

BRAND USA: BACKGROUND PROGRAM AND FUNDING DOCUMENT



ABOUT BRAND USA

- Brand USA is a public-private partnership established by the U.S. Congress to promote and market the United States as a destination to international travelers.
- Created in 2010, half of Brand USA's budget comes from private sector contributions. Those funds are matched up to \$100 million by the federal government from a \$14 fee, the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) program fee collected once every two years on travelers visiting the U.S. from Visa Waiver Program countries—\$10 of which contributes to Brand USA funding. **No federal taxpayer dollars fund Brand USA.**
- Through a variety of partnerships with more than 800 organizations across the U.S., Brand USA's programs market U.S. destinations small and large, rural and urban in over 40 countries around the world.
- Brand USA is also charged by Congress with helping the U.S. government explain evolving entry and visa requirements to foreign visitors, thereby supporting U.S. homeland security.
- Brand USA has been an undeniable success. In 2017, Brand USA returned \$29 in visitor spending for each \$1 spent on its marketing activities, according to independent economists. Last year alone, Brand USA supported 54,000 jobs and generated \$8.5 billion to the U.S. economy.
- Since 2013, Brand USA has supported more than 51,000 jobs a year, and generated a total of \$38 billion to the U.S. economy.

BRAND USA'S FUNDING STATUS

- The current authorization of Brand USA runs through fiscal year 2020.
- However, Congress recently extended the ESTA fee through 2027 to pay for general government programs, leaving Brand USA without a dedicated funding source after 2020.
- ESTA 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 ESTA 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 U.S. TRAVEL INDUSTRY CALLS ON CONGRESS TO REAUTHORIZE BRAND USA AND ENSURE ESTA FEES REMAIN ITS FUNDING SOURCE FOR YEARS TO COME.

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