

Report on the US Department of State's FY 2023 Visa Operations

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On Nov. 28, 2023, the U.S. Department of State (DOS) released a press release highlighting its visa operations achievements in the federal fiscal year 2023 (FY 2023) from October 2022 through September 2023. During FY 2023, DOS issued more than 10.4 million nonimmigrant visas globally and half of U.S. embassies and consulates adjudicated more nonimmigrant visas than ever before, indicating not only a return to pre-pandemic visa processing volume, but also near record levels for a handful of noteworthy nonimmigrant visa categories.

Below is a summary of DOS visa operations and achievements during FY 2023:

- Issued **nearly eight million visitor visas for business and tourism** (B1/B2 visas), the highest number of B1/B2 visas issued since FY 2016.
- Adjudicated the highest number of student visas (F-1 visas) since FY 2017, with a total of over **600,000 student visas**; DOS embassy and consulates in India issued a **record of more than 140,000 student visas**; DOS issued **nearly 40,000 student visas to African students**, with nearly 10,000 visas

issued to students from Nigeria.

- Helped address the shortage of U.S. workers in agriculture and other sectors needing seasonal or temporary workers by issuing an **all-time high 442,000 visas to temporary and seasonal workers**.
- **Issued 590,000 nonimmigrant visas to highly skilled workers and executives** to work alongside American experts, especially in some of the United States' most critical fields, including artificial intelligence and health care.
- Processed and issued roughly **365,000 nonimmigrant visas to airline and shipping crew members** to provide essential services for maintaining global transportation and supply chains that support the U.S. and global economies.

According to DOS, “these achievements were possible because of innovative solutions, such as expanding **interview waiver** authorities that allow frequent travelers who meet strict national security standards to renew their visas without having to visit an embassy or consulate.” Moreover, DOS is actively exploring new technologies and processes to streamline operations, including the option of **domestic visa renewals** in select visa categories.

With its historic fiscal year and plans for continued improvements in visa processing efficiency, DOS visa operations could have a profound impact on the U.S. economy given that international visitors contribute roughly \$239 billion in annual spending to the U.S. economy and support an estimated 9.5 million American jobs.

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