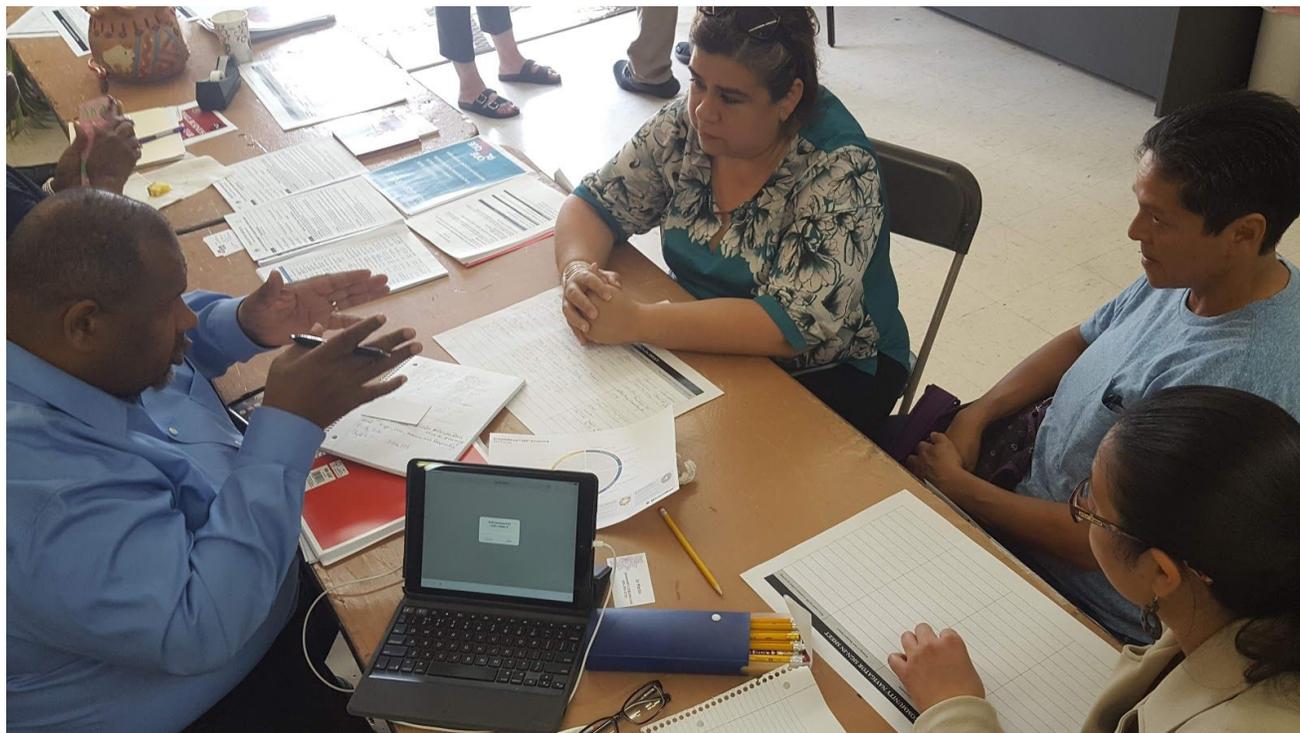


# SMALL BUSINESS RESOURCE FAIR REPORT

*Supporting Albuquerque's Growing Small Business Community*



Report Created by City Council Staff

April 2019



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## Executive Summary

In July 2018, the City of Albuquerque released its new Economic Development Plan placing a strong emphasis on supporting the city's emerging small business community. While the Plan outlines six key areas to improving the community's overall economy, it does not include specific tools and venues for addressing those key areas. These five areas include: 1) Buying Local, 2) Smart Recruitment, 3) International Business, 4) Creative Economy and Film, 5) Increment of One, and 6) Placemaking.

One tool for implementing this new Plan is for the City of Albuquerque to hold resource fairs. Holding a resource fair is one of the most effective ways to proactively share information within a community and to empower residents who would not normally have access to that information. This is accomplished by consolidating resources such as specialists, informational handouts, tools, videos, and other literature, in one location for a special event that is also easily accessible. While the City of Albuquerque occasionally holds job and career fairs to help prospective employees network and apply for work with potential employers, it rarely holds resource fairs to help empower local residents to start up their own business and/or create their own jobs.

In response to this need, City Councilor Klarissa Peña enacted R-18-82, calling for the convening of the City of Albuquerque's first Small Business Resource Fair. This Resolution directed the City Council and Economic Development Departments to convene the first fair and to create a long-term plan for supporting the City's emerging small business community before the end of April 2019. Councilor Peña decided to hold the first fair on April 6, 2019 at the West Central Community Development Group office near the intersection of Central Ave and Estancia Dr. The Resolution also called for the City Council and Economic Development Departments to use lessons learned from the first fair to identify strategies and next steps for holding fairs in other neighborhoods throughout the City. Visit Section V: Conclusions to see a comprehensive list of lessons learned by City Council staff along with next steps for holding future fairs.

## I. Context

*Background:* According to the Economic Development Department (EDD)'s most recent Economic Development Plan, small business employed 336,684 people in Albuquerque in 2014. This accounted for 60% of the private workforce. Currently, people of color own 61,000 businesses in Albuquerque. This accounts for 40% of small businesses.

According to WeConnect NM, there are over 150,000 businesses in New Mexico and the vast majority of them are small businesses. Small business make up 99% of all New Mexico businesses and employs 54% of all New Mexico employees. WeConnect NM says that given this data, communities around the state need to focus more on connecting local entrepreneurs to resources, encouraging the development of essential infrastructure, and creating incentives designed to support sustainable growth.

In addition to the EDD's new Economic Development Plan, the Mayor's Office launched the One Albuquerque Engage initiative in September 2018 aimed at accomplishing four key tasks:

- Encouraging new businesses to move in and existing businesses to grow by filling vacant buildings with creative temporary experiences and attractions.
- Attracting people to underutilized areas while enhancing social experiences.
- Working to activate indoor and outdoor spaces fostering a safer, more vital downtown.



- Partnering with organizations and businesses already making a positive impact through a variety of arts, performance, dining, and shopping experiences

One tool that the City created to help implement this initiative was the creation of a pop up business license. 32 aspiring small business owners registered for a pop up business license during the time that the registration opportunity was open from the beginning of September until the end of December. The license expired December 31, 2018. The City is still in the process of determining how to continue this program, but in the meantime, City Council and Economic Development staff decided it would be beneficial to select from this pool of vendors when recruiting for the Fair. Of the 32 vendors who registered for pop up business licenses, 5 vended at the Small Business Resource Fair.

## II. Case Studies

As part of the process of designing and planning for a Small Business Resource Fair, City Council staff conducted peer-city research to see how other local governments were supporting their small business communities and also took a closer look at the South Valley's West Fest event for inspiration. Pittsburgh and Kansas City were two municipalities with similar population sizes that appeared to be bringing unique resource fairs out into their communities. While these two municipalities appeared to have more capacity than what the City of Albuquerque might currently have available for holding these events, there were key elements of each of their fairs that City Council staff considered when designing and planning for its own fair.

- *Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania:* In Pittsburgh, the Small Business and Neighborhood Group partners with the Department of Innovation & Performance to host Small Business Resource Fairs. The Small Business and Neighborhood Group, within the Bureau of Neighborhood Empowerment, is charged by the Mayor with helping communities achieve their revitalization goals. These are held every other month. These events offer small businesses owners opportunities to learn about available assistance for their building, business plan and financing, to meet with potential advisors and mentors, and to meet with representatives from City services (zoning, permits, ADA compliance, etc.).
- *Kansas City, Missouri:* In celebration of National Small Business Week, the Small Business Administration (SBA) based out of Kansas City partners with their local Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) to host a free Small Business Resource Fair & Credit Workshop. This is an attempt to bring all the resources that promote small businesses to one location. 16+ exhibits are filled with federal, state, and local resources that promote small businesses via entrepreneurial development, small business loans, selling to the federal government, small business certifications, disaster recovery, international trade, etc.
- *Albuquerque, New Mexico:* Much of the inspiration for holding the City's first Small Business Resource Fair came from West Fest, a community-driven event held on September 22, 2018 in conjunction with the Alamosa Neighborhood Association's 25th Anniversary. This unique event included a wide range of activities, including the renaming of the Alamosa Community Center to the Ted M. Gallegos Community Center, a boxing exhibition, Show n' Shine car show, live music and entertainment, and pop up vending. One of the most unique aspects of the event, however, was the City's ability to conduct a community survey during the event, results of which will be used to help inform the planning process for the next year's event. These key elements of the event served as a model for designing the Small Business Resource Fair.

*Lessons Learned:* Based upon City Council staff's research on existing small business resource fairs, City Councilor Klarissa Peña and the Economic Development Department decided to incorporate the following key elements into the design of the City's own fair:

- Bringing all local resources to one location out in the community
- Bringing all relevant departments together to that location
- Setting no vending fee for registered pop up business license vendors
- Partnering with local small business support groups to leverage their resources
- Utilizing neighborhood group facilities for holding the event
- Engaging in innovative, inclusive outreach to invite minority populations
- Stimulating one-on-one interactive relationship-building interactions between aspiring small business owners and business support groups that extends beyond giving and receiving printed informational materials

### III. Event Planning

*Budget:* One of the main reasons why municipalities hold resource fairs is because they provide a cost-effective means of pooling resources together into one place and at one time. Fairs also provide municipalities the opportunity to invite community groups to share their resources and even utilize one of their facilities for free for holding the event. In an effort to find the most cost-effective way to convene the City’s first Small Business Resource Fair and more in the future, City Council staff developed the following budget for this fair:

| Budget*  |                   |
|--|-------------------|
| Expenditure  | Amount            |
| Flyer Translation (per word)   | \$63.50           |
| Interpretation Services for Panel, Tabling, and City Navigators (2)  | \$690.40          |
| Renting Tables and Chairs  | \$253.33          |
| Bus Panel Printing (for all buses in English and Spanish)            | \$329.00          |
| Mailing Out Invitation Letters to District 3 (at \$0.45 an envelope) | \$195.75          |
| Breakfast Catering   | \$77.73           |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>\$1,609.71</b> |

\*It should be noted that the majority of the costs associated with this budget reflect City Councilor Klarissa Peña’s goal of making the fair as inclusive as possible. While the City could certainly hold its next fair with an even leaner budget, one of the most important reasons for holding these fairs is to ensure that people who normally would not be able to attend (or feel comfortable to) would have the opportunity and desire to participate. City Councilor Klarissa Peña utilized Council Project funds to cover the costs of holding the event.

*Other Expenditures:* Beyond the direct costs associated with holding the fair, other expenditures to be considered include:

- City department staff time used to attend planning meetings
- City department staff time used to attend fairs

*Cost Savings:* City Council and Economic Development staff identified the following strategies to save on the budget. These strategies include the following:

- Creating graphics for outreach materials in-house
- Using City staff instead of a local vendor to provide facilitation services during the fair
- Inviting food trucks to provide food for lunch rather than paying for catering for lunch (paying only for breakfast)
- Utilizing existing contract with City Navigators

*Outreach:* City Council and Economic Development staff diversified their outreach strategies in order to reach the broadest group of potential attendees.

- *Bus Panels:* In order to tailor the City’s outreach efforts to target populations that might not typically attend City events and functions, City Council staff reached out to ABQ RIDE to utilize their advertising space inside of city buses. While advertising on the outside of city buses increases the amount of exposure to outside vehicles, advertising on the panels inside of the buses increases the amount of exposure to bus riders. Printing and installing bus panels is not only a more tailored form of outreach, but is also

cost-effective considering the number of buses the panels can be installed on and the amount of reach they have throughout the entire city. In order to increase the panels' reach beyond English speakers, City Council staff worked with the Office of Equity and Inclusion to have the messaging on the panel translated in Spanish before sending the design to one of ABQ RIDE's local vendors for printing.

- *Mail:* With the goal of giving emerging small business owners the opportunity to network with existing business owners, City Council staff worked with the Business Registration and Albuquerque Geospatial Information System (AGIS) Divisions to mail out invitation letters to all of the existing businesses registered within District 3. Due to the fact that the addresses that were used for sending out the letters were inputted by applicants themselves, many of these addresses were not accurate. This confirms the importance of effective business registration practices in order to ensure adequate outreach and notification among small business owners. Providing both an adequate email address and mailing address is important for small business owners wanting to take advantage of business development opportunities being provided by the City. When it comes to registering a business as either a home business or a commercial business, it was interesting to find that out of the 434 businesses that were registered within District 3, 314 of those businesses were registered as home businesses. City Council staff took note of this during the planning process and recommends utilizing outreach data to help inform the design of future fairs. For example, if there is another District in the City that also has a high number of home businesses, the City could tailor its informational materials to address more of the needs of home businesses than commercial businesses. Despite all of the lessons learned from mail outreach efforts, unfortunately there were very few existing business owners who attended the fair.
- *Social Media:* City Council and Economic Development Communications staff both used social media as a tool for promoting the fair. While City Council staff utilized Instagram and Twitter to reach City Council constituents, Economic Development utilized Facebook to reach local business support groups. City Council staff also sent out email notice to Councilor Peña's constituent list.

*Inter-Departmental Coordination and Community Collaboration:* As part of the process of planning for the fair, City Council staff held a series of meetings with other City Department representatives to discuss logistics surrounding the event. This included four planning meetings. The goal of these meetings was to discuss and finalize logistics surrounding 1) how the panel would operate and 2) what each department needed to have ready to table. Coordination between departments included planning meetings and group emails, however, the planning meetings were more effective for sharing information and preparing staff. This was the same when trying to coordinate event logistics with local community groups wanting to get involved in either participating on the panel and/or tabling. City Council and Economic Development staff worked closely with one another when developing a list of local community groups to reach out to and to invite to the fair. If a particular community group was unable to attend there were a few instances where one of their representatives was able to refer City Council and Economic Development staff over to another group to invite. The lessons learned from coordinating the first fair can be applied to future fairs and could make for a quicker, more cost-effective implementation. See Section V: Conclusion to see a comprehensive list of lessons learned by City Council staff.

*Translation/Interpretation Services:* One of the most important aspects of planning for and implementing this fair was the City's emphasis on making the event as culturally and linguistically inclusive and accommodating as possible. This was incorporated both into the City's outreach efforts as well as providing translation services during the fair. For more information on the costs associated with providing this service, please see the Budget section above. While this resource might not have been used as much as expected, it is important to have available at future fairs and should draw other attendees.

*Survey:* In an attempt to get a better understanding of the needs of both aspiring and existing small business owners, City Council and Economic Development staff developed a short survey for fair attendees to complete either before or during the fair. These questions related to everything from the difficulty of acquiring a CRS number from New Mexico Tax and Revenue to completing the City's business registration process. This survey was available on the City's website. This survey was also used by City Council staff to help them get a better understanding of how many people might be in attendance at the fair and to plan accordingly. Please see Appendix 2 and 3 to see the specific questions that were asked in that survey and the survey results.

*City Navigators:* In preparation for the fair, City Council staff met with City Navigator staff to discuss opportunities for making the fair as interactive, engaging, and meaningful for attendees as possible. The City Navigator program is a City of Albuquerque and City Alive initiative aimed to provide local businesses with the means to shore up their operations, enhance their customer and financial markets, and connect them to the existing resources in their communities. City Alive is a collective impact initiative bringing together government officials,



philanthropists, business leaders, non-profit leaders, and other key stakeholders to strengthen our local small business ecosystem and systemically change the way business is done. This is part of a pilot program that has not been implemented in any other city around the country. The first phase of the pilot program began back when Albuquerque Rapid Transit was in its planning and construction phases. This was the Small Business Resource Collaborative. One of the biggest findings from this phase of the program was that only businesses with higher capacity were taking advantage of the loan program being offered by the City. Furthermore, little to no businesses on the Westside were taking advantage of the program. With the City Navigator program recently completing their contract with the Economic Development Department, staff believed that having a few Navigators attend the fair would be a great opportunity for the community on the Westside to get a better understanding of the services they are continuing to offer beyond the completion of their contract.

Color Theory is the next phase of the City Navigator program that involves partnering with a variety of other local organizations like Encuentro, the New Mexico Immigrant Law Center, United We Dream, WESS'I, and the South Valley Economic Development Center. Color Theory is a 3-strategy initiative involving over 18 service provider organizations, which includes Navigation services, robust service-provider infrastructure, and connections with high school entrepreneurship programs. Color Theory grew out of a series of conversations that have been emerging amongst local small business support organizations over the past two years. While the South Valley Economic Development Center and Encuentro were exploring strategies for better aligning their services with the needs of Spanish speakers, City Alive was exploring collective impact strategies for strengthening Albuquerque's entrepreneurial ecosystem. At the same time, organizations involved with the Molino Project were trying to identify a common language for all of the local small business support organizations in the community to share. Thanks to the vision of Henry Rael of the McCune Foundation, organizations involved in these three conversations came together to develop a shared technology platform that would incorporate a common language and intake process for all participating organizations to share. This led to the adoption of Growthwheel and Sourcelink to use as shared tools and online platforms, and the initiation of Color Theory. This whole effort has placed the entrepreneur at the center of our local entrepreneurial ecosystem, not the organizations.

City Council and Economic Development staff agreed that having City Navigators involved in the fair would be a great addition to the event, because of the fact that most resource fairs only involve passing out informational materials and do not provide attendees with the same level of technical assistance as attendees need or desire. To make the most of the City Navigators' services during the fair, City Council staff believed it would be best to have them first participate on the panel and then have them engage in their one-on-one meetings with attendees who want to sign up for their services. In addition, the robust amount of data that the City Navigators could collect would also be useful for inclusion in the report presented to the City Council.

#### IV. Fair Outcomes

*Survey Summary:* A total of 48 individuals participated in the survey. While the majority of these individuals took the survey prior to attending the fair, there were a few who took the survey when they signed into the fair. To review the full results of the survey, see Appendix 3.

- The two most common types of business were Food and Beverage (15%) and Visual Arts and Crafts (12.5%).
- The most common type of small business support group was Consultation, Tech Startup, Design Services (13.8%).
- The biggest barrier to starting a business is having enough upfront capital (18.5%).
- The biggest barrier to continuing a business is acquiring capital for growth (20.2%).
- 25 out of 48 respondents said they did not face any barriers registering their business with the City of Albuquerque. 15 out of 48 respondents said they faced difficulties completing the application process while only 13 faced difficulties paying the \$35 fee.
- 9 out of the 48 respondents said they already conduct or would like to conduct their business online. The same number of respondents conduct (or would like to conduct) business out of a brick and mortar location as those who conduct business at local vending events (4).
- 40 out of 48 respondents said they use social media to promote their products and 36 out of 48 respondents said they use word of mouth. Only 12 respondents said they use such as traditional advertising, television, and newspaper.
- 26 out of 48 respondents identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino and 24 out of 48 respondents identified themselves as White (with 13 of them identifying as both).
- 12 out of 48 respondents either already have or would like to operate his/her business on his/her own. 9 out of 48 respondents would like to have a business partner or employee.
- 42 out of 48 respondents feel that brick and mortar businesses and street vendors promote one another while 5 respondents feel that they do not.
- 38 out of 48 respondents want more support from the City of Albuquerque in connecting them with more business development opportunities, including applying for micro-loans, grants, etc.

*Attendance:* A total of 35 individuals attended the fair. Out of these 35 individuals, 12 participated as pop up vendors. Out of these 12 pop up vendors, 5 of them were local community groups offering small business supports.

*Notification Reach:* As part of the process of checking attendees in at the fair, City Council staff asked attendees how they found out about the event. Here is a list of how attendees heard about the event and the counts associated with each type of outreach:

- Social media - 6
- City website - 6
- Email - 5
- Invitation from City - 4
- Bus panels - 3
- ONC - 2
- Word of Mouth - 2
- Referrals from Community Organizations - 1

*Announcements:* To kick off the fair, City Councilor Klarissa Peña gave a short presentation providing attendees some contextual information regarding why she felt the need to hold the City's first Small Business Resource Fair. The Director of the Economic Development, Synthia Jaramillo, spoke next and announced two new programs being developed by the Department. The first program is a Small Business Advocacy Office aimed at connecting minority and women owned business enterprises with business support groups, helping them navigate City systems, and guide them in becoming City vendors. The Office will accelerate a wide array of procurement equity strategies, support the development and growth of local companies owned by people of color, and bring business development efforts into alignment with the City's economic equity agenda. One of the key aspects of this program is helping minority and women owned business enterprises become City vendors, because business owners of color are less likely to be familiar with government

contracting, their businesses tend to be smaller and thus less competitive for public contracts, they tend not to have the savings or cash flow needed to accommodate lengthy municipal systems, and discrimination makes it difficult for their businesses to expand. Another program that the Economic Development Department has recently developed is the Increment of One Job Training. The Increment of One Job Training Albuquerque program consists of two core components: 1) training to enhance the local workforce and 2) support local companies and employers to hire and develop employee skills. To enhance the local workforce, training will be provided in key skill areas and in areas where certifications are required. To support local companies and employees to hire and develop employee skills, the training will involve working with employers to enroll employees into training programs.



*Panel:* The following list of panel participants shared their expertise in a wide variety of areas. While some panelists represented local government departments others represented local community groups. Two panelists are still in the startup phase of starting their own business and one was an artist who was making a full-time living off of her work. Here is a complete list of panelists, along with their area of expertise and a short description of their work:

- *Small Business Startup:* Steven (Sparky) Gomez, Founder of Sparky Chicano Dawgs
  - Pop up vending at local community events - offering quality hot dogs at a good price with Hatch green chili created by a local mom n' pop shop.
- *Micro-Loans:* David Sayers of Accion
  - Accion advances financial inclusion by giving people the financial tools to improve their lives. Founded as a community development initiative serving the poor in Venezuela, Accion is known as a pioneer in the fields of microfinance and fintech impact investing.
- *Micro-Lending:* Kim Blueher, Microlending with WESST
  - WESST is distinguished in New Mexico as the only organization offering long-term, comprehensive training, one-on-one consulting and low-cost loans specifically targeted to women, low-wealth and ethnically diverse clients.
- *Savings Accounts/ Asset Development:* Dara Romero, Prosperity Works
  - Prosperity Works advocates across public and private sectors to change attitudes, behaviors and policies that reinforce systemic poverty. Prosperity Works also connects New Mexicans to opportunities, knowledge and relationships to achieve economic prosperity.
- *Food Trucks/Food Product Incubation:* Tina Garcia-Shams, Director of Street Food Institute Executive
  - SFI is a non-profit organization of food service and business professionals dedicated to shaping a healthy, sustainable and creative food future across New Mexico. They are guided by their belief that street food

has an amazing capacity to connect people and enrich their community by creating jobs, developing local business opportunities and inspiring the culinary leaders of tomorrow.

- *Business Incubation:* Courtney Rich, Programs Manager of South Valley Economic Development Center (Rio Grande Community Development Corporation)
  - Since 1986, the Rio Grande Community Development Corporation (RGCDC) has been working with their neighbors, colleagues, partners and friends in the South Valley to effect change. The RGCDC's mission has been to pursue community-wide healthy economic and social development that enriches traditional cultural values and historical uses of the land while supporting the people's voice in development and reducing poverty through entrepreneurial enterprise. The RGCDC has two divisions of programming: the economic development division known as the South Valley Economic Development Center (SVEDC) focusing on local economic/business development, and the Social Impact through Nonprofit Community (SINC) division focusing on non-profit capacity building.
- *Food Product Incubation/Community Classroom:* Anzia Bennett, Director of Three Sisters Kitchen
  - Three Sisters Kitchen emerged from community conversations hosted by the DowntownABQ MainStreet Initiative, the Downtown Albuquerque Growers' Market, and their partners, from 2015-2017 with neighborhood residents, community-based organizations, farmers, healthcare and social service providers, and local business owners. Three Sisters Kitchen opened in 2017 to fulfill a need and to complement existing food and health programming in Albuquerque.
- *Pop-Up Events/Lease Agreements:* Carlos Contreras, CABQ Director of Innovation and Marketing and One Albuquerque Engage
  - One Albuquerque Engage is a local project initiated by the Mayor's Office aimed at elevating public experiences in the Downtown area while increasing public safety. The project is aimed to encourage new businesses to move in and existing businesses to grow by filling vacant buildings with creative temporary experiences and attractions. It is also aimed at attracting people to underutilized areas while enhancing social experiences that activate both indoor and outdoor spaces in a way that fosters a safer, more vital downtown.
- *E-commerce:* Sean Wells, Art and Design
  - Born in Texas and having grown up in Santa Fe, New Mexico, Sean has been heavily influenced by the traditional heritage art forms of the region as well as the influx of contemporary art that have made Santa Fe an attractive destination for collectors and artists.
- *Innovation:* Arina Caster, Founder of Sustainable Planet Solutions (SPS)
  - Empowering clients with cutting edge sustainable and renewable technologies. SPS aims to offer clients efficient and beneficial ways to become a part of the process that creates a healthier planet while providing real solutions that benefit clients. SPS has products that have big implications for farming and other kinds of rural activities in the more rural parts of New Mexico.
- *City Navigator:* Michael Jefferson, Color Theory Initiative
  - City Navigators, is a City of Albuquerque initiative aimed to provide local businesses the means to shore up their operations, enhance their customer and financial markets, and connect them to the existing resources in their communities. City Navigators want to open doors for local entrepreneurs and meet them exactly where they



are. Committed to serving overlooked entrepreneurs that face barriers of culture, language and geography by bringing tools and resources to businesses owners at their place of business.

A few of the most common themes that emerged from the panel discussion included the following:

- Some of the biggest barriers to starting a small business in Albuquerque is tied to language, confidence, culture, and clarity.
- While some of the business support community feels that acquiring growth capital is one of the biggest barriers/priorities for new businesses, others feel that it is more important to be establishing personal goals, doing market research, refining the product, etc. before thinking about acquiring capital.
- At a certain point in the process of growing a business, there is a real need for funding to support research and development, scaling, and using commercial equipment.
- The key to business success is knowing the amount of risk that is involved with a particular business idea.
- There is a strong need for more communication with the City regarding the growth of the community's entrepreneurial ecosystem and how the City can help support that growth.
- The City could start creating more spaces, services, and infrastructure for emerging entrepreneurs - this includes providing services like childcare such as the the City's Cultural Services Department is already working on with its Tipping Point for Creatives initiative.
- When it comes to starting, growing, and clustering small businesses, multipliers are possible and already happening in many industries in the community.
- Acquiring the right amount of financial literacy is key for establishing a sustainable small business. There are lots of small business owners in the community who already struggle with their own personal finance, so acquiring extra financial literacy to help grow one's business is essential.
- It takes time for small business startups to get a product ready to bring to the market and sometimes emerging entrepreneurs need to learn to "cool their jets" before trying to do so. Depending on the complexity of the product, the customer discovery phase of research and development could take small business owners a good amount of time and funding to fully complete.
- The Coop Capital is a local micro-lending program that is relationship-based and is improving access to capital for emerging local entrepreneurs. This program needs to be more widely known and utilized.

Questions and comments raised by attendees include the following:

- While attendees were thankful for all of the information and insights provided by the panel, some of them were looking for more specific information related to selecting a legal structure for their business, identifying potential angel investors to support their business, and how to establish a business plan. Panelists responded by saying that there are an incredible amount of resources available in the community and even if the City was unable to invite CPAs and other business professionals to the fair to provide these more specific services, each of the panelists would be happy to refer attendees over to other professionals in the community after the fair had been completed. A few attendees also requested for City Council staff to share the list of contact information for all of the community groups that participated in the panel in the final report presented to City Council.
- One attendee asked about the current local economy and how to overcome the recession that has impacted the national economy. One panelist responded by saying that the first step is to be sure that your business idea is addressing a real local problem. Another panelist responded by saying that it is always important to diversify revenue streams.



- Another attendee expressed concern over various City departments being unresponsive to requests for more information about registering a business with the City and getting proper permits and approvals. City staff responded by saying that this is one of the main reasons for holding a resource fair.

*Information Tables:* Attendees had the opportunity to pick up informational materials and ask questions about starting/growing their businesses when visiting various informational tables present at the Fair. There were representatives from ten City Departments and/or Divisions present at the fair, and there was one representative from the New Mexico Tax and Revenue Department as well. There were also representatives from five community groups. Here is a list of all of the informational tables that were in attendance, along with the names of representatives who were manning each table, the information they were providing attendees, and the number of attendees they engaged with:

- *Economic Development Department* (Director Synthia Jaramillo and Manager Lucas Pedraza): Providing background information on the creation of the City's new current Economic Development Plan and other local Economic Development Initiatives.
  - Beyond providing attendees with information about some of the Department's most recent programs and opportunities, this Department gave out 12 free Square readers to attendees. This was possible because of the Department's current partnership with Square.
- *New Mexico Tax and Revenue* (Revenue Agent Supervisor, Kimberle Lowe): Providing information about the Tax Amnesty Program and scheduling information for participating in New Business Workshops.
  - Most of the attendees who visited this table were interested in registering for one of the Department's workshops. About ten attendees came to this table and asked questions. Two attendees wanted to register their businesses.
- *City Council Office/Office of Neighborhood Coordination* (Policy Analysts, Jeff Hertz and Cherise Quezada and ONC Manager, Angelo Metzgar): Providing attendees with background information on the Resolution that created the fair and the goal of the initiative moving forward.
  - Beyond checking all attendees into the fair, this table had four attendees inquire about the Resolution that called for the convening of the City's first small business resource fair.
- *Planning Department, Business Registration Division* (Fiscal Techs, Melanie Benavidez and Betty Baca): Walking attendees through the business registration process and solicitation permitting process.
  - Approximately 20 attendees visited this table. The Division's representative reported that everyone who came to the table took a brochure, but they did not set up any follow up meetings because they would go onto the website to register.
- *Environmental Health Department, Consumer Health Protection Division* (Field Operations Officer, Michelle Wall): Walking attendees through mobile food registration and inspection process, compliance with inspections, how to find a commissary kitchen, how to acquire a temporary permit to vend at a growers market, and providing informational materials for all of the registration and permitting requirements with the City.
  - Eight attendees visited this table and six took informational materials. No attendees requested follow up meetings or appointments, but three took business cards and informational materials to make contact for future questions and inspections.
- *Planning Department, Air Quality Control* (Senior Environmental Health Scientist, Angela Lopez): Providing attendees with small business assistance related to compliance with air quality requirements and emissions associated with operating businesses of different sizes and product lines.
  - 25 attendees approached this table and 20 took information. No one requested a follow-up meeting.
- *Cultural Services Department* (Social Media & Digital Content Specialist, Marisa Leger): Talking to attendees about the new Tipping Points for Creatives initiative and walking attendees through the special event permitting process.
  - 12 attendees approach this table and 10 took informational materials.
- *Office of Equity and Inclusion* (Translation/Interpretation Vendor, Denise Garcia): Providing translation/interpretation services during the panel, at the breakout tables, and at a centralized table with every City Departments' informational materials
  - While there were only 1-2 attendees who utilized the translation/interpretation services provided by one of this Department's local vendors, there were also 2 attendees who utilized this vendor's services while

participating in the City Navigators’ assessment process. This was particularly helpful considering the high level of engagement that takes place between City Navigators and their clients.

- *Albuquerque Police Department* (Problem Response Team, Sgt. D. Otzenberger and Sgt. Larry Middleton): Recruiting new police officers and providing information on recent “Problem Response Team” initiative aimed at working more closely with West Central businesses to address crime.
  - 15 attendees approached their table and gave out business cards to 12 attendees.
- *Buy Local Racial Equity Team* (Procurement Manager, Violet Cunningham): Providing information about the City of Albuquerque’s new procurement strategy prioritizing working with small local business vendors
  - 10 attendees approached their table. Attendees ranged from real estate brokers to speaking coaches.

The following small business support groups and organizations set up informational tables at the fair and gave out informational materials in the form of pamphlets, tools, etc:

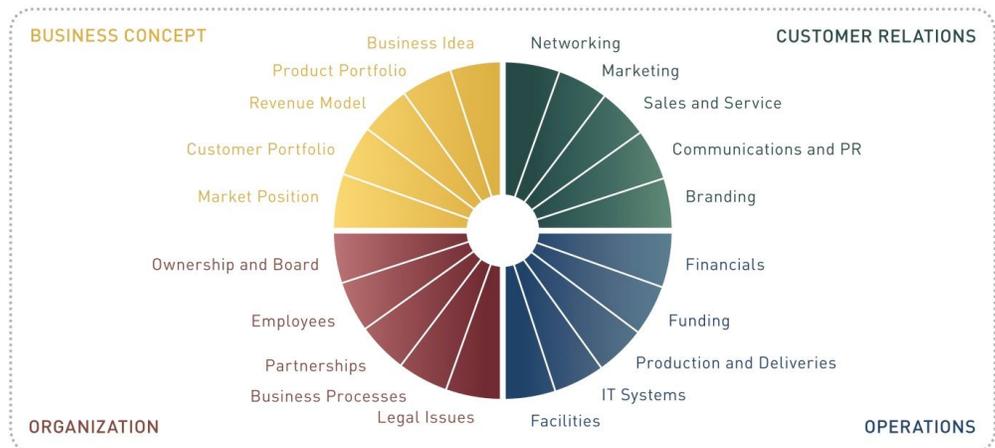
- Veterans Business Registration and Development, Archie Garcia
- Academy Mortgage Corporation, Sahar Saidi and Jynel Torres
- Score (Albuquerque Chapter), Katie Kabuska
- Accion, David Sayers and Isaac Crow
- Anderson School of Business Law Society, Troy Lawton and Amanda Cvinar

*City Navigator AMP Report Summary:* With the fair offering a wide variety of resources and activities for attendees to participate in, City Navigators who were in attendance at the fair emphasized that they did not have sufficient time to offer the full sphere of their program operations but they did get an opportunity to conduct preliminary assessments with 11 attendees (7 attendees classifying themselves as new business owners and 4 as existing business owners). This assessment is called Navigation Point, which is used by City Navigators to determine a prospective business’ potential to fulfill initiatives and priorities established by the City of Albuquerque in the new Economic Development Plan.

Before conducting the assessment, each attendee worked with a City Navigator to develop a profile for his/her business. This profile was used to help determine the capacity of that attendee based upon a continuum from Accept to Manage to Prosper (AMP). This is an economic assessment moniker used to determine each attendee’s capacity to utilize short or long-term investment of city resources. The City Navigator team developed this profiling system to better evaluate all of the various types of businesses operating in Albuquerque along with their various capacities.

Each attendee’s profile included a condensed baseline data report that includes revenue streams, obstacles, assistance requested, and a client baseline story. Finally, a SWOT analysis was conducted with each attendee based on metrics pre-determined by the Economic Development Department and recorded within Sourcelink, the business tracking software provided by the Department to complete the substantiation of the individual and team’s assessment of the business. Each session concluded with a correlating list of City Navigator recommendations and small business supports for the business to reach the assessed level of capacity and sustained profitability.

The City Navigators used the Growthwheel Screening as an assessment tool for attendees. This included twenty common areas or tasks undertaken by any business, no matter the industry of involvement. Attendees rated themselves within these twenty areas on a scale ranging from 25% to 100% and then identified three areas to focus their efforts on

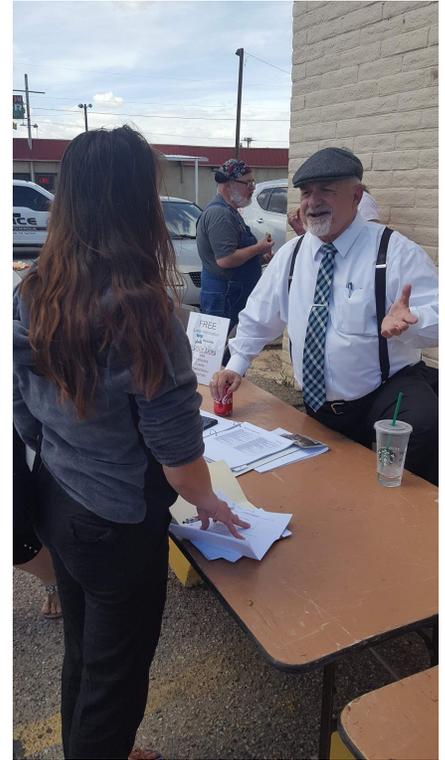


improving business operations and profitability. This was intended to provide attendees with a birds eyes view of their business allowing them to create decisions and actions to make progress towards improvement. To help attendees start making progress towards improvements, all partnering organizations such as Encuentro and United We Dream share and utilize Growthwheel and Sourcelink. To read the City Navigators' full report on the fair, see Appendix 4.

## V. Conclusion

*Lessons Learned:* City Council staff identified the following lessons learned based upon feedback from both attendees and City Department staff members:

- Across City and State Departments and local small business support groups, informational tables need to have a consistent process for collecting attendees' contact information and engaging them after the fair has been completed.
- There is a need to consolidate all informational materials offered by each of the City Departments regarding their registration requirements, services available, technical assistance offered, etc. to make the process of starting a business more navigable. This should also include everything that needs to be completed with the State of New Mexico.
- There is a need for other business professionals and technical experts to be at future fairs. These experts include CPAs, attorneys, and other business professionals. More support/knowledge related to taxes would also be good to have in attendance.
- While it is helpful to multiple translators/interpreters available during panels, there are often times where only one is needed.
- To make the most of services provided by translators/interpreters, it is important for the City to conduct bilingual outreach and promotions that generate more attendance among foreign-language speakers.
- Developing a small vendor fee would be a good strategy for ensuring higher attendance among pop up vendors who have registered for the event.
- Based upon the process of reaching out to existing business owners to invite them to the fair, it is apparent that the process of collecting business registration data is not only important for the City's sake of keeping sufficient records on commerce taking place within City limits, but it is also important for the businesses' sake because it provides them with notifications about upcoming events and opportunities to receive services and/or resources. The opportunity to streamline and improve the data collection process of business registration should be investigated.
- It would be valuable to get more City Navigators involved in future fairs and to give them more time to engage in one-on-one interactions with attendees because of the higher level of engagement they are able to provide than City and State Departments as well as their ability to connect each attendee with the most appropriate small business support organizations.
- It is interesting to note that acquiring sufficient upfront capital and growth capital are perceived to be the biggest barriers among both entrepreneurs starting and continuing small businesses, while small business support groups believe that conducting adequate market research, having access to professional equipment, and earmarking sufficient time for customer discovery are bigger barriers to these entrepreneurs.



*Next Steps:* If the City is interested in holding future small business resource fairs in different parts of the City, the following recommendations should be considered:

- Identify ways to increase access to and utilization of services offered by City Navigators.
- Identify ways to continue to fund the City Navigator program.
- Identify strategies to increase sales for vendors participating in the event while also maximizing the amount of resources they are able to access while attending the Fair.

- Identify opportunities for decreasing the overall budget for future fairs. A revised budget is based upon lessons learned from the first fair as well as feedback received from attendees and other City staff.

*Other Considerations:* In addition, the following should be considered when planning and holding future fairs:

- Holding the fair in the community attracted people who normally would not go down to City Hall and other local government buildings to complete the registration process. In this respect, holding the fair at the West Central Community Development Group was good for building capacity within the neighborhood in which the fair is held.
- It would be valuable to share local small business support organizations' contact information among all of the attendees on the email list. This would also be good for those who could not attend, but who want to stay involved in the planning for the next fair. This information could also be shared by setting up an event website.
- Attendees appreciated hearing the success stories told about different business support groups and their clients - both in attendance at the fair. In this way, these fairs are an opportunity to showcase the great work that is already happening in the community.
- The City was approached by a few local radio stations leading up to the fair who wanted to broaden the reach of their services and who offer very low rates for radio segments (\$18-20 per segment). The City could utilize this alternative outreach/promotional avenue for getting the word out about the next fair. This could be used in addition to or instead of the bus panels.
- While holding fairs during the weekend helps accommodate some of the general public's work schedules, days and times for future fairs should be driven by the community above all else. Before setting the date for future fairs, staff may wish to conduct a survey to find what days and times serve the highest range of participants.

*Proposed Revised Budget:* The following revised budget is based upon lessons learned from the first fair as well as feedback received from attendees and other City staff (below). \*Note that the proposed budget includes the cost of both purchasing bus panels and local radio segments, but a future fair may include only one or both.

| <b>Expenditure</b>  | <b>Amount</b>    |
|---|------------------|
| Flyer Translation (per word)  | \$63.50          |
| Interpretation Services for Panel, Tabling, and City Navigators (1) | \$345.20         |
| Local Radio Segments (5) (\$18-20 each)                             | \$100.00         |
| Bus Panel Printing (for all buses in English and Spanish)           | \$329.00         |
| Breakfast Catering  | \$77.73          |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>*\$915.43</b> |

*Other Cost Savings:* Beyond the original list of strategies that City Council and Economic Development staff identified for saving funds, staff identified a few other strategies for reducing the cost of holding the next fair:

- Partnering with other City Departments to borrow tables and chairs or using a City facility
- Emailing existing business owners instead of mail out invitations

*Determining Locations:* Due to the fact that there was little to no locational data collected before or during the fair, it is difficult to determine which parts of the City have the highest demand for coordinating another fair. Working closely with AGIS to identify neighborhoods that might benefit from a fair the most might be the best way to move forward with this. Future fairs could be coordinated on a City quadrant or City Council district basis.