

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, 30 in Colorado.

SUMMER WORK TRAVEL PARTICIPANTS*

| | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | Decrease from 2019 |
|---------------|---------|-------|--------|--------------------|
| United States | 108,303 | 4,952 | 39,647 | 63% ↓ |
| Colorado | 6,855 | 214 | 3,513 | 49% ↓ |

*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 Colorado, 20 businesses reported a total loss of \$2,365,000, averaging

\$118,250

per business

- PUBLIC DIPLOMACY IMPACT -

Lack of J-1 Visa Exchange Visitors hamstrings 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

“Due to staff shortage and burnout, our service was getting poor. Negative reviews increased. Brand is tarnished. In addition, we are probably 50% under our possible profit target AND will be less so since we just lost all of our domestic staff.”

- *Restaurant in Estes Park, CO*

“Diversity creates the need to learn, accept, relate, reflect and be better as a whole. There is a bigger world out there and this is a great and cost efficient way to have a 'preview' from these ambassadors about the world.”

- *Restaurant in Estes Park, CO*

“Employee and management burn out. People are quitting because there is not enough staff to cover all of the duties.”

- *Restaurant in Vail, CO*

“The program offers an amazing opportunity for local staff to meet and work with young people from other countries and gain an experience they would not get at other jobs.”

- *Amusement Park in Denver, CO*

“Have to operate at 50% without help.”

- *Hotel in Glenwood Springs, CO*

“We have suffered losses because we were closing our shop early and sometimes had it closed entirely for the day. If we could have more seasonal help, we would be better off financially by almost \$200,000.”

- *Retail Store in Estes Park, CO*