

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, 25 in Maryland.

SUMMER WORK TRAVEL PARTICIPANTS*

	2019	2020	2021	Decrease from 2019
United States	108,303	4,952	39,647	63% ↓
Maryland	5,729	151	2,386	58% ↓

*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 Maryland, 17 businesses reported a total loss of \$5,155,000, averaging

\$303,235

per business

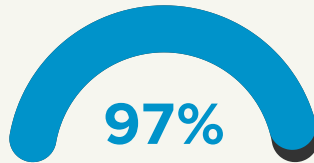
- PUBLIC DIPLOMACY IMPACT -

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.

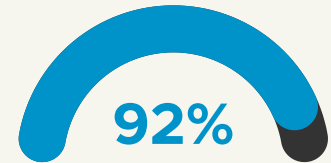
Host employers across America agree or strongly agree that Summer Work Travel and Camp Counselor participants:



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

“I was forced to close one day a week during peak season. I closed 3 weeks early due to the lack of exchange participants and not having enough staff. These are days of revenue I am unable to recover.”

- Restaurant in Ocean City, MD

“We need a certain number of attendants to operate rides, if we don't meet that minimum then we need to close rides, if rides are closed customers don't purchase the larger ticket packages therefore we make less money.”

- Amusement Park in Ocean City, MD

“The Summer Work Travel program gives our guests a taste of what other countries are like!”

- Hotel in Ocean City, MD

“We would not survive summer without BridgeUSA Exchange Visitors. They are mandatory for our seasonal economy.”

- Restaurant in Ocean City, MD

“Summer Work Travel students come with a good attitude and embrace the culture here. They also leave with a positive viewpoint of both the U.S. and our local resort town. It is a mutually beneficial program.”

- Hotel in Ocean City, MD

“We have had to reduce hours and limit seating all season which is lost income.”

- Restaurant in Ocean City, MD

“Reduced staffing means we cannot capitalize on all revenue opportunities.”

- Hotel in Ocean City, MD