

# 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, 74 in Massachusetts.

### SUMMER WORK TRAVEL PARTICIPANTS\*

	2019	2020	2021	Decrease from 2019
United States	108,303	4,952	39,647	63% ↓
Massachusetts	6,985	340	2,074	70% ↓

\*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 Massachusetts, 47 businesses reported a total loss of \$9,258,000, averaging

**\$196,979**

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

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“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**

“We could not sell as many rooms because we didn't have sufficient staff to service them. Room nights are our business. This was awful.”

**- Hotel in Edgartown, MA**

“We were forced to reduce hours at our deli counter and were not able to serve breakfast. We stayed open, but staff worked long hours and we lost sales that we would otherwise have had.”

**- Grocery Store in Nantucket, MA**

“Seasonal staffing shortages put incredible strain on every aspect of the business.”

**- Restaurant in Oak Bluffs, MA**

“I was forced to close completely several days because of the staffing shortages. The tourist season is finite. I cannot make up those lost days/ income once they have left.”

**- Restaurant in Eastham, MA**

“We have a pretty homogeneous community so having international staff is very fun for all. They really help bridge the summer labor gap between American college starting and the slowing of demand in September.”

**- Bakery & Farm Store in Edgartown, MA**

“Our U.S. based employees look forward to the arrival of our Summer Work Travel participants each year. Friendships are made, travel is initiated, and the participants enjoy meeting the guests and learning about America. It's a win win.”

**- Hotel in Chatham, MA**