

U.S. Travel's unique mission is to increase travel to and within the United States.

We pursue this mission by establishing travel as essential and responsible, advancing seamless and secure travel, shaping solutions to operational challenges and building a strong business. By engaging with U.S. Travel, our members shape a thriving and sustainable travel experience.

Accomplishments against priority areas through December 2023 are noted in red.

ESTABLISH TRAVEL AS ESSENTIAL AND RESPONSIBLE

The travel industry supports **20+ million American jobs** and is a **critical component to the economic vitality of every community in the United States**. Leisure, business transient, group and international inbound travel each have a story to tell, and **it is U.S. Travel's opportunity to bring these stories to life**. Our 2023 priorities to establish travel as essential include:

- **Update all impact research to educate federal policymakers** on the economic, societal and diplomatic benefits to communities across the country
 - Released and highlighted 2022 national, state and district [economic impact data](#) during 200+ Congressional meetings at [Destination Capitol Hill](#).
 - Created and shared new [“State of the Travel Industry”](#) report outlining travel's impact across key economic drivers with policymakers, membership and media.
 - Communicated economic impact data during [National Travel and Tourism Week](#), which resulted in amplification from 130 elected leaders, 30 million impressions and more than 2,000 media mentions.
 - Launched new quarterly “Travel Outlook” media roundtable that leverages fresh [consumer insight data](#) developed in partnership with IPSOS and JD Power. The roundtables attracted more than 100 news reporters to put attention on policy priorities, including the FAA reauthorization, travel's economic impact and consumer trends.
 - Enhanced [TravelPAC's](#) impact with strategic support for congressional travel champions and coordinated ongoing efforts to collaborate with industry partners and allies, thanks to the industry's support in reaching our fundraising goal of \$500K across the TravelPAC and advocacy fund.
 - Shared a new analysis on the impact of a government shutdown on the U.S. travel industry, which we leveraged in lobbying and advocacy messaging.
- **Reimagine the Travel Works program** and launch broad grassroots engagement to amplify the importance of the travel industry to local economies.
 - Expanded the [Travel Works program](#), creating new opportunities to deepen engagement with elected officials alongside U.S. Travel members and industry partners while broadening messaging reach across the country.
 - Re-launched [Travel Works](#) with stops in [Washington, DC](#), [Baltimore, MD](#), [Alexandria, VA](#), [Savannah, GA](#), [Detroit, MI](#), and [North Muskegon, MI](#).
 - Launched a new Travel Works website to highlight the campaign stops across the country—increasing messaging around the essential nature of the industry and its role as the backbone of America's economy.
 - Expanded [media engagement](#) in local and national markets to spotlight the Travel Works campaign resulting in nearly 40 broadcast and/or online media mentions reaching a possible 1M readers/viewers.
- **Highlight the commitments** and specific activities the travel industry is pursuing to enhance the sustainability of the travel experience.
 - Launched the [Journey to Clean](#) initiative—highlighting sustainability practices and commitments from more than 50 organizations across the travel experience—which is highlighted regularly via industry communications efforts.
 - Developed industry sustainability objectives and priorities, with guidance from the [Sustainable Travel Coalition](#).
 - Collaborated with the National Travel and Tourism Office (NTTO) at the Department of Commerce to ensure awareness and alignment between the government's national travel and tourism strategy and the Sustainable Travel Coalition's policy priorities.
 - Generated attention on the industry's sustainability initiatives and challenges at the [2023 Future of Travel Mobility](#) conference.

- Worked to protect sustainable travel policy priorities from legislative threats.
- **Establish the importance of transient and group business travel**—and increasing “bleisure” travel—in a post pandemic environment.
 - Executed record-breaking [Global Meetings Industry Day](#)—resulting in activity from 35 countries, reaching 10 million people and garnering nearly 400 media mentions, including a nationwide radio tour featuring Meetings Mean Business Coalition co-chairs.
 - Shared insights from quarterly [Business Travel Tracker](#), highlighting trends in business travel and the pace of recovery with industry, government and media.
 - Advocated for the Biden administration to [issue government-wide policy](#) to return to office, resulting in a White House [memo](#) encouraging federal departments to develop return-to-office strategies.
- **Shape implementation of the new Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Travel and Tourism** to streamline government processes and elevate industry priorities.
 - Worked with Congressional champions to [press for language](#) in FY24 appropriations that enables and encourages the Commerce Department to fill the position of the Assistant Secretary for Travel and Tourism.
 - Utilized the collective voice of the industry during Destination Capitol Hill to amplify advocacy efforts on the Assistant Secretary.
 - Facilitated Congressional and White House consideration of qualified candidates for the Assistant Secretary position.

ADVANCE SEAMLESS AND SECURE TRAVEL

Because travel is essential, **we must establish increasing travel as a priority for policymakers and business leaders alike.** Removing frictions in the travel experience will drive growth in each travel category. Our 2023 priorities to advance seamless and secure travel include:

- **Eliminate staggering visitor visa delays** in top source markets across the globe.
 - Launched advocacy campaign—“[They Wait, We Lose](#)”—spotlighting personal stories on the impact of visa delays across the globe, garnering national and international media attention and a possible 15M readers/viewers.
 - Completed an analysis in partnership with Euromonitor to assess how the U.S. travel experience and government leadership compares to our top global competitors.
 - Worked with Congressional champions in the Senate to develop the Visa Processing Improvement Act (S.2632), bipartisan legislation designed to reduce excessive interview wait times for visitor visas. Currently working on companion legislation to be introduced in the House.
 - Pressed the Biden administration to extend the existing interview waiver authority for low-risk visa renewals through 2024.
 - Engaged in grassroots activations and organized U.S. mayors to sign on to [letters](#) and local op-eds urging the administration to implement visa processing reforms.
 - Quantified [economic losses](#) associated with visa delays and promoted them in media and throughout government.
 - Regularly [engaged](#) with senior State Department officials to urge policy actions, including setting wait time goals, addressing staffing shortages and establishing an expedited process for travelers going to large international conventions and events in the U.S. (effectively in progress).
 - Ramped up [media appearances](#) to highlight the harm of excessive visa delays on the U.S. economy, resulting in 550+ media mentions across broadcast, print and online news outlets.
- **Make the air travel experience more reliable** through the 2023 FAA reauthorization process with a focus on staffing, next generation technology, security, infrastructure and sustainability.
 - Collaborated with airlines, airports and vertical associations to develop and advocate for [FAA reauthorization policies](#) that increase investment in aviation technology and infrastructure, improve U.S. airports and address workforce shortages.
 - Advocated for the [industry’s FAA policy agenda](#) during Destination Capitol Hill, through direct lobbying and in national media appearances.
 - Secured several priorities in [House FAA reauthorization bill](#), including additional funding flexibility for airports, hiring more air traffic controllers and investing in air traffic control technologies.

- Optimized [media appearances](#) with U.S. Travel leadership and industry executives to highlight inefficiencies in the air travel system and call for reforms.
- Continued to [leverage](#) timely consumer insights on travel pain points and the economic costs of travel hassles in the media to urge Congressional action.

Continue to press the Senate to act on their stalled FAA reauthorization while highlighting the negative implications for the entire travel ecosystem if a long-term reauthorization is not passed by Congress.

- **Develop traveler experience expertise** through research and data analysis to focus our advocacy on the most meaningful solutions and better inform policymakers and industry.
 - Leveraged consumer insights [survey tools](#) in partnership with Ipsos and JD Power to regularly track traveler pain points and motivations, sharing key findings with membership, policymakers and media. Research survey data attracted 400+ mentions reaching a possible 14M readers/viewers this year.
- **Engage industry, security and facilitation experts** to reimagine the air travel experience.
 - Engaged with former Acting Secretary of Homeland Security, Kevin McAleenan, and his firm Pangiam to lead the creation of an external commission of nationally renowned aviation and security experts. The commission will seek to develop a 10-year vision for seamless and secure travel, create policy recommendations and an craft advocacy plan to execute the vision.
 - Executed a Future of Travel Mobility conference in November that elevated U.S. Travel's thought leadership and engaged more than 30 expert speakers and federal policymakers on critical issues, including to transportation, mobility, emerging tech, sustainability, and evolving the travel experience.
- **Develop a gameplan** to ensure that billions of dollars in infrastructure funding are **targeted at the greatest areas of need within the travel experience**.
 - Maintained member-only [Federal Resources Guide](#) to help travel stakeholders gain access to the range of federal programs shaped by U.S. Travel's advocacy efforts, like the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.
 - Led two member-facing webinars (Federal Funds Available for Travel and Plug Into EV Charging Funding Opportunities) highlighting several funding programs and resources available to industry stakeholders, with insight from federal officials administering the programs.
 - As a result of U.S. Travel's policy victories in the bipartisan infrastructure law, nearly \$500 million in project funding has been awarded this year by the U.S. Department of Transportation to 32 transportation projects that support increased travel and tourism.

SHAPE SOLUTIONS TO OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES

As we increase travel, **the industry must possess the resources to effectively and responsibly manage demand**. While these issues—including workforce, sustainability, inclusivity and emergency preparedness—are bigger than any one industry, U.S. Travel will shape solutions favorable to travel. Our 2023 priorities include:

- **Expand and modify the H2B program and develop a targeted immigration program for travel industry**, support policy solutions to remedy the pilot shortage and provide forums to educate the industry on workforce related topics.
 - Elevated U.S. Travel's membership level on the H-2B coalition to help lead advocacy efforts related to the expansion of the H-2B visa program.
 - Engaged with a bipartisan group of lawmakers to promote measures designed to provide H-2B cap relief—including language in FY24 appropriations and continuing resolutions that temporarily increased the amount of available H-2B visas in FY24 from 66,000 to 130,716.
 - Highlighted the need to increase the annual H-2B cap in [media engagements](#) garnering nearly 30 mentions in outlets reaching a possible 16M readers/viewers.
- **Assess the industry's pandemic response and create a strategy to best position the industry** for future public health challenges and other emergency situations.
- **Convene industry to determine strategy and positioning** on issues related to over-tourism, industry footprint.

BUILD A STRONG BUSINESS: ENGAGEMENT, TEAM, CULTURE

Building a strong business—including bolstering resources, engagement, talent and culture—are prerequisites to achieving our external priorities. Our 2023 priorities to build a strong business include:

- Completed a comprehensive member audit as part of a new multi-stage, multi-year project to build a membership strategy that delivers greater value and equitable dues to every organization.
- **Launch member-populated subject matter expert advisory boards** in the areas of international inbound, group and transient business travel to identify challenges/opportunities and prioritize activities to increase travel within each segment.
 - Convened members to discuss challenges facing international inbound travel and group travel.
- **Continue to drive IPW's recovery and develop five-year strategic plan**, including assessing opportunities to expand beyond the international travel segment.
 - Returned our signature IPW event to pre-pandemic attendance levels including exhibitors, international buyers and media.
 - Streamlined the exhibitor experience by simplifying booth pricing and the registration process.
- **Address necessary internal capabilities and build organizational structure** to establish U.S. Travel as issue expert, value-diversified and uniquely capable at advancing the industry's agenda.
 - Implemented significant organization restructure to make our organization more nimble, innovative, focused and collaborative.
- **Seek opportunities to expand the value provided to members** in the areas of events, research and education.
 - Developed new [U.S. Travel Summer Summit](#) conference format and approach—enhancing engagement opportunities by providing unique and rich content, elevating the overall experience and reimagining how our members convene.
 - Initiated bi-monthly CEO and Board communication, focusing on key activities and progress against our priorities.
 - Continued to enhance research offerings through newsletter communication, a new [webinar series](#) and enhancements to our member-only [dashboard](#), with input and guidance from member groups.
 - Executed a sold-out [ESTO](#), welcoming more than 1,000 delegates to Savannah, GA.
 - Held more than 25 member meetings for groups like the [Research](#) and [Communications](#) Advisory Committees, National Council of State Tourism Directors, Meetings Mean Business Coalition and others throughout the year, fostering opportunities to learn from each other and network.
 - Transitioned board meetings to a new board briefing format, pairing these engagement opportunities in the Spring and Fall with signature U.S. Travel events.