

BRAND USA TALKING POINTS



The following messages can be tailored for the media, business leaders and elected officials. The messages are designed to demonstrate the impact Brand USA has on U.S. jobs and the economy, felt by communities nationwide.

Recommendation: Supplement the talking points below with real stories from real people collected by your organization from industry and business professionals that benefit from Brand USA, as well as use local facts and figures that speak to the impact of international tourism in your community.

BRAND USA HELPS THE U.S. ECONOMY GROW

Brand USA's contributions to the U.S. economy and American jobs has grown incrementally over the past five years, with among the **highest returns in 2017**.

Last year alone, Brand USA returned \$29 in visitor spending for each \$1 spent on its marketing activities. This resulted in:

- 54,000 incremental jobs
- \$8.5 billion economic impact
- 1.16 million additional visitors
- \$3.9 million incremental spend

Since 2013, the Brand USA has been responsible for:

- Nearly 51,000 incremental jobs supported, on average, each year
- \$38.4 billion total economic impact
- 5.4 million additional visitors
- \$17.7 billion incremental spend
- \$5 billion in federal, state and local tax revenue
- Returning an average of \$27 in visitor spending for each \$1 on its marketing activities

BRAND USA BENEFITS U.S. TAXPAYERS WITHOUT COSTING THEM A SINGLE DOLLAR

Brand USA's budget is entirely funded by the private sector and by a small fee collected from foreign visitors to the United States who participate in the highly selective and secure Visa Waiver Program.

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INTERNATIONAL VISITORS ARE GOOD FOR AMERICAN WORKERS, BUSINESSES AND COMMUNITIES

- International travel to the United States, America's number one services export, generated a trade surplus of \$77 billion in 2017.
- International travel spending directly supported about 1.2 million U.S. jobs and \$33.7 billion in wages.
- International visitors stimulate local communities' economies by staying in area hotels, eating in local restaurants, shopping in neighborhood stores, and patronizing regional attractions.
- On average, overseas visitors spend nearly approximately \$4,360 per trip.

BRAND USA IS ESSENTIAL TO AMERICAN COMPETITIVENESS.

- Every country in the world with which the United States fiercely competes for hundreds of billions in annual travel spending has a government function similar to Brand USA.
- To remain competitive, we must continue to promote the U.S. with a collective voice that is supported by the federal government.
- With the U.S. dollar once again gaining strength since mid-April (in key summer travel booking months), international visitation remains under pressure in 2018.
- Without Brand USA, the United States would have received 1.2 million fewer visitors in 2017, reducing its share of the global travel market, according to Oxford Economics.

BRAND USA IS AN EXAMPLE OF A PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP THAT TRULY WORKS.

Brand USA is proof that public-private partnerships, like those promoted by the Trump administration and U.S. Congress, can be effective.

Rather than create a new government agency or program, Congress set up Brand USA as a nonprofit chartered by the government, but funded by the private sector and \$10 of a fee paid once every two years by visitors from Visa Waiver Program countries.

Among the advantages of this public-private structure:

- Brand USA can only tap its foreign-traveler funding if it secures a match from the private sector—thus creating a strong incentive for the travel industry to put “skin in the game.”
- Brand USA campaigns are designed and approved by the private sector's best experts at marketing travel.
- Brand USA remains accountable to congressional oversight and public scrutiny, ensuring it sticks to its sole mission of promoting the entire United States and clearly communicating the evolving U.S. visa and entry policies to visitors.

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BRAND USA ENHANCES NATIONAL SECURITY

- An important part of Brand USA's official mission is explaining U.S. visa and entry policies to foreign visitors, making it a key partner to federal national security agencies.
- One such example of Brand USA's federally mandated explanation of entry policies is the Visa Waiver Program, a Department of Homeland Security program that is highly regarded for intelligence-sharing. The Visa Waiver Program, which collects the same ESTA fee that funds Brand USA, allows international travelers to visit the United States without a visa if they meet certain requirements.
- The Visa Waiver Program, combined with Brand USA's marketing efforts, are critical to enhancing our country's national security.

BRAND USA NEEDS TO BE REAUTHORIZED

- The current authorization of Brand USA runs through fiscal year 2020 but future funding for the program is at risk.
- In early 2018, Congress diverted the traveler fees used by Brand USA to the general Treasury leaving Brand USA without a dedicated funding source after 2020.
- These fees are crucial to Brand USA's success and enable the program to operate without any U.S. federal taxpayer dollars.
- The uncertainty created by the de-coupling of Brand USA from the traveler fee puts at risk the strong private-public model which has helped it succeed.
- Brand USA's partners engage in long-term strategic planning, and partners need to have certainty that Brand USA has a reliable federal funding source to match its private-sector contributions.
- The travel industry calls on Congress to reauthorize Brand USA and ensure ESTA fees remain its funding source for years to come.

**THE U.S. TRAVEL INDUSTRY CALLS ON CONGRESS TO
REAUTHORIZE BRAND USA AND ENSURE ESTA FEES
REMAIN ITS FUNDING SOURCE FOR YEARS TO COME.**