



Supporting economic growth in our community.



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **AED Announces This Year's 505 Award Honorees**

### *Annual Awards Program Recognizes Leadership in Economic Development in the Albuquerque Area*

**Albuquerque, NM** – Today, Albuquerque Economic Development, Inc., and the Albuquerque Forward Fund announced the honorees for the second annual 505 Awards, which recognize organizations and individuals that are making exceptional contributions to economic growth and prosperity in the Albuquerque metro area, resulting in improvements to the region's overall economic strength. The awards program is sponsored by True Health New Mexico.

"In this especially challenging year, we saw organizations and individuals come together in some truly inspiring and creative ways to support each other and our region," said Leean Kravitz, Chair of the Albuquerque Forward Fund. "This year's awards program will help us recognize those leading that recent, vital work as well as their longer term efforts to improve the lives of those in our community."

A call for nominations was released earlier this summer, and nominations were accepted from any source. To be considered, nominees were required to accept their nominations and provide follow-up documentation of their work.

The 505 Awards include three categories that honor the work of organizations:

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AWARD (Sponsored by Enterprise Bank & Trust)

**2020 Honorees: Albuquerque Community Foundation and Indian Pueblo Cultural Center**

This award recognizes an organization that has made significant contributions toward strengthening the community's economy. The organization may be public or private; must have an established operation with employees in the Albuquerque metro area; and must describe and quantify how the organization has contributed to economic development in the region through leadership, financial support, local investments, hiring, training, or related activities.

EXCELLENCE IN WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AWARD (Sponsored by Facebook)

**2020 Honoree: Central New Mexico Community College**

This award recognizes an organization that has played a leading role in workforce readiness, including the implementation of training and educational programs, the sponsorship of scholarship or grant programs, the creation of internship or mentorship programs, or other efforts to develop long-term job skills and career pathways for the region's workforce.

SMALL BUSINESS CHAMPION AWARD (Sponsored by Bank of Albuquerque)

**2020 Honoree: DreamSpring**

New this year, this award recognizes a small business (100 employees or less) that is creating an environment focusing on collaboration, innovation and hard work, consistently demonstrating a commitment to its employees, clients and Albuquerque.

In addition to the organizations being honored, the 505 Awards also recognize the work of individuals making a difference in economic development in the local community. This year's winners include:

LIFETIME LEADERSHIP AWARD (Sponsored by Mr. Aldo Vaio)

**2020 Honoree: Gary Tonjes**

This award recognizes an individual whose ongoing commitment to economic development has made a significant and lasting impact on the Albuquerque metro area. This individual must have a demonstrated history of supporting and implementing economic development initiatives in the Albuquerque metro area over a minimum period of 15 years; must be a positive role model in the community; and must have a track record of executing projects that create jobs, diversify the region's economy and spur investment in the state.

ADVOCATE OF THE YEAR AWARD (Sponsored by NAI Maestas & Ward)

**2020 Honoree: Charles Rath, President and CEO, RS21**

This award recognizes a business leader who has made a measurable difference in the economic development arena during the past year by investing in projects that have created or will create jobs in the Albuquerque metro area. Individuals nominated for this award were required to work in the private sector.

#### PUBLIC SERVICE LEADERSHIP AWARD

##### **2020 Honoree: Fred Mondragon, Founder and Owner, Mondragon International**

This award recognizes a current or former public official or public employee who has served as a committed supporter of economic development efforts over a period of at least three years.

#### RISING STAR AWARD (Sponsored by US Bank)

##### **2020 Honoree: Rathi Casey, Partner and CEO, UKUU Creative**

This award recognizes an emerging leader who is contributing to economic development programs, projects and activities in a significant manner that leads to increasing investment in the community and job creation.

A selection committee organized by the Albuquerque Forward Fund reviewed all nominations and made final award selections. AED and the Forward Fund thank the following judges for their participation in the awards program:

- Charles Ashley, Cultivating Coders
- Leean Kravitz, Fidelity Investments
- Paul Mondragon, Bank of America
- Roberta Cooper Ramo, Modrall Sperling
- Helen Wertheim, Retired

Award winners will be recognized at a special virtual event luncheon on Thursday, November 12, from 12-1 p.m. To purchase tickets, [visit this link](#).

Special thanks to Premier Sponsor [True Health New Mexico](#) for making this event possible. We also thank category sponsors Enterprise Bank & Trust, Facebook, Bank of Albuquerque, Mr. Aldo Vaio, NAI Maestas & Ward, Nusenda Credit Union, US Bank, and Fidelity Investments.

For more information about the awards categories, eligibility requirements and judging criteria, [please visit the Albuquerque Forward Fund website](#).

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