



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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State Department Processing Visas at Record Pace: More Visitors from China and Brazil Mean More American Jobs

Media Note

Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC

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Earlier this year, President Obama called for a national strategy to make the United States the world's top travel and tourism destination, generating jobs and revitalizing our economy. The Department of State is well on the way to meeting the President's goals of increasing visitor visa processing capacity in China and Brazil by 40 percent in 2012.

Visa Surge: In Brazil, consular officers issued more than 555,000 visas in the first half of fiscal year 2012, compared to 350,000 visas during the same timeframe in 2011, an increase of 59 percent. In China, consular officers issued more than 453,000 visas in the first half of the year, compared to approximately 310,000 visas in the same timeframe in 2011, an increase of 46 percent.

Short Wait Times: At the same time, the Department of State has reduced wait times for visa interview appointments. On average, applicants wait just five days for an appointment at U.S. consulates in China. Wait times have dropped dramatically in Brazil and now average two weeks or less in Brasilia, Recife, and Rio de Janeiro, and 35 days or less in Sao Paulo.

New Consulates: To further increase visa processing capacity in Brazil, President Obama announced on April 9 that the United States will open new consulates in Belo Horizonte and Porto Alegre. These consulates will facilitate travel and trade to support economic growth in both the United States and Brazil, and will further expand the breadth and depth of the U.S.-Brazil relationship. Additionally, the Department of State is exploring whether to add visa-issuance services in Wuhan, China.

Innovative Hiring Program: In another initiative to streamline visa processing without compromising security, the first group of newly hired consular adjudicators recently arrived at U.S. consulates in Brazil and China. These adjudicators were hired under a landmark program which targeted recruits who already speak Portuguese or Mandarin. These talented employees were selected by the State Department through a rigorous screening and security process, and given the same consular training as career Foreign Service Officers. The program offers the flexibility to quickly augment our consular staff with qualified professionals.

The State Department is committed to facilitating travel to the United States as part of broader "Jobs Diplomacy" goals. Visas for legitimate travelers are an important tool to help accelerate America's economic revival.

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