



 Asset Funders Network

 EQUITY AMPLIFIER



[nmnativevote.org](http://nmnativevote.org)



**Asset Funders Network's Equity Amplifier for Economic Security (EA)** is a new series highlighting organizations or nonprofits focused on building economic security/asset building in communities of color. EA's intent is to:

- Amplify the voices of organizations led by people of color.
- Reduce systemic biases and barriers within philanthropy.
- Encourage AFN membership to broaden and deepen their commitment to supporting economic security and asset building strategies that target diverse communities.

## SPOTLIGHT

### **New Mexico Native Vote**

New Mexico Native Vote's mission is to build a Native American vote bloc that actively promotes a Native American agenda, underscores the importance of being informed and is involved in issues that affect Native American families and communities. NM Native Vote's leadership, staff and board are Native American.

New Mexico Native Vote endorses candidates based on their commitment to help Native American and working families throughout New Mexico. Each endorsement decision is based on a candidate's:

- Platform to uplift Native American working families by providing a quality education that benefits Native students;
- Commitment to Tribal Sovereignty through government to government relations;
- Efforts to diversify and strengthen NM's economy through renewable energy that protects the state's land, air and water.

## How can funders can get involved?

As a benefit of AFN membership, funders may nominate local nonprofits focused on building economic security/asset building in communities of color to highlight as part of the EA series. AFN members will also receive the opportunity to participate in a brief interactive virtual video presentation that will be shared with national AFN membership, allowing your organization to showcase innovative models and best practices to help build a more secure future for diverse communities.

[Click Here](#) for more information or to nominate an organization or nonprofit led by people of color for the AFN EA.

EA IS GENEROUSLY SUPPORTED BY THE JPMORGAN CHASE FOUNDATION AND METLIFE FOUNDATION.

## Q & A with Austin Weahkee - Political Director, New Mexico Native Vote

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### **Can you provide an example of a program or initiative that your organization is spearheading to advance economic opportunity and prosperity for communities of color?**

NM Native Vote has focused on high interest lending legislation since the Mid 2010's. We are aware of the disparate impacts of payday lending and high interest lending have specifically on poor, low income, and disenfranchised people.

A lot of times these lenders centralize in communities of color and "Border towns" like Gallup and Farmington where many tribal members go to run errands. They make themselves convenient, friendly and accessible so that people will accept terms long before they understand the true impact of these loans.

### **What are some specific barriers or biases from within philanthropic organizations that you believe are hindering diverse organizations from accessing adequate funding or support?**

*At times there has simply not been enough funding distributed to the state for all the initiatives necessary, and this has led to many organizations needing to take on huge swaths of work, and burning out new organizers.*

The unhealthy competition between organizations for limited resources has until now been a major barrier. Fortunately under new leadership, and with assistance from the NM State Voices, and AmericaVotes, those conditions are beginning to change. Those improvements need to be maintained and built upon.

### **How does this work impact communities and populations that are historically marginalized, underserved, and/or under-resourced?**

Native People consistently face an uphill climb when it comes to educational, and financial attainment. High Interest Lending is a direct way that corporations funnel money out of New Mexico to the tune of \$500 Million dollars.

We also know that these lenders specifically target recent high school drop outs, those without college attainment, those with low credit scores, outstanding debt, and communities with high concentrations of poverty.

This serves specifically as a way to target only those without the legal representation to stand up against predatory loans, and to permanently hinder the economic mobility of whole communities.

### **Name one thing funders need to be cognizant of when connecting or partnering with diverse organizations and communities?**

We get 1000 asks a day as one of the very few Native organizations that does voter engagement work for native communities specifically.

We are happy, proud and honored to be doing this work, but building support for existing work is something we aim to do without always creating additional silos of work.

The more we can connect to existing efforts the better off and more successful we will all be.