



Key Takeaways from 22 February 2023

VISITOR VISA APPOINTMENT WAIT TIMES UPDATE

In China, visa appointment wait times for would-be U.S. visitors were recently reported to be within a reasonable range.

- Beijing | 30 days (no change)
- Shanghai | 22 days (-6 days)
- Guangzhou | 22 days (+1 days)
- Shenyang | 2 days (no change)

Despite this good news, wait times remain unacceptable in many countries including Brazil (average wait: 425 days), Mexico (444 days), India (626 days), and Columbia (872 days).

- In response, [44 U.S. mayors sent a letter](#) to Secretary of State Blinken this week calling on the State Department to take concrete steps to reduce wait times.
- ASAE also put out a [call for stories](#) on the impact of wait times on association meetings, and the Hispanic Leadership Fund wrote a [supporting op-ed](#) in The Hill.

As of 24 February, visa appointment wait times in three of the four U.S. embassies and consulates in China have increased significantly (see chart below).

Consulate	Last week	This week	Increase
Beijing	30 days	71 days	41 days
Guangzhou	28 days	90 days	62 days
Shanghai	22 days	35 days	13 days
Shenyang	2 days	2 days	0 days

While these wait times are nowhere near the unacceptable delays at U.S. embassies and consulates in Mexico, Brazil, India, and Columbia, this is likely the beginning of a surge of incoming visa applications as international outbound travel from China accelerates after its January 8 reopening.

Within that context, we encourage you to **please communicate to all of your would-be Chinese exhibitors and attendees coming to events in 2023 and early 2024 to request their visa appointment as soon as possible!**

(This goes double for all organizations' events for the remainder of 2023!)



MATSO MEETS

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MUSIC LICENSING

There are now four official PROs (Performing Rights Organizations) to pay attention to. Most are familiar with BMI and ASCAP as everyone pays both BMI and ASCAP fees. Many are not familiar the other two - GMR and SESAC - and are not paying. These two lesser-known groups are becoming increasingly more aggressive in their approach to try to enforce their rules and regulations. It was confirmed that yes, these two new organizations are legitimate, but to check with your legal team regarding next steps.

- Music licensing has become increasingly tricky as some performers are covered by one PRO, but not all. Check your exhibitor clauses for those who play music in their booths as those exhibitors should take on the music license liability responsibility. If a show organizer is sued by a music licensing entity for an exhibitor who plays music in their booth, should the proper clause be inserted into their booth agreement, it may be hard to prove in court that it was the responsibility of the show organizer to pay music licensing fees.
- There is a current court case that could change some of the current rules and regulations, but Tommy Goodwin said it may not be settled for a couple of years. There are currently no active litigations going on against event organizers.
- It was also discussed that there is no clear definition for how events should be charged. Some organizations charge per person, while others have a lump sum for the event. For example, if music is ONLY played in a general session that 1,000 people attend, but the entire show attracts 100,000 people, why pay for 100,000 people?

ADVOCACY EFFORTS RAMP UP IN KENTUCKY

In Kentucky, on-the-ground work is accelerating to clarify the state's new sales tax on meeting space.

- Where it stands: Legislative language has been drafted that would exempt event organizers from charging sales tax to their exhibitors.
- What's next: Work will continue in the Kentucky legislature on securing a technical correction to the sales tax law until it adjourns on March 30.

The original intent of the law when it was written is not what it is today. Unfortunately, it will affect events there this year. There is a plan to repeal and hopefully discourage other states from following suit. ECA recommends having a presence at Legislative Action Day in DC on 1 June to help support and voice your opinions on industry issues like this at the national level.

A special thanks to TMS for sponsoring this important session that allows large show organizers to learn about key issues affecting shows larger than 200,000 NSF while also providing a forum for open dialogue and exchange.