



American Society of
Travel Advisors

PRESS KIT
2025



We'll take you there.

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AMERICAN SOCIETY OF TRAVEL ADVISORS

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ASTA FAST FACTS



Founded in 1931, the American Society of Travel Advisors (ASTA) is the leading global advocate for travel advisors and agencies, the travel industry, and the traveling public.

ASTA's diverse membership includes travel advisors as well as the companies whose products they sell, including airlines, hotels, cruise lines, tour operators, and car rental companies. Among ASTA's members are the country's largest corporate travel management companies (TMCs), responsible for moving workforces and facilitating global commerce.

OUR MISSION Represent the Agency Community



GOVERNMENT

Direct Lobbying,
Grassroots, Political
Engagement



TRAVEL SUPPLIER

Air, Car, Hotel,
Cruise, Rail,
Insurance, etc.



TECHNOLOGY PLAYERS

GDS, Aggregators,
Support Products



CONSUMER

ASTA.org,
Consumer Research,
Mainstream Media

ASTA AND ITS AFFILIATES REPRESENT



190,000
TRAVEL
ADVISORS
across the
United States¹

8,000
DOMESTIC
TRAVEL
AGENCIES
and **SUPPLIER**
TRAVEL
COMPANIES²



250
INTERNATIONAL
TRAVEL
SUPPLIER
Members³

98%

of travel agencies
**ARE SMALL
BUSINESSES⁴**

80%

of the travel advisor
industry is comprised of
**FEMALE-OWNED
SMALL BUSINESSES⁵**

ASTA IS REGULARLY FEATURED IN



AND MORE...

Sources: ¹U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; ^{2,3}ASTA Internal Data; ⁴U.S. Small Business Administration; ⁵Phocuswright and Travel Weekly research in partnership with ASTA: U.S. Travel Agency Landscape 2023



TRAVEL ADVISORS SELL
735,000
AIR TICKETS DAILY⁵



of **CRUISE BOOKINGS**⁶



of **TOUR PACKAGES**⁷



of **ALL AIR TRAVEL**⁸

30% of travel advisors say that **OVER HALF OF THEIR CLIENTS** are **USING THEIR SERVICES FOR THE FIRST TIME.**⁹

TRAVELERS



50% of travelers say they are **MORE LIKELY TO USE A TRAVEL ADVISOR TODAY** than they were in the past¹⁰



By 2026, **TRAVEL AGENCY SALES** will comprise **26% OF THE TOTAL TRAVEL MARKET**, with that share expected to **REACH \$141.3 BILLION**¹³



U.S. travelers are **PLANNING THEIR TRIPS 6-12 MONTHS** in advance¹¹



8 IN 10 U.S. adults **PLAN TO TAKE A VACATION IN THE NEXT 12 MONTHS**¹⁴



67% of Gen Zers **PLAN TO TRAVEL FOR LEISURE IN THE NEXT 12 MONTHS**¹²



Nearly **60% OF TRAVELERS** are **SPENDING MORE THAN \$500 PER PERSON** per day on their trips.¹⁵

Sources: ^{5,8}Airlines Reporting Corporation (ARC); ^{6,7,13}Phocuswright and Travel Weekly research in partnership with ASTA: U.S. Travel Agency Landscape 2023; ^{9,10,11,15}ASTA Research; ^{12,14}The 2024 "Fall Edition" of MMGY's Portrait of American Travelers® report

Popular
TRAVEL DESTINATIONS



TOP THREE MOST POPULAR OVERALL



EUROPE



CARIBBEAN



MEXICO

TOP ASIAN COUNTRIES

Japan, Thailand, and Vietnam



TOP AFRICAN COUNTRIES

South Africa, Kenya, and Tanzania



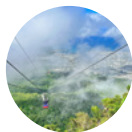
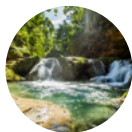
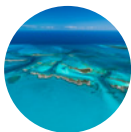
TOP EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

Italy, France, and United Kingdom



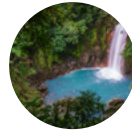
TOP CARIBBEAN/ISLAND DESTINATIONS

The Bahamas, Jamaica, and Dominican Republic



TOP CENTRAL AMERICAN COUNTRIES

Costa Rica, Belize, and Panama



TOP MIDDLE EASTERN COUNTRIES

United Arab Emirates, Egypt, and Israel



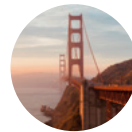
TOP SOUTH AMERICAN COUNTRIES

Argentina, Peru, and Brazil



TOP U.S. STATES

Florida, California, and New York



Source: ASTA 2024 Q2 Benchmarking Survey

OUR MISSION



**WE ARE THE
LEADING
ADVOCATE
FOR TRAVEL ADVISORS,**
the travel industry
and the traveling public.



The mission of ASTA and its affiliated organizations is to facilitate the business of selling travel through effective representation, shared knowledge and the enhancement of professionalism. ASTA and its affiliates comprise the world's foremost travel trade association with members in 120 countries. Our work encompasses every aspect of the travel experience.

Here is just a sample of the activities in which ASTA is involved:

- **ADVOCACY:** We promote and defend the travel agency community and the traveling public at all levels of government as well as within every segment of the travel industry, fighting to ensure a level playing field and fair competition throughout our industry which, of course, benefits industry professionals as well as consumers.
- **EDUCATION:** We provide our members with the most relevant and necessary training and related resources, so that they can provide the utmost professional service to their clients as a trusted resource. ASTA's educational program allows member agencies and future travel professionals the opportunity to expand their business through specialization, giving advisors the tools to sell unique travel experiences, comply with government regulations and adhere to its code of ethics.
- **CONSUMER AFFAIRS:** Through our advertising and public relations efforts, we make the traveling public aware of the many benefits of using a professional travel advisor to arrange and purchase travel as well as provided the needed support throughout the traveler's journey. We actively monitor the travel industry to identify threatening scams and those whose unethical practices harm consumers and our industry. We equip travelers with comprehensive resources to help them recognize and guard against fraud. Above all, we advise travelers to work with a Verified ASTA Travel Advisor (VTA). Only ASTA members subscribe to a 12-point code of ethics which stands for "Integrity in Travel." This is an integral pledge all ASTA members stake their reputations on.

ASTA - A LIVING HISTORY



Since our founding in 1931 as the American Steamship & Tourist Agents Association, ASTA's mission has been to promote professionalism and advocate for its members. As modes of transportation evolved, so did ASTA, widening our focus and renaming ourselves the American Society of Travel Agents in 1944. Then, reflecting the shift from booking agent to trusted advisor, in 2018, ASTA became the American Society of Travel Advisors. Here's a decade-by-decade look at some highlights from our storied past.

- 1930s** — ASTA was formed in 1931 as the American Steamship & Tourist Agents Association. At a time when agents were booking about 85 percent of all steamship travel, ASTA was urging ship lines to adopt agent-friendly policies and working to persuade hotels and railroads to pay agent commissions.
- 1940s** — When World War II curtailed all but essential travel, ASTA members fought for the survival of their association, and in 1946, when airlines cut agent commissions, we were there to fight for our members. Reflecting shifts in the industry, we changed our name to the American Society of Travel Agents.
- 1950s** — ASTA won a 27-year battle for rail commissions. Plus, as part of fulfilling our mission to encourage and enhance professionalism in the industry, ASTA introduced the travel industry's first basic training tool, a home-study course for agents.
- 1960s** — ASTA made impressive progress in education. We held our first School at Sea and opened seven travel schools. In 1968, when President Johnson announced plans to restrict travel outside of the United States, ASTA waged the largest grassroots campaign in our three-decade history.
- 1970s** — The 1970s brought airline deregulation, leading to increased airline competition and the first rise in air commissions in 25 years. ASTA established ASTA Marketing Services, Inc. (AMSI), negotiating member discounts on quality products and services and the ASTA Political Action Committee (ASTAPAC) to help support our government advocacy efforts.
- 1980s** — We continued our emphasis on education, holding Trainingfest, School on Rails, School at Sea, and School on the Road. The decade was a period of significant growth for travel agents and the industry.
- 1990s** — In 1995, seven airlines capped agency commissions on domestic tickets. ASTA responded by filing an anti-trust lawsuit and settled out of court for \$86 million. Plus, advocating for agents and consumers, ASTA drafted and promoted an Air Travelers Bill of Rights which led to the Consumer Access to Travel Information Act.
- 2000s** — In 2007, ASTA re-launched its brand with a new logo and membership structure with enhanced benefits, including a redesigned website, member tools for advocacy, advertising and public relations campaigns, increased opportunities for global networking, and improved online and home-study courses.



ASTA - A LIVING HISTORY



2010s

ASTA advocacy efforts scored major victories at the federal and state levels, saving the travel agency community an estimated \$630 million in taxes, fees and other costs. ASTA led the fight to prevent airlines from passing along merchant fees to travel agents and their clients, successfully petitioned the Department of Labor to remove travel agencies from a regulatory “blacklist,” helped get more than half of the U.S. Senate to support Cuba travel freedom and successfully opposed legislation against the use of independent contractors. ASTA fought new disclosures in the FAA Reauthorization bill before Congress—saving travel advisors \$56 million.

2018

New branding was unveiled, changing the name to the American Society of Travel Advisors. Advisors are trusted counsel from inspiration to complex itineraries and no longer seen to the traveling public as a booking intermediary.

2020

The COVID-19 pandemic threatened the travel industry as a whole. ASTA was there, front and center, as an advocate in state and federal governments and in front of the traveling public on local and national news. ASTA helped ensure that travel agencies had access to resources to stay in business while times were tough and kept a safe return to traveling norms in the forefront of everyone’s mind.

2020s

In the months and years emerging from the pandemic, ASTA experienced unprecedented grassroots engagement and public advocacy exposure. In 2020, ASTA helped secure CARES Act funding, which was utilized by 78 percent of ASTA’s members. In 2021, over 170 ASTA members lobbied congress for the Alaska Tourism Restoration bill to resume cruises between Alaska and Washington state. Shortly after ASTA’s Legislative Day, the bill unanimously passed the House of Representatives. In 2022, just days before more than 200 ASTA members were set to embark on Capitol Hill and after a year of advocacy, the Biden administration reversed course on its inbound testing mandate. Additionally, throughout the first several years of the decade, ASTA successfully fended off tax proposals at the state level in Kentucky, Nebraska and Louisiana that would have placed an added financial burden on advisors and consumers alike.

TODAY

In 2024, after numerous petitions to DOT, DOJ and grassroots efforts from travel advisors and travelers alike, American Airlines rolled back its NDC implementation and plan to exclude airline tickets booked through travel agencies from its AAdvantage loyalty program. Reversing the decision to withhold AAdvantage points and miles for agency bookings was a testament to the firm position that travel agencies hold in the airline distribution channel, and we look forward to working with all airlines on a responsible implementation of their NDC programs, which includes its valuable partners in the travel advisor community.



From 1931 through the present, the industry continually faced rapid changes in technology and shifting alliances among the travel community. Yet through all those advances and realignments,

ASTA HAS REMAINED THE ONE TRUE VOICE OF TRAVEL ADVISORS.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



ARE TRAVEL AGENCIES STILL A THING?

Yes! Travel agencies and travel advisors now only still exist, but the Bureau of Labor Statistics is now predicting steady year-over-year growth for the next 10 years. Don't take our word for it, let the statistics speak for itself!

190,000 TRAVEL ADVISORS across the United States.¹⁵

98% OF TRAVEL AGENCIES are small businesses.¹⁶

By 2026, travel agency sales will comprise **26% OF THE TOTAL TRAVEL MARKET**, with that share **EXPECTED TO REACH \$141.3 BILLION**.¹⁷

30% OF TRAVEL ADVISORS indicate **OVER HALF THEIR CLIENTS ARE USING THEIR SERVICES FOR THE FIRST TIME**.¹⁸

As one of the **PRIMARY DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS** for airlines, cruises and hotels, **TRAVEL ADVISORS SUPPORT MORE THAN 700,000 U.S. JOBS** in the travel sector.¹⁹

In recent years, travel advisors have **CONSISTENTLY REPORTED BUSINESS GROWTH** and are currently one of the nation's fastest growing professions, with **EMPLOYMENT PROJECTED TO GROW 3%** every year from 2022 to 2032.²⁰

**ADVISORS ARE
THERE
FOR
YOU**
**IF SOMETHING
GOES WRONG,**
providing a safety
net beyond travel
insurance.



Sources: ^{15,20}U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; ¹⁶U.S. Small Business Administration; ¹⁷Phocuswright and Travel Weekly research in partnership with ASTA: U.S. Travel Agency Landscape 2023; ¹⁸ASTA Research; ¹⁹U.S. Travel Association April 2023 "The State of the Travel Industry" Report

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE TRAVEL ADVISOR AND HOW HAS IT CHANGED?

As travel becomes more complex, demand for travel advisors continues to grow. Travel advisors do more than book trips; they provide expert consultation to craft personalized itineraries that cater to unique client needs and preferences. These trusted professionals manage every aspect of a journey—whether leisure or business travel—from pre-trip planning to support during travel and follow-up upon return. Travel advisors are a lifeline, offering peace of mind in the event of an emergency or unexpected change in plans, and serve as strong advocates for their clients throughout the entire process.

Travel advisors are the experts on international destinations you've never heard of.

Travel advisors make recommendations when you're not sure where to go and what to do while there.

A travel advisor understands what you truly want to get out of each trip, even when you don't.

The world is more complicated than ever, and travel advisors specialize in mitigating the ever-increasing complexities of travel.

Travel advisors ensure you truly experience the destination—not just tick landmarks off a list of things to see.

Travel advisors understand the true value of experiences.

Travel advisors have access to benefits you can't get otherwise—our industry is built on relationships.

The travel agency community specializes in those things you simply cannot find online.

ETHICS & TRAVEL ADVISORS

ASTA members must adhere to a strict code of ethics. Any traveler who works with an ASTA member and has a problem has the option to file a formal complaint with the association. Our consumer affairs team will investigate the matter and work with the consumer and the member to achieve an amicable resolution. If the member company does not cooperate or it is discovered that it has engaged in dishonest or fraudulent conduct, ASTA will remove that member from the association.

WHERE CAN I FIND A TRAVEL ADVISOR?

VeriVacation.com is the only place consumers can be connected with a Verified Travel Advisor (VTA) and search for ASTA-vetted and experienced professionals with expertise in destinations or specific travel categories that interest you. Every travel advisor listed on VeriVacation.com has been certified because they met our rigorous professional development assessment (see page 13 for more information about ASTA's VTA program).

You can also use the membership directory tool on ASTA.org to see all ASTA members in good standing, regardless of VTA status.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



WILL ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) REPLACE TRAVEL ADVISORS?

Despite many challenges over the years and the rise of artificial intelligence (AI), travel advisors are proving their continued value and resiliency. While AI can offer simple data-driven recommendations, human advisors provide authentic, customized travel experiences that algorithms can't replicate. Travel advisors possess an in-depth understanding of their clients' individual preferences, enabling them to match travelers with the perfect hotels, destinations, and modes of transportation. This personal touch makes travel advisors indispensable, ensuring that clients receive tailored experiences and enjoy memorable, stress-free journeys.

We're living in a world where

HUMAN CONNECTIONS ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER.

IT'S HOW WE BUILD TRUST



When we travel,

**WE'RE CONNECTING THE WORLD
THROUGH THE PEOPLE WE MEET**

AND THE EXPERIENCES THAT MAKE US FEEL A PART OF THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY.]

DO TRAVEL ADVISORS CHARGE PROFESSIONAL FEES?

There is no one answer, however, many travel advisors charge a professional fee. This could range from \$50 to several hundred dollars depending on the complexity of the trip. Don't be scared off by professional fees. Remember, you're paying an expert just like you would your accountant or a lawyer. That fee will come back to you through the added value your advisor provides, such as time saved, informed recommendations, complimentary upgrades, and other exclusive access their connections unlocked for you.

HOW DO I

CHOOSE A TRAVEL ADVISOR?



Every travel agency is uniquely different and accordingly, some are more suited to a given traveler than others. Here are some tips on choosing the travel advisor who is right for you.

LOOK FOR THE ASTA LOGO: Through our continuing education and training programs, ASTA prepares its members to operate high-caliber, competitive businesses including a required adherence to an enforceable code-of-ethics.

SEARCH ONLINE: Connect with a travel advisor through VeriVacation.com. Enter the specifics of your trip, and a relevant selection of ASTA Verified Travel Advisors will be provided for you to potentially work with.

ASK AROUND: Tap friends, neighbors and relatives who use a travel advisor they trust. You may want to visit or call several agencies to find the one that best suits your needs.

INTERVIEW THE ADVISOR: Consider the advisor's willingness to listen and answer questions. The best travel advisors want to establish a long-term relationship with a client, not just organize one trip.

ASK ABOUT FEES: Expert advisors will notify their clients of any professional fees they may charge up front. Consumers should know up front the true cost of booking with an advisor.

CHECK INDIVIDUAL CREDENTIALS: Work with an ASTA Verified Travel Advisor (VTA). In an industry where the barriers of entry are low, completing the VTA certification is the best method for an advisor to showcase exemplary professionalism, credibility and trustworthiness. ASTA's VTA program focuses on ethics, the law and legal issues plus regulatory compliance, and ASTA's VTA has requirements for both an advisor's time in the industry and demonstrated sales.



WHY

VERIVACATION?



verivacation

Why VeriVacation?

In today's digital age, where many claim to be a travel advisor, VeriVacation gives the traveler peace of mind by ensuring ASTA has evaluated and confirmed their expertise and experience. When you choose a Verified Travel Advisor through VeriVacation, you ensure you're working with a highly qualified, ethical professional, backed by ASTA's trusted dispute resolution process for added protection. As demand for travel advisors grows, VeriVacation ensures you're connecting with the best in the industry.

WHAT IS A VERIFIED TRAVEL ADVISOR?

The ASTA Verified Travel Advisor (VTA) certification is a rigorous and unique professional development program for new and experienced travel advisors. VTAs have met ASTA's gold standard in customer service, ethics, and compliance, ensuring the traveler receives top-notch expertise and support for every trip.

By using VeriVacation, you're working with trusted professionals who go beyond booking trips—they craft personalized itineraries, manage logistics, and offer support throughout your journey. With a VTA, you get peace of mind knowing you have an advocate by your side, especially important when plans change, or emergencies arise.

WHAT REQUIREMENTS DO TRAVEL ADVISORS NEED TO EARN THE VTA CERTIFICATION?

- Minimum two years of proven advisor experience
- Proven sales
- Completion of four specialized courses in ethics, regulatory compliance, and legal and law related knowledge
- Continuing education requirements every two years





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