

Karen G. Mills

Karen Gordon Mills was sworn in April 6, 2009, as the 23rd Administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration. She leads a team of more than 2,000 employees whose mission is to help entrepreneurs and small business owners grow and create jobs by providing greater access to capital, counseling, and federal contracting opportunities. The SBA also provides loans to business owners, homeowners and renters affected by disaster.

Mills earned an A.B. in economics from Harvard University and an M.B.A. from Harvard Business School where she was a Baker Scholar. Since then, her career has involved counseling, managing, mentoring, and investing in businesses of all sizes across a number of U.S. states.

During the recession of the early 1990s, Mills helped several small manufacturers increase efficiency in order to improve their competitiveness and ultimately survive the downturn. This included producers of hardwood flooring, refrigerator motor manufacturers, plastic injection molding companies, and more. More recently, she worked in management consulting for businesses in sectors such as consumer products, food, textiles, and industrial components.

In 2007, she was appointed by Maine Gov. John Baldacci as chair of the state's Council on Competitiveness and the Economy, where she focused on attracting investment in rural and regional development initiatives. She also served on the Governor's Council for the Redevelopment of the Brunswick Naval Air Station.

She is a leading voice for American competitiveness and an expert on new approaches to business growth such as "regional innovation clusters." Before becoming Administrator, she worked to form a cluster of boatbuilders in Maine, helping them compete around the world by leveraging composite technologies at a local university.

Already, at the SBA, Mills' has helped strengthen SBA lending, increase small business' share of federal contracts, and reinvigorate the SBA's network of about 14,000 affiliated counselors.

She has also served as a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and has been vice chairman of the Harvard Overseers.

Mills and her husband, Barry Mills, president of Bowdoin College, live in Brunswick, Maine. They have three sons.