



Asbestos and Small Business Ombuds (ASBO) Program

— Tuesday, March 12, 2024

Presented by Paula Hoag, EPA's ASBO



AGENDA

- ASBO Program Overview
- Ombuds Reporting
- Outreach and Engagement
- Resources and Services
- Questions and Listening



ASBO PROGRAM OVERVIEW

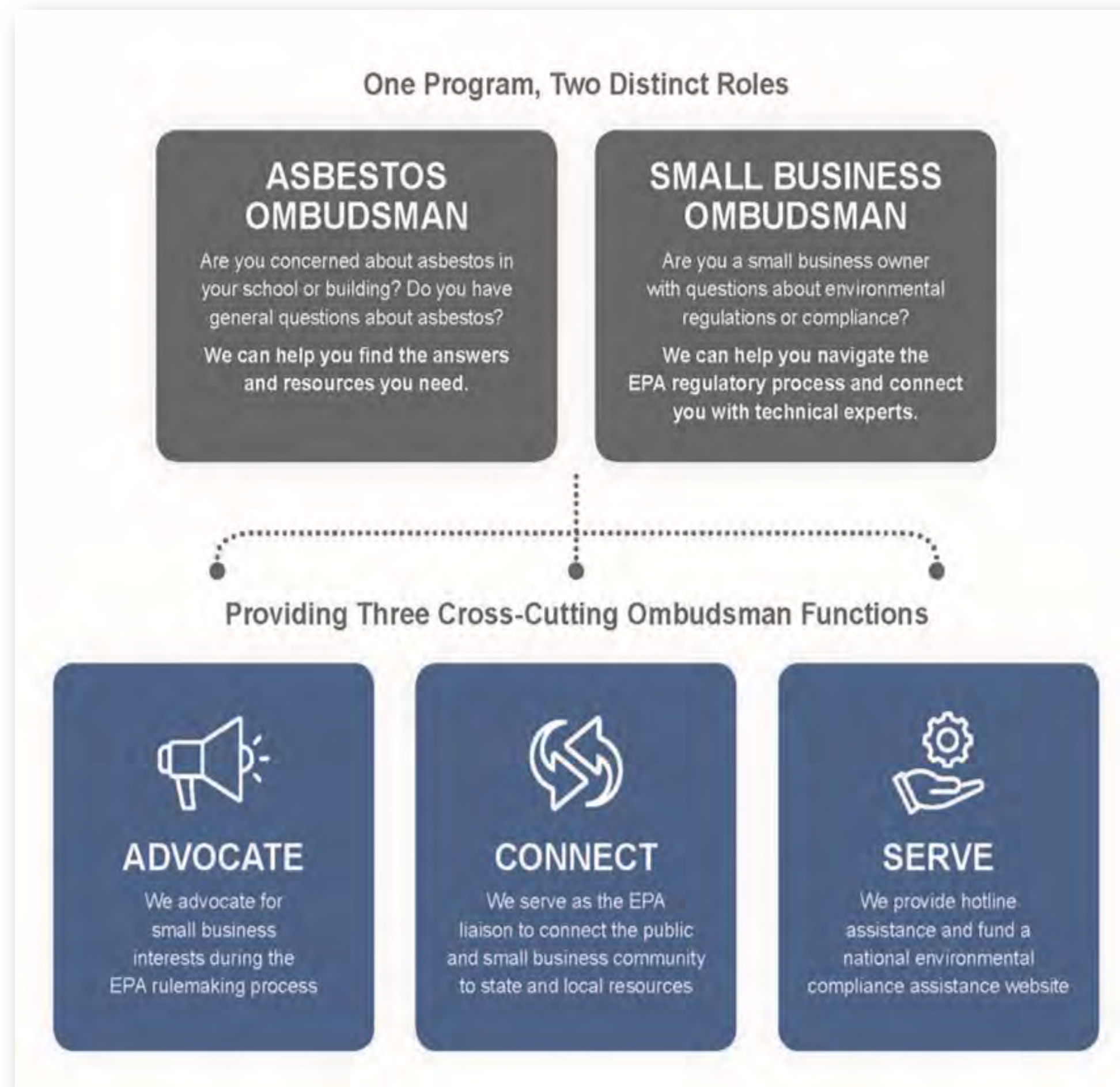


Asbestos and Small Business Ombuds (ASBO) Program

Informal, informational liaison for the general public, small business community, and EPA; providing technical resources and contact information on asbestos, environmental regulations and compliance assistance

Statutory Authority and Policy Directives:

- Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act
- Clean Air Act – Section 507
- EPA's RFA Policy – Section 213 Program



About the Ombudsman Profession

- An ombudsperson or ombud is an official in charge of serving as a representative, or an advocate for a fair process, by addressing questions or investigating public complaints
- The ombudsman profession has standards of practice, with the three main pillars to serve as an *independent, impartial and confidential* resource to help ensure operational excellence



- 1996 Alternative Dispute Resolution Act: encourages the use of an ombuds to resolve conflicts
- Administrative Conference of the U.S.'s 2016 Final Report: Use of Ombuds in Federal Agencies

Ombuds Reporting



ASBO PROGRAM INQUIRY REPORT FISCAL YEAR 2022 DATA ANALYSIS

MESSAGE FROM THE OMBUDS

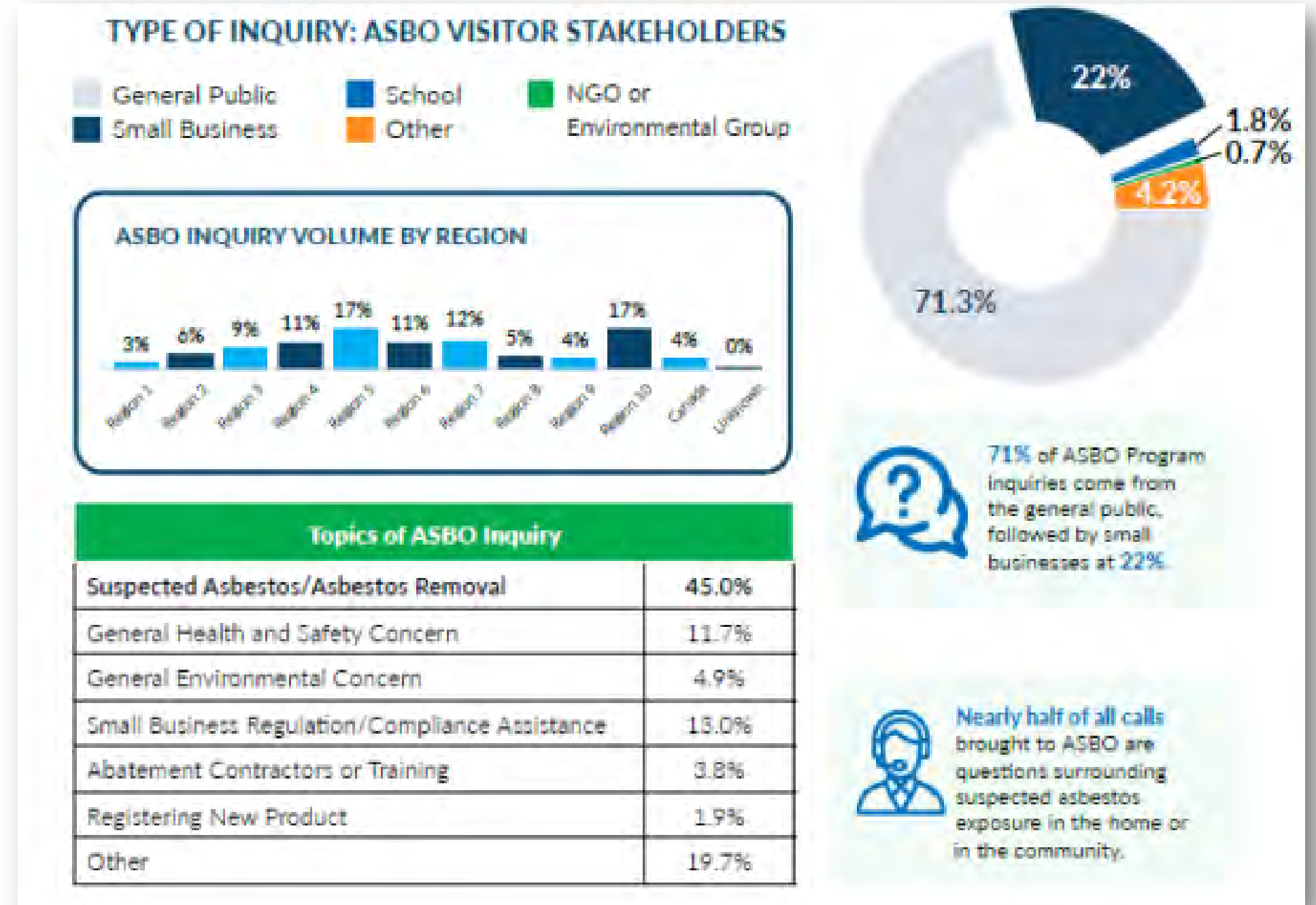
As the Asbestos and Small Business Ombudsman (ASBO or Ombudsman) for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), I am pleased to share this Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 ASBO Program Inquiry Report. The role of an ombudsman is to serve as an advocate for a fair process, and to offer an informal course in resolving disputes. This report serves to highlight the top issues brought to the Program in order to offer transparency and address topics of concern for Agency consideration.

REPORTING STRATEGY

- The ASBO role has statutory requirements that direct the Ombuds to report out or make recommendations based on its findings
- **1ST ASBO Inquiry Report, published June 2023**
- Scheduled to produce internally to EPA every 3 years, highlights will be made public

ASBO Public Inquiry Report Highlights

- 71% of all inquiries to the ASBO program are from the general public
- 22% of inquiries from small business
- 18% of inquires are regulatory compliance and enforcement concerns



507 Program Report to Congress

- Required by statute to periodically report to Congress and is defined /scheduled in ASBO's Reporting Strategy
- Framework to be completed by FY 2024
- Report is to monitor the effectiveness and compliances of EPA's Small Business Program responsibilities

Outreach and Engagement



Region 6 Dallas EPA and SBEAP Meeting

- February 2024 State SBEAP Meeting at the EPA Region 6 Dallas Office
- First meeting of its kind
- Due to success of the meeting R6 commitment a staff member, Tongee Fleming, to serve as the new Regional Small Business Liaison





U.S. Small Business
Administration



SBA Ombudsman & Office of Advocacy

- Meeting with SBA Ombudsman
Fall 2023
- Ongoing attendance of SBA's
Office of Advocacy
Environmental Roundtable
Meetings

EPA's Office of Civil Enforcement (OCE)

OCE plans and sets priorities for enforcement activities, develops national enforcement policy and guidance, participates in Agency rule-making to ensure that regulations contain clear and enforceable provisions, and responsible for implementing effective communication to alert regulated entities to potential compliance problems.

- Annual coordination on SBA's Report to Congress on SBREFA activities, including compliance assistance
- OCE/ASBO collaboration to increase Ombuds visibility with OECA's enforcement officers and develop best practices for assistance



ASBO RESOURCES & SERVICES



ASBO HOTLINE & Ombuds Assistance

- Live staff support to assist the public and small businesses on asbestos concerns and regulatory compliance
- Most technical asbestos and compliance questions are deferred to the state level for local resources and assistance needs
- Range of calls and questions come through the hotline; great appreciation for live hotline support and to brainstorm/ problem solving next steps



ASBO's Monthly Bulletin

- Newly designed and managed subscription service with over 3,100 subscribers
- Curated environmental updates and resource information for the small business community

EPA MAR 2023


SMALLBIZ@EPA

EPA's Asbestos and Small Business Ombudsman Program

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR THE REGULATED SMALL BUSINESS COMMUNITY

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 **POLICY & REGULATION**

Miscellaneous Coating Manufacturing: National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants (NESHAP)

This regulation establishes emission limits and work practice requirements for new and existing miscellaneous coating manufacturing operations, including process vessels, storage tanks, wastewater, transfer operations, equipment leaks, and heat exchange systems, and implements section 112(d) of the Clean Air Act (CAA) by requiring all major sources to meet hazardous air pollutant (HAP) emission standards reflecting application of the maximum achievable control technology (MACT). The HAP emitted from miscellaneous coating manufacturing facilities include toluene, xylene, glycol ethers, and methyl isobutyl ketone. Exposure to these substances has been demonstrated to cause adverse health effects such as irritation of the lung, eye, and mucous membranes, effects on the central nervous system, and cancer.

The final rule will reduce HAP emissions by 4,900 tons per year for existing facilities that manufacture miscellaneous coatings. [Read the full article](#)



**ARE YOU
PREPARED
FOR INCREASED
ENVIRONMENTAL
INSPECTIONS IN
YOUR AREA?**



**WE CAN HELP YOUR BUSINESS
STAY IN ENVIRONMENTAL
COMPLIANCE!**

507 Program 5-Year Cooperative Agreement

NEW! Environmental Justice
and Enforcement Flyer

Funding and engagement
support to manage national
SBEAP website, collaborative
services & training activities

Upcoming FY 2024 Resources

Updated web-based sustainability guide for small businesses

Internal Stakeholder Engagement Planning Guide and Toolkit for EPA Rulewriters to encourage and support small entity engagement

From the EPA Office of Small & Disadvantaged Business Utilization

SMART STEPS TO SUSTAINABILITY

YOUR GUIDE TO A GREENER SMALL BUSINESS



Contact us

ASBO Hotline:
800-368-5888

Email:
asbo@epa.gov

Our Website:
www.epa.gov

The screenshot shows the EPA website's 'Resources for Small Businesses' page. At the top left is the EPA logo with the text 'United States Environmental Protection Agency'. To the right is a search bar labeled 'Search EPA.gov'. Below the logo is a navigation bar with links for 'Environmental Topics', 'Laws & Regulations', 'Report a Violation', and 'About EPA'. A 'CONTACT US' link is located in the top right corner. The main heading is 'Resources for Small Businesses'. Below this is a large image of a blue pen writing on a document. A dark blue box on the right contains the text: 'EPA Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization' followed by a paragraph describing the office's mission and a link to 'Learn about the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization.' Below the image are three numbered tabs (1, 2, 3). The page is divided into three columns: 'Doing Business with EPA' (with links to Small Business Solutions and Opportunities, Contracting with EPA, Small Business Vendor Database, and Procurement Forecast), 'Environmental Regulation and Compliance' (with links to EPA's Small Business Ombudsman, About EPA Regulations, Regulatory Flexibility for Small Entities, Small Business Compliance, and Compliance Assistance Centers), and 'Additional Resources for Small Businesses' (with links to Small Business Administration, Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Program, National Small Business Environmental Assistance Program, Energy Star for Small Business, Environmental Compliance, Information on Made in America Requirements and Waivers, and Sustainability).