page. Any content posted to the page must be approved by an administrator.

Media Interviews/Press Releases/Advertising



Every effort should be made to have all media interviews conducted by the Executive Director to ensure media policy objectives are met. Board Members, and Committee or Event Chairs may speak on the program's behalf with approval from the Executive Director or Board Chair.

Press releases submitted to print and radio outlets are to be managed by the Executive Director. Every effort should be made to submit proposed press releases composed by committee or event chairs with 2 weeks of lead time prior to their release for review.

No paid advertising of any kind is permitted without express permission from a majority of the DDA Board, and contracts for paid advertising, as well as content will be executed by the Executive Director with consent from the DDA board.

Volunteer Sensitivity

Volunteers must give every person involved in the event or activity equal opportunity to access resources and advice pertaining to the mission of the event or activity; as well as equal respect to all people regardless of differences. If a volunteer feels uncomfortable with a certain situation or client, they must excuse themselves from the event or activity area and notify the Volunteer Administrator or Executive Director for reassignment.

Dispute Resolution

We're all human. We're not going to agree on all things. Should a situation arise where volunteers are involved in a disagreement, the parties are expected to conduct themselves in a calm respectful manner; moving away from the event or activity area if need be. Should a mediator need to be involved, the volunteers can request mediation from the Executive Director or DDA Board. In the event of a conflict between a volunteer and the Executive Director or DDA Board member, if mediation is requested, the City Manager or their designee may serve as a mediator.

VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION



Recruitment

The Executive Director and Volunteer Committee will recruit volunteers with the intent of broadening and expanding community involvement in the Program. It is the intent of the Program to place volunteers in areas that align with their interests. The sole qualification for volunteer recruitment shall be an applicant's ability to perform tasks on behalf of the program with disregard, but not limited to: race, color, sex and/or gender, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability, religion, and/or familial status. Written volunteer descriptions will be developed by members of the Program and Program Committees, with approval and disbursement charged to the Executive Director and/or majority of the DDA Board.

Volunteer Opportunities

The City of Eaton Rapids DDA page on the City of Eaton Rapids website is where all volunteer opportunities will be posted on. This website is free to use and makes it easy for volunteers to sign up for tasks that interest them. The DDA page is located at:

https://cityofeatonrapids.com/?page_id=507

Volunteer Position Description

Volunteer staff, similar to paid staff, require a clear, complete, and current description of the duties and responsibilities of the position which they are expected to fill. Each position must have a specific description before any volunteer assignment or recruitment begins. All descriptions must include position purpose and duties, a designated work site, and a timeframe for the performance of the duties. The position descriptions serve as a guide for volunteers and

the Executive Director to assist with management and evaluation efforts. The Executive Director will conduct regular reviews of the position descriptions to ascertain any changes.

Placement

When placing a volunteer into a position, the Executive Director or Volunteer Committee will engage with the volunteer to determine interests, commitment to the program, qualifications, and answer any questions the volunteer may have. The Program will make every effort to place a volunteer in a position that matches their interests; but if the volunteer wishes to be reassigned or take on additional roles, the volunteer is encouraged to speak with the Executive Director or Volunteer Coordinator.

Professional Services

Volunteers are not to perform professional services for which certification or licensing is required unless the Program has a copy of the volunteer's current, valid license or certification.



VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION

All volunteers will participate in a general orientation session on the purpose of the program, overall operation of the program, and an overview of the position requirements.

Volunteers will also receive position-specific orientation or training to accomplish the goals and tasks required to complete their assignment. The timing and methods of delivery of the training will be deemed appropriate based on the demands of the position and the capabilities of the volunteer.

An annual volunteer recognition event will be planned to highlight and reward the contributions of the Program volunteers. Assistance in planning the best yearly event possible is encouraged of volunteers.

