

# BridgeUSA Program Survey

## Absence of Crucial International Exchange Visitors Devastates Seasonal Businesses Across the United States

From September 13 to October 15, 2021, the Alliance for International Exchange surveyed 665 seasonal businesses and summer camps nationwide, of which 72% are small businesses. Below are responses from these businesses, 12 in Alaska.

### SUMMER WORK TRAVEL PARTICIPANTS\*

	2019	2020	2021	Decrease from 2019
United States	108,303	4,952	39,647	63% ↓
Alaska	1,976	22	284	86% ↓

\*Data source the U.S. Department of State, J-1 Visa Exchange Visitor Program.

### - ECONOMIC IMPACT -

**60%**

Of Businesses  
Lost Revenue

**20%**

Of Seasonal  
Positions Unfilled

**3 in 5**

Shortened their  
season/hours or closed  
business locations



Did not meet peak  
staffing needs without J-1  
Visa Exchange Visitors



Reported staff burnout



Reported lower quality of  
customer service or longer  
customer wait times

In Alaska, 7 businesses reported a total loss of \$700,000, averaging

**\$100,000**

per business

## - PUBLIC DIPLOMACY IMPACT -

Lack of J-1 Visa Exchange Visitors hampers U.S. public diplomacy goals by taking away a key positive U.S. experience from tomorrow's international leaders, and preventing them from engaging with their American host communities.

### Host employers across America agree or strongly agree that Summer Work Travel and Camp Counselor participants:



Enable U.S. based staff to gain a better understanding of other cultures



Contribute to a positive culture in the workplace



Make the community more sensitive to other cultures

“Seasonal staffing shortages meant we didn't open the majority of the hotel properties and dining venues throughout our AK-based system.”

**- Hotels & Restaurants in Denali National Park, AK**

“We were forced to close off room reservations and not operate at 100% occupancy, our restaurant was closed for part of the season and we are still not able to open for lunch.”

**- Hotel in Homer, AK**

“The greatest impact can be seen in the lasting relationships that our staff has come to cherish. This program opens doors for J-1 students to experience cultural exchange but it also opens doors for American workers to establish relationships all around the world.”

**- Amusement Park in Keystone, SD**

“Participants enrich our resort year after year with a combination of enthusiasm and culture. They introduce our chefs to international cuisine, which in turn is shared with our guests and staff.”

**- Ski Resort in Park City, UT**

“Exchange participants provide fantastic cultural exposure to the local community and also support the local economy by renting accommodations, purchasing goods and gifts for their families.”

**- Restaurant in Dennis, MA**

“Everything had to be cut back as there was no staff. As the owner my hours increased drastically. Now I am totally exhausted from this year.”

**- Restaurant in Seward, AK**