



Article 306

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## **Access to Capital Unites State's Entrepreneurs**

*By Russ Cummins, Executive Director, New Mexico Small Business Investment Corporation*

On the surface, Albuquerque's Clínica la Esperanza, a medical clinic, has little in common with Desert Aire Copy & Fax Services, a convenience store and copy center that serves residents of the isolated border *colonia* of Chaparral. And it apparently has nothing in common with SSC Construction, a Native American-owned construction company based in San Felipe Pueblo that builds homes on tribal lands throughout New Mexico.



Yet all of these businesses got an early boost with loan funds that originated with the New Mexico Small Business Investment Corporation (NMSBIC) and were channeled through its network of lenders.

NMSBIC promotes economic development statewide by deploying capital to every area of New Mexico, including communities where it doesn't traditionally flow. To that end, the organization will convene its August meeting in Española, where it hopes to attract the owners of new and expanding local businesses hungry for the capital and expertise it and its lending and equity partners can offer.

### **Partners in Development**

Since its creation by the Legislature in 2001, NMSBIC has managed funds allocated from the Severance Tax Permanent Fund and distributed money through its lending and equity partners to small businesses statewide. Some of those partners include The Loan Fund, Accion, and WESST.

The partner organizations apply their own underwriting standards when deciding which businesses to back, but they generally serve clients who don't qualify for traditional loans, either because they lack a long business track record or their credit isn't stellar. Lenders look for a solid business plan, an ambitious owner or management team, and the kinds of enterprises that create jobs and improve communities. Since 2004, the network has approved more than 2,600 loans to businesses in nearly every New Mexico community.

As the largest lending partner, The Loan Fund tailors loans to individual circumstances and offers its clients expert business advice. Since joining forces with NMSBIC a decade ago, The Loan Fund has directed more than \$20 million to more than 400 businesses statewide.

Accion also contributes intellectual capital along with financial capital. Clients are offered mentoring, technical assistance and training through workshops on small-business management and financial and personal development. Accion publicizes client businesses on its social media and public speaking platforms. Since 2004, it has underwritten nearly 2,300 loans as small as \$200 and as large as \$300,000.

WESST focuses on business consulting and training, technical assistance, and support services to its clients; and its microloans primarily target the entrepreneurial ambitions of low-income women and minorities, though any New Mexican who wants to start or improve a business is eligible to apply.

### Spreading the Word

“Accessing Capital in New Mexico” is the theme for the public meeting to be held on August 22 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Santa Claran Hotel’s Rio Grande Room, 460 N. Riverside Drive in Española.

Business-service providers from Española and other parts of the state will discuss free and low-cost services available to entrepreneurs. Panelists include representatives from NMSBIC’s lending partners as well as the Regional Development Corporation and the Small Business Development Center at Northern New Mexico College.

“The NMSBIC board is excited to hold its August meeting in Española and to have this opportunity to share information with members of the community in Northern New Mexico,” said Lupe Garcia, NMSBIC board member, and owner of Garcia Tires based in Santa Cruz, New Mexico.

For more information about the meeting and NMSBIC’s debt and equity partners, visit [www.nmsbic.org](http://www.nmsbic.org).

*Finance New Mexico is a public service initiative to assist individuals and businesses with obtaining skills and funding resources for their business or idea. To learn more, go to [www.FinanceNewMexico.org](http://www.FinanceNewMexico.org). Sponsored by:*

