

July 1, 2026



Welcome to the June edition of CIEE's Government Affairs and Advocacy newsletter. We are excited to announce that the new CIEE Government Affairs and Advocacy (GAA) webpage is live! Visit the new GAA page to read previous GAA newsletters, learn more about upcoming CIEE events and current initiatives, and catch up on inspiring BridgeUSA stories.

### **The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Fiscal Year 2027 Budget**

The U.S. House Appropriations Committee passed its version of the Fiscal Year 2027 Homeland Security budget bill. The funding bill now heads to the floor for consideration by the full House. Once the House passes the bill, it will move to the Senate for review. The funding bill includes several Department of Homeland Security (DHS) reporting requirements.

Visa Integrity Fee. The 2025 created Visa Integrity Fee is a mandatory and refundable \$250 payment for visas issued to non-immigrant visa applicants. Currently, DHS and the Department of State (State) are developing the operational procedures to collect and refund the Fee. Until the procedures are finalized, the Fee is not being collected.

The funding bill directs DHS and State to report how DHS plans to implement the Fee, including an assessment of the impact of the Fee on visa processing times, travel delays, staffing requirements, and the volume of visa applications.

Overstay Rates. The funding bill requires DHS to collect data on nonimmigrants who overstay their visas. DHS would be required to share its comprehensive plan for overstay enforcement and deterrence with Congress. The report must include details on DHS' ongoing actions to notify visitors in advance of their required departure dates, to track overstays for enforcement action, and to refuse or revoke current and future visas and travel authorizations for those who overstay.

Electronic Device Searches. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) must publish data on its website that details the number of instances when CBP personnel: accessed digital contents (by the visa applicant's nationality and country of departure), accessed online accounts (including social media), requested consent to access digital content, and detained an individual for refusing to disclose or provide consent to access digital contents.

### **“Duration of Status” Policy Update**

According to Inside Higher Ed, the White House's Office of Management and Budget (OMB) reviewed and cleared DHS' proposed Duration of Status rule change. If approved, the rule would create a fixed period of stay equal to the length of the nonimmigrant J, F, and I visa holder's approved program plus 30 days or a four-year maximum period of admission to the U.S., depending on the program. This rule change seeks to further expand the U.S. Administration's focus on reducing overstay rates and addressing unauthorized stays.

CIEE understands that, if approved, this rule change would have a significant impact on participants in the Research Scholar category of the BridgeUSA program and college and university students. In addition, the rule change would require careful planning when filing an extension of stay. Our team will monitor this proposed rule as it continues to move through the rulemaking process and will work with ECA as more information becomes available.

In late May, a bipartisan group of Congressmembers wrote a letter to the Secretary of DHS and the Director of OMB requesting that they “preserve the current [Duration of Status] framework as part of the government's efforts to advance American economic competitiveness and global leadership.”

### **Closure of 30 Visa Processing Offices in Africa**

In June, the U.S. Department of State began reducing the number of African visa processing offices from 50 consular posts to 20 designated regional hubs. Citizens who are not in regional hub countries will need to travel to one of the approved sites for visa appointments. The 20 hubs that will remain open for all processing are: Abidjan, Ivory Coast; Accra, Ghana; Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; Cape Town, South Africa; Dakar, Senegal; Dar-Es-Salaam, Tanzania; Djibouti, Djibouti; Johannesburg, South Africa; Kampala, Uganda; Kigali, Rwanda; Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo; Lagos, Nigeria; Lomé, Togo; Luanda, Angola; Malabo, Equatorial Guinea; Monrovia, Liberia; Nairobi, Kenya; Port Louis, Mauritius; Praia, Cape Verde; and, Yaoundé, Cameroon.

### **CIEE's Community Impact Initiative and America Gives!**

As part of CIEE's supporting partnership with America250, CIEE has embraced the America Gives initiative, which encourages organizations to deepen their commitment to community service. CIEE's Community

Impact Initiative, which began in 2025, adds meaningful, locally grounded community service to all of CIEE's international exchange and study abroad programs. In fact, from March to June this year, CIEE's program participants and staff logged close to 6,500 hours of community service in the U.S. and around the world.

Track our efforts on LinkedIn and our CIEE and America250 Partner webpage.

### **BridgeUSA Best Practices and Community Connections**

Learn more about BridgeUSA best practices and connect with the global BridgeUSA community by getting involved with the Coalition for American Public Diplomacy and Leadership (CAPDL)!

- Check out CAPDL's June episode of "The Truth with Rick Ruth" celebrating "the beautiful exchange" of BridgeUSA.
- Become a CAPDL member to take part in best practices webinars.
- Support the CAPDL Scholarship Fund.
- Join CAPDL members and local officials at CAPDL's in-person workshops, like the one being held in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, on July 30.

Cheers to those whose national teams are competing in the 2026 FIFA World Cup!

### **Happy Fourth of July and 250th Anniversary to America!**

As always, thank you for your support of the BridgeUSA program through placements, by creating connective on-site cultural programming, and by reaching out to Congressional members. For questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to your CIEE point of contact.

Questions? Contact Asenith Dixon Bell.

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