

American Alpine Institute^{Ltd.}

Administrative Internship

Intro to the Job:

The AAI Internship position was designed for a creative and energetic person who has great enthusiasm for people and for climbing. The duties of this job include the full range of typical office operations. Because the person filling this role will gradually learn the details of AAI programs and gain the knowledge to skillfully counsel and register clients on the telephone, a good mountaineering background is required. The Institute is composed of a highly motivated and dedicated staff serving an enthusiastic clientele from all over North America and abroad.

Intro to Bellingham:

Many find Bellingham to be a wonderful place to live. With an extensive system of parks and trails, good outdoor fun is right out the door for runners as well as road and mountain bikers (the American Hiking Society named Bellingham "Trail Town USA," along with only 29 other communities). Kayakers can put in just 12 blocks from our office, where the end of the road meets the inland waters of the Pacific Ocean in northern Puget Sound. Travel east and you can be climbing on a massive glacier on Mt. Baker in two hours. Drive north two hours to Squamish, British Columbia, and enjoy some of the best rock climbing in western North America.

Outside magazine ranked Bellingham #1 in the US for living in a place with great opportunity for outdoor sports. Bellingham is ranked 8th in the US by the Environmental Protection Agency for municipal governments committed to buying green energy. And the city is ranked number two in the U.S. for three other things: highest per capita use of the public library (we're all trying to expand our minds); highest per capita number of arts organizations (we're all trying to find ourselves); and the highest per capita number of espresso shops (we're all trying to stay awake in the process). In all seriousness, if you move here you will become part of a part of a bright, energized, sports-minded, and environmentally conscious community that also happens to be very warm and friendly.

Job Summary:

Administrative internship position with growing responsibility in:

- Public contact
- Support of marketing efforts
- Basic office operations

Growing duties in the areas of:

- Dealing with initial client contact and accurately recording their name and address in the AAI database
- Taking phone reservations from climbers and then shepherding them through the registration process
- Helping clients choose between programs based on their background and goals

Job Requirements:

- A general familiarity with word processing and data base programs; an ability to type accurately and with good speed
- An ability to speak articulately, comfortably, and clearly on the phone, conveying sincere interest and enthusiasm in the topics being discussed
- An ability to write clearly, creatively, and effectively.
- An ability to become familiar with, describe, and compare the Institute's various climbing programs
- An ability to attend to routine office management duties
- Experience, skill, and understanding of mountaineering to a degree that will eventually allow you to understand AAI programs thoroughly and counsel clients on their choice of programs
- An ability to work with a high level of energy, commitment, and personal responsibility

Pay and Hours:

- This is an unpaid internship.
- Our internship programs are designed to work in conjunction with a school schedule. If your school is on semesters, then the internship will reflect that. If it is on quarters, then it will reflect that.
- The schedule is variable, but we ask that interns put in 16-20 hours per week.

An Introduction to the American Alpine Institute

The American Alpine Institute is an international mountain climbing school and guide service. It offers courses in rock, snow, and ice climbing for those just beginning to climb as well as for those with experience who want to advance their skills. AAI also offers guided climbs and expeditions on which its clients apply all their climbing techniques and good judgment in an effort to climb one or more major summits.

Domestic & International Programs

Part of the appeal of the Institute to our clients is our ability to teach and guide them at all technical levels and, additionally, to guide them at any technical level throughout the world. AAI climbers also find great reward in the philosophy of and commitment by AAI guides to always help each climber expand their climbing skill and judgment regardless of the context. Even on guided climbs, we don't simply get people to the summit – we help them become better climbers in the process.

The single largest areas of operation for the Institute are in Washington, Nevada, California, and Alaska. In Washington's Cascades, most courses and guided climbs begin in early May -- when the weather improves and the mountains come into good shape -- and continue until early October. In Nevada's Red Rock Canyon, we offer programs from late September through early May. In California's Sierra, we offer programs year round, while in Alaska our focus is on the best weather months of May, June, and the first half of July. We also operate in many other areas: in the summer we have programs in Canada, France, Switzerland, Russia, Tanzania, Peru, and Bolivia, while in the fall, winter, and spring we have programs in Colorado, Canada, Ecuador, New Zealand, Chile, Argentina, Tanzania, Antarctica, and a variety of locations in Asia.

Great geographical diversity of programs is part of the appeal that the Institute has to its clients. We climb the 7 Summits, and – large and small – we also trek, teach, and climb on the most beautiful mountains in the world, from Alaska to New Zealand and from Chile to China.

A combination of this technical and geographical diversity with a dedication to making every program that we operate packed with learning and rewarding experiences, has earned high regard for the Institute throughout the world. *Outside* magazine termed AAI the “best all around guide service and climbing school in North America,” *Travel and Leisure* rated it “America's top climbing school,” and Matt Mooney of the New York Times calls AAI “the Harvard of climbing schools.” Extremely happy clients, many repeat customers, and a staff of dedicated guides have built that reputation.

Facilities

All of the Institute's operations are managed out of our office (a converted house in the Fairhaven Historical District) in Bellingham, Washington. Working here are a director, an operations manager, three program coordinators, a graphic artist, a bookkeeper, an equipment manager, and an assistant equipment manager. In the summer months we also have an administrative assistant and three equipment specialists.

The Equipment Department fills a second AAI building (also a converted house), with retail space on one floor and rental gear and guide service gear on another. The Equipment Department outfits the guide service with technical gear, rents equipment to clients and the general public, and sells gear to clients, guides, and the general public.

Leadership in the Outdoor Industry

As well as working hard for its clients, AAI also works hard for the outdoor industry and has been a major creator and shaper of programs and policy within it. Several guides serve as teachers and examiners in the American Mountain Guides Association's Certification Program; two AAI guides have served as national chairmen of the program; and AAI's president also served as a board member and president of AMGA for a decade.

AAI is a member of the Outdoor Industry Association (OIA), the trade association of America's human-powered outdoor sports industry, and AAI's director served on its board and as its president for many years. AAI has participated in OIA's manufacturer's standards committees, and three AAI staffers have served as members who vote on ASTM standards for climbing equipment manufactured in the U.S. One Institute staff member served as a delegate to the National Summit on Outdoor Recreation and on the National Steering Committee of the Leave No Trace (LNT) program that established LNT as a non-profit organization. One AAI staff member also served as Chairman of the National Summit Committee on Search and Rescue.

Work Atmosphere

AAI is a great place to work. It provides an opportunity to work with a group of great people who care about their work, each other, and the environment in which we live. It is a skilled and very enthusiastic group that is extremely active in a variety of outdoor sports (especially climbing and skiing, but also mountain biking, running, sea kayaking, and fishing). Many long-term friendships and climbing partnerships originate here.

We are also privileged to work with a well-educated, highly motivated, and very enjoyable clientele. It's a lot of fun helping AAI climbers prepare for great adventures around the world. The work at AAI involves a great deal of personal contact with AAI clients, many in person and many more on the telephone. Variety is also characteristic:

from designing marketing and promotional materials and strategies, to program development and scheduling, to routine data entry and brochure mailings, all aspects of administering to and corresponding with our clients are conducted on a friendly, enthusiastic, and professional basis from our centralized office and equipment shop.

Internship Position

The Institute is seeking someone to work in a range of administrative services that encompass public contact, support of our marketing efforts, and basic office operations. The job typically starts with routine tasks, but as familiarity with the business and its programs increases, the intern will gradually have more contact with the public (primarily via the telephone). Initially this will involve taking requests for program catalogs, while eventually it will include counseling prospective clients on which program will best serve their needs and interests.

The Institute office functions in three fundamental ways, and eventually, we want the intern to be involved with all three of them. They are:

1. Dealing with initial client contact – providing a friendly and helpful response, sending a catalog and any other requested materials quickly, and accurately recording their name and address in the AAI database.
2. Taking phone reservations from climbers and then shepherding them through the registration process. There are many elements involved in this process (from the need to provide them with equipment lists and travel information, to the need to provide and track forms on air arrangements, travel insurance, and liability release), and each element is a very important part of the whole.
3. Answering questions that clients have once they've read the program descriptions. In its most complex and interesting form, this will involve helping clients choose between programs based on their background and goals.

As the new person begins their work, they will be involved primarily in what might be called the fundamental and objective aspects of the first and third areas. As time goes on and knowledge grows, this person will be involved in the more complex aspects of the first and second, as well as gradually with the third.

Starting Dates and Finishing Dates

Applicants are encouraged to call the office to determine when there are internship openings. Most of our openings tend to be seasonal in conjunction with school schedules.

Job Requirements:

To successfully fill this position you will need:

1. A general familiarity with word processing and database programs; an ability to type accurately and with good speed;
2. An ability to speak articulately, comfortably, and clearly on the phone, conveying sincere interest and enthusiasm in the topics being discussed;
3. An ability to write clearly, creatively, and effectively;
4. An ability to become familiar with, describe, and compare the Institute's various climbing programs;
5. An ability to attend to routine office management duties (including filing, recording client and trip information in the data base, tracking of forms, etc.) with thoroughness and accuracy;
6. Experience, skill, and understanding of mountaineering to a degree that will allow you to understand AAI programs thoroughly and counsel clients on their choice of programs (the new staff member will work into this very gradually, but a mountaineering background is essential for this to occur);
7. An ability to work with a high level of energy, commitment, and personal responsibility.

Work Schedule:

Typically an intern will work 16 to 20 hours per week for the duration of the internship. The number of hours may be amended to meet the needs of your specific internship. The days of the week of the internship and the hours per day are flexible.

Benefits:

- Letters of recommendation from the operations manager and the president.
- The opportunity to go on a minimum of one AAI climbing course in the Cascades and depending on the schedule, perhaps more. The value of a six-day course is \$1160 and the value of a twelve-day course is \$2,190.
- Purchase of mountaineering clothing and equipment for personal use at discounted, wholesale, or pro-deal prices.

To Apply, Log Onto:

<https://alpineinstitute.wufoo.com/forms/project-internship-application/>