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SCORE Offers Entrepreneurs Free Mentoring, Low-Cost Training

By Finance New Mexico

Considering all the business smarts stored in the brains of seasoned executives, it would be a shame to let it go to waste.

SCORE gives entrepreneurs the key to that stored knowledge by pairing them with volunteer mentors who have decades of expertise in all aspects of starting and running a business. It also hosts workshops and seminars that teach basic and advanced skills that are crucial for a business owner to have.



When the nonprofit formed in 1964, its name was an acronym for the Service Corps of Retired Executives, because early mentors were recruited from the ranks of the retired. The organization later shortened its name, as many of its volunteers still hold jobs in a complex and rapidly evolving global economy.

Thanks to its resource partnership with the U.S. Small Business Administration and its nationwide network of volunteers, SCORE can offer its services at little to no cost.

SCORE's Wide Reach

Santa Fe is home to one of the state's most active — and oldest — SCORE chapters. Launched in the mid-1970s, it mentored more than 800 clients last year, and 500 more attended its workshops.

“Anyone is welcome to come to Santa Fe and attend our workshops,” said Ray Berger, chairman of the chapter that serves Northern New Mexico. Berger also belongs to a three-person mentoring team, contributing experience from his 35 years in marketing and merchandising for large U.S. retailers.

But even people who can't travel to Santa Fe can tap SCORE's resources, Berger said.

The national office of SCORE, which gave the Santa Fe chapter the 2014-2015 platinum award for outstanding client service, encourages the nation's 310 chapters to expand their reach by posting webinars and educational videos on their websites and offering mentoring through Web-based platforms.

SCORE also serves the state from offices in Albuquerque and Las Cruces.

Albuquerque SCORE is at 500 Gold Ave. S.W., Suite 11409, but it recently opened a satellite office at the Epicenter, 191 Broadway Blvd. N.E. Besides offering confidential in-person mentoring and workshops for startups and established businesses, the SCORE chapter in New Mexico's largest city hosts Business Owners Councils, round-table sessions in which a business owner can get feedback from industry peers on how to meet specific challenges.

The Las Cruces SCORE chapter serves southern New Mexico from its office in the Loretto Towne Center at 505 S. Main St.

Groups and Individuals Welcome

In Santa Fe, a client administrator assesses the needs and objectives of each entrepreneur who asks for individual mentoring and then matches the client with the team that has the appropriate know-how. Mentors, for example, can help entrepreneurs design a business plan, evaluate a business concept, choose a legal structure and create an exit strategy.

All SCORE branches offer workshops that provide more general information in a group setting. Topics include crowd funding, legal structures and regulatory compliance, writing a business plan, growing a sustainable nonprofit, social media, maximizing a business website and working with Quick Books.

To learn more about SCORE or volunteer as a mentor, visit the Albuquerque website at abqscore.org and the Las Cruces website at scorelascruces.org. The Santa Fe chapter can be found at santafe.score.org.

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