



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Uptown Partnership

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Uptown Partnership Joins DHCD's Mobilizing Main Street Program Cohort

Focus on community revitalization, organizational development and capacity building

MARTINSVILLE, VA (September 22, 2022) – Martinsville Uptown Partnership (UP) is joining the Commonwealth's Department of Housing and Community Development's (DHCD) first-ever [Mobilizing Main Street Program](#) cohort-based program. This two-year program will provide the framework for targeted organizational development support to Exploring Main Street (EMS) communities interested in pursuing Advancing Virginia Main Street (VMS) designation and Main Street America accredited status.

"We are thrilled that Uptown Partnership has been selected as a member of the Mobilizing Main Street program," said Liz Harris, UP board president. "Our organization was formed in 2020 for the main purpose of pursuing this designation, and over the past three years, UP's board, staff and volunteers have worked tirelessly to reengage with DHCD and the VMS program, while keeping community engagement at the forefront. I am proud to see UP and the Martinsville community advance in this program and continue this important work."

Uptown Partnership will work with DHCD staff to bolster their community for economic opportunity. The cohort will develop individualized work plans and implementation of program benchmarks and will assist with market analysis, design assessments, grant management and other essential tools for impactful success. This accelerated program is funded by the [Virginia Main Street \(VMS\) Program](#).

“The Virginia Main Street program has been transforming communities for over 35 years, and it continues to be critical to economic development, small business growth and job creation across the Commonwealth,” said DHCD Director Bryan Horn. “This new program will foster local and ongoing community development efforts while offering targeted support to participating organizations to ensure their future success in the Virginia Main Street program.”

The MMS VMS announcement comes on the heels of Uptown Partnership’s recent decision to remain an independent organization and not pursue a merger with the Chamber’s Partnership for Economic Progress (C-PEG) and the Martinsville-Henry County Chamber of Commerce. In discussions with state officials, it became clear that a merged structure would not meet requirements for participation and advancement in the Virginia Main Street designation and that UP should remain a free-standing agency.

“As we look ahead to 2023 and beyond, UP looks forward to working with DHCD, the City, Uptown residents and property owners and our many community partners, including the Chamber and C-PEG, to build a comprehensive Uptown revitalization program that champions grassroots leadership and preservation-based economic development,” said Beverly Lyle, UP board member.

The program kicks off in mid-January and UP, along with other participating organizations and communities, will meet monthly over the next two years. For more information, visit dhcd.virginia.gov/vms

About Uptown Partnership

Formed in 2020, Uptown Partnership (a 501 (c) (3) organization) is an inclusive and diverse group of people who are committed to bringing residents, visitors and businesses to Uptown Martinsville, using the nationally successful Main Street Approach. To learn more, visit uptownpartnership.com.