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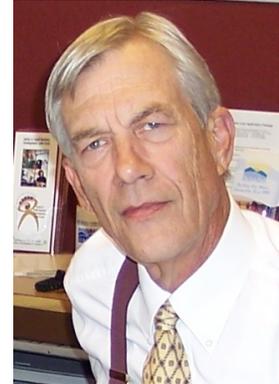
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## The Loan Fund Helps Veteran Buy Building To Expand Business

*By Joe Justice, Loan Officer, The Loan Fund*

Jose Ocampo launched his Santa Fe Exclusive Honda and Acura auto repair and parts business 13 years ago in a small building in the New Mexico capital. He outgrew the space within three years and moved to a larger facility nearby.

As his business continued to grow, Ocampo started looking around for “a building with better parking and more room” that would be better to meet his customers’ needs and comfort.



About a year ago he found an ideal spot on Siler Lane with a metal building with 2,000 square feet of warehouse space. The lot was particularly attractive because it could accommodate construction of a 2,000-square-foot workspace addition.

He applied for a loan with The Loan Fund — a nonprofit, alternative lender that specializes in lending to small businesses and startups — and construction began on the garage and service-bays addition once soil testing and surveys were completed. In early March, Ocampo moved into his new auto shop.

Ocampo moved to the United States from Nicaragua in 1980 after his family was granted political asylum here. He was 4 at the time.

After a tour of duty in the U.S. Marine Corps and a few years at the University of New Mexico, he set his sights on being a mechanic and eventually opening his own shop. He graduated from the Universal Technical Institute in Phoenix and moved to Santa Fe to work in a friend’s shop until he was ready to go solo.

Having his own business “was just something I wanted to do,” Ocampo said. After reaching that milestone at the age of 24, his next goal was to buy his own building, which would increase the value of his business and give him a tangible asset he could sell in the future.

For the first time in his life as a sole proprietor, Ocampo began shopping around for a business loan. He heard about The Loan Fund from a friend and worked with its loan officers to restructure his business as a limited liability company called Exclusive Land and secure money for his new shop.

Since then, he said, “Everything’s come into place. We’ve started paying back the loan.”

The Loan Fund works with its clients to tailor loans to their resources. It keeps the paperwork simple and payment schedules flexible. And it provides expert advice to small-business clients with big ambitions — people like Ocampo.

The Loan Fund, like a handful of other nonprofit alternative lenders in New Mexico, is able to work with startups and entrepreneurs because it draws on money provided by the New Mexico Small Business Investment Corporation. Since its creation in 2001, the program has assisted small businesses that generate employment in the state.

Since joining forces with NMSBIC in 2004, The Loan Fund has provided almost \$20 million in financing to more than 380 businesses statewide using NMSBIC funds.

The Loan Fund can be reached toll free at 866-873-6746 or online at [www.loanfund.org](http://www.loanfund.org). For more information about NMSBIC, visit [www.nmsbic.org](http://www.nmsbic.org).

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