

U.S. PARTICIPATION IN THE APEC BUSINESS TRAVEL CARD (ABTC) SCHEME

Frequently Asked Questions

Does the U.S. recognize the ABTC?

- The U.S. currently recognizes the ABTC for expedited visa appointments at U.S. embassies and consulates abroad. ABTC cardholders also receive expedited immigration processing through airline crew lanes upon arrival at any U.S. international airport port of entry. It does not and cannot substitute for a U.S. visa.
- The U.S. does not recognize the ABTC as a visa. Cardholders from non- Visa Waiver Program countries still need to present valid passports and obtain U.S. visas as required by United States law.

How does the U.S. plan to participate in the ABTC scheme?

- In 2007, APEC created a transitional membership category that allowed the U.S. to join the scheme even though it does not meet all the criteria of the ABTC.
- The U.S. joined the ABTC Scheme as a transitional member in September 2007. The U.S. is currently reviewing the remaining principles of the scheme.
- As a transitional member, the U.S. is exploring options on how eligible U.S. citizens may be issued the ABTC, allowing them expedited immigration processing at ABTC member airports.

Who can apply for an ABTC?

- The ABTC scheme is limited to bona fide business persons and senior government officials.
- Each member economy is responsible for vetting or “pre-clearing” their applicants. In general, applicants will have to demonstrate that they hold a current passport valid for at least 6 months, may need to travel frequently on short term visits within the APEC region to fulfill business commitments, and have not been convicted of a criminal offense.
- Business applicants may also be required to provide proof of their business affiliation.

When can U.S. citizens apply for an ABTC? Where do I apply? How much does it cost?

- We are still exploring options on how U.S. citizens may be issued the ABTC and hope to have more information for you soon. The ABTC is not yet being issued to U.S. citizens.

Do ABTC cardholders receive benefits when leaving the United States?

- There are no benefits upon departure. The U.S. does not have exit immigration procedures at international airports.

Where can I find more information on the ABTC?

- On the Business Mobility Group website:
<http://www.businessmobility.org/key/abtc.html>