

ARES CAPITAL CORP
Form N-2/A
August 31, 2018

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As filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on August 31, 2018

Registration No. 333-223482

U.S. SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20549

FORM N-2

REGISTRATION STATEMENT
UNDER
THE SECURITIES ACT OF 1933

✓ PRE-EFFECTIVE AMENDMENT NO. 2
o POST-EFFECTIVE AMENDMENT NO.

ARES CAPITAL CORPORATION

(Exact Name of Registrant as Specified in Charter)

245 Park Avenue, 44th Floor
New York, New York 10167
(Address of Principal Executive Offices)

Registrant's Telephone Number, including Area Code: (212) 750-7300

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Ares Capital Corporation
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Approximate Date of Proposed Public Offering: From time to time after the effective date of this Registration Statement.

If any securities being registered on this form will be offered on a delayed or continuous basis in reliance on Rule 415 under the Securities Act of 1933, other than securities offered in connection with a dividend reinvestment plan, check the following box.

It is proposed that this filing will become effective (check appropriate box):

when declared effective pursuant to section 8(c).

CALCULATION OF REGISTRATION FEE UNDER THE SECURITIES ACT OF 1933

Title of Securities Being Registered	Amount Being Registered	Proposed Maximum Offering Price Per Unit	Proposed Maximum Aggregate Offering Price(1)	Amount of Registration Fee
Common Stock, \$0.001 par value per share(2)(3)				
Preferred Stock, \$0.001 par value per share(2)				
Subscription Rights(2)				
Warrants(4)				
Debt Securities(5)				
Units(6)				
Total			\$3,000,000,000(7)	\$373,500(8)

(1) Estimated pursuant to Rule 457(o) solely for the purpose of determining the registration fee. The proposed maximum offering price per security will be determined from time to time, by the Registrant in connection with the sale by the Registrant of the securities registered under this registration statement.

(2) Subject to Note 7 below, there is being registered hereunder an indeterminate number of shares of common stock or preferred stock, or subscription rights to purchase shares of common stock as may be sold, from time to time separately or as units in combination with other securities registered hereunder.

(3) Includes such indeterminate number of shares of common stock as may, from time to time, be issued upon conversion or exchange of other securities registered hereunder, to the extent any such securities are, by their terms, convertible or exchangeable for common stock.

(4) Subject to Note 7 below, there is being registered hereunder an indeterminate number of warrants as may be sold, from time to time separately or as units in combination with other securities registered hereunder, representing rights to purchase common stock, preferred stock or debt securities.

(5) Subject to Note 7 below, there is being registered hereunder an indeterminate principal amount of debt securities as may be sold, from time to time separately or as units in combination with other securities registered hereunder. If any debt securities are issued at an original issue discount, then the offering price shall be in such greater principal amount as shall result in an aggregate price to investors not to exceed \$3,000,000,000.

(6) Subject to Note 7 below, there is being registered hereunder an indeterminate number of units. Each unit may consist of a combination of any one or more of the securities being registered hereunder and may also include securities issued by third parties, including the U.S. Treasury.

(7) In no event will the aggregate offering price of all securities issued from time to time pursuant to this registration statement exceed \$3,000,000,000.

(8)

Previously paid.

THE REGISTRANT HEREBY AMENDS THIS REGISTRATION STATEMENT ON SUCH DATE OR DATES AS MAY BE NECESSARY TO DELAY ITS EFFECTIVE DATE UNTIL THE REGISTRANT SHALL FILE A FURTHER AMENDMENT WHICH SPECIFICALLY STATES THAT THIS REGISTRATION STATEMENT SHALL THEREAFTER BECOME EFFECTIVE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 8(a) OF THE SECURITIES ACT OF 1933, AS AMENDED, OR UNTIL THIS REGISTRATION STATEMENT SHALL BECOME EFFECTIVE ON SUCH DATE AS THE COMMISSION, ACTING PURSUANT TO SECTION 8(a), MAY DETERMINE.

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The information in this prospectus is not complete and may be changed. We may not sell these securities until the registration statement filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission is effective. This prospectus is not an offer to sell these securities and it is not soliciting an offer to buy these securities in any jurisdiction where the offer or sale is not permitted.

Subject to Completion, dated August 31, 2018

PROSPECTUS

\$3,000,000,000

**Common Stock
Preferred Stock
Debt Securities
Subscription Rights
Warrants
Units**

Ares Capital Corporation is a specialty finance company that is a closed-end, non-diversified management investment company incorporated in Maryland. We have elected to be regulated as a business development company under the Investment Company Act of 1940. Our investment objective is to generate both current income and capital appreciation through debt and equity investments. We invest primarily in first lien senior secured loans (including "unitranche" loans, which are loans that combine both senior and mezzanine debt, generally in a first lien position), second lien senior secured loans and mezzanine debt, which in some cases includes an equity component. To a lesser extent, we also make preferred and/or common equity investments.

We are externally managed by our investment adviser, Ares Capital Management LLC, a subsidiary of Ares Management, L.P., a publicly traded, leading global asset manager. Ares Operations LLC, a subsidiary of Ares Management, L.P., provides certain administrative and other services necessary for us to operate.

Our common stock is traded on The NASDAQ Global Select Market under the symbol "ARCC." On August 30, 2018 the last reported sales price of our common stock on The NASDAQ Global Select Market was \$17.44 per share. The net asset value per share of our common stock at June 30, 2018 (the last date prior to the date of this prospectus on which we determined net asset value) was \$17.05.

Investing in our securities involves risks that are described in the "Risk Factors" section beginning on page 22 of this prospectus, including the risk of leverage.

We may offer, from time to time, in one or more offerings or series, up to \$3,000,000,000 of our common stock, preferred stock, debt securities, subscription rights to purchase shares of our common stock, warrants representing rights to purchase shares of our common stock, preferred stock or debt securities, or units comprised of any combination of the foregoing, which we refer to, collectively, as the "securities." The preferred stock, debt securities, subscription rights and warrants (including as part of a unit) offered hereby may be convertible or exchangeable into shares of our common stock. The securities may be offered at prices and on terms to be described in one or more supplements to this prospectus. In the event we offer common stock, the offering price per share of our common stock less any underwriting commissions or discounts will generally not be less than the net asset value per share of our common stock at the time we make the offering. However, we may issue shares of our common stock pursuant to this prospectus at a price per share that is less than our net asset value per share (a) in connection with a rights offering to our existing stockholders, (b) with the prior approval of the majority of our common stockholders or (c) under such circumstances as the SEC may permit. This prospectus and the accompanying prospectus supplement concisely provide important information about us that you should know before investing in our securities. Please read this prospectus and the accompanying prospectus supplement before you invest and keep it for future

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reference. We file annual, quarterly and current reports, proxy statements and other information with the SEC. This information is available free of charge by calling us collect at (310) 201-4200 or on our website at www.arescapitalcorp.com. The SEC also maintains a website at www.sec.gov that contains such information.

Neither the SEC nor any state securities commission has approved or disapproved of these securities or determined if this prospectus is truthful or complete. Any representation to the contrary is a criminal offense.

This prospectus may not be used to consummate sales of securities unless accompanied by a prospectus supplement.

The date of this prospectus is _____, 2018.

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You should rely only on the information contained in this prospectus and the accompanying prospectus supplement. We have not authorized any other person to provide you with different information. If anyone provides you with different or inconsistent information, you should not rely on it. We are not making an offer to sell these securities in any jurisdiction where the offer or sale is not permitted. You should assume that the information appearing in this prospectus and the accompanying prospectus supplement is accurate only as of the date on the front cover of this prospectus and the accompanying prospectus supplement, as applicable. Our business, financial condition, results of operations and prospects may have changed since that date.

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ABOUT THIS PROSPECTUS

This prospectus is part of a registration statement that we have filed with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (the "SEC"), using the "shelf" registration process. Under the shelf registration process, we may offer, from time to time, in one or more offerings or series, up to \$3,000,000,000 of our common stock, preferred stock, debt securities, subscription rights to purchase shares of our common stock, warrants representing rights to purchase shares of our common stock, preferred stock or debt securities, or units comprised of any combination of the foregoing, on terms to be determined at the time of the offering. The securities may be offered at prices and on terms described in one or more supplements to this prospectus. This prospectus provides you with a general description of the securities that we may offer. Each time we use this prospectus to offer securities, we will provide a prospectus supplement that will contain specific information about the terms of that offering. The prospectus supplement may also add, update or change information contained in this prospectus. Please carefully read this prospectus and the prospectus supplement together with any exhibits and the additional information described under the headings "Available Information" and "Risk Factors" before you make an investment decision.

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PROSPECTUS SUMMARY

This summary highlights some of the information contained elsewhere in this prospectus. It is not complete and may not contain all of the information that you may want to consider. You should read carefully the more detailed information set forth under "Risk Factors" and the other information included in this prospectus and the accompanying prospectus supplement. Except where the context suggests otherwise, the terms "we," "us," "our," "the Company" and "Ares Capital" refer to Ares Capital Corporation and its consolidated subsidiaries; "Ares Capital Management" and "our investment adviser" refer to Ares Capital Management LLC; "Ares Operations" and "our administrator" refer to Ares Operations LLC; and "Ares" and "Ares Management" refer to Ares Management, L.P. (NYSE: ARES) and its affiliated companies (other than portfolio companies of its affiliated funds).

THE COMPANY

Overview

Ares Capital, a Maryland corporation, is a specialty finance company that is a closed-end, non-diversified management investment company. We have elected to be regulated as a business development company, or a "BDC," under the Investment Company Act of 1940, as amended, and the rules and regulations promulgated thereunder or the "Investment Company Act." We were founded on April 16, 2004, were initially funded on June 23, 2004 and completed our initial public offering ("IPO") on October 8, 2004. As of June 30, 2018, we were the largest BDC in the United States with approximately \$12.3 billion of total assets.

We are externally managed by our investment adviser, Ares Capital Management, a subsidiary of Ares Management, a publicly traded, leading global alternative asset manager, pursuant to our investment advisory and management agreement. Our administrator, Ares Operations, a subsidiary of Ares Management, provides certain administrative and other services necessary for us to operate.

Our investment objective is to generate both current income and capital appreciation through debt and equity investments. We invest primarily in U.S. middle-market companies, where we believe the supply of primary capital is limited and the investment opportunities are most attractive. However, we may from time to time invest in larger or smaller companies. We generally use the term "middle-market" to refer to companies with annual EBITDA between \$10 million and \$250 million. As used herein, EBITDA represents net income before net interest expense, income tax expense, depreciation and amortization.

We invest primarily in first lien senior secured loans (including "unitranche" loans, which are loans that combine both senior and mezzanine debt, generally in a first lien position), second lien senior secured loans and mezzanine debt, which in some cases includes an equity component. First and second lien senior secured loans generally are senior debt instruments that rank ahead of subordinated debt of a given portfolio company. Mezzanine debt is subordinated to senior loans and is generally unsecured. Our investments in corporate borrowers generally range between \$30 million and \$500 million each and investments in project finance/power generation projects generally range between \$10 million and \$200 million. However, the investment sizes may be more or less than these ranges and may vary based on, among other things, our capital availability, the composition of our portfolio and general micro-and macro-economic factors.

To a lesser extent, we also make preferred and/or common equity investments, which have generally been non-control equity investments of less than \$20 million (usually in conjunction with a concurrent debt investment). However, we may increase the size or change the nature of these investments.

The proportion of these types of investments will change over time given our views on, among other things, the economic and credit environment in which we are operating. In connection with our

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investing activities, we may make commitments with respect to indebtedness or securities of a potential portfolio company substantially in excess of our final investment. In such situations, while we may initially agree to fund up to a certain dollar amount of an investment, we may subsequently syndicate or sell a portion of such amount (including, without limitation, to vehicles managed by our portfolio company, Ivy Hill Asset Management, L.P. ("IHAM")), such that we are left with a smaller investment than what was reflected in our original commitment. In addition to originating investments, we may also acquire investments in the secondary market (including purchases of a portfolio of investments).

The first and second lien senior secured loans in which we invest generally have stated terms of three to 10 years and the mezzanine debt investments in which we invest generally have stated terms of up to 10 years, but the expected average life of such first and second lien loans and mezzanine debt is generally between three and seven years. However, we may invest in loans and securities with any maturity or duration. The instruments in which we invest typically are not rated by any rating agency, but we believe that if such instruments were rated, they would be below investment grade (rated lower than "Baa3" by Moody's Investors Service, lower than "BBB " by Fitch Ratings or lower than "BBB " by Standard & Poor's Ratings Services), which, under the guidelines established by these entities, is an indication of having predominantly speculative characteristics with respect to the issuer's capacity to pay interest and repay principal. Bonds that are rated below investment grade are sometimes referred to as "high yield bonds" or "junk bonds." We may invest without limit in debt or other securities of any rating, as well as debt or other securities that have not been rated by any nationally recognized statistical rating organization.

We believe that our investment adviser, Ares Capital Management, is able to leverage the current investment platform, resources and existing relationships of Ares Management with financial sponsors, financial institutions, hedge funds and other investment firms to provide us with attractive investment opportunities. In addition to deal flow, the Ares investment platform assists our investment adviser in analyzing, structuring and monitoring investments. Ares has been in existence for over 20 years and its partners have an average of approximately 23 years of experience in leveraged finance, private equity, distressed debt, commercial real estate finance, investment banking and capital markets. We have access to Ares' investment professionals and administrative professionals, who provide assistance in accounting, finance, legal, compliance, operations, information technology and investor relations. As of June 30, 2018, Ares had approximately 405 investment professionals and approximately 640 administrative professionals.

While our primary focus is to generate current income and capital appreciation through investments in first and second lien senior secured loans and mezzanine debt and, to a lesser extent, equity securities of eligible portfolio companies, we also may invest up to 30% of our portfolio in non-qualifying assets, as permitted by the Investment Company Act. See "Regulation." Specifically, as part of this 30% basket, we may invest in entities that are not considered "eligible portfolio companies" (as defined in the Investment Company Act), including companies located outside of the United States, entities that are operating pursuant to certain exceptions under the Investment Company Act, and publicly traded entities whose public equity market capitalization exceeds the levels provided for under the Investment Company Act.

Senior Direct Lending Program

We have established a joint venture with Varagon Capital Partners ("Varagon") to make certain first lien senior secured loans, including certain stretch senior and unitranche loans, primarily to U.S. middle-market companies. Varagon was formed in 2013 as a lending platform by American International Group, Inc. and other partners. The joint venture is called the Senior Direct Lending Program (the "SDLP"). In July 2016, the Company and Varagon and its clients completed the initial funding of the SDLP. The SDLP may generally commit and hold individual loans of up to \$300 million. We may directly co-invest with the SDLP to accommodate larger transactions. The SDLP is capitalized

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as transactions are completed and all portfolio decisions and generally all other decisions in respect of the SDLP must be approved by an investment committee of the SDLP consisting of representatives of ours and Varagon (with approval from a representative of each required).

We provide capital to the SDLP in the form of subordinated certificates (the "SDLP Certificates"), and Varagon and its clients provide capital to the SDLP in the form of senior notes, intermediate funding notes and SDLP Certificates. As of June 30, 2018, we and a client of Varagon owned 87.5% and 12.5%, respectively, of the outstanding SDLP Certificates. The SDLP Certificates pay a coupon of the London Interbank Offered Rate ("LIBOR") plus a stated spread and also entitle the holders thereof to receive a portion of the excess cash flow from the loan portfolio, which may result in a return to the holders of the SDLP Certificates that is greater than the stated coupon. The SDLP Certificates are junior in right of payment to the senior notes and intermediate funding notes.

As of June 30, 2018, we and Varagon and its clients had agreed to make capital available to the SDLP of \$6.4 billion in the aggregate, of which \$1.4 billion is to be made available from us. We will continue to provide capital to the SDLP in the form of SDLP Certificates, and Varagon and its clients will provide capital to the SDLP in the form of senior notes, intermediate funding notes and SDLP Certificates. Investment of any unfunded amount must be approved by the investment committee of the SDLP consisting of representatives of ours and Varagon (with approval from a representative of each required).

For more information on the SDLP, see "Management's Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations Portfolio and Investment Activity Co-Investment Programs Senior Direct Lending Program."

Ivy Hill Asset Management, L.P.

As of June 30, 2018, our portfolio company, IHAM, an SEC-registered investment adviser, managed 23 vehicles and served as the sub-manager/sub-servicer for two other vehicles (such vehicles, the "IHAM Vehicles"). As of June 30, 2018, IHAM had assets under management of approximately \$5.0 billion. As of June 30, 2018, the amortized cost and fair value of our investment in IHAM was \$444 million and \$521 million, respectively. In connection with IHAM's registration as a registered investment adviser, on March 30, 2012, we received exemptive relief from the SEC allowing us to, subject to certain conditions, own directly or indirectly up to 100% of IHAM's outstanding equity interests and make additional investments in IHAM. From time to time, IHAM or certain IHAM Vehicles may purchase investments from us or sell investments to us, in each case for a price equal to the fair market value of such investments determined at the time of such transactions.

Ares Capital Management LLC

Ares Capital Management, our investment adviser, is served by an origination, investment and portfolio management team of approximately 95 U.S.-based investment professionals as of June 30, 2018, and led by certain partners of the Ares Credit Group: Kipp deVeer, Mitchell Goldstein and Michael Smith. Ares Capital Management leverages off of Ares' investment platform and benefits from the significant capital markets, trading and research expertise of Ares' investment professionals. Ares Capital Management's investment committee has eight members primarily comprised of certain of the U.S.-based partners of the Ares Credit Group.

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MARKET OPPORTUNITY

We believe that current market conditions present attractive opportunities for us to invest in middle-market companies, specifically:

We believe that many commercial and investment banks have, in recent years, de-emphasized their service and product offerings to middle-market businesses in favor of lending to large corporate clients and managing capital markets transactions. In addition, these lenders may be constrained in their ability to underwrite and hold bank loans and high yield securities for middle-market issuers as they seek to meet existing and future regulatory capital requirements. These factors may result in opportunities for alternative funding sources to middle-market companies and therefore more new-issue market opportunities for us.

We believe disruption and volatility that occurs periodically in the credit markets, reduces capital available to certain capital providers, causing a reduction in competition. When these volatile market conditions occur, they often create opportunities to achieve attractive risk-adjusted returns.

We believe that there is a lack of market participants that are willing to hold meaningful amounts of certain middle-market loans. As a result, we believe our ability to minimize syndication risk for a company seeking financing by being able to hold our loans without having to syndicate them is a competitive advantage.

We believe that middle-market companies have faced difficulty in raising debt through the capital markets. This approach to financing may become more difficult to the extent institutional investors seek to invest in larger, more liquid offerings, leaving less competition and fewer financing alternatives for middle-market companies.

We believe there is a large pool of un-invested private equity capital for middle-market businesses. We expect private equity firms will seek to leverage their investments by combining equity capital with senior secured loans and mezzanine debt from other sources such as us.

We believe the middle-market represents a significant portion of the overall economy, and the demand for capital by middle-market companies reflects generally stronger growth trends and financial performance. In addition, due to the fragmented nature of the middle-market and the lack of publicly available information, we believe lenders have an opportunity to originate and underwrite investments with more favorable terms, including stronger covenant and reporting packages, as well as better call protection and change of control provisions as compared to the large, broadly syndicated loan market.

COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES

We believe that we have the following competitive advantages over other capital providers to middle-market companies:

The Ares Platform

Ares operates three distinct but complementary investment groups, including the Ares Credit Group, the Ares Private Equity Group and the Ares Real Estate Group. We believe our affiliation with Ares provides a distinct competitive advantage through Ares' originations, due diligence, and marketing activities. In particular, we believe that the Ares platform provides us with an advantage through its deal flow generation and investment evaluation process. Ares' asset management platform also provides additional market information, company knowledge and industry insight that benefit our investment

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and due diligence process. Ares' professionals maintain extensive financial sponsor and intermediary relationships, which provide valuable insight and access to transactions and information.

Seasoned Management Team

The investment professionals in the Ares Credit Group and members of our investment adviser's investment committee also have significant experience investing across market cycles. This experience also provides us with a competitive advantage in identifying, originating, investing in and managing a portfolio of investments in middle-market companies.

Broad Origination Strategy

We focus on self-originating most of our investments by pursuing a broad array of investment opportunities in middle-market companies and power generation projects across multiple channels. We also leverage off of the extensive relationships of the broader Ares platform, including relationships with the portfolio companies in the IHAM Vehicles, to identify investment opportunities. We believe that this allows for asset selectivity and that there is a significant relationship between proprietary deal origination and credit performance. We believe that our focus on generating proprietary deal flow and lead investing also gives us greater control over capital structure, deal terms, pricing and documentation and enables us to actively manage our portfolio investments. Moreover, by leading the investment process, we are often able to secure controlling positions in credit tranches, thereby providing additional control in investment outcomes. We also have originated substantial proprietary deal flow from middle-market intermediaries, which often allows us to act as the sole or principal source of institutional capital to the borrower.

Scale and Flexible Transaction Structuring

We believe that being one of the largest BDCs makes us a more desirable and flexible capital provider, especially in competitive markets. We are flexible with the types of investments we make and the terms associated with those investments. We believe this approach and experience enables our investment adviser to identify attractive investment opportunities throughout economic cycles and across a company's capital structure so we can make investments consistent with our stated investment objective and preserve principal while seeking appropriate risk adjusted returns. In addition, we have the flexibility to provide "one stop" financing with the ability to invest capital across the balance sheet and syndicate and hold larger investments than many of our competitors. We believe that the ability to underwrite, syndicate and hold larger investments benefits our stockholders by (a) potentially increasing net income and earnings through syndication, (b) increasing originated deal flow flexibility, (c) broadening market relationships and deal flow, (d) allowing us to optimize our portfolio composition and (e) allowing us to provide capital to a broader spectrum of middle-market companies, which we believe currently have limited access to capital from traditional lending sources. In addition, we believe that the ability to provide capital at every level of the balance sheet provides a strong value proposition to middle-market borrowers and our senior debt capabilities provide superior deal origination and relative value analysis capabilities compared to junior capital focused lenders.

Experience with and Focus on Middle-Market Companies

Ares has historically focused on investments in middle-market companies and we benefit from this experience. In sourcing and analyzing deals, our investment adviser benefits from Ares' extensive network of relationships focused on middle-market companies, including management teams, members of the investment banking community, private equity groups and other investment firms with whom Ares has had long-term relationships. We believe this network enables us to identify well-positioned prospective portfolio company investments. The Ares Credit Group works closely with Ares' other investment professionals. As of June 30, 2018, Ares oversaw a portfolio of investments in over 1,500

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companies, over 500 structured assets and over 170 properties across approximately 60 industries, which provides access to an extensive network of relationships and insights into industry trends and the state of the capital markets.

Disciplined Investment Philosophy

In making its investment decisions, our investment adviser has adopted Ares' long-standing, consistent, credit-based investment approach that was developed over 20 years ago by its founders. Specifically, our investment adviser's investment philosophy, portfolio construction and portfolio management involve an assessment of the overall macroeconomic environment and financial markets and company-specific research and analysis. Its investment approach emphasizes capital preservation, low volatility and minimization of downside risk. In addition to engaging in extensive due diligence from the perspective of a long-term investor, our investment adviser's approach seeks to reduce risk in investments by focusing on:

businesses with strong franchises and sustainable competitive advantages;

industries with positive long-term dynamics;

businesses and industries with cash flows that are dependable and predictable;

management teams with demonstrated track records and appropriate economic incentives;

rates of return commensurate with the perceived risks;

securities or investments that are structured with appropriate terms and covenants; and

businesses backed by experienced private equity sponsors.

Extensive Industry Focus

We seek to concentrate our investing activities in industries with a history of predictable and dependable cash flows and in which the Ares investment professionals have had extensive investment experience. Ares investment professionals have developed long-term relationships with management teams and management consultants in approximately 60 industries, and have accumulated substantial information and identified potential trends within these industries. In turn, we benefit from these relationships, information and identification of potential trends in making investments.

OPERATING AND REGULATORY STRUCTURE

Our investment activities are managed by our investment adviser, Ares Capital Management, which is a subsidiary of Ares, and supervised by our board of directors, a majority of whom are independent of Ares and its affiliates. Ares Capital Management is registered under the Investment Advisers Act of 1940, or the "Advisers Act." Under our Amended and Restated Investment Advisory and Management Agreement with Ares Capital Management, referred to herein as our "investment advisory and management agreement," we have agreed to pay Ares Capital Management base management fees based on our total assets, as defined under the Investment Company Act (other than cash and cash equivalents, but including assets purchased with borrowed funds) ("base management fees"), fees based on our net investment income ("income based fees") and fees based on our net capital gains ("capital gains incentive fees"). See "Management Investment Advisory and Management Agreement." Ares Operations provides us with certain administrative and other services necessary for us to operate pursuant to an Amended and Restated Administration Agreement, referred to herein as our "administration agreement." See "Management Administration Agreement."

As a BDC, we are required to comply with certain regulatory requirements. For example, we are not generally permitted to co-invest in any portfolio company in which a fund managed by Ares or

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any of its downstream affiliates (other than us and our downstream affiliates) is also co-investing. On January 18, 2017, we received an order from the SEC that permits us and other BDCs and registered closed-end management investment companies managed by Ares to co-invest in portfolio companies with each other and with affiliated investment funds (the "Co-investment Exemptive Order"). Co-investments made under the Co-investment Exemptive Order are subject to compliance with certain conditions and other requirements, which could limit our ability to participate in a co-investment transaction. We may also otherwise co-invest with funds managed by Ares or any of its downstream affiliates, subject to compliance with existing regulatory guidance, applicable regulations and our allocation procedures.

Also, while we may borrow funds to make investments, our ability to use debt is limited in certain significant aspects. See "Business Operating and Regulatory Structure" and "Regulation." In particular, under the provisions of the Investment Company Act, BDCs must have at least 200% asset coverage calculated pursuant to the Investment Company Act (i.e., we are permitted to borrow one dollar for every dollar we have in assets less all liabilities and indebtedness not represented by senior securities issued by us) in order to incur debt or issue preferred stock (which we refer to collectively as "senior securities"), unless the BDC obtains approval (either stockholder approval or approval of a "required majority" (as defined in Section 57(o) of the Investment Company Act) of its board of directors) to apply the modified asset coverage requirements set forth in Section 61(a)(2) of the Investment Company Act, as amended by the Small Business Credit Availability Act (the "SBCAA"), reducing the required asset coverage ratio applicable to the BDC from 200% to 150% (i.e., the revised regulatory leverage limitation permits BDCs to double the amount of borrowings, such that we would be able to borrow up to two dollars for every dollar we have in assets less all liabilities and indebtedness not represented by senior securities issued by us).

Currently, our asset coverage requirement applicable to senior securities is 200%. On June 21, 2018, our board of directors, including a "required majority" of our board of directors, approved the application of the modified asset coverage requirement set forth in Section 61(a)(2) of the Investment Company Act, as amended by the SBCAA. As a result, effective on June 21, 2019 (unless we receive earlier stockholder approval), our asset coverage requirement applicable to senior securities will be reduced from 200% to 150%. In order to incur this additional leverage, we intend to enter into certain amendments for our Revolving Credit Facility (as defined below) and Revolving Funding Facility (as defined below) to reduce the current asset coverage requirements specified therein. See "Risk Factors Risks Relating to Our Business Effective on June 21, 2019 (unless we receive earlier stockholder approval), our asset coverage requirement will reduce from 200% to 150%, which may increase the risk of investing with us" and "Management's Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations Financial Condition, Liquidity and Capital Resources."

As of June 30, 2018, our asset coverage was 255%.

In addition, as a consequence of us being a regulated investment company ("RIC") under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (the "Code"), for U.S. federal income tax purposes, our asset growth is dependent on our ability to raise equity capital through the issuance of common stock. RICs generally must distribute substantially all of their investment company taxable income (as defined under the Code) to stockholders as dividends in order to preserve their status as a RIC and not to be subject to additional U.S. federal corporate-level income taxes. This requirement, in turn, generally prevents us from using our earnings to support our operations, including making new investments. See "Certain Material U.S. Federal Income Tax Considerations."

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ACQUISITION OPPORTUNITIES

We believe that there may be opportunity for further consolidation in our industry. From time to time, we evaluate potential strategic opportunities, including acquisitions of:

asset portfolios;

other private and public finance companies, business development companies and asset managers; and

selected secondary market assets.

We have been in, and from time to time may engage in, discussions with counterparties in respect of various potential strategic acquisition and investment transactions, including potential acquisitions of other finance companies, business development companies and asset managers. Some of these transactions could be material to our business and, if completed, could be difficult to integrate, result in increased leverage or dilution and/or subject us to unexpected liabilities. However, none of these discussions has progressed to the point at which the completion of any such transaction could be deemed to be probable or reasonably certain as of the date of this prospectus. Completion of any such transaction would be subject to completion of due diligence, finalization of key business and financial terms (including price) and negotiation of final definitive documentation as well as a number of other factors and conditions including, without limitation, the approval of our board of directors, any required third party consents and, in certain cases, the approval of our stockholders. We cannot predict how quickly the terms of any such transaction could be finalized, if at all. Accordingly, there can be no assurance that such transaction would be completed. In connection with evaluating potential strategic acquisition and investment transactions, we may incur significant expenses for the evaluation and due diligence investigation of these potential transactions.

INDEBTEDNESS

As of June 30, 2018, we had approximately \$4.6 billion in aggregate principal amount of total outstanding indebtedness, approximately \$4.2 billion aggregate principal amount of which was unsecured indebtedness of Ares Capital and approximately \$414 million aggregate principal amount of which was secured indebtedness at the Ares Capital level.

For more information on our debt, see "Management's Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations Financial Condition, Liquidity and Capital Resources."

RISK FACTORS

Investing in Ares Capital involves risks. The following is a summary of the principal risks that you should carefully consider before investing in our securities. In addition, see "Risk Factors" beginning on page 22 for a more detailed discussion of the principal risks as well as certain other risks you should carefully consider before deciding to invest in our securities.

The capital markets may experience periods of disruption and instability. Such market conditions may materially and adversely affect debt and equity capital markets, which may have a negative impact on our business and operations.

Uncertainty about the financial stability of the United States, China and several countries in Europe could have a significant adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations.

A failure on our part to maintain our status as a BDC may significantly reduce our operating flexibility and a failure to maintain our status as a RIC may subject us to additional corporate-level income taxes.

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We are dependent upon certain key personnel of Ares for our future success and upon their access to other Ares investment professionals.

Our ability to grow depends on our ability to raise capital.

We borrow money, which magnifies the potential for gain or loss on amounts invested and may increase the risk of investing with us.

Effective on June 21, 2019 (unless we receive earlier stockholder approval), our asset coverage requirement will reduce from 200% to 150%, which may increase the risk of investing with us.

We operate in a highly competitive market for investment opportunities.

We are exposed to risks associated with changes in interest rates.

Most of our portfolio investments are not publicly traded and, as a result, the fair value of these investments may not be readily determinable. Additionally, to the extent that we need liquidity and need to sell assets, the lack of liquidity in our investments may adversely affect our business.

Our financial condition and results of operations could be negatively affected if a significant investment fails to perform as expected.

There are significant potential conflicts of interest that could impact our investment returns.

Declines in market prices and liquidity in the corporate debt markets can result in significant net unrealized depreciation of our portfolio, which in turn would reduce our net asset value.

Economic recessions or downturns could impair our portfolio companies and harm our operating results.

Our investments, which are primarily in middle-market companies, may be risky and we could lose all or part of our investment.

Our portfolio companies may be highly leveraged.

Our credit ratings may not reflect all risks of an investment in our debt securities.

Our shares of common stock have traded at a discount from net asset value and may do so again, which could limit our ability to raise additional equity capital.

OUR CORPORATE INFORMATION

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Our administrative offices are located at 2000 Avenue of the Stars, 12th Floor, Los Angeles, California 90067, telephone number (310) 201-4200, and our principal executive offices are located at 245 Park Avenue, 44th Floor, New York, New York 10167, telephone number (212) 750-7300.

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OFFERINGS

We may offer, from time to time, in one or more offerings or series, up to \$3,000,000,000 of our common stock, preferred stock, debt securities, subscription rights to purchase shares of our common stock, warrants representing rights to purchase shares of our common stock, preferred stock or debt securities, or units comprised of any combination of the foregoing, on terms to be determined at the time of the offering. We will offer our securities at prices and on terms to be set forth in one or more supplements to this prospectus. The offering price per share of our common stock, less any underwriting commissions or discounts, generally will not be less than the net asset value per share of our common stock at the time of an offering. However, we may issue shares of our common stock pursuant to this prospectus at a price per share that is less than our net asset value per share (a) in connection with a rights offering to our existing stockholders, (b) with the prior approval of the majority of our common stockholders or (c) under such other circumstances as the SEC may permit. Any such issuance of shares of our common stock below net asset value may be dilutive to the net asset value of our common stock. See "Risk Factors Risks Relating to Offerings Pursuant to this Prospectus."

Pursuant to approval granted at a special meeting of stockholders held on May 14, 2018, we currently are permitted to sell or otherwise issue shares of our common stock at a price below net asset value, subject to certain limitations and determinations that must be made by our board of directors. Such stockholder approval expires on May 14, 2019.

We may offer our securities directly to one or more purchasers, including existing stockholders in a rights offering, through agents that we designate from time to time or to or through underwriters or dealers. The prospectus supplement relating to each offering will identify any agents or underwriters involved in the sale of our securities, and will set forth any applicable purchase price, fee, commission or discount arrangement between us and our agents or underwriters or among our underwriters or the basis upon which such amount may be calculated. See "Plan of Distribution." We may not sell any of our securities through agents, underwriters or dealers without delivery of a prospectus supplement describing the method and terms of the offering of our securities.

Set forth below is additional information regarding offerings of our securities:

Use of proceeds

Unless otherwise specified in a prospectus supplement, we intend to use the net proceeds from the sale of our securities for general corporate purposes, which include, among other things, (a) investing in portfolio companies in accordance with our investment objective and (b) repaying indebtedness. Each supplement to this prospectus relating to an offering will more fully identify the use of the proceeds from such offering. See "Use of Proceeds."

Distributions

We currently intend to pay dividends or make other distributions to our stockholders on a quarterly basis out of assets legally available for distribution. We may also pay additional dividends or make additional distributions to our stockholders from time to time. Our quarterly and additional dividends or distributions, if any, will be determined by our board of directors. For more information, see "Price Range of Common Stock and Distributions."

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Taxation

We have elected to be treated as a RIC for U.S. federal income tax purposes. As a RIC, we generally will not pay U.S. federal corporate-level income taxes on any income and gain that we distribute to our stockholders as dividends on a timely basis. Among other things, in order to maintain our RIC status, we must meet specified source of income and asset diversification requirements and distribute annually generally an amount equal to at least 90% of our investment company taxable income, out of assets legally available for distribution. See "Risk Factors Risks Relating to Our Business We may be subject to additional corporate-level income taxes if we fail to maintain our status as a RIC" and "Price Range of Common Stock and Distributions."

Dividend reinvestment plan

We have a dividend reinvestment plan for our stockholders. This is an "opt out" dividend reinvestment plan. As a result, if we declare a cash dividend, then stockholders' dividends will be automatically reinvested in additional shares of our common stock, unless they specifically "opt out" of the dividend reinvestment plan so as to receive cash. Stockholders whose cash dividends are reinvested in additional shares of our common stock will be subject to the same U.S. federal, state and local tax consequences as stockholders who elect to receive their dividends in cash. See "Dividend Reinvestment Plan."

The NASDAQ Global Select Market symbol

"ARCC"

Anti-takeover provisions

Our board of directors is divided into three classes of directors serving staggered three-year terms. This structure is intended to provide us with a greater likelihood of continuity of management, which may be necessary for us to realize the full value of our investments. A staggered board of directors also may serve to deter hostile takeovers or proxy contests, as may certain other measures adopted by us. See "Description of Our Capital Stock."

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Leverage

We borrow funds to make additional investments. We use this practice, which is known as "leverage," to attempt to increase returns to our stockholders, but it involves significant risks. See "Risk Factors," "Senior Securities" and "Regulation Indebtedness and Senior Securities." We are currently allowed to borrow amounts such that our asset coverage, as calculated pursuant to the Investment Company Act, equals at least 200% after such borrowing. Effective on June 21, 2019 (unless we receive earlier stockholder approval), our asset coverage requirement applicable to senior securities will be reduced from 200% to 150% (i.e., the revised regulatory leverage limitation permits BDCs to double the amount of borrowings, such that we would be able to borrow up to two dollars for every dollar we have in assets less all liabilities and indebtedness not represented by senior securities issued by us). See "Management's Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations Financial Condition, Liquidity and Capital Resources." The amount of leverage that we employ at any particular time will depend on our investment adviser's and our board of directors' assessments of market and other factors at the time of any proposed borrowing.

Management arrangements

Ares Capital Management serves as our investment adviser. Ares Operations serves as our administrator. For a description of Ares Capital Management, Ares Operations, Ares and our contractual arrangements with these companies, see "Management Investment Advisory and Management Agreement," and " Administration Agreement."

Available information

We are required to file periodic reports, proxy statements and other information with the SEC. This information is available free of charge by calling us collect at (310) 201-4200 or on our website at www.arescapitalcorp.com. Information contained on our website is not incorporated into this prospectus and you should not consider such information to be part of this prospectus. Such information is also available from the EDGAR database on the SEC's website at www.sec.gov.

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FEEES AND EXPENSES

The following table is intended to assist you in understanding the costs and expenses that an investor in our common stock will bear, directly or indirectly, based on the assumptions set forth below. We caution you that some of the percentages indicated in the table below are estimates and may vary. Except where the context suggests otherwise, whenever this table contains a reference to our fees or expenses, we will pay such fees and expenses out of our net assets and, consequently, stockholders will indirectly bear such fees or expenses as investors in Ares Capital.

Stockholder transaction expenses (as a percentage of offering price):	
Sales load	(1)
Offering expenses	(2)
Dividend reinvestment plan expenses	Up to \$15 Transaction Fee (3)
Total stockholder transaction expenses paid	(4)

Annual expenses (as a percentage of consolidated net assets attributable to common stock)(5):	
Base management fees	2.60%(6)