



News Release

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SBA Announces Key Agency Appointments

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Small Business Administration has announced the appointment of several members of the leadership and management team of Administrator Karen G. Mills.

“Small business is a key driver of economic recovery and the SBA has a vital role to play in helping them access the capital and resources they need to survive and prosper in these tough economic times,” Mills said. “I am pleased to make these appointments to our team of talented and dedicated public servants who are committed to the mission of the SBA and to ensuring that this agency is the partner small businesses need at this critical time.”

Recently appointed members of the team include:

Joseph Bastian is special assistant in the Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs covering the U.S. House of Representatives. Prior to this position Bastian was a legislative assistant, correspondent and staff assistant for Congresswoman Corrine Brown, and a field organizer for the Barack Obama Campaign for Change, and the Florida Democratic Party Get Out The Vote campaign. Bastian holds a B.A. in public management from Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University.

William Bittinger is special assistant in the Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs covering the U.S. Senate. Previously, Bittinger had served as regional field director in Cleveland, Ohio on Barack Obama’s Campaign for Change, a field organizer for Obama for America, and nominations clerk for the Senate Judiciary Committee on Senator Patrick Leahy’s staff. Bittinger holds a B.A. in Modern European History from Brown University.

Nicholas Coutsos is deputy associate administrator for the Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs. Prior to this position Coutsos served as counsel to the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship. Before working for former Chairman John Kerry and current Chair Mary Landrieu, he was an attorney in the business counsel practice group of Miller Johnson in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Coutsos holds a J. D. from the University of Notre Dame Law School and a B.A. from Kalamazoo College.

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Jess Knox is associate administrator for the Office of Field Operations. Prior to this position Knox was a director on the Presidential Inaugural Committee. Before joining SBA, Knox worked in government and public policy for more than a decade. He was special assistant to the Maine Speaker of the House, and served as the Speaker's Legislative and Political Director. He worked on Protect Colorado's Future, and served as deputy national political director for the John Edwards for President Campaign and field director for the 2004 West Virginia Kerry-Edwards campaign. Knox holds a J. D. from the University of Maine School of Law, and a B.A. in politics and government from Ohio Wesleyan University.

Hayley Matz is press secretary for the Office of Communications and Public Liaison. Matz most recently served on Capitol Hill as the press secretary and acting communications director for the Congressional Joint Economic Committee. Prior to that she worked as a media events planner for Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, and as deputy communications director for the McCaskill for U.S. Senate campaign in Missouri. Her background includes working as a law clerk for the U.S. District Court in South Dakota, and also as a deputy resource liaison for the United Nations World Food Program. She holds a J.D. from The Pennsylvania State University and a B.A. in Spanish from Tulane University.

Nathan Osburn is senior speechwriter for the Office of Communications and Public Liaison. He worked as a state-level communications director for Obama for America and most recently was executive communications officer at the University of California, Davis Health System in Sacramento, responsible for speechwriting and communications strategy for medical school deans and hospital executives. Before that, Osburn was a Washington, D.C.-based speechwriter at the American Medical Association and, prior to that, the Federal Aviation Administration. Osburn holds a master's degree in journalism from the University of Missouri and a bachelor's in public relations from the University of Oklahoma.

Valerie Villarreal is a special assistant in the Office of Capital Access. Prior to this position, Villarreal was a management consultant at McKinsey and Company. She also served on the Obama-Biden Presidential Transition Team, working on agency review for the Department of Commerce and the Federal Communications Commission. She previously held financial and research analyst positions at Deutsche Bank as well as several non-profit community development organizations in New York City. She holds a B.A. in Political Science from Stanford University.

Joe Zepecki is deputy associate administrator for the Office of Communications and Public Liaison. Zepecki most recently served as campaign manager for Scott Kleeb's U.S. Senate campaign in Nebraska after working on the Dodd for President Campaign in Iowa and Nevada. His experience also includes work as senior associate for 360JMG, LLC, a strategic communications firm based in Washington, D.C. At 360JMG, Zepecki worked with a broad portfolio of clients to provide advertising, marketing and public relations services in addition to his management of the firm's political direct mail operation. Zepecki holds a M.A. in Political Management from George Washington University and a B.A. in Political Science from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

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