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Nonprofit Offers Loans

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RCAP Solutions, a broadly focused organization based in Gardner, is now in the business of making business loans.

The new lending program will allow RCAP to distribute funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to selected communities in Central Massachusetts. The group (whose name stands for Resources for Communities and People) already offers diverse services including water and waste management for communities, housing support for low-income families and a loan program to help people with disabilities make their homes more accessible.

Donna Warshaw, who was hired last year to run the organization's new financial services division, said helping small businesses get funding is in line with RCAP's mission of supporting communities.

"Although our background is in affordable housing, it became clear to us that there's no house that's affordable to you if you don't have a job," she said.

Warshaw said the group is targeting businesses in North Central Massachusetts, along with Southbridge and Warren, as areas with a history of manufacturing and other business strength, as well as high poverty.

So far, Warshaw said, RCAP has received a \$500,000 loan from the USDA to lend to local businesses. For more information, visit www.rcapsolutions.org.