

# 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, 7 in Missouri.

### SUMMER WORK TRAVEL PARTICIPANTS\*

	2019	2020	2021	Decrease from 2019
United States	108,303	4,952	39,647	63% ↓
Missouri	1,403	40	520	63% ↓

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

### - ECONOMIC IMPACT -

**60%**

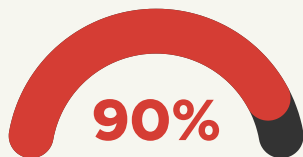
Of Businesses  
Lost Revenue

**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 Missouri, 5 businesses reported a total loss of \$410,000, averaging

**\$82,000**

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

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"Our business was not able to provide the typical level of service for our guests due to the staffing shortage and it taxed our staff."

**- Amusement Park in Branson, MO**

"Seasonal staffing issues almost destroyed our business. We had to reduce hours of operation and the stress it put on the handful of employees we had was tremendous."

**- Restaurant in Kitty Hawk, NC**

"Owner and wife working 90 hour weeks for 4 months with no days off. Staff is working 55 hours per week. Forced to cut hours of operation. Forced to reduce the variety of products. Everyone is burned out."

**- Candy Store in Rehoboth Beach, DE**

"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**

"The Summer Work Travel program brings employee diversity. It helps break down the stereotypes that people have of other countries."

**- Hotel in Lake Ozark, MO**