

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, 55 in New York.

SUMMER WORK TRAVEL PARTICIPANTS*

	2019	2020	2021	Decrease from 2019
United States	108,303	4,952	39,647	63% ↓
New York	7,004	123	2,350	66% ↓

*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 York, 40 businesses reported a total loss of \$8,549,250, averaging

\$213,731

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

"We are located in a small town in the Adirondack Mountains, where it is increasingly difficult to get U.S. based employees. We had more business than ever and less employees to run that business."

- Amusement Park in Old Forge, NY

"Our restaurant had to reduce hours and services. Our resort was open but with a significant reduction in services and an uptick in guest complaints. Full time year-round employees experienced high stress and burnout. We absolutely can not operate without the BridgeUSA students!"

- Hotel in Lake Placid, NY

"Due to the staffing shortage we were not able to open all of our camp cabins so we were not able to take as many campers as we would have any other year (lost sales) and parents were also not able to get the child care they needed to be able to fully go back to work."

- Summer Camp in Hancock, NY

"Summer Work Travel students have become life-time friends to many of our U.S. based employees. One of our employees even had the opportunity to visit Kosovo and experience a new culture which would not have been possible without BridgeUSA programs. "

- Restaurant in Lake George, NY

"We have had to close our restaurant 4 hours early every day, close our kitchens due to cook shortages, we had one new restaurant we were trying to open that we could not because of lack of applicants. Potentially half a million in revenue left on the table and burnout of my current team members."

- Hotel in Niagara Falls, NY

"Staffing shortages meant we could not stay open after 5pm, closing the doors on a line of customers many times and losing that extra income."

- Restaurant in Water Mill, NY