

**Prospectus for jobs at the
Mountaineering Equipment Shop of
American Alpine Institute
Bellingham, Washington**

**One Management Position and
Two Equipment Specialist Positions**

Introduction to the Institute

The American Alpine Institute is a mountaineering school and guide service based in Bellingham and operating in six states and sixteen countries. Working at the Institute are about fourteen people in administration and equipment services, and about seventy mountain guides and instructors. Though the Institute operates year-round, the activity peaks in the summer because of AAI's large North Cascades program as well as simultaneous operations in Alaska, Europe, and the Andes. All programs are managed from Bellingham.

Introduction to the Institute's Equipment Services & Shop

Though the primary business of the American Alpine Institute is the teaching of climbing skills and the guiding of climbs and expeditions, the range of equipment services conducted at the Institute constitutes a very important part of the organization's overall business. Proper equipping of the guide service itself, assisting AAI's professional guides in keeping themselves outfitted, and skillful advising of clients on acquisition of the best possible gear for their programs, are all essential parts of the whole operation.

In addition to acquiring gear for internal use by the Institute, equipment staff members also run a small retail shop and an equipment rental operation that helps clients effectively equip themselves for their programs. The equipment staff also maintain a website for online ordering and direct the Institute's Guide's Choice International Gear Testing Program.

The Jobs Being Offered

1) Equipment Shop Co-Manager

The AAI staff in equipment services has consisted of two co-managers who work full-time, year-round under the light-handed direction of a part time manager Richard Riquelme, who works a little more than half-time as one of the Institute's international guides. Additionally, as described below, three to four equipment specialists work 20 to 40 hours per week seasonally, from May through September, and two of them work 10 to 20 hours per week the rest of the year.

Co-Management responsibilities include:

1. Select, order, and maintain inventory, and sell equipment in the retail shop and web-based platform. This co-manager will take the lead on ordering maintaining inventory and will consult with the other co-manager on selection.
2. Consult but take the second position role with the other co-manager in overseeing the selection, stocking, and maintenance of equipment for the guide service
3. Consult but take the second position role with the other co-manager in overseeing the Equipment Shop's gear rental program for clients and the public
4. Co-manage the Guides' Choice Equipment Testing Program
5. Advise the Institute's clients and public customers on their selection of personal gear for their courses, climbs, and/or expeditions on the phone and in person
6. Take the lead in maintaining the retail sales website

2) Equipment Specialists

Though the primary business of the American Alpine Institute is the teaching of climbing skills and the guiding of ascents and expeditions, the range of equipment services conducted at the Institute constitutes a significant part of the organization's overall business.

The equipment specialists play a very important role in the following areas:

1. Help maintain the large gear rental program, and work directly with clients in sizing and fitting clients. When gear is returned, inspect and clean it (repairing and replacing items as needed)
2. Following a training period, advise clients on gear needs for their intended pursuits at program meetings and for walk in client sales in the Equipment Shop
3. Maintain the guide service fleet of equipment, retiring and replacing gear as needed
4. Assisting AAI's professional guides in keeping themselves outfitted for the conditions and locations in which they are climbing and guiding
5. Check in all new gear from manufacturers; price and stock new inventory for the retail shop
6. Maintain the Institute's fleet of vans

Job Requirements

Both the co-management job and the Equipment Specialist jobs require the following:

- Have very good oral and written communication skills and be able to effectively communicate with clients, staff, and retail customers

- Be very good at multitasking
- Have proficiency in computer skills and programs
- Be efficient and able to give attention to detail.
- Have at least basic knowledge and skills of rock climbing, ice climbing, and/or mountaineering. Knowledge and experience in backcountry skiing or riding is not required but is also helpful.
- Have a good understanding of outdoor clothing and climbing equipment.
- Have a valid driver's license and a good driving record.
- Be comfortable (or learn to be comfortable) driving 12 and 15 passenger vans.
- Live within 30 minutes of our location in the Fairhaven Historical District of Bellingham.
- Be willing to work on weekends regularly and work long hours occasionally.
- Be able to occasionally lift 40lbs.
- Have strong "trouble-shooting" skills
- Have a high ethical standard that is reflected in your personal conduct
- Be collaborative in your style of work with others

How to Apply

1. Read this Prospectus thoroughly including the background on the Institute below.
2. Fill out the Wufoo application located here:

<https://alpineinstitute.wufoo.com/forms/mountaineering-equipment-services/>
3. Be sure to attach your résumé and cover letter to the Wufoo application. Additionally, **be sure to use your cover letter to explain a) why you have an interest in working for the Institute and getting the job for which you are applying, and b) how you meet the job requirements.**

Benefits

1. Work with a great group of people who like finding partners for climbing, mountain biking and other outdoor activities. Many people form life-long friendships while working at the Institute.
2. Receive pay that is commensurate with your experience
3. Paid time off: Paid time off is accrued at the rate of .04 hours per hour worked. This is equivalent to 10 days paid leave per year if you work full time, year round (2000 hours per year). If you work part-time, you get a proportional benefit. This paid leave can be used for vacation or sick days, or however you would like. You will be entitled to use your accrued leave beginning on the 90th calendar day after the start of your employment or after you have worked 500 hours, whichever comes first. On December 31st of each year, accrued paid time off of 5 days or less will be carried over to the following year.
4. Get pro-deals for yourself from about 200 outdoor gear and clothing companies
5. Be proud to work for a company that is a leader in:
 - professional guiding in the US
 - innovative outdoor education
 - innovative action on climate change including being a zero carbon footprint Company
 - developing an effective and respected political voice on sustainable business practices and sustainable uses of national public lands

We look forward to reading your application!

AAI is an equal opportunity employer and recreation provider.

Further Background on the American Alpine Institute

Over the years the Institute has played a major role in the American climbing industry. The company was founded by its President Dunham Gooding in 1975, and was a pioneer in technical instruction in rock and ice in the US and in leading its clients on major technical climbs in the US, Andes, and Himalaya. Early on its reputation was solidly established as a teaching guide service and climbing school, far outside the European tradition of teaching clients just enough skills to haul them up and down mountains.

That Institute ethic has been continuously embodied for the 42-year life of the Institute, and accreditation reviewers as well as major publications continue to find that AAI provides the most intense and rewarding educational experiences among America's guide services. While AAI trains hundreds of beginners every year in both technical skills and their development of keen mountain judgment, the Institute offers many courses in the upper technical levels of climbing including big wall courses, efficiency clinics, technical leadership training, professional rescue training, and a diverse and rewarding program for those who want to become professional mountain guides.

Public Service

AAI guides have served as teachers and examiners in the American Mountain Guides Association's Certification Program, and one of them has served as national chairman of the program. AAI's president and two other former Institute employees have served as president of the AMGA board of directors. AAI's Director of Operations currently serves on the board. AAI is a member of the Outdoor Industry Association (OIA) and AAI's president has served as the president of this trade association that represents the interests of the \$120 billion (annual revenue) American human powered outdoor sports industry.

AAI has also participated in OIA's manufacturer's standards committee, and two AAI staffers served for years as voting members on national ASTM standards committees for climbing equipment. One Institute staff member has served as chair of the National Summit Committee on Rescue and on the national steering committee of the NPS/USFS/BLM Leave No Trace program. AAI's president was one of 30 members chosen nationally to serve on a committee to design the goals and programs the National Park Service Centennial celebration in 2017. In sum AAI is very involved with the issues, programs, and legislation that effect mountaineering and technical climbing and the broader conscientious use of public lands.

AAI is a great place to work and provides opportunity to work with a very skilled and enthusiastic staff as well as with a well-educated, highly motivated, and very enjoyable clientele. The work at AAI involves a great deal of personal contact with colleagues and clients, and for those in equipment services, significant contact with all the major manufacturers and distributors in the climbing industry.

Equipment Services Management

Although AAI is considered to be one of the major guide services of north America, it is nonetheless a small business, and even managers must not be afraid of or be above rudimentary, hands-on activity, be it dealing with a van maintenance problem, cleaning up the shop, or packaging and mailing out a gear

order. As one would expect, when equipment specialists are on the job during the summer, as much routine activity as possible is delegated to them. But during the non-summer months, the equipment managers must handle some basic duties.

A good job has been done by our equipment staff over the years. The services provided to our clients have steadily become more sophisticated, the precision in running the shop has steadily increased, the volume of sales and rentals handled by the same number of people has increased, and the Guide's Choice field testing program has been expanded.

As well as it has been run, however, there still is significant room for expansion. The testing program alone, having already received significant national publicity, could become an even more important program. We would also like to expand our publications program, which relates both to the testing program and more generally to advice on equipment selection and use.

The Alpine Institute has been recognized by the media as the best all around climbing school and guide service in North America. The company is widely recognized and respected both by the public and the climbing industry, and the equipment services division has the opportunity both to take advantage of that excellent reputation and, through its own valuable programs, make its own contributions to that good standing and high stature.

AAI's Equipment Services

The retail operation began many years ago when many AAI clients, coming to the North Cascades for summer snow and ice climbing from throughout the country, were unable to equip themselves with suitable gear in their home area. Not surprisingly, warm clothing and foul weather gear disappears from retailers' shelves in many parts of the country just as the best snow and ice climbing begins in the Pacific Northwest.

The AAI equipment shop has also been serving client needs by being able to advise program participants very expertly on gear selection and by offering for sale and for rent what AAI has found to be the best gear in each product area. Whether they are selecting gear in person or over the phone with an AAI catalog in hand, the expert advice from AAI equipment personnel combined with an impeccably researched and carefully stocked inventory, assures clients of the opportunity to equip themselves appropriately before they begin their next climb or expedition.

The Institute has operated an equipment testing program since 1979, and in those 39 years the program has come to constitute one of the important roles that the company plays in the climbing industry. Its two primary goals are to provide consumers with objective evaluations of the equipment that they find in the marketplace and to provide manufacturers with objective evaluations and comparisons, which, if they choose, may be of use in modification of current products or design of future ones. The testing program is supervised by AAI's equipment managers, and tests are conducted by a core group of guides. The manager may also be a tester depending on his or her background relevant to the gear and to practical issues related to season and best location for the testing.

When AAI finds a product to embody excellence of design and performance, the Institute grants use of its "Guides' Choice" award. This seal is designed to signify gear that is at the top of its product category because of its design, functionality, and durability. In sum, the equipment testing program assists the

general public in selecting gear, assists manufacturers in design, functional, and durability issues, and assures that the gear used and sold by the Institute is the best currently being manufactured.

In summary, Equipment Services staff members provide their service in three basic areas:

- the guide service and climbing school;
- the clients who climb with AAI; and
- the professional guides who work for the Institute.

Behind the success of all these services are the knowledge, experience, and good judgment of the equipment staff and the ongoing research and testing of equipment carried out by the Institute.

**It's a great team effort with a lot to be proud of in education, research, and public service.
We hope you will consider joining us!**