

WASHINGTON, DC UPDATE: OCTOBER 6, 2023

1. FEDERAL GOVERNMENT FUNDED THROUGH NOVEMBER 15

Congress struck an 11th-hour agreement on Saturday to [fund the government](#) through November 15.

- **Where it stands:** Congress is unlikely to finish its fiscal year 2024 government funding work by November 15. The Senate and House of Representatives remain far apart, with both chambers yet to take up most of their appropriations bills or agree on topline funding numbers.
- **Why it matters:** Without another continuing resolution, the federal government could shutdown in mid-November, which could [wreak havoc with travel](#) and pause federal government support for events (e.g., government speakers at events, Trade Event Partnership Program staffing, etc.).

ECA remains active on Capitol Hill on government funding issues since funding legislation could be a vehicle for passing ECA's top policy priorities such as reducing visa wait times.

2. VISA WAIT TIMES UPDATE: GOOD NEWS IN CHINA & BRAZIL

Speaking of visas, interview [wait times](#) are down in China and Brazil, but rising in Mexico and India.

Country	Average wait	1-month change	3-month change	Status
China	102 days	↓ 38 days	↓ 15 days	Green
Brazil	147 days	↓ 39 days	↓ 149 days	Yellow
India	538 days	↑ 51 days	↑ 132 days	Red
Mexico	723 days	↑ 25 days	↑ 70 days	Red

The State Department's goal is to have all posts below 120 days by the end of 2023, which is unlikely.

- While the China numbers are good, ECA still encourages all event organizers to get their would-be exhibitors and attendees from China to apply for their visas as early as possible.

3. ISRAEL ACCEPTED INTO U.S. VISA WAIVER PROGRAM

Last week, Israel's long-standing application to join the U.S. Visa Waiver Program (VWP) was [approved](#).

- **What it means:** From November 30, Israeli exhibitors and attendees will be able to travel to the U.S. for up to 90 days without a visa.
- **By the numbers:** Israel is the [41st country](#) to join the VWP, which helps facilitate travel to the U.S. while keeping the country secure.

Unfortunately, Israel may be the last new WVP country for a while. Candidate countries include Brazil, Argentina, and Costa Rica, but none currently meet the security requirements for WVP admission.

4. IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

- The MIC Coalition published a new [blog post](#) about why transparency is key to building a better music-licensing marketplace.
- UFI posted an [interview](#) with ECA's Tommy Goodwin about ongoing visa processing delays.
- The latest EXHIBITOR Now Association Focus podcast episode included an [advocacy recap](#).