



April 14, 2026

The Honorable Marvin L. Abney, Chair
House Finance Committee
Rhode Island House
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

RE: HOUSE RESOLUTION 8316– RESOLUTION MAKING AN APPROPRIATION OF \$150,000 TO THE MAIN STREET RHODE ISLAND PROGRAM

Chair Abney and Honorable Committee Members,

On behalf of the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns, we are writing to express our support for House Resolution 8316, which would authorize the appropriation of \$150,000 to the Main Street Rhode Island Program.

The League and our member municipalities recognize the important role that the Main Street Rhode Island Program plays in strengthening downtowns and village centers, supporting small businesses, and advancing local economic development efforts across the state. This program has consistently demonstrated its value as a practical and effective partner to municipalities working to revitalize historic commercial corridors and improve community vibrancy.

Municipalities across Rhode Island continue to face challenges related to vacant storefronts, aging building stock, and the need for sustained investment in their traditional downtown areas. The Main Street program helps communities address these challenges by providing technical assistance, coordinating local revitalization strategies, and supporting efforts that encourage private reinvestment. These efforts are essential to maintaining strong, active, and attractive town centers that serve as both economic and civic hubs.

Equally important, this program strengthens the small business ecosystem that is central to Rhode Island's municipal economies. By supporting local entrepreneurs, facilitating façade improvements, and promoting coordinated marketing and revitalization initiatives, Main Street programs help businesses grow and remain rooted in their communities. These efforts not only enhance economic activity but also contribute directly to local job creation and a stronger municipal tax base.

The League also recognizes the program's ability to leverage additional investment. State support for Main Street initiatives often serves as a catalyst for matching private investment, philanthropic contributions, and complementary grant funding. As a result, a relatively modest state appropriation can generate a meaningful return for participating communities and extend far beyond its initial investment.

In addition, the technical assistance and capacity-building support provided through the program is particularly valuable for smaller municipalities that may not have dedicated economic development staff. This expertise helps ensure that communities of all sizes have access to proven strategies in revitalization, historic preservation, and downtown management.

For these reasons, the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns respectfully urges the Committee to support House Resolution 8316 and approve the proposed appropriation for the Main Street Rhode Island Program. We believe this investment will continue to strengthen communities, support local businesses, and enhance the long-term economic vitality of Rhode Island's cities and towns.

We appreciate your consideration and remain available as a resource as the Committee evaluates this important legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "R. Rossi".

Randy R. Rossi
Executive Director

Cc: Honorable Members of House Finance Committee