

El Encuentrolero

EDITION 10 * SPRING 2024 * BUILDING FINANCIAL STABILITY TOGETHER

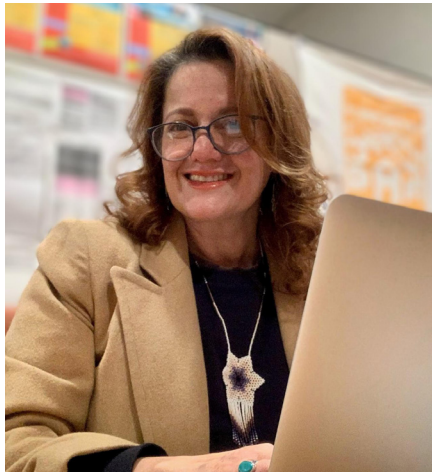
Letter from
Teresa Guevara
Director of Education

Our Mission

Encuentro's mission is to transform New Mexico into a thriving community for all of its residents by engaging with Latino immigrant families in education and career development opportunities that build skills for economic and social justice.

GIVE TODAY to support Encuentro's mission and fuel educational and career opportunities for immigrant adults.

Make your donation at
encuentronm.org



April was Financial Empowerment Month, and at Encuentro, we celebrate the many ways our Latinx immigrant community engages in building knowledge and skills to improve their personal and family finances. Financial stability is a driver for many migrating families and having equal access to resources is crucial to long-term family

security. To address this, our Financial Literacy and Small Business program empowers Spanish-speaking immigrants to engage in their education and secure the tools and resources they need to achieve financial independence.

In this edition, you will learn about our Financial Literacy and Small Business classes, as well as key community partnerships that teach and empower participants to develop a family budget, maintain smart money management habits, and ensure that immigrant entrepreneurs and families build the knowledge, resources and guidance they need to start or develop their own business and realize better financial futures. Thanks to these partnerships, we are strengthening wealth building behaviors that advance social and economic justice by closing equity gaps and revitalizing our local communities.

Check out what our community has to say about this important work.

Pathways to Economic Mobility



FINANCIAL LITERACY STUDENT HIGHLIGHT



Lirio Antillon, a mother of two who migrated from Chihuahua in 2000, recognizes the importance of mastering household finances. Although she and her husband work hard to provide for their family, their income is never quite enough. She credits attending Encuentro's Financial Literacy class and coaching from her teacher, Emilia Rivera, as pivotal to improving her family's financial stability. During Encuentro's Student Project Presentations, Lirio presented her family budget and how money was being wasted on unnecessary expenses.

"I found ways to reduce our spending, such as canceling an under utilized car wash membership that I forgot we had, which directly improved our bottom line. This financial awareness enables me to take charge of our finances, make wiser choices and begin saving money."

—Lirio Antillon, Financial Literacy Graduate 2024



SMALL BUSINESS STUDENT HIGHLIGHT



Marlon Galindo migrated from Honduras in 2018 to reunite with his wife and two children. He began working for a local landscaping company. In 2021, motivated by the success of his employer's business, Marlon launched his own landscaping business. Despite having no knowledge of how to start a business, and limited English Language skills, Marlon recruited his oldest son to help with client communications and together they started Marlon's Landscaping Company.

"I found Encuentro and WESST when I needed them the most . . . My business class was taught in Spanish, so I was able to understand and apply all that I learned to develop a business plan, create a budget, manage finances, and launch a marketing plan that really works. Thanks to all I learned, my business is finally growing!"

—Marlon Galindo, Small Business Graduate 2024



FINANCIAL LITERACY INSTRUCTOR HIGHLIGHT



Emilia Rivera was born in Mexico and migrated with her family of three small children to the United States in 2000. Upon arrival, she worked as a housekeeper while attending TVI (now CNM Community College) to improve her English. In 2007, she invested in her education and earned certifications in Accounting, Bookkeeping, Payroll and Tax Preparation. Emilia started working at Encuentro in 2011 as a volunteer and eventually became Financial Literacy Instructor in 2017. In 2020, she launched her own bookkeeping company offering services such as tax returns, payroll, and financial support to small businesses.

Emilia oversees an Individual Development Account (IDA) program, offered in collaboration with Prosperity Works, provides financial coaching, and teaches Citizenship and Financial Literacy.

"For many in our community, financial stability is a fundamental aspiration. I am deeply gratified to provide our community members with the knowledge and resources they need to achieve their financial goals. I am proud to empower them to secure their own economic well-being and achieve prosperity for their families."

—Emilia Rivera, Financial Literacy Instructor and Coach



THE POWER OF COLLECTIVE IMPACT

Encuentro’s collaborations with key partners extends opportunities beyond the classroom. Latinx immigrant families and entrepreneurs have access to essential financial resources and educational opportunities for economic advancement that bridge fundamental barriers, like language and cultural differences, and strengthen financial stability.



WESST is a small business assistance organization committed to supporting individuals in New Mexico who

want to start a business or improve the performance of an existing one. In partnership with Encuentro, WESST has tailored and delivers a Spanish language entrepreneurship training that equips students with the tools they need to thrive in their entrepreneurial endeavors.



Celebrating Success WESST Team presents certificate to Ignacio Jimenez, a proud graduate of our Small Business Program, at the 2024 graduation ceremony.

DID YOU KNOW...

Small Business classes include coaching and provide a comprehensive learning experience for aspiring immigrant entrepreneurs. The curriculum, created by WESST, covers business fundamentals, including business planning, registration, taxes, insurance, regulatory frameworks, and financial management.

Breaking Down Systemic Barriers

The Color Theory is a collaborative that brings together six community organizations, to build shared community resources that support low-income entrepreneurs of color and their families within Bernalillo County with a focus on Spanish-speaking immigrants. The founding members include: Roanhorse Consulting, NM Dream Team, WESST, Encuentro, New Mexico Immigrant Law Center, Siembra Leadership High School, and South Valley Economic Development Center.

“Color Theory aligns with the mission of Encuentro. Each collaborator bridges identified gaps and needs and targets support for marginalized low income entrepreneurs to strengthen their businesses, and subsequently, their families.”

—Maria Jose Ramos,
Color Theory Initiative Coordinator

DID YOU KNOW...

Encuentro’s Financial Literacy class teaches students essential financial concepts, including setting goals, managing expenses, building credit, and planning for savings and investment.



COLOR THEORY



PROSPERITY WORKS



Prosperity Works advocates for policies that generate economic prosperity and provides low-income New Mexico families with social and economic financial assets to thrive.

In partnership with Encuentro, Financial Literacy and Small Business students are eligible for Individual Development Accounts (IDAs). IDAs are matched savings accounts for individuals interested in saving for a change-making asset such as purchasing a home, starting a business, or going back to school.

Thanks to Prosperity Works, the four founding members of the ABQ Assistance Care en Comunidad Cooperative received financial coaching and an 8-1 IDA match to support the launching of their cooperative.



(L-R) **Angelica de la Cruz, Virginia Cantua, Susana Espino and Maricela Ramirez**, Encuentro's Home Health Aide graduates and founding leaders of ABQ Assistance Care en Comunidad, the first immigrant worker-owned home healthcare cooperative in New Mexico.

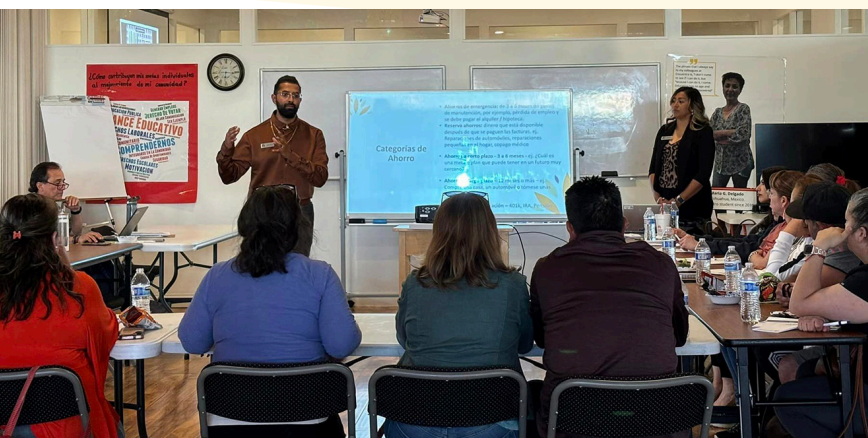
UNIDOS US

STRONGER COMMUNITIES. STRONGER AMERICA.

The UnidosUS Financial Empowerment Network (FEN) unites Affiliates to a nationwide network of bilingual financial coaches. As an Affiliate, Encuentro's Community Health Workers, Norma Casas and Alma Torres, successfully reached over 400 families and connected them with FEN's expert guidance and coaching. Families gained access to tailored financial resources, referrals, and knowledge to achieve long-term financial stability.



Norma Casas, Community Health Worker and Resource Navigator, promotes the FEN program at West Mesa Community Center on April 13.



Bryan Avalos from Rio Grande Credit Union providing valuable information to Encuentro's community.



RIO GRANDE - CREDIT UNION -

Rio Grande Credit Union, sponsors of Encuentro's Cesar Chavez Small Business and Financial Literacy Classroom, provided an open enrollment financial empowerment workshop in Spanish on April 25. 30 community members attended to learn about financial resources and services.

¡Felicidades!

2024 Small Business and Financial Literacy Graduates!



(L-R) Lirio Antillon, Isaura Gonzalez, Emilia Rivera (class instructor), Marisa Morales Granados, Isabel Zamarron. Not pictured: Alma Alvarado, Maria Garcia, Alma Mendoza



TOP ROW (L-R) **WESST team:** Sandro Tonini, Valeria Olave and Kevin Sierra
SEATED (L-R) **Graduates:** Ignacio Jimenez, Norma Casas, Marlon Galindo, Blanca Quijada.
NOT PICTURED: Yasser Lomana, Angelica Torres & Marisela Vargas

Meet the Staff

Susana Aranda
Educational Programs Assistant

Brook Bernini
HHA Economic Opportunities
Manager

Norma Casas, CHW
Community Support Manager

Julia Cusatis
Development Director

Felipe Durán
Educational Programs Assistant

Ilse Grijalva-Lastiri
Communications Manager

Teresa Guevara
Director of Education

Rosalina López
HHA Economic Opportunities
Coordinator

Dalia Medina Bustillos
Executive Director

Joseline Mendoza
Development Assistant

Verónica Salazar
Digital Equity Manager

April Smith
Educational Programs Manager

Alma Torres, CHW
Office Coordinator



505-247-2920
907 4th Street SW
Albuquerque, NM 87102
encuentronm.org
@encuentronm