

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, 13 in Michigan.

SUMMER WORK TRAVEL PARTICIPANTS*

	2019	2020	2021	Decrease from 2019
United States	108,303	4,952	39,647	63% ↓
Michigan	1,879	50	816	57% ↓

*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 Michigan, 8 businesses reported a total loss of \$1,195,000, averaging

\$149,375

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

“Exposing our staff to other cultures has always been exciting and challenging in ways that help us grow.”

- Summer Camp in Holland, MI

“We closed two full service restaurants and limited hours of operations/availability in other F&B outlets resulting in \$300-500k in reduced revenue. Further, we closed 15% of our lodging accommodations due to staffing shortages.”

- Golf & Ski Resort in Gaylord, MI

“We do not have a large enough employee base in our area to handle demand.”

- Hotel in Mackinac Island, MI

“Summer Work Travel participants contribute a wonderful sense of diversity and give the resort a more unique character.”

- Resort in Mackinac Island, MI

“Please allow this program to open back up for 2022. I have used up my favors from my friends. I need staff!”

- Summer Camp in Lawrence, MI

“Long lines turn people away and we shut down a month earlier than normal.”

- Concessions Company in South Haven, MI

“For nearly 30 years, international staff have brought culture, diversity, enthusiasm, and incredible people to our camp.”

- Summer Camp in West Bloomfield, MI