

## **EPA Regional Small Business Liaisons (RSBLs)**

The EPA Regional Small Business Liaison (RSBL) is the primary contact for state Small Business Environmental Assistance Programs (SBEAPs) and Small Business Ombudsmen (SBOs) within the ten EPA regions. RSBLs serve to connect SBEAPs/SBOs with other EPA staff, keep them informed and serve as their voice within the agency.

The role of each RSBL varies from region to region. They can tailor specific actions to meet the unique needs of the region and the SBEAPs they work with. However, many perform similar core functions.

The National Steering Committee (NSC) for SBEAPs/SBOs compiled the following list based on examples of past RSBL activities and future opportunities. This document serves as a guide to help those in the RSBL role, as well as other EPA staff and state programs, explore potential activities and choose the best ways for them to work together to benefit small businesses and the environment.

### **Core function: Liaison between SBEAPs/SBOs, EPA region, EPA headquarters, ASBO**

- Central point of contact for small business activities within regional EPA office.
- Connect regional SBEAPs/SBOs with regional EPA staff, experts, etc. and help them find right contact within regional office when questions arise.
- Find EPA speakers for trainings, etc.
- Help the small business/SBEAP voice be heard within agency, including promoting NSC comment letters.
- Make regional staff knowledgeable about SBEAPs/SBOs and advocate for and champion the programs at the regional and national level.
- Maintain connections with ASBO.
- Collaborate with other RSBLs (regular calls, etc.) to share ideas.
- Attend 507 Annual Training.
- Pass on EPA information that SBEAPs/SBOs need to be aware of such as changes to rules, policies and priorities; opportunities to comment; grant opportunities; etc.
- Facilitate regional SBEAP/SBO interaction by hosting and/or attend regional SBEAP/SBO meetings and/or calls, email communications, etc.
- Refer questions regarding small business to appropriate state program.

### **Core function: Strategic planning for small business assistance**

- Identify areas where small businesses need assistance and communicate needs to SBEAPs/SBOs.
- Help SBEAPs/SBOs develop solutions, set objectives, prioritize assistance needs.
- Help identify ways to decrease burden of compliance for small businesses.
- Promote partnerships between EPA, SBEAP/SBOs, other assistance providers.

### **Core function: State/regional partnerships on initiatives**

- Work to coordinate small business assistance between EPA regional staff, SBEAPs/SBOs, partner organizations, and/or regional offices of other federal agencies.
- Help identify assistance needs, develop and implement solutions for regional issues.
- Involve small businesses and/or assistance providers in development of assistance materials.
- Connect SBEAPs/SBOs with EPA staff who can partner on initiatives.
- Identify EPA needs and priorities and engage SBEAPs/SBOs to help EPA reach their goals.

### **Core function: Direct small business assistance**

- Connect small business stakeholders with EPA rule writers and encourage small business input into rulemaking.
- Advise rule writers on small business considerations.
- Ensure compliance assistance and outreach materials are written in plain language.
- Make sure small business considerations are incorporated into program work (i.e. Pollution Prevention, Environmental Justice).
- Answer small business questions or provide straightforward, easy-to-access information or connect them to appropriate EPA or state resources. Make sure businesses that contact the agency are directed to the appropriate people to assist them.
- Make sure state SBEAP information is included in enforcement letters going to small businesses.
- Promote use of self-disclosure policies.