

U.S. HOTEL OPERATORS REPORT FEWER BOOKINGS AHEAD OF 2026 FIFA WORLD CUP



Across the U.S., hotel operators see fewer guests than forecast, even as preparations ramp up for the 2026 FIFA World Cup, reveals fresh data from the sector's top trade group.

Running from June 11 to July 19, the upcoming tournament is meeting cooler reactions across the 11 host cities, according to hotel operators represented by the American Hotel & Lodging Association.

Though excitement was expected at first, real-world conditions have since shifted sentiment. Rosanna Maietta, leading the group as president and chief executive, pointed to multiple challenges in her remarks attached to a study issued midweek. Enthusiasm has faded - not sharply, but noticeably - due to complications emerging lately. **From New York all the way to Los Angeles, business owners voice rising unease**

Eight out of ten hotels report fewer guests than expected. Tougher conditions show up clearly in some places. Notably low numbers appear in Kansas City, where summer bookings dip beneath the normal patterns. On the other hand, cities like Boston, Philadelphia, San Francisco, and Seattle see little impact from the World Cup. For those areas, the global tournament feels distant, with minimal effect on stays.

Visa Issues and High Travel Expenses Keep People Away

One reason fewer overseas visitors come to the U.S. lies in tougher visa rules and an impression they won't be warmly received. As noted in the AHLA study, some travelers believe they'll face indifference instead of hospitality. Adding pressure, expenses tied to movement - like fuel and flight fees - have climbed sharply lately. Because of this shift, visiting America now demands a larger budget than before. Though not new, these financial strains hit harder amid ongoing policy hurdles.

Criticism Surrounding FIFA Booking Methods

Not far behind its critique of local policies, the AHLA turned sharp attention toward FIFA, the body managing the event. With bookings made well in advance for thousands of accommodations - later dropped without notice - the group argues financial projections grew unreliable across hotels. Staffing schedules faced disruption because of shifting room commitments. Daily operations at multiple sites adjusted repeatedly, only to find prior arrangements undone weeks later.

FIFA responded by stating room releases followed contract timelines precisely. Where needed, properties got their availability back ahead of schedule - hotels had asked for such flexibility. Regular talks marked the buildup, with updates shared often. Adjustments happened on the fly: numbers shifted, pricing adapted, information flowed both ways. Coordination remained constant, according to officials, supported by structured reporting cycles.

Ensure Success

Turning things around demands teamwork, Rosanna Maietta emphasized. **To reach its full promise during the World Cup, she said, ease of travel and hospitality for global visitors should be guaranteed by both the U.S. and FIFA.** A seamless experience begins with how guests are received - comfort matters just as much as logistics

As Maietta notes, keeping extra charges off visas and transit during event times matters just as much as steering clear of sudden hotel taxes pushed by local officials right before things start.

With the tournament approaching, time grows short for hotels, city planners, and FIFA to tackle rising issues while securing the full financial upside of staging the sport's biggest global gathering.

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