

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, 50 in New Jersey.

SUMMER WORK TRAVEL PARTICIPANTS*

	2019	2020	2021	Decrease from 2019
United States	108,303	4,952	39,647	63% ↓
New Jersey	5,272	245	1,955	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 New Jersey, 38 businesses reported a total loss of \$22,507,500, averaging

\$592,303

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

“BridgeUSA students bring so much to our area and community, as well as our workplace. Our internal surveys of American workers show that many rate working with the international students as one of the main reasons they want to work a summer job with us.”

- Amusement Park in Wildwood, NJ

“Staffing shortages impacted our hours of operations, many attractions were closed, employees were burned out, customer service was reduced, revenue fell by 25%.”

- Amusement Park in Hope, NJ

“We were not able to keep normal hours or serve our normal amount of guests resulting in lost revenue.”

- Restaurant in Wildwood, NJ

“Due to staffing shortages we were unable to provide the services we normally provide to our guests. Restaurants, stores and all businesses were suffering. This gives our town a bad reputation.”

- Hotel in Wildwood, NJ

“Summer Work Travel participants not only fill our seasonal positions, their presence brings a uniqueness to our team for the summer. You see the students having conversations with our U.S. staff about their lives in their country and vice versa. It's a dynamic that can only be achieved by mixing employees from all over the world in one place.”

- Hotel in Cape May, NJ