

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, 63 in Wisconsin.

SUMMER WORK TRAVEL PARTICIPANTS*

	2019	2020	2021	Decrease from 2019
United States	108,303	4,952	39,647	63% ↓
Wisconsin	6,439	834	3,004	53% ↓

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

- ECONOMIC IMPACT -

60%

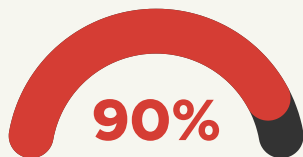
Of Businesses
Lost Revenue

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 Wisconsin, 42 businesses reported a total loss of \$10,303,026, averaging

\$245,310

per business

- PUBLIC DIPLOMACY IMPACT -

Lack of J-1 Visa Exchange Visitors hamstrings 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 were not able to open our ice cream shop and restaurant until 3:30pm because we didn’t have enough staff. So we lost all our lunch mid-day sales”

- Restaurant in Mercer, WI

“To account for the shortage of housekeepers we have blocked rooms from rental. This directly impacts the bottom line.”

- Hotel in Egg Harbor, WI

“Lost reservations, denied bookings to customers, compensation for wait times, complimentary offers to guests, guests walking out.”

- Resort in Wisconsin Dells, WI

“We get to work with delightful young people from all over the world, learn about their cultures while teaching them about ours, and create new friendships.”

- Restaurant in Lake Delton, WI

“Our year-round staff and our customers love getting to know our international students. We learn about their countries, cultures and religions, leading to a more inclusive, tolerant and empathic workplace for everyone.”

- Restaurant in Fish Creek, WI

“We could increase revenue by 20%, provide a better customer experience, and provide a better working experience with the help of Summer Work Travel employees.”

- Restaurant in Eagle River, WI

“Closure of the entire restaurant to the public, 85% reduction in pub hours, 15% reduction in bakery hours, and forced non-rental of open lodging units has resulted in approx \$1,000,000 lost revenue based on previous year figures multiplied by recorded, turned-away demand.”

- Hotel in Ellison Bay, WI