



Article 264

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Identity Theft Victim Gets Accion Loan to Start Educational Nonprofit

By Edwin Rios, Loan Assistant, Accion New Mexico – Arizona - Colorado

Mark Medley was working with a business consultant to recover from identity theft when he heard about Accion New Mexico – Arizona – Colorado. What Medley learned while trying to repair his credit prompted him to start a nonprofit — ID Theft Resolutions — to help others protect themselves from identity thieves and to rebound as quickly and completely as possible if their efforts fail.

Medley got a loan from Accion to help him get the nonprofit going after obtaining his designation as a 501c(3) nonprofit. Accion offers loans as small as \$200 and as large as \$300,000 to people who might otherwise be turned down by lenders because they are a startup or have credit problems.

Medley qualified in both cases: His credit score was destroyed by identity theft and his nonprofit was the equivalent of a startup.

A First for Accion

The loan to Medley is Accion's first to a nonprofit, according to Lynn Trojahn, Accion's vice president of advancement.

"We decided to include nonprofit lending in our toolbox, as the entrepreneurs who create nonprofits are as visionary, tenacious, committed and often as underfunded as for-profit startups," she said. "Accion's mission to support small businesses includes all businesses, and the more we can capitalize and finance nonprofits, the better our communities can be in serving others."

Medley had proved his resilience during eight years of fighting to clear his name and reclaim his identity. And his willingness to help other identity crime victims led to the state of New Mexico implementing his idea for an endorsement — a "V" — on the driver's licenses of identity theft victims to prevent police officers from mistaking them for the criminals who had assumed their names.

Medley plans to use the loan money to conduct workshops and offer consultant services to other nonprofits, financial institutions, law-enforcement agencies and individuals. Other Accion clients will be among the first beneficiaries of Medley's seminars.

Moving forward, he hopes to secure grants so he can provide services on a sliding scale to people who otherwise can't afford to hire someone to help them repair their credit records.

Relationship Builders

Medley's entry-level commercial loan is called a "relationship builder," and it's designed to help early stage businesses establish credit. Because commercial loans carry more weight with credit scoring agencies, the loan should help Medley quickly reestablish his creditworthiness and graduate into other loans as his business grows.

Relationship builder loans are typically for \$1,000 or less, which makes them easy to evaluate and approve quickly — in as little as three days. Larger loans take more time, as the lender has to verify a client's assets and his ability to pay it off.

As an Accion client, Medley is now part of the Accion community, where he can meet other clients to establish relationships and work with mentors.

More information about ID Theft Resolutions can be found at idtheftresolutions.org. For more information about Accion, visit Accionnm.org.

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