

## Update to U.S. Passport Processing – Significant Delays Expected Due to Post-Pandemic Demand

Article By:

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The U.S. Department of State (“DOS”) has recently cited “unprecedented demand” for passport processing and, in a recent [press release](#), announced that it is receiving over 500,000 applications for passports every week, causing significant delays in all passport processing. According to published [processing times](#), as of late March 2023, routine service is currently approximately 10 – 13 weeks, and expedited service is approximately 7 – 9 weeks from the date an application is received at the passport office. These processing times do not include delivery times, which can add an additional 2 weeks due to delayed mail delivery. Applicants should be advised that processing times can change without notice.

The DOS is encouraging people to check their passport expiration dates and future travel dates and to [apply early](#). The DOS has been dealing with significant backlogs since 2020, when passport offices nationwide were closed, followed by limited phased re-openings starting in late 2020. This caused a backlog of millions of applications. With the upcoming summer travel season, the DOS anticipates additional delays and an increased backlog. The agency processed nearly 22 million passports in 2022 and is on track to exceed that number this year, according to Rachel Arndt, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Passport Services.

The DOS has committed to doing what it can to manage processing times — it said it is “aggressively recruiting and hiring across our passport agencies and centers” and has already had its team members “contribute tens of thousands of hours of overtime a month to issue the millions of passports sought by traveling Americans.” The DOS has also opened a satellite office to help process “the large number of applications” it is receiving.

On January 9, 2023, we posted an article on a [Pilot Program](#) for online passport renewals. However, in March 2023, the State Department paused the rollout of the online application system due to technical issues with the system. Most applications submitted through the online system are still pending with the passport office.

Applicants can [track](#) the status of a submitted application online. In addition, applicants with a pending application who need to travel urgently may call the National Passport office for assistance at 1-877-487-2778.

*Authored by Colleen DiNicola*

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