



## **2020 Annual 507 Program Training Sept. 8 – 11, 2020 Event summary report**

### **Background**

The 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments (CAAA) directed states to develop programs to help small businesses comply with air quality regulations. These state programs are made up of three components as described in Section 507 of the CAAA. As such the programs are often referred to as the “507 Programs.” The Small Businesses Environmental Assistance Programs, or SBEAPs, are the technical assistance component of the 507 Programs and often consist of one or two professional staff. SBEAPs have specific regulatory and communication training and sharing of technical information needs. Resources and training are essential to operating a successful state program. As such annual training events are critical to the support of 507 Programs and the small business communities they serve.

The national steering committee (NSC) is made of state 507 Program staff who have organized the nationwide SBEAP, or 507 Programs. In partnership with EPA, the NSC has hosted an annual training multi-day event for nearly 25 years. In recent years, the U.S. EPA Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization has financially supported the training every other year. During off years, NSC grassroots efforts host the event, supported by low registration costs and held at regional EPA offices that provide space at no cost. The target audience includes primarily state SBEAPs or 507 Programs, the EPA, trade associations, small businesses and in some cases state regulators. When attendees are asked to “rank the importance of the (annual training) information to their profession” through formal annual training evaluations, the majority indicate the information is “extremely important.”

In 2020 the annual training was scheduled for early May at a hotel in Washington, D.C. The EPA secured a contractor to help with the event coordination and the NSC planning subcommittee began meeting in January to plan the agenda and secure speakers. The May 2020 event was canceled due to COVID-19, but the EPA and NSC identified the need to host some type of delayed alternative training.

In June 2020 EPA approached the Kansas State University Pollution Prevention Institute (PPI) and Nationalsbeap.org contractor to ask if, through an extension of its existing contract, PPI would host a virtual training. The existing contract was due to expire July 30, 2020, and unused annual training travel and scholarships funds were still available. The EPA and PPI agreed to use these funds, under a 60-day extension, to support a virtual event.

Working with the NSC planning subcommittee, PPI secured internal technical experts and a Zoom Webinar license for the Sept. 8 -11, 2020, event. The NSC planning subcommittee quickly

revamped the agenda, secured speakers and worked with PPI to promote the event. Registration opened in late July and remained open until Sept. 3. More than 150 participants pre-registered and a summary of this by registrant category is included below.

In an effort to host the first, national multi-day virtual training, PPI met with internal K-State professionals and formed a work group made up of the EPA, NSC planning subcommittee chair and PPI. The group met once a week for four weeks to address behind-the-scene details including registration, promotion, presenter training, platform type, security and polling/evaluation details. A shared file was created for the work group where all detailed annual training files continue to be maintained and will be accessible for future event planning.

### **Presenter training**

Due to the virtual nature of the annual training, presenters were asked to participate in a training course via individual sessions with PPI staff. This covered several aspects of the event and helped to answer questions, as well as offer a “practice” session to ensure the presenter was comfortable with the technology. One hundred percent of the presenters were represented and indicated the session was very helpful. In a few cases, presenters requested a second practice session. PPI, with guidance from work group members, also developed two presenter checklist resources. The first guidance was used in combination with the formal presenter training sessions, and the second was intended to remind presenters of last-minute key details and tips to ensure their sessions were successfully presented.

### **Registration and participation summary**

For Webinar security reasons, all attendees were required to preregister for this event. Speakers were not required to register if they only intended to join for their presentation, though some chose to do so anyway. The following is a summary of registration data:

- Individuals registered — 152
- First-time attendees of annual training — 81
- States and territories represented, including at least two states from each region — 41, plus one state that did not register, but did attend part of Friday on invitation
  - Non-attending states or territories: District of Columbia, Hawaii, Maryland, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia, Wyoming
- Attendees from the following distribution of organizations (Note: Registrants could select more than one type of organization. —
  - SBEAP 51%
  - SBO 15%
  - Business 7%
  - EPA 14%
  - State regulator 20%
  - CAP 5%
  - Other:11%
- Registration and attendance for each day —
  - Pre-training networking social: 64 registered, attendance not recorded
  - Tuesday: 139 registered, 119 attended
  - Wednesday: 129 registered, 104 attended

- Thursday: 128 registered, 93 attended
- State awards ceremony: 78 registered, 60 attended
- Friday: 102 registered, 81 attended

### **Training agenda**

The original May agenda was revamped for both content and presenters, mainly to accommodate changes due to COVID and current needs of the 507 programs. The draft and now final agenda reside on the [Annual Training](#) one-stop page. Eighteen different sessions were presented by 24 different environmental professionals or small businesses. This included the awards session that featured live and pre-recorded acceptance speeches. Session breaks included a CAAA trivia quiz and a physical challenge — both well received. All presentation files, recordings, poll results and question/answer content were linked to the specific content on the agenda.

### **Polling**

The polling feature in Zoom Webinar was used as a means of audience interaction. Four presenters used polling to engage the audience, understand the audience’s background with a subject or solicit feedback on a given subject. Polls were used during “Update on TSCA Section 6 Implementation,” “Small Business Assistance in the COVID-19 and Virtual Age,” “Review of Annual Report Data,” and “NSBEAP Website Air Resources and Virtual Feedback Session.” During each day’s break, a trivia question related to the CAAA and a physical challenge were posted; attendees could answer the trivia question and indicate whether they had completed the challenge through the polling feature. Poll results can be found on the 2020 Annual Training webpage, listed with their respective sessions.

### **Questions and answers**

With the exception of the deputy administrator, all presenters accepted questions. Presenters were asked to leave five minutes for questions and were given a time cue by the primary moderator. Participants were allowed to ask questions in writing through the question-and-answer (Q&A) features. A dedicated moderator monitored the Q&A, answering some questions directly but reading most technical questions to the presenter to answer live. In some cases, if time did not allow for all questions to be answered live, written questions were provided to the speaker who then sent written responses. Q&A were archived by recording and via Zoom logs, then posted per session on the [Annual Training](#) agenda.

### **Recordings**

All sessions except the pre-event networking, NSC breakouts and state networking were recorded. Each session was recorded separately, uploaded to the PPI YouTube site and linked to the [Annual Training](#) agenda.

### **Archived records**

Since 2015, PPI has maintained [archived training records by year](#). Once details related to the 2021 Annual Training are determined, the 2020 Annual Training page will be archived accordingly.

### **Evaluation summary**

Attendees were asked to provide an evaluation of the event through a questionnaire created using Qualtrics. Links were sent out during the last day of training and the week after the training as a

reminder. Attendees had two weeks to respond and 66 responses were recorded. Below are summary highlights from the attached full report of evaluation responses:

- Respondents were evenly distributed among days attended, considering variations in registration and attendance counts (Tuesday: 61, Wednesday: 59, Thursday: 60, Friday: 53).
- Most respondents represented an SBEAP or SBO.
- On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being “poor” and 5 being “excellent,” the majority of respondents rated overall content of the training as “excellent.”
- On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being “not important” and 5 being “extremely important,” the majority of respondents rated the information presented as “extremely important” to their profession.
- When asked whether they were “very likely,” “somewhat likely” or “not likely” to make changes as a result of what they learned, the majority of respondents chose “somewhat likely.”
  - Most indicated they would use resources and training learned or seek to collaborate more with other programs.
- Respondents were asked to identify the three sessions they found most helpful. The most popular sessions were “Small Business Assistance in the COVID-19 and Virtual Age,” “U.S. EPA Office of Air Quality and Planning Standards Update and Learning Management System,” “Newcomers and Brief Overview of 507 Program” and “Outreach and Information Division Small Business Program - the Path Forward for a Sustainable Future.” Several people also mentioned they valued the networking opportunities.
- On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being “poor” and 5 being “excellent,” the majority of respondents rated use of technology to facilitate the event as “excellent.”
  - Several respondents commented they appreciated opportunities for engagement, especially Kahoot!, but there was also a desire for more interaction.
- On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being “poor” and 5 being “excellent,” the majority of respondents rated overall management of the event as “excellent.”
- Respondents were also asked for suggestions on improving the training. Common themes included the following:
  - More interaction and networking opportunities
  - More input from states and individual programs, and greater focus on problems different programs are facing; strategies and new projects being implemented;
  - More technical and compliance-oriented topics, particularly on conducting site visits and inspections

Attachment: Qualtrics evaluation results