

## **Office of Business Advocacy — a One-Stop Shop for Clearing Bureaucratic Roadblocks — Will Now Help Entrepreneurs Launch and Grow**

*By Angela Heisel, New Mexico Economic Development Department*

Governor Susana Martinez and Economic Development Secretary Jon Barela established the Office of Business Advocacy (OBA) in January 2011, and have been extremely pleased with its success. Since then, the OBA has saved or created more than 2,000 jobs by helping businesses navigate the sometimes complicated processes of permitting and licensing that can slow job creation and business growth. Now the OBA is expanding its mission.



“The Office of Business Advocacy has done remarkably well helping small businesses that may not have the time or resources to sift through the regulatory, licensing and permitting process or address policy issues affecting their operations,” Secretary Barela said. “As a result of regulatory reforms, leading to less bureaucratic red tape than when the governor first took office four and half years ago, we’re expanding the OBA’s role to include proactively helping entrepreneurs start businesses and grow.”

Leslie Porter, the director of the OBA, is moving the office in that direction. “OBA will take a more inclusive approach and will also function as the Business Resource Center (BRC) instead of just focusing solely on resolving unnecessary delays in permitting and licensing,” Porter said. “This will streamline the process and achieve the goal of making both OBA and BRC more approachable.”

While the OBA is evolving, it won’t lose sight of its original mission and will continue to reach out to businesses. “I will increase exposure and communicate that OBA is a resource for small-business owners that will not only work to resolve red tape barriers but will also help guide entrepreneurs through the process.”

The agency also cultivates strategic partnerships with the New Mexico Small Business Development Center, the U.S. Small Business Administration and other service providers. The New Mexico Economic Development Department’s regional representatives work with local

chambers of commerce, economic development organizations and small businesses to increase OBA's reach.

OBA advocates have firsthand knowledge of intergovernmental affairs and know decision makers in all agencies that intersect with the business community. These relationships make it easier to solve conflicts — sometimes by doing something as simple as making a phone call to set up a meeting with the right person. Advocates operate as caseworkers to facilitate movement of paperwork through the system, and they don't close cases until they're resolved.

“I will travel the state, introducing the office to areas where either owners may not have been aware of this resource or may not have access to it,” she said. “We are continuing to increase office exposure and let small-business owners know that OBA is open for business — that the state is open for business.”

Visit the Office of Business Advocacy at [www.NMforBusiness.com](http://www.NMforBusiness.com). To initiate a case, call [505-827-2486](tel:505-827-2486) or email [business.advocacy@state.nm.us](mailto:business.advocacy@state.nm.us).

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