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, 8 in Washington.

SUMMER WORK TRAVEL PARTICIPANTS*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2021</th>
<th>Decrease from 2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>108,303</td>
<td>4,952</td>
<td>39,647</td>
<td>63% ↓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>821</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>68% ↓</td>
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</tbody>
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*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

90% Did not meet peak staffing needs without J-1 Visa Exchange Visitors
87% Reported staff burnout
82% Reported lower quality of customer service or longer customer wait times

In Washington, 5 businesses reported a total loss of $1,240,000, averaging $248,000 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**: 95%
- **Contribute to a positive culture in the workplace**: 97%
- **Make the community more sensitive to other cultures**: 92%

“We had to block available units just to keep up with the workload. We barely did what was sold and we weren’t able to sell more due to staffing.”
- **Resort in Friday Harbor, WA**

“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**

“Exchange Visitors make our program richer, more diverse, and promote cross-cultural understanding. It also helps people from outside the United States have a better understanding and view of our country.”
- **Summer Camp in Vashon, WA**

“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**

“The greatest impact can be seen in the lasting relationships that our staff has come to cherish. This program opens doors for J-1 students to experience cultural exchange but it also opens doors for American workers to establish relationships all around the world.”
- **Amusement Park in Keystone, SD**