Karen V. Brown Leadership Award

This award category offers an opportunity to showcase the accomplishments of **an individual from a SBEAP or SBO** who embodies the example set by the **first ASBO**, Karen V. Brown, in how they promote small business compliance assistance, sustainability, advocacy, and collaboration nationwide. This award honors their **long-term achievements** in leadership, innovation, education, dedication to environmental protection, and highlights their efforts to build strong local/state/federal partnerships for small business compliance assistance. Nominees must have **at least 15 years** with their SBEAP and cannot have received this award previously. Review the list of past award winners on the [promotion committee](https://nationalsbeap.org/committees/promotion) webpage before submitting a nomination.

*“While at EPA most were focused on big environmental problems associated with big businesses, I was delighted to help small businesses. You see, everything big starts out small. I believed that helping small business at the time meant preventing big problems later. Well, it was future-focused state leaders who made this belief a reality. I’m thrilled to recognize them though this award. Always remember that if we cannot do great big things, we can still do small things in a great way.”* ***-- Karen V Brown (12/17/2020)***

More details on Karen’s history and impact are at the bottom of this document. Achievements of previous KVB award winners are described in their press releases on the [2019](https://nationalsbeap.org/files/nationalsbeap/Annual_training/Awards/Karen%20V%20Brown%20Award%20press%20release%202019.pdf) and [2018](https://nationalsbeap.org/files/nationalsbeap/Annual_training/Awards/2018/Karen%20Brown%20Award%20press%20release%202018%20Tony%20Pendola.docx) Awards pages.

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| Please include the following contact information: | |
| Person submitting nomination: |  |
| Region: |  |
| City/State: |  |
| Phone: |  |
| Email: |  |
|  |  |
| Award Nominee: |  |
| Region: |  |
| Address: |  |
| Phone: |  |
| Email: |  |

**Nominations applications should be submitted by email to:** [Renee.Bashel@wisconsin.gov](mailto:Renee.Bashel@wisconsin.gov).

## Nomination Questions

Please provide a narrative description of your nomination using the following criteria as a guide (Limit 1,000 words)

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| 1) To what extent has the individual been involved with the National Steering Committee (NSC) and/or NSC subcommittees? Provide examples of how this involvement supported the NSC goals of strengthening partnerships, empowering programs, and building program credibility. (20 points) |
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| 2) In what ways has this individual embodied the example of Karen V. Brown and exhibited leadership qualities? Provide examples of how these qualities are evident in their role as a compliance assistance provider, mentor, and/or small business advocate. (20 points) |
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| 3) What are some unique activities, tools, resources, or partnerships the nominee has developed to assist small businesses and/or promote the SBEAP nationally? Provide examples. (10 points) |
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| 4) Please share any metrics measured related to these activities. These can include environmental impacts or social and behavioral changes. Explain how the metrics were measured. (Bonus 5 pts) |
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## Karen Brown Highlights

In 1985, Karen was appointed EPA Small Business Ombudsman by Administrator Lee Thomas, and three years later she was asked to take on additional duties as EPA's Asbestos Ombudsman. During the 1990’s, EPA's Small Business Ombudsman program continued to gain recognition under Karen's leadership. It was highlighted in Congressional testimony as one of the best outreach programs in federal government, profiled in the Wall Street Journal as an outstanding model of government working well for the people it serves (<https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB895604052391176000>), and described in Entrepreneur Magazine as a friend to the small business community (<https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/18482>). Excerpts from these articles are attached at the end of this form to give you additional insight into Karen’s efforts on behalf of the SBEAPs. Request full copies from [renee.bashel@wisconsin.gov](mailto:renee.bashel@wisconsin.gov) if interested.

*From Richard Rasmussen, former Virginia SBO*. “Karen was the ultimate Advocate. She positioned herself with the ability to access the entirety of government and did so on our behalf. [...] She had an uncanny ability to bring disparate forces together to wage war and win the battle. [...] She supported me in our effort to get access to OAQPS rule writers during the initial Area Source Rule development phase.”

*From Pam Christenson, former WI SBO/SBEAP and first NSC Chair*. “Karen was fierce; she fought hard for the creation and continuation of the 507 programs within EPA and beyond. The early years were really a battle for the programs.”

*From Audrey Graylin, former national SBEAP website contractor for ASBO*. “Karen was the consummate hard worker; inspirational to those who worked with her and for her. [...] Karen was authentic in her passion for the environment and small business and expected all those supporting her cause to meet and exceed her expectations. She was truly the core of small business environmental assistance.”

*From Annette Fulgenzi, former IL SBEAP and NSC Chair*. “[Karen] was thoughtful about what the programs needed and fought for us not only internally but externally to ensure the state SBEAPs had a seat at the table when decisions were being made that would impact small businesses. She knew the importance of in person meetings to build relationships among the programs and with those that are needed within USEPA and the business community for the programs to be successful.”

Wall Street Journal article ***“I’m From the Government...And I’m Here to Help. Really.”*** By John J. Fialka, May 21, 1998.

“Ms. Brown is [...] someone who understands how heavy the impact of new government regulations can be on a fragile enterprise that often lives from hand to mouth.”

“Carol M. Browner, the EPA’s Administrator, says the fact that calls to Ms. Brown’s office have increased fivefold while she has held the post of ombudsman ‘attests to her success. The service she performs is invaluable, both for us and for the small business community.’”