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# Revitalization Program Partners

The local downtown revitalization program must involve groups throughout the community to be successful. Different groups have different interests in the downtown. And, while each may have a particular focus, all groups ultimately share the common goal of revitalizing the commercial district. By involving a broad range of constituents in the process, the downtown program can help each group realize that this common goal exists and that cooperation is essential for successful revitalization. Furthermore, by identifying each organization's greatest strengths, the downtown program can help focus that group's energy in the areas where it will be most effective and have the most to contribute. Groups typically represented and involved in successful local downtown revitalization programs include:

## ***Retail & Service Sector Business Owners***

Retail and service sector activity is an important part of the downtown's economic base; consequently, business owners have a vested interest in the success of the downtown revitalization program. Retailers are often most interested in, and the most valuable contributors to downtown promotional activities, though their involvement in other downtown activities can also be beneficial.

## ***Property Owners***

Since they literally own the downtown, property owners have a direct interest in the downtown program's success and often become active participants in the revitalization process. Absentee owners, though, may show little or no interest in the program, nonetheless, they should be kept informed about revitalization activities and, as the program develops greater competency in directing downtown's economic growth, should continue to be invited to take part in its projects.

## ***Chambers of Commerce***

The chamber of commerce is an important player in most downtown revitalization programs because of its interest in the community's commercial development. The chamber can help the downtown program by providing liaison with local and regional economic development agencies, helping businesses expand, recruiting new businesses and sharing information resources. Remember, though, that the chamber must be concerned with community-wide development. Focusing too much on the downtown can contradict its direct mission.

## ***Financial Institutions***

Local financial institutions benefit from a revitalized downtown in many ways, from making new business loans to being able to attract new industry to the community. Banks and savings and loans can support the revitalization program by helping package loans, taking part in interest buy down and other financial incentive programs, providing leadership and seeking innovative ways to stimulate downtown economic development. Many financial institutions also find that participation in the local downtown revitalization program helps satisfy their directives under the Community Reinvestment Act.

## ***Consumers***

In many ways, consumers stand to benefit the most from a revitalized downtown offering goods and services that meet their needs. Many local consumers who may not belong to an existing community organization will still be interested in participating in the revitalization effort and in helping make the downtown - and the community - a more lively place to be.

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### ***City and County Government***

Without the support and involvement of local government, it is doubtful that a downtown revitalization program will achieve long-lasting success. Local government can help provide the financial and information resources, technical skills and leadership to the revitalization effort. Because local government plays a major role in directing the community's economic growth, it must be an active participant in restructuring the downtown's economic base and developing innovative solutions to downtown issues.

### ***Media***

Downtown revitalization means creating new jobs, generating new investments and bringing more money into the community - all newsworthy activities. Thus, the media are usually major supporters of a downtown revitalization effort. In addition to publicizing the local program's successes, media can provide information about local market characteristics to help the revitalization effort find better ways to meet consumer needs.

### ***Regional Planning Commissions and Councils of Government***

These groups can provide the local downtown program with market data and other technical information about the downtown's market area. They can also help the program identify resources and establish relationships with regional, state and national economic development agencies.

### ***Historic Societies and Historic Preservation Organizations***

These groups can contribute expertise in local history, preservation technology and related fields to the downtown revitalization program.

### ***Civic Clubs***

By taking part in the revitalization program, civic clubs can help improve the community's quality of life and make the downtown a more pleasant and vibrant place for community activities.

### ***Schools***

Schools can contribute to successful downtown revitalization in several ways. First, by involving young people in the revitalization process, the downtown program can reach a segment of the community that may not be familiar with downtown. Second, they can help students become positive contributors to the community's quality of life. Finally, by giving students opportunities to use their academic skills in a "real world" environment, they can help the downtown revitalization effort implement programs and activities.

Source: Revitalizing Downtown, National Main Street Center

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