

You probably get emails and texts from Feria Southside.

That's partly why we're here.

Economic Development and Santa Fe Chamber of Commerce has been quietly building something on the Southside

IEDC 2024

**Gold Winner + Best in Show
Nominee**

What it is

A place on the Southside where immigrant entrepreneurs can start.

Feria Southside is a City of Santa Fe initiative, run with the Santa Fe Chamber of Commerce, that creates bilingual markets, workshops, and cultural events on the Southside. It is free to attend. Everything happens in Spanish and English.

"Feria Southside was created to unlock the American Dream for Latino and immigrant families on Santa Fe's Southside by removing barriers to entrepreneurship and civic engagement."

Submitted to the US Conference of Mayors Latino Alliance, 2025

The program includes

Quarterly Mercados

Bilingual markets tied to cultural holidays. Free booths, \$30 reimbursement, vendors from the Southside.

The Annual Feria

A larger summer fair at Ortiz Middle School with cultural programming, danza, music, and family activities.

Business Workshops

Food licensing, permits, social media, entrepreneurship. Childcare provided. 90 children supported across 5 workshops.

Entre Amor y Negocios

A telenovela-style educational video series made by local Latino creatives. 19,300 views in its first month.

How we got here

Four years of building trust, one step at a time.

2022

The seed

The community visioning process on Airport Road had already named what was needed: outdoor markets, bilingual outreach, cultural events. The City, the Chamber, and the Hispanic Chamber all wanted to help but had different visions. The first Feria happened. So did the telenovela.

2023

Finding the model

Sporadic workshops. A market here and there. Different partners pulling in different directions. The program existed but had not yet found its rhythm. What held it together was the community response every time an event happened.

2024

Gold Winner. Best in Show.

The IEDC named Feria Southside a Gold Winner for Economic Equity and Inclusion, then handpicked it as one of only 14 Best in Show nominees globally, across every category and every city size. Two awards. The recognition arrived before the funding did.

2025

The year it clicked

\$75,000 in funding. \$30,000 for marketing. \$45,000 to the Chamber. First full calendar: Valentine's Day, Mother's Day, August Feria, December Mercado. 122 vendors. 2,500 attendees. \$11,733 in sales. A program that had been sporadic became consistent.

The people

Santa Fe's immigrants are already contributing. They need a way in.

Source: American Immigration Council, *New Americans in Santa Fe County*, November 2023

\$1.1B

GDP contribution
12.3% of county total

\$122M

In taxes paid to all
levels of government

1,800

Immigrant entrepreneurs
\$35.6M business income

85.8%

Speak Spanish at home
26.7% limited English

Of the county's 16,600 immigrants, 73.5% are from Mexico, Central America, or the Caribbean. They are more likely to be of working age than U.S.-born residents and slightly more likely to start a business. The challenge is not ambition. It is access.

The top challenge immigrant vendors name is finding customers and marketing. That is exactly what a Mercado solves. Feria puts them in front of a live, community-embedded audience at the moment they need it most.

2025 in numbers

The first year everything ran on schedule.

Valentine's Day + Mother's Day + August Feria + December Mercado

2,500+

Community members
attended

122

Unique vendors and
exhibitors

\$11,733

In vendor sales
reported

8+

Events including
workshops and fairs

615

Email subscribers,
30% Spanish speaking

50%

Growth in Spanish
database vs 2024

Most recent

Valentine's Day Mercado, February 2026.

300 to 350

people attended

\$5,291

in vendor sales, nearly equal to December

NPS 52

vendor satisfaction. Above 50 is good.

97%

of vendors want to come back

The pipeline story

1 in 3 vendors was selling to the public for the very first time. Not testing a side business. Their first time.

82% of vendors are early stage, just starting out or still growing. This is the beginning of the pipeline, not the middle.

60% were Spanish speaking or bilingual, up from 16% on average across 2025. Bilingual outreach is working.

Their biggest challenge is finding customers. A Mercado solves that directly, on the day, in front of a live audience.

In their own words

"I cried during the dancing. I feel so much pride in acknowledging my Latina and Indigenous roots. Given the current hostile political climate, today hit pretty hard. Thank you so much."

Corrina Hughes, Kokopelli Design Studio, February 2025

"These are difficult times, but thanks to you we were able to get some help with our income. Happy holidays, and thank you so much."

Patricia Alexandre, December 2025

"Esta fue mi primera venta en publico. Me senti nerviosa pero ahora tengo confianza." (This was my first public sale. I felt nervous but now I feel confident.)

A vendor, 2025

Four things the Immigration Committee can see in this work.

01 A safety net that works through economic inclusion

When formal pathways feel threatening, informal market participation is helpful. Feria gives immigrants a legal, supported way to earn income. Special Event Permits handled. Space provided. Language no barrier. Pipeline to Business Navigator Program.

03 The City showing up changes how people feel about the City

When there is ballet folklórico, mariachis, bagels, and children's activities and the City put it there, it tells a community under national pressure: this city sees you. That is policy in practice.

02 Language access that is built in

60% of February 2026 participants were Spanish speaking or bilingual. Every communication and form at the booth happens in both languages. This is rare in City programming.

04 The data makes the case

Immigrants in Santa Fe County contribute \$1.1B to GDP and \$122M in taxes. Feria is how the City invests back in the 1,800 immigrant entrepreneurs already here, and the hundreds more ready to start.

Having more support would help us:

01

Tell people about it

The number one reason people do not come is that they did not hear about it in time.

02

Connect us to networks

Improve relationships with churches, schools, and community organizations.

03

Advocate for continued funding

97% of vendors want to return. 1 in 3 sold publicly for the first time. The program is proving itself. Help ensure the City continues to invest in what is working on the Southside.

04

Find political support

If the community sees elected officials, in this political moment, that visibility matters more than we can measure.

The people who believed in this

Feria Southside does not happen without partners.

Primary Partner

Santa Fe Chamber of Commerce

Lead Sponsor

Del Norte Credit Union

Community Sponsors

NuSenda Credit Union

Triad National Security

NM Music Commission

Presbyterian

St. Vincent Hospital Foundation

Santa Fe Business Incubator

You probably hadn't heard of Feria Southside.

Now you know a vendor earned her first sale there.

A child watched ballet folklórico and recognized herself.

A family walked into a City event and felt, like it was made for them.

That is what \$75,000 and four years of work looks like on the Southside.

We are asking you to be advocates for it.

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