



Junior Columbia Main Street

WHERE YOUNG IDEAS SHAPE MAIN STREET

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Junior Main Street is a youth-leadership program in Columbia, TN, designed to give high school students the opportunity to work with real local businesses and learn how they grow and succeed. Participants gain hands-on experience with tasks such as managing social media, creating engaging content, planning events, and promoting the unique appeal of downtown. The program focuses on building leadership skills, exploring entrepreneurship, and empowering students to make a meaningful impact in their community.

PROGRAMS VISION

Junior Main Street is a program where young ideas help make downtown Columbia a better place by planning events, promoting small businesses, and bringing fun, family-friendly activities to life. JR Main Streeter's get to execute projects, help local businesses with social media, and learn real-world skills in leadership, marketing, and teamwork.

ABOUT COLUMBIA MAIN STREET

Columbia Main Street has played a key role in transforming downtown into a vibrant hub for business, tourism, and community life. Downtown Columbia is home to 65 unique small businesses and hosts monthly and annual events that bring over 196,000 event attendees annually. Through historic preservation, major events like Mule Day, and over \$84 million in private and public investment in 2024, downtown continues to thrive as a destination for locals and visitors alike.

Columbia Main Street is committed to the revitalization, economic growth, and historic preservation of Downtown Columbia. Our mission is to champion the charm, community, and commerce of Columbia by strengthening the authentic identity and historic character of the downtown through partnerships with the local government, local businesses, and community members. Together, we unify the downtown district by creating a family-focused destination where people want to live, desire to work, love to play, and wish to return.

Following the Main Street America Four-Point Approach, we focus on:

- Economic Vitality: Supporting small businesses and investment.
- Design: Enhancing downtown's visual appeal and preserving history.
- Promotion: Showcasing Columbia through events and marketing.
- Organization: Strengthening partnerships for sustainable growth.

MISSION

Junior Main Street gives youth the chance to be part of what makes downtown Columbia awesome. By helping plan events, support local businesses, and get creative with marketing, Junior Main Streeter's will build real skills and take pride in improving their community.

PROGRAM GOALS

- Provide students with real-world experience in business operations, event planning, and marketing.
- Develop student understanding of Main Street program principles.
- Foster entrepreneurship skills through direct mentorship with small business owners.
- Build event management abilities, including planning, execution, marketing, and logistics.
- Cultivate community pride and love for Columbia.
- Create a lifelong passion for volunteering.
- Provide college and career readiness through practical experience and mentorship.
- Provide business partners connections with highschool students who could be hired as part time staff.
- Foster flexibility and adaptability in a professional environment.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE:

- **Workshops & Training:** Students will receive structured education on business marketing, entrepreneurship, and content creation.
- **Mentorship & Networking:** Participants will engage with business owners and industry experts to gain insights and build professional connections.
- **Hands-on Internships:** Students will collaborate with local businesses to create and manage social media content, helping businesses expand their online reach.

EXPECTATIONS AND GUIDELINES:

- Interns must always work in pairs or groups for safety.
- Interns are not to be used as free labor and should only be involved in skill-building and learning experiences.
- All participants must be assigned to a committee that will be responsible for meeting goals.
- As a Junior Main Streeter, the requirement is to work a set number of events throughout the program year.
- Mandatory attendance for The Summit. Failure to attend this meeting will disqualify you from being a Junior Main Streeter.
- Absence of 3 meetings will result in automatic dismissal from the program.
- Consistent communication between business partners and the Main Street program to ensure a positive experience.
- Junior Main Streeters must conduct themselves professionally and be a role model to all, serving with a good attitude and willingness to contribute to this community. Failure to do so could result in dismissal from the program.

PROGRAM COMMITMENT:

- Volunteer hours:
 - FALL – 18+ Hours
 - Spring – 17+ Hours
 - Business Mentorship (social media audit, identifying improvement opportunities)
- Plan and execute one signature event for Downtown Columbia, with event logistics led by the Jr. Main Street Board (SPRING)
- Mandatory volunteering at 1 First Friday (3-4:45 pm) and Fruit Teaser Event (1-5 pm/5-9 pm), and The Christmas Parade

MONTHLY TIMELINE

FALL (SEPT - DEC)

Junior Main Streeter's will meet on the 1st Wednesday of every month (September, October, November, and December from 3:30 – 5:00 PM at Puckett's Restaurant.

1st Wednesday: 3:30 – 5:00 PM (Event Logistics Execution)

Students will work Main Street Initiatives (grants, city services, project-based, guest speakers)

- Creating and scheduling social media marketing posts for JMS event
- Coordinating with event partners (e.g. stage setup, lighting, porta-potties, run-of-show, volunteers, insurance, etc.) for the JMS event

Spring (Jan-April)

Junior Main Streeter's will meet on the 1st of every month (January, February, March, and April) from 3:30 – 5:00 PM at Puckett's Restaurant. On the 3rd Wednesday of every month, students will meet with their assigned business mentor.

1st Wednesday: 3:30 – 5:00 PM (**Main Street Overview**)

3rd Wednesday: 3:30-5:00 PM (**Business Content Creation**)

Students will visit assigned downtown businesses to:

- Meet with business owners to understand their content goals for the month
- Take content photos and videos
- Write captions and plan post ideas based on the business's focus
- Use the business owner's phone, laptop, or tablet to schedule (not post) content for approval
- Ensure all posts (including Reels and stories) are scheduled only, so the business owner can review and approve before publishing

IMPORTANT EVENT DATES

SUMMIT DAY

*Mandatory

Saturday, August 22

- 9 am - 1 pm
- Location: TBD

FIRST FRIDAYS

*Must sign up for 1

- September 4
- October 2
- November 6
- December 4

FRUIT TEASER

*Mandatory

Sept 12, 2026

CHRISTMAS PARADE

*Mandatory

December 5

APPLICATION TIMELINE

Application goes live on July 20. Application deadline will be August 10th by 4 PM via online at columbiainmainstreet.com. Students will be notified by August 14th of their acceptance.



Junior Columbia Main Street

WHERE YOUNG IDEAS SHAPE MAIN STREET

What is Junior Main Street

Junior Main Street is an empowering program where young leaders ignite new energy in downtown Columbia — by planning an event, promoting small businesses, and creating family-friendly fun that builds community pride.

Program Overview

Fall Volunteer Hours: 18+

Spring Volunteer Hours: 17+

Summit Day (Aug 22, 2026) (Mandatory)

- Build real-world business and event skills
- Love of Volunteering

Program Schedule

September 2, 2026 - April 21, 2027.

The program runs (September–April) and is divided into Fall & Spring programming.

Each semester has a distinct focus:

- Fall: Event Volunteering & Main Street Support
- Spring: Main Street Projects & Business Mentorship

Fall Schedule (Sept - Dec)

Events: 3 total = 12 hours

- 1x First Fridays (Oct-Dec)
- Fruit Teaser (Sept 12)
- Christmas Parade (Dec. 5)

Meetings: 4 total = 6 hours

(1st Wednesday) **3:30 - 5:00 PM**

- Main Street Overview (grants, city services, project-based, guest speakers)
- Event Planning (JMS Spring Event)

Spring Schedule (Jan - April)

Meetings: 8 total = 12 hours

(1st Wednesday)

3:30 - 5:00 PM: Main Street

- Spring Event Planning and Main Street Overview Continued

(3rd Wednesday)

3:30 - 5:00 PM: Business Owner

- Partnership with local downtown business owner
- Marketing Support (video/picture/design/display)

CMS Event: 1 total = 5 hours

Apply to Join!

Deadline: August 10 at 4 PM

Submit to: online application

- columbiainmainstreet.com
- Acceptance letters sent out on August 14, 2025.

> **Save the Date: The Summit Day**

- August 22, 2026
- 9 am - 1 pm
- Location | TBD

Contact Information

Kelli Johnson - Main Street Director

931-560-1507 | kjohnson@columbiatn.gov