



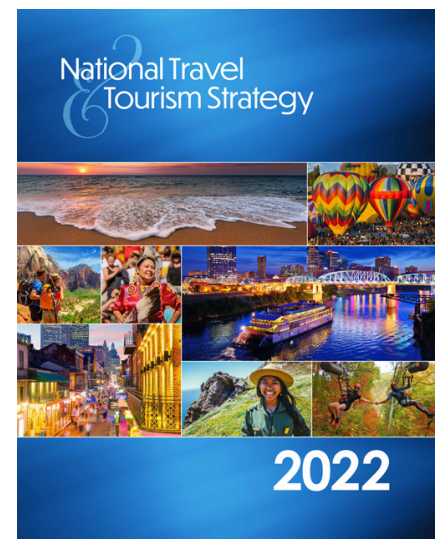
National Travel and Tourism Strategy

Year Two Successes

Travel and tourism is a critical driver of economic growth and employment in the United States. In 2022, travel and tourism supported:

- **9.5 Million American Jobs**
- **\$2.3 Trillion in Economic Impact**

To strengthen our nation’s global competitiveness in travel and tourism and create a more equitable, resilient, and sustainable travel and tourism industry, the U.S. Government continues to advance these priorities through key initiatives under the National Travel and Tourism Strategy.



Released in June 2022 by Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo on behalf of the Tourism Policy Council (TPC); the Strategy focuses federal efforts, in partnership with the private sector, on actions under four pillars:

- Pillar 1: Promoting the United States as a Travel Destination
- Pillar 2: Facilitating Travel To and Within the United States
- Pillar 3: Ensuring Diverse, Inclusive, and Accessible Tourism Experiences
- Pillar 4: Fostering Resilient and Sustainable Travel and Tourism

The Strategy set an overarching goal to achieve by 2027:

- **90 Million International Visitors**
- **\$279 Billion Annual Spending**

Good News!

We are on track to welcome 91 million international visitors by 2026, exceeding the visitation goal one year early.

In recognition of the second anniversary of the Strategy, the following are some of the many initiatives led by federal departments and agencies under the four pillars in year two:

➤ Pillar 1: Promoting the United States as a Travel Destination

On Track to Exceed Strategy Visitation Goal Early: Data from the U.S. Department of Commerce's (Commerce) National Travel and Tourism Office (NTTO) show that international visitation to the United States was 67 million in 2023, and spending by these visitors was over \$213 billion. NTTO's forecast for international travel released in February 2024 estimates that the United States will welcome 91 million international visitors by 2026, exceeding the visitation goal one year early.

Improving Travel Data to Help Stakeholders Make More Informed Market Decisions: NTTO has expanded the Survey of International Air Travelers by increasing its ability to measure the number of states and cities visited by international visitors and by increasing the frequency of reporting from annual to quarterly. NTTO also rolled out new innovative data visualization tools to facilitate the use of travel statistics by stakeholders.

Driving Visitation to the United States from Top Markets: Commerce (NTTO and U.S. & Foreign Commercial Service), in collaboration with the U.S. Department of State (State), continues efforts at U.S. embassies to coordinate U.S. Government efforts to promote travel to the United States. To date, 21 embassies in key markets are actively working under strategic Tourism Country Plans.

Increasing Visitation from Japan: The U.S. and Japanese governments declared 2024 the "U.S.-Japan Tourism Year." Japan was the second-largest source of overseas travelers to the United States before the pandemic, but visitation has only rebounded to 40.5 percent of 2019 levels. The Tourism Year aims to accelerate recovery in this key market by encouraging more travel between Japan and the United States.

Re-Engaging with Key Market China: Commerce (NTTO and U.S. & Foreign Commercial Service) is working with Brand USA to recover travel and tourism from China to the United States. The return to the 2019 level of Chinese visitors would contribute over \$30 billion to the U.S. economy and create 50,000 direct American jobs. If indirect jobs and students studying in the United States are included, this number would reach 400,000 jobs. In May, Commerce, Brand USA, and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the People's Republic of China held the 14th China-U.S. Leadership Summit (Summit). The Summit brought together travel and tourism sector leaders to rebuild critical stakeholder relationships and grow the recovery of two-way travel.

➤ Pillar 2: Facilitating Travel to and Within the United States

Enhancing Secure Travel and the Travel Experience: The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Customs and Border Protection (CBP) has expanded biometric exit through public-private partnerships with airlines, airports, and cruise lines to enhance security and the travel experience. CBP has biometric exit at 50 airports and facial biometric debarkation at 21 seaports, a process that decreased the debarkation time by 30 percent. To date, CBP processed 519 million travelers through facial biometrics at all air, land, and seaports of entry. CBP also received a record 3.2 million Global Entry applications during FY 2023 and is currently on pace to receive around 4 million applications during FY 2024. There are currently 13.5 million travelers with Global Entry benefits, a growth of 1.3 million since October 1, 2024.

Facilitating Travel by Issuing Record Number of Visas: From October 2022 through September 2023 (the 2023 federal fiscal year), State issued a near record level of nonimmigrant visas - more than 10.4 million globally. This represents 20 percent more visas than in 2019. Half of our U.S. embassies and consulates adjudicated more nonimmigrant visas than ever before. The top four issuing Missions - Mexico, India, Brazil, and Colombia - processed over 5 million applications in FY 2023.

Piloting Domestic Renewals of H-1B Visas: In 2024, State launched a limited pilot for domestic renewal of H-1B work visas. More than 6,000 H-1B workers participated, representing more than 2,400 companies with U.S. offices. Domestic renewals eliminate the need for eligible applicants to travel abroad to renew their visas, opening thousands of interview appointments overseas.

Expanding Visa Waiver Authority: State, in coordination with DHS, expanded its ability to waive in-person interviews for eligible nonimmigrant visa applicants renewing or who previously were issued certain visas. Consular officers' use of this authority safeguards national security as it expands interview appointment availability overseas and decreases wait times.

Innovating the Issuance of Visas: State's Remote Processing Division (RPD) supports U.S. consular sections overseas by remotely adjudicating nonimmigrant visa applications under current interview waiver authorities. This support maximizes global visa processing capacity and increases appointment availability overseas, allowing consular sections to focus on applicants who must come in for an interview. Largely due to the support of the RPD, Mission Mexico's interview wait time was reduced from 565 days in February 2022 to 42 days in May 2024.

Supporting Travel and Tourism Infrastructure: The Department of Transportation (DOT) released its updated National Travel and Tourism Infrastructure Strategic Plan (NTTISP) in April 2024. The NTTISP supports the implementation of the Strategy through infrastructure investments that are informed by an emphasis on climate, sustainability, equity, economic strength, and global competitiveness.



› Pillar 3: Ensuring Diverse, Inclusive, and Accessible Tourism Experiences

Supporting Communities in Recovery: Commerce's Economic Development Administration invested \$750 million in American Rescue Plan funding to support travel, tourism, and outdoor recreation communities whose economies were hard hit by the pandemic. With \$240 million in competitive funding, which is expected to generate \$1.1 billion in private investment and create or save 10,291 jobs. More than 50 percent of these awards are expected to directly benefit historically underserved communities and populations. Activities include workforce training, new construction or upgrades to existing tourism infrastructure, tourism marketing and promotion, and tourism-related economic planning.

Expanding Accessibility for Airline Passengers: DOT proposed a rule requiring airlines to meet new standards for prompt, safe, and dignified assistance for passengers with disabilities, including mandating enhanced training for airline employees and contractors who physically assist passengers and handle wheelchairs. This rule will hold airlines accountable if there is damage or delay of the return of a wheelchair by making it an automatic violation of the Air Carrier Access Act.

Forging New Partnerships to Increase Diverse Tourism: Aiming to extend the benefits of travel and tourism to underserved communities across the United States, the International Trade Administration (ITA) signed a new Strategic Partnership with Travel Unity, a non-profit focused on increasing diversity in the travel and tourism sector through individual and community empowerment. ITA also renewed a Strategic Partnership with the American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association (AIANTA), which serves as a united voice for the Native hospitality sector. Through these partnerships and future ones being explored, ITA will support events, webinars, outreach, and training for these businesses as part of a shared mission to support diverse, inclusive, and accessible tourism experiences.

› Pillar 4: Fostering Resilient and Sustainable Travel and Tourism

Fostering Sustainable Travel: The Biden-Harris Administration announced new commitments to boost access to electric vehicles (EVs), save taxpayer dollars, and tackle the climate crisis. These efforts include new Federal employee travel guidelines that direct the use of sustainable transportation, when feasible, for official and local travel. The guidelines prioritize the use of EVs, rail travel, and public transit. In addition, the Joint Office of Energy and Transportation provides technical assistance for the National EV Infrastructure Formula Program and the Charging and Fueling Infrastructure Discretionary Grant Program to enable the strategic deployment of EV charging infrastructure and establish an interconnected network across the nation.

Investing in America's National Parks: The U.S. Department of the Interior announced a \$195 million investment in climate restoration and resilience projects to protect America's national parks. This funding will be used across the United States to prepare for the impacts of climate change, protect species, restore ecosystems, facilitate outdoor recreation and tourism, and invest in conservation jobs, while also supporting small and rural communities, bringing investments and jobs to local economies.

Researching the Impacts of Sea-level Rise: Through the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Tourism Working Group, NTTO led an APEC-funded project on Assessing the Impact of Rising Sea Levels on Travel and Tourism in APEC Economies. The project researched the impact on the tourism sector of sea level rise in APEC economies, particularly as related to small and medium sized enterprises. The final report compiled existing research on sea level rise; surveys and data from APEC economies on how their tourism industries are being affected; and specific economy case studies that highlight best practices on topics such as adaptation and resiliency.

Investing in Sustainable Ecosystems: The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) announced it will invest \$50 million in funding from the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) to strengthen climate resilience and enhance equitable access to benefits of NOAA's National Marine Sanctuary System. The funding will support facilities improvements, inclusive access to visitor experiences, and public education to advance awareness, understanding and appreciation of marine ecosystems and conservation efforts. National marine sanctuaries safeguard diverse marine ecosystems and also support the local economy through tourism. NOAA is also investing \$30 million in IRA funding for national marine sanctuary designations to help further the goals of America the Beautiful and provide additional places for sustainable recreation and tourism.

For more information on the Strategy, please visit trade.gov/national-travel-and-tourism-office.

