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Mentorship Program - Selected Mentors

Laura Barclay

Executive Director

**Old Takoma Business Association/ Main Street Takoma
Takoma Park, Maryland**

Laura Barclay has served as Executive Director of the Old Takoma Business Association since 2012, overseeing the place-based economic development program in the combined commercial district of Takoma Park, MD and the Takoma neighborhood of Washington, DC. Laura has successfully elevated the district's visibility and attracted both visitors and new businesses to the area and has been twice awarded the coveted Best DC Main Street by the Washington City Paper Best of DC's Readers' Poll.

Alicia Calhoun

Executive Director

**Elkton Alliance, Inc.
Town of Elkton, Maryland**

Alicia Calhoun is the Executive Director of the Elkton Alliance, Inc., a Main Street organization dedicated to revitalizing and strengthening the Town of Elkton through economic development, historic and cultural preservation, and advancement of the arts. A lifelong resident of Elkton, Alicia brings more than 35 years of nonprofit leadership and management experience to her role. As Executive Director, Alicia serves as the organization's chief administrator and strategic leader, overseeing programs, partnerships, and long-term planning to support a vibrant and sustainable downtown. Her work focuses on advancing Main Street initiatives, building strong relationships with local businesses, property owners, municipal and county partners, and engaging volunteers to support community-driven goals. Through collaborative leadership and thoughtful stewardship, she works to elevate the visibility, vitality, and economic health of Elkton's downtown district.

Main Street Maryland Mentorship Program – Selected Mentors

Julie Della-Maria

Executive Director and Chief DEI Officer
Downtown Sykesville Connection
Sykesville, Maryland

Julie Della-Maria is the Executive Director of the Downtown Sykesville Connection, where she leads award-winning Main Street revitalization initiatives focused on economic growth, community engagement, and historic preservation. With a Ph.D. in Molecular & Cellular Biology and a decade-long career in scientific research, Julie brings a data-driven, strategic approach to community development. Her leadership has positioned Sykesville as a model for leveraging public-private partnerships, creative financing, and mission-driven planning to deliver lasting local impact. She is a frequent presenter on nonprofit leadership and the role of DEI, not just as a moral imperative, but as a powerful economic driver. Julie's work emphasizes true community engagement, with a focus on including all layers and segments of Sykesville's population.

Jenny Erhard

Executive Director
Bel Air Downtown Alliance
Bel Air, Maryland

Jenny Erhard is the Executive Director for the Bel Air Downtown Alliance. She oversees the day-to-day operations and facilitates the organization's mission. Jenny is a Bel Air native who graduated from Bel Air High School and then went on to earn her bachelor's degree in Psychology from Eastern University in St. Davids, PA. Jenny was first introduced to the Alliance as the creator of The Belle Aire Market in 2016. She joined the team full :me as the Project Coordinator, later accepting the position of Director of Development and through COVID was named Executive Director. She is a 2020/2021 graduate of the Harford Leadership Academy. She currently lives in Street with her husband, son, daughter, dog and cat. She also enjoys her antique refinishing business, gardening, traveling, and spending :me with her family and friends.

Main Street Maryland Mentorship Program – Selected Mentors

Vickie Grinder

Economic Development Manager
Town of Thurmont/Thurmont Main Street
Thurmont, Maryland

Vickie Grinder is the Economic Development Manager for the town of Thurmont and has been with the town for fifteen years. While working in the hospitality industry, Vickie was one of Wes Moore, Governor Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor Jake Day, Secretary Julia Glanz, Deputy Secretary three volunteers in 2003 who took the journey down the Main Street Designation path, and two years later, the town was accredited a Designated Maryland Main Street status in 2005. Vickie has also worked at the Maryland Department of Commerce in the tourism sector. The Thurmont Maryland Main Street program is managed under the umbrella of the Thurmont Office of Economic Development. Vickie holds a B.S. in Business Administration, MBA (2016), and a graduate of the Certified Public Manager Certification in 2024.

Carmen Hilton

Program Manager, Community Development
Brunswick Main Street
Brunswick, Maryland

Carmen Hilton has been involved with the City of Brunswick and Brunswick Main Street for over five years, supporting downtown revitalization efforts through organizational leadership, community engagement, and program development. Her professional background spans commercial real estate, nonprofit leadership, ministry coordination, and private contracting, giving me a practical, well-rounded perspective on how organizations and communities function. Carmen previously served as Vice President of a nonprofit board for three years and has extensive experience working in volunteer-driven environments with limited capacity. She values relationship-building, clear communication, and helping teams focus on achievable, sustainable goals. She is a wife and the mother of two grown children, and outside of work she enjoys disc golf, traveling, listening to audiobooks, and exploring creative projects involving photography and design.

Main Street Maryland Mentorship Program – Selected Mentors

Melinda Kelleher

Small Business Development and Main Street Manager
Cumberland Main Street
City of Cumberland, Maryland

Melinda Kelleher currently serves as the Small Business Development and Main Street Manager for the City of Cumberland, Maryland. In her role, Kelleher oversees the promotion of Cumberland's Main Street district as a vibrant community and tourist destination for shopping, dining and entertainment, as well as, serves as a resource for local small businesses for marketing and promotions. Additionally, she plays a key role in fostering economic growth and revitalizing the commercial district. She held a key leadership role in the \$16MM Baltimore Street Project in downtown Cumberland – a complete revitalization of the Main Street footprint.

Prior to her work at the City of Cumberland, Kelleher had a 26-year career in non-profit leadership, fundraising and marketing and communications in her hometown of Atlanta, Georgia. As a highly accomplished, mission-focused professional, her experience includes over 2,000 solicitations with individuals, corporations and foundations and reaching or surpassing fundraising goals with an over 90% success rate. Leading teams at the Muscular Dystrophy Association Atlanta Regional office, Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Atlanta, Atlanta Habitat for Humanity and Ronald McDonald House Charities of Metro Atlanta, she trained and mentored countless new fundraisers with exceptional relationship and team building skills. Kelleher served in leadership roles at the Atlanta chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals, including election as President of the 500+ member chapter in 2018. Kelleher's passions include being outdoors in the mountains, reading, traveling, animal rescue, and the endless improvement projects on her 125-year-old historic home. A transplant to Cumberland from the south, she still gets excited when it snows and has become adept at shoveling.

Amanda Smit-Peters

Main Street Manager
Highlandtown Main Street
Baltimore, Maryland

For nearly 15 years, Amanda Smit-Peters has provided support to business owners and active artists in Highlandtown's Main Street and Arts districts. She also provides grants management, graphic design services, commercial façade renovations, capital improvement projects, promotional campaigns, community events and more. During the COVID pandemic, she led a

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district-wide response to ensure independent entrepreneurs in Highlandtown had support through several rounds of funding from local, State, and federal programs. She provided outreach, workshops and one-on-one technical support sessions that led to over \$800,000 in direct funds to 100 businesses, resulting in overall district stabilization and a net gain of 6 businesses in the district following the pandemic. Amanda has provided graphic design services for businesses, non-profits and events throughout Baltimore and coordinated inclusive, community-wide public art projects.

