

PENNSYLVANIA DOWNTOWN CENTER'S

*Community Revitalization Academy*



## Course Catalog



*Helping you  
make your town  
a better place.*

# About Pennsylvania Downtown Center



**Since 1987** PDC has provided affordable services and benefits to communities across the commonwealth in order to help them address their unique economic and social conditions. Our member organizations, and the communities with which we work, range in size and location from extremely large urban neighborhoods to rural towns with a population of less than one thousand.

Primarily through utilization of the National Main Street Center's Main Street Approach®, PDC provides outreach, technical assistance, and educational services in order to assist communities in revitalizing their central business districts and surrounding residential neighborhoods. Over the years, we have formed a variety of strategic partnerships with local and statewide organizations in order to further our mission of promoting community revitalization and reinvestment. Additionally, our centralized Harrisburg location allows us to interact regularly with members of the PA Legislature in order to advocate on behalf of downtown and neighborhood initiatives in the commonwealth.

Our philosophy identifies ongoing professional management as a critical component of any successful revitalization plan. How do we do this? With a staff that includes experienced urban and regional planners, as well as communications and marketing experts and event planners. PDC has carefully selected a group of professionals who possess the skills and experience necessary to assist you with your revitalization needs. Additionally, our business members include planning, engineering, and architecture firms, as well as a variety of other relevant businesses and consultants. This increases our community members' access to comprehensive guidance and support.

# Overview of the Academy



*The Community* Revitalization Academy (CRA) is a series of five (5) two-day workshops designed to provide first year Main Street managers, Elm Street managers, and other interested revitalization professionals with intermediate level instruction based on the Main Street Approach® of the National Main Street Center and the Five-Point Approach of the Pennsylvania Elm Street Program. While these two programs have slight variations in the nomenclature and certain program activities, there is a high degree of consistency in the training required to effectively and efficiently implement these programs.

Each of the five two-day courses is divided into eight individual educational sessions. Each session is scheduled to last approximately one-hour and fifteen minutes. Each 75-minute session will generally include about 45 minutes of concept on the topic, 15 minutes of “How-To” training and 15 minutes for questions and answers. Using this format, 4 sessions are delivered in each of the two-day courses.

Attendance at the academy will generally require that the first year manager has previously attended the one-day New Manager Training so that he or she has a basic understanding of the history of community revitalization and basic, introductory level comprehension of both the Main Street and Elm Street concepts of community revitalization.

Completion of the CRA is required for designated program managers. Attendance is monitored by PDC and certificates of completion are issued when an individual completes all five courses. **\*\*Articulation of the full CRA attendance policy is featured on page 13 of this brochure.**

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# Course A

## Organizational Development for Community Revitalization

### Session 1 | Organization Committee Roles and Operations

No committee is more important to the effective operation of a revitalization effort than that dealing with organizational issues. Making sure that the local revitalization organization has in place the necessary human and financial resources is critical to success. In this session, the attendee will learn the basic elements that comprise the work of the organization committee, setting up a committee work plan and the kind of individuals the committee will need to function effectively.

### Session 2: Role of the Board of Directors and Organizational Governance

The board of directors of any revitalization effort is the key stakeholder group in undertaking a revitalization program. The role of the board evolves as the life cycle and stage of the organization they oversee progresses. In this session, the attendee will gain an appreciation for and understanding of how the role of the board changes over time. Particular attention is paid to moving the board toward a more strategic role, rather than one of micro-management and the increasing need for the board to be knowledgeable of both IRS and other non-profit laws and regulations.

### Session 3 | Keeping the Community Informed

Not only do revitalization efforts have to get the word out about the good things happening in their business district or neighborhood, they need to get the word out about the work being done by their organization. In too many cases, the local community, even the merchants and residents in the area being served, do not fully understand who is doing what in their area. This session is designed to help attendees promote the local revitalization organization, a key part of gaining access to the human and financial resources it will need to succeed.

### Session 4 | Building Community Partnerships

The work of community revitalization is complex and multi-faceted. Not every activity that must be undertaken to implement a revitalization strategy must, or in some cases can, be implemented by the local organization. This session is designed to help the attendee better comprehend the important role of creating the linkages with other organizations in the target area so that the most appropriate organization is implementing the various actions embodied in the revitalization program. Subcontracting, cooperation agreements, and memoranda of understanding are explored.



## **Session 5 | Budgeting and Financial Issues for Community Revitalization**

Every organization is always seeking money to implement its revitalization program. But before that organization can effectively search for financial resources, it must first understand how much money it needs to attain the goals it has established AND to determine if that level of funding is realistic. This session educates the attendees on establishing a solid process for creating both a long-term and annual budget and in putting in place the processes it will need to insure it can fund the programs it wishes to implement.

## **Session 6 | Fundraising, Development and Organizational Sustainability**

Now that we know how much money we need, how do we develop a plan for raising the funds required? Too many people rely solely on the low-hanging fruit of state-related revitalization funds. This session is designed to educate the attendee on the wide variety of other funding resources, including improvement districts, membership, special events, fee for service work and social entrepreneurship that are available. Attention is also paid to the tools and technology that will be needed to undertake a successful long term fund-raising program.

## **Session 7 | Developing a Volunteer Program**

No Main Street or Elm Street Manager can possibly be expected to do, alone, all the things required by a revitalization strategy, nor should they be. An effective revitalization program requires thousands of hours of time from unpaid individuals who are committed to the revitalization mission of the organization. The development of this volunteer base is a critically important component of the overall effort. In this session the attendee will learn how to recruit, provide orientation and ongoing education and most importantly recognize and reward volunteers. Particular attention will be paid to what motivates people to respond depending upon their age.

## **Session 8 | Integrating the Business District and Neighborhood Revitalization Efforts**

As more and more revitalization organizations understand the mutual economic benefits of linking their business district and neighborhood revitalization efforts, the organizational pressures will naturally increase. The need for more volunteers and more funding will grow as the complexity of the effort grows. The focus of this session is how to make the local revitalization organization a more efficient and effective operation. Attendees are introduced to the concept of the integrated Community Revitalization Corporation (CRC) which seeks to combine business district and neighborhood revitalization plans and operating committees into a more effective operating system while reducing duplicative administrative costs.

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# Course B

## Physical Improvements & Other Design Considerations

### Session 1 | Design Committee Roles and Operations

If it's visible, it's the responsibility of the typical design committee. In this session, attendees will learn in greater detail the myriad of functions that a well-oiled design committee will undertake. In addition, the skills needed on the committee, from architectural to historic preservation to planning and zoning expertise, will be explored in this session.

### Session 2 | Understanding the Elements of Design

The various components of design do not begin at the individual property level. Community design is a complex inter-relationship of physical elements that begin at the regional level and work their way down to the individual structure. In this session, the attendee learns how neighborhoods and districts, along with corridors, preserves and nodes, begin to frame the physical environment of community.

### Session 3 | Operating Effective Façade Renovation Program

One of the most iconic activities of any revitalization is the storefront restoration project, and the best renovation programs are based on a solid set of policies, guidelines and procedures. In this session, the attendee will learn the best practices for putting in place a high quality façade renovation program. Included are the pros and cons of running a grant program versus a loan program, developing an annual façade renovation program schedule and design guidelines. Also included in this session is an understanding of the important legal aspects of state prevailing wage requirements and federal Davis-Bacon requirements.

### Session 4 | Transportation and Parking Issues

Always among the most important of the physical components of any revitalization project is the issue of parking. Whether it's an actual supply problem (too few spaces) or a management problem (poor enforcement), parking is always a hot-button issue. This session addresses ways that the downtown or neighborhood can better insure the use of the public right-of-way for all modes of transportation including auto, pedestrians, bikes, mass transit and related issues.

### Session 5 | The Importance of Historic Preservation

The historic architecture of the business districts and neighborhoods of the Commonwealth is one of its most important and enduring assets. How the community mobilizes to protect and enhance these precious physical components is a critical function of any revitalization effort. In this session the attendee will gain a greater appreciation for the important role that historic preservation must play in any revitalization effort and the legal tools and financial incentives available to assist with that effort.



## **Session 6 | Visual Merchandising for Downtown Merchants**

Physical revitalization does not stop in the public domain. Window display and store layout are also part of the physical environment of the business district. In this session, the attendee will learn the basics of good window display support to merchants. Also included are the basic geometrical layouts for store interiors based on the type of business. An overview of color and lighting are also included. The focus of this session is not to make the attendee a visual merchandising expert, but to provide them with sufficient information to know the difference between good and bad merchandising and where to go for technical assistance.

## **Session 7 | Curb Appeal for Neighborhood Revitalization**

Just as in the business district, the first impression of a neighborhood is often based on the physical condition of the homes within it. In this session, the inter-relationship between the public space streetscape, the landscape of the private yard and the physical condition of the dwelling unit are explored. The attendee is provided with an overview of the architectural elements of a typical home, the appropriate use of landscaping to frame and enhance the home and how to educate residents that improving the curb appeal of their individual property can improve the physical character of the overall neighborhood.

## **Session 8 | Planning and Zoning Issues**

Facade renovations, new signage, historic preservation efforts, housing rehab projects and the physical arrangements of structures on land are all components of the land use regulations of communities as usually defined in the municipality's comprehensive plan and zoning ordinances. In this session, the attendee is educated on the different and critical roles that the community's comprehensive plan and zoning ordinance play in institutionalizing the local revitalization effort. The impact of the comprehensive plan on the overall strategy, and the relationship between the details of the municipal zoning ordinance and local organization's design guidelines are explored. Also covered are methods for the local design committee to analyze how these documents are impacting the revitalization effort and to seek legal steps to make these critical documents more supportive of the local revitalization effort.

## **Session 9 | Managing Streetscape Projects**

In most cases, though not all, the local revitalization organization will be an advocate for the reconstruction of public amenities within a business district or neighborhood. Occasionally the local organization will actually contract for these construction projects. In this session, the attendee will learn the different steps involved in the streetscape reconstruction process, from conceptual architectural design to the development of technical drawings and bid documents, through construction phase activities and project closeout. The session differentiates between those programs that are acting as project advocate/ombudsman and those that are actually responsible for contract management.

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# Course C

## Community Marketing: Promoting & Developing Your Community

### Session 1 | The Marketing Committee's Roles and Operations

Promoting the business district or neighborhood is critical to the overall success of the revitalization effort. Whether marketing to new customers or investors (image) or to the current businesses and residents (identity), knowing the intricacies of basic marketing concepts is a key skill for revitalization managers and marketing committees to develop. This session will introduce the basic elements of general image (branding), special events, retail promotions and neighborhood identity to the participants. Also included in this session will be the identification of the skill sets necessary in volunteers to insure the effective operation of this committee.

### Session 2 | Understanding and Interpreting Market Data

Community marketing is increasingly about identifying "target audiences." In order to undertake this targeted marketing effectively, it is important to understand the various types of data to assist the community organization in undertaking a comprehensive branding, special event, and retail promotion calendar. While the attendee may be familiar with the usual socio-economic data available from sources such as the U.S. Census Bureau, he or she may be less familiar with the increasingly important psychographic data that defines different lifestyle preferences of different segments of the population. This session will expose the attendee to both of these types of data and explain how to interpret and use this information.

### Session 3 | Knowing When to Implement Transitional Marketing

Not every community is ready to go immediately to inviting in new customers, businesses and tourists. Many communities have problems that must be dealt with before they can effectively market their attributes and obtain the desired results of economic growth or new investment. Utilizing data that can be developed relative to the crime and litter situation in the target area, the attendee will be able to determine if it has either real or perceived problems that must be addressed before the real marketing begins. In this session, attendees will learn how to promote the change that is taking place in their neighborhood and deal with the inevitable set-backs that are likely to occur.

### Session 4 | Branding Your Downtown or Neighborhood

Branding, or the general image of a business district or neighborhood, is more than just a logo, a color scheme and a tag-line. It is doing all the things necessary to deliver on the promise made to the customer. This session will begin by helping the attendee determine the target areas current brand identity, be it good or bad, and then to take the steps necessary to either improve or enhance the current brand.



## **Session 5 | Special Events & Neighborhood Events**

Special events are designed to reacquaint the customer with a business district or a neighborhood that they may have physically or emotionally abandoned long ago. Walking tours, house tours, and neighborhood treasure hunts (Geocaching) are all new attempts to get potential residents and investors to explore the many opportunities that the historic architecture and quality craftsmanship of older neighborhoods provide. Special events are one of the major activities connected with revitalization efforts. The trick is to do these well, without letting them become all-consuming of the organization's time and talent. This session will provide the attendee with the tools necessary to evaluate the cost and benefits of the current special event schedule and to undertake the planning, budgeting and implementation steps required to insure that the special events that are undertaken reinforce the vision trying to be attained.

## **Session 6 | Promotions & Enticing the Buyer: In Downtowns and Neighborhoods**

If special events are designed to get people back downtown, retail promotions are designed to get them to cross the store's threshold and actually make a purchase. This session will introduce the various classes of retail promotions to the attendee. Emphasis is placed on getting the sometimes reluctant independent merchant to realize the benefit of participating in joint promotions such as sidewalk sales, loyalty card programs and other similar tools designed to spur sales. Identity is a self-perception held by an individual. Neighborhood identity is the perception of the neighborhood held by the residents who live there. Isolating, defining and capitalizing on this group identity, whether it be a shared social characteristic, positive asset or other common trait, are key steps in the neighborhood revitalization process. This session will assist the attendee in describing and building upon this identity so as to solidify the local revitalization effort and to better market that identity to the outside world.

## **Session 7 | Getting the Message Out Through Web Sites and Social Media**

The internet and social media are the increasingly preferred form of communication and marketing, especially with younger customers and residents. Understanding these valuable marketing tools is an important and cost effective way to reach large audiences. Being able to evaluate the current use of these tools through measures such as page views, unique visitors, "friends" and other quantitative measures of electronic connectedness are the focus of this session. The manager is not expected to become a webmaster, but to be able to adequately convey the importance of these 21st Century marketing tools.

## **Session 8 | Media Relations**

At some point in every revitalization program's life cycle, be it for better or worse, the revitalization effort will have to deal with the media. Cultivating a relationship with the local media should be on the agenda of every revitalization program. In this session managers are given an overview of how to react to media inquiries, how to deal with "crisis" situations, and how to prepare the press kits, website "newsrooms" and other aspects of media relations designed to insure that the local revitalization is always viewed in the best possible way.

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# Course D

## Economic Vitality for Your Business District or Neighborhood

### Session 1 | Economic Vitality and Neighbors & Economy – Committee Roles and Operations

The “triple-bottom line” of any revitalization effort is ultimately about improving the economic, social and environmental quality of the target area, be it a neighborhood or a business district. The “Asset Enhancement” Academy, a combination of the economic restructuring function of Main Street and neighbors and economy function of Elm Street, deals with the economic and social components of this triple-bottom line. In this first session, the attendee is taught about the various components that contribute to enhancing the economic and social environment of the community, how to organize an appropriate committee to implement the required activities, and how to create a work plan designed to insure that the unique steps of this particular area are properly implemented. Also included is a review of the skill sets required for such a committee and the types of individuals that would make for good committee members.

### Session 2 | Developing and Using the Information Your Revitalization Effort Needs

For the economic vitality role to be carried out effectively, the committee will need access to the best information available. Typically this information includes both primary data (data collected by the local revitalization program) and secondary data (U.S. Census information, Claritas data, etc.). Also of increasing importance is the use psychographic, or life-style preference data. In this session, attendees are taught the differences between these types of data, how to interpret and use this data in a host of related revitalization activities, and how understanding the geography of local information systems can influence their ability to prepare a more accurate and robust database that will assist in performance-based measurement efforts.

### Session 3 | Linking Your Community’s Vision to the Economic Development Strategy

No community can afford to waste precious human and financial resources by having different stakeholders pursue different outcomes of a revitalization effort. With accurate data in hand, the vision for the future of the business district or neighborhood can become a more refined market-driven and asset-based driver of the local revitalization effort. This market-based and asset-driven vision will then, hopefully, become the common target that all parties in the revitalization effort are seeking to attain. In this session the attendees are taught how to review, or develop new, visions that insure a strong connection between the realities of the market in which they are located and the ultimate goal of the program.



## **Session 4 | The Universe of Financial Incentive Programs**

Too often, many revitalization programs rely only a narrow range of financial incentives to accomplish their goals. For many managers a broader understanding of the types and levels of financial incentives is required. In this session, attendees are taught the differences, including pros and cons of the various sub-elements of both tax-related (i.e. tax abatement, tax credit, tax exemption) and non-tax (loans, grants and direct technical assistance) incentive programs. Also included in this session is basic review of the evolving literature of how well the various types of incentives are working.

## **Session 5 | Human Asset Enhancement**

In this session, the Manager becomes familiar with the important role of assessing the life-skills situation of the residents in his or her target neighborhood. The emphasis here is not in making the revitalization program or the manager, a social service provider. Instead the focus is on enabling the committee members to understand the socio-economic situation of the various residential groups within the neighborhood, and how to they can partner with other social service groups to insure that appropriate life-skill and other need human asset development assistance is being delivered in the neighborhood.

## **Session 6 | Business & Economic Resource Enhancement**

For revitalization programs, business retention and business recruitment are important components of the economic restructuring function. In this session, the managers are taught how to assess the current business environment in their district by conducting business owner surveys, business networking sessions and one-on-one business site visits. Using these tools as a foundation, the economic restructuring committee, with the assistance of the manager, may then craft appropriate district wide educational programs, and provide customized one-on-one business assistance either directly or through a third party provider such a the local SBDC or SCORE. The focus of this effort is ultimately to fill business vacancies and increase both the number of jobs and tax base of the business district.

## **Session 7 | Technology Enhancement**

The fastest growing component of retail sales today is on-line purchases. Yet many smaller businesses, and therefore entire business districts, are not yet prepared to deal with the changes in the retail environment brought on by the increasing use of the computer and the internet to conduct business. In this session managers are taught the varying levels of eCommerce and how to assess the current e-commerce environment of both individual businesses and, by aggregation, the e-commerce of the overall district. Once again, the emphasis is not on making the manager an e-commerce expert, but to provide them with sufficient understanding of the issues so that appropriate resources from more experienced service providers may be brought to the district as required.

## Session 8 | Institutional Asset Enhancement

Another one of the unique components found in most neighborhoods is a rich environment of, broadly defined, social service providers. Religious organizations, community centers, ethnic-based social service organizations, and neighborhood schools all generally exist in some form within, or service, neighborhoods. The purpose of this session is to educate the manager in identifying those social service providers, the types of services they provide, and to develop partnerships with them so that those deficiencies that may have been identified in Session 5 can be adequately and efficiently delivered to the neighborhood by one of these partner organizations.

## Session 9 | Is Real Estate Development Right for Your Organization?

Almost every revitalization effort has land or buildings that have been addressed by the private sector. In some cases the economics of these properties may be beyond the capacity of the private sector to deal with. In this session, participants are given an overview of the important role that the local revitalization organization can play in moving these problem or nuisance properties from blights in the community to positive catalysts from revitalization. Managers are taught the various issues that an organization must address before becoming involved in real estate development, the varying levels of participation, partnerships to foster with developers, and the responsibilities entailed with being an owner-operator.

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# Course E

## Safe, Clean & Green - The Foundation of Any Revitalization Effort

### Session 1 | Safe, Clean and Green – Committee Roles and Responsibilities

The expenditure of funds on many revitalization efforts is like throwing good money after bad when the target area is not, at a minimum safe and clean. Enter the Safe, Clean and Green Committee. The intention of this basic overview session is to introduce the fundamental aspects of anti-crime and anti-litter/trash awhile simultaneously making the business district or neighborhood more abundant with all types of greenery in both the public and private spaces. Attendees of this session will learn how to set up a Safe-Clean-Green-Committee and find the right volunteer skills to maximize its opportunities for success.



## **Session 2 | Developing and Enhancing the Block Watch Concept to Implement S-C-G**

One of the fundamental building blocks of any neighborhood-based anti-crime effort is the establishment of neighborhood block watches. These resident based volunteer groups, when properly trained, can serve as the eyes and ears of the police in the target area and make dramatic impact on reducing crime. However, when the immediate crime-related problem disappears, these valuable neighborhood volunteers often recede back into their homes for lack or other meaningful neighborhood activities. In this session, the attendee will learn not only those techniques needed to establish block watches for the anti-crime effort, but how to motivate them to undertake other activities related to clean-up and general information gathering and distribution within the neighborhood.

## **Session 3 | How Safe is Your Community?**

Understanding crime data is trickier than it might seem at first. Police crime data may or may not be available at the local level, and if it is, it need to be interpreted into a crime rate per 100,000 residents so that a clear understanding of the relative safety of the target area can be determined. This session will assist the attendee with understanding how crime data is collected and presented, how to interpret the data that is available, and ultimately to determine whether or not the business district or neighborhood is a relatively safe place to live, work and play, or if the crime situation is more a matter of perception than reality.

## **Session 4 | Implementing a Crime Prevention Program**

Once the community has a clear understanding of its relative crime situation, dealing with both the perception and reality of crime must be addressed. While crime fighting is primarily the responsibility of the local police department, there are many things that local residents and businesses can undertake to make their business district or neighborhood more secure. This session will instruct the attendee in both the low-tech, human-based steps that can be taken as well as explore some of the growing number of high tech steps that may be taken

## **Session 5 | How Clean Is Your District?**

Nothing says that a neighborhood or business district is more “out of control” than the obvious signs of litter, trash, graffiti, abandoned vehicles and other forms of dirt and debris. But just how dirty is dirty? Does a spotless street also signal that nobody ever uses the area in question? With the assistance of a do-it-yourself litter index system developed by PDC in cooperation with Keep America Beautiful, attendees will be instructed in understanding the various forms of trash, litter, etc. that can be found in the target area, and how to quantify this information so that progress can be measured.

## **Session 6 | Implementing an Ongoing Clean-Up Program**

If it turns out that you do have a trash and litter problem, what steps can be taken to clean up the area. Different types of problems demand different types of answers. The spectrum of activities can run from simple neighborhood clean-ups and broom distribution efforts, to more involved graffiti clean-up reaction teams and the implementation of “clean-based” improvement district programs. Attendees will learn how to use the information developed in Session 5 to put in place an ongoing clean-up program designed to reduce the long-term and negative impacts of trash and graffiti on the community.

## Session 7 | How Green is Your Community?

Access to greenery-trees, planters, lawns, gardens, etc., not only has a positive impact on the health and quality of life in a business district or neighborhood, but an increasing number of studies also point to positive economic impacts as well. This educational session will help the attendee better understand the types of green-space that should or could be present in a target area and how to measure not only the number of trees, planters and gardens, but other aspects of the green environment in the target area.

## Session 8 | Making Your Community Greener

Too little greenery in your target area? Learn what steps can be taken to increase the green infrastructure of your business district or neighborhood. Not only does the potential implementation plan include placing new street trees and planters, but exploring the possibilities for siting parkettes, community gardens, private space planter programs, green roofs, and other innovative ways to make the target area “greener.”

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### **\*\*Attendance Policy**

Managers have two years from their hire date to complete the five-course CRA series. At least three sessions must be completed within the first year. After two years time, a manager's initial registration payment is no longer considered applicable toward the cost of this training series. If a manager pays the full course registration of \$250 but fails to complete the CRA within two years time, a \$100 fee will be charged for each additional session. Pennsylvania Downtown Center will not recommend a community for National Accreditation if the respective manager has not completed the CRA series in the specified time period. Additionally, a manager's failure to complete the CRA series as prescribed will negatively impact the Annual Assessment of their program.



*PDC prides itself in providing services that its members find critical to their revitalization efforts while maintaining the objectivity necessary to deal with complex implementation strategies. Initiatives are developed that incorporate the unique social, economic, and political environment of each community and that fit within the potential resources of that particular community. Find out how we can help you make your town a better place.*



**PENNSYLVANIA  
Downtown Center**

• Since 1987 •

*Location* 1230 N. Third Street | Harrisburg, PA 17102  
*Mailing Address* P.O. Box 1265 | Harrisburg, PA 17108  
717.233.4675 t. | 717.233.4690 f.  
[padowntown.org](http://padowntown.org)