



AMERICAN MOUNTAIN GUIDES ASSOCIATION
ANNUAL REPORT 2023



THE AMERICAN MOUNTAIN GUIDES ASSOCIATION (AMGA)

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

2023 was a pivotal year at the AMGA. The year began with the news of a financial loss in 2022 that would have significant consequences for AMGA in 2023 and beyond. Like a guide evaluating a difficult move on a challenging rock climb, the AMGA made a careful assessment of the situation, considered the options available, and looked inward for the resolve to keep climbing. This is what guides do. They stay calm, they identify solutions, and they dig deep to make the next move. And the move after that.

In this moment of introspection, the AMGA cultivated a renewed commitment to the mission of the organization. The Board of Directors and staff developed a laser-like focus on prudent financial management, serving AMGA students through industry-leading education, and upholding international guiding standards.

By the end of 2023, the AMGA enrolled a record number of students, welcomed three new AMGA Accredited Businesses, and executed a financial turnaround that positions the organization for long-term, mission driven success.

Read on to learn more about AMGA's progress in 2023—and the bright future that lies ahead.



Matt Wade
Executive Director
American Mountain Guides Association

AMGA MISSION

*To be the leader in education,
standards, and advocacy for
professional guides and
climbing instructors.*



MOUNTAIN GUIDE PROGRAMS (MGP)

Training guides is the heart of what we do.

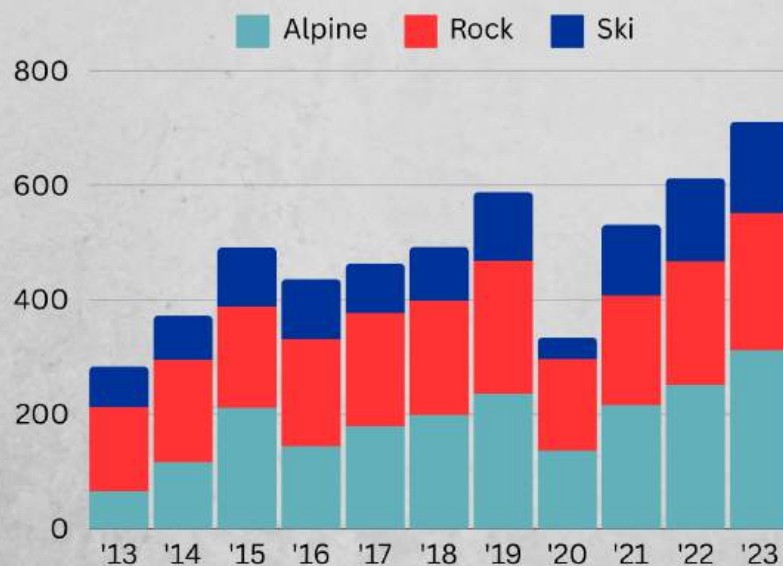
In 2023, a record 710 students participated in MGP courses and exams. Additionally, the 200th American Mountain Guide/IFMGA Mountain Guide became certified—a monumental achievement for American guides.

Thank you to all AMGA students and Instructor Team members for making a strong commitment to furthering guide training and education in the United States.

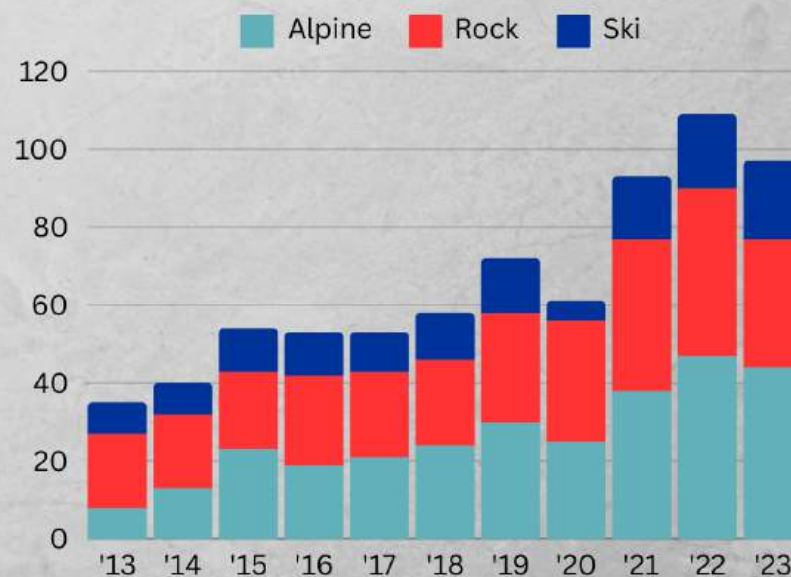


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STUDENTS BY DISCIPLINE ANNUALLY



PROGRAMS BY DISCIPLINE ANNUALLY





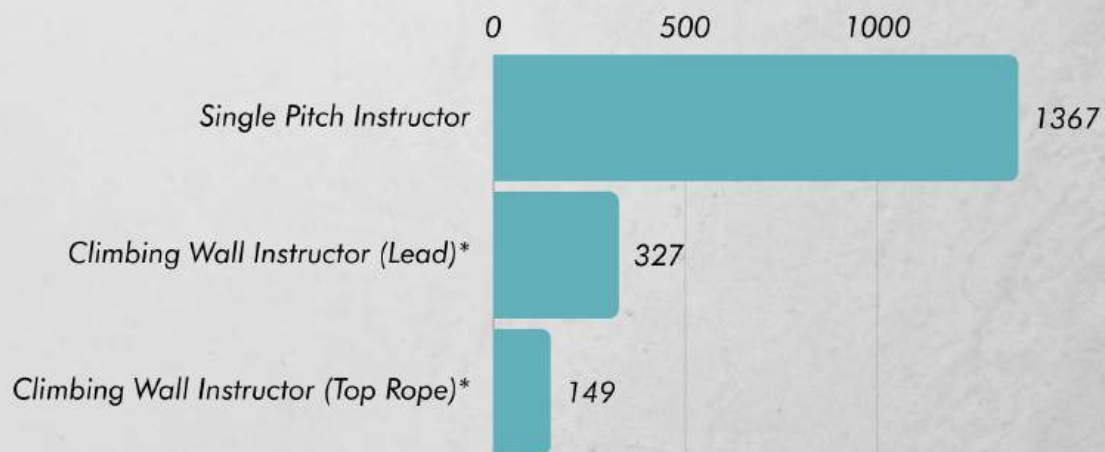
2023 MEMBERSHIP

4693
TOTAL AMGA
MEMBERSHIP

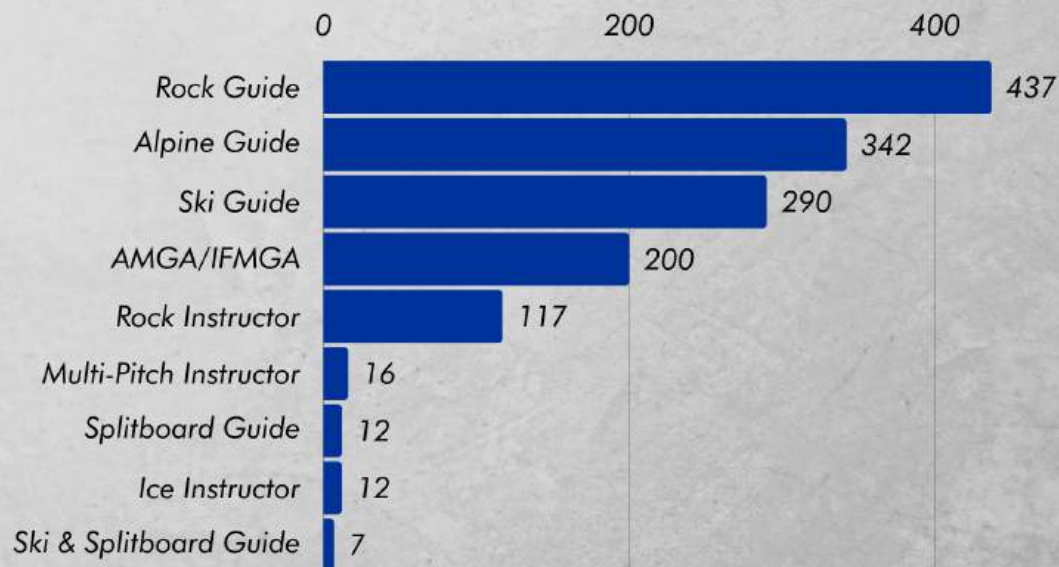
2427
APPRENTICE &
ASSISTANT
GUIDES, & NON-
CERTIFIED
INSTRUCTORS

2266
CERTIFIED
GUIDES AND
INSTRUCTORS

CERTIFICATIONS HELD IN 2023 (CLIMBING INSTRUCTOR PROGRAM)



CERTIFICATIONS HELD IN 2023 (MOUNTAIN GUIDE PROGRAM)



*Number of CWI certifications corrected 4/29/2024



REDUCING BARRIERS

AMGA AFFINITY PROGRAMS

AMGA Affinity Programs play a crucial role in fostering an inclusive environment and breaking down barriers to empower individuals who may have traditionally faced limited access or representation in the industry. AMGA Affinity Programs provide like-minded spaces, mentorship, and networking that enables aspiring guides and instructors from underrepresented communities to feel supported while they develop their skills and pursue careers in the field.

In 2023, the AMGA offered seven programs serving 38 students with scholarships totaling over \$57,000. Scholarships are provided by a distinguished lineup of corporate partners including The North Face, Black Diamond, Arc'teryx, and Mountain Hardwear. Their support facilitates a welcoming and financially-accessible pathway into the profession that might not have existed otherwise.

AFFINITY PROGRAMS IMPACT 2018-2023

\$253k SCHOLARSHIPS

231 PARTICIPANTS

34 PROGRAMS



©EDDIE NEGRETE

"The power of affinity programs became evident to me during those early interactions.

The program served as a bridge that connected people who had felt like outsiders in the broader context of climbing and outdoor communities. It was a place where we could not only learn the technical skills of climbing but also find a sense of belonging and acceptance that had often eluded us in other settings."

-Esteban Usuga 2023 Affinity Program Participant, AMGA Certified Single Pitch Instructor



ADVOCACY & POLICY

ACCESS TO PUBLIC LANDS

The AMGA Advocacy and Policy Department works to expand opportunities for the public to visit public lands with a guide. In recent years, the AMGA has been instrumental in the development of the Simplifying Outdoor Access for Recreation Act (SOAR Act). The SOAR Act would make significant changes to the outfitter-guide permitting systems of the federal land agencies (National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, etc.). The changes would make it easier for guides to obtain permits to lead trips on federal land and make it easier for the land agencies to administer those permits.

The AMGA is also a strong supporter of the Protecting America's Rock Climbing Act (PARC Act). The PARC Act would ensure that recreational climbing—including the placement, use, and maintenance of fixed anchors—is allowable in Congressionally designated wilderness areas.

In 2023, the SOAR Act and PARC Act were included in the first-ever package of recreation bills to be developed by Congress. In the Senate, the package is called the America's Outdoor Recreation Act (AORA). In the House of Representatives, the package is called the Expanding Public Lands Outdoor Recreation Experiences Act (EXPLORE Act). The AMGA worked with staff from the Senate and House Committees to prepare the SOAR Act and PARC Act for inclusion in the recreation packages. The AMGA is advocating for the passage of a unified recreation package by the end of 2024.

AMGA Advocacy At Work in 2023:

- Comments submitted on NPS and USFS Draft Climbing Guidance
- Testimony submitted to House Natural Resources Hearing on EXPLORE Act
- Collaborated with Black Canyon National Park to remove unnecessary limits on guided climbing service day allocations
- Collaborated with Salt Lake Ranger District to reinstate temporary permits for guided recreation after a moratorium was announced





2023 FINANCIALS

AMGA 2023 REVENUE \$3.58 MILLION

- 68% revenue from programs
- 15% of revenue from membership
- 13% of revenue from fundraising
- 4% of revenue from other

AMGA 2023 EXPENSE \$3.09 MILLION

- 68% of expense from programs
- 12% of expense from membership
- 4% of expense from fundraising
- 14% of expense from general and administrative
- 2% of expense from scholarships

80% OF EXPENSES DIRECTLY SUPPORT THE DELIVERY OF PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

GROWTH IN AMGA ANNUAL REVENUE





2023 FINANCIALS

2023 REVENUE VS. EXPENSE BY CATEGORY



AMGA 2023 net operating income was \$344,000

The 2023 net operating income has been set aside in reserve for the long-term financial health of AMGA

* Mountain Guide Program, Climbing Instructor Program, Accreditation



LOOKING AHEAD

In 2024, the AMGA will be undertaking two exciting and ambitious projects.

AMGA ALPINE GUIDE COURSE REDESIGN

To meet the needs of guides and the guiding industry, the AMGA will be redesigning the AMGA Alpine Guide Course to provide specialized training earlier in the alpine guide progression.

- The AMGA Alpine Guide Course will be split into two modules: a snow/glacier module and an alpine rock module.
- The new snow/glacier module will enable a guide to more quickly gain qualification to guide popular snow and glacier climbs such as those on Mt. Rainier, Mt. Baker, and Mt. Washington.
- The new alpine rock module will enable a guide to more quickly gain qualification to guide in popular non-glaciated areas such as the Tetons, Colorado Rockies, and parts of the Sierra Nevada.
- The two new modules will be incorporated into the AMGA Alpine Guide Program in 2025.

AMGA WEBSITE AND DATABASE UPGRADE

In today's digitally-driven world, a modern website is critical for effective communication. In 2024, the AMGA will be upgrading the AMGA website to enhance the look and feel, improve functionality, and strengthen communication with the AMGA membership and the public.

"Some of the new technical skills I learned took some time to really integrate fully into my arsenal of knowledge. Once they did I felt more confident and empowered in my role as a guide and yearned for more."

-Michael Hill, Scholarship Recipient,
Certified Single Pitch Instructor,
Apprentice Rock Guide



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PARTNERSHIPS

As we reflect on the accomplishments of 2023, we would like to highlight the pivotal support provided by AMGA corporate partners. The dedicated brands listed to the right have made a significant, direct impact on AMGA members and the guided public through their contributions to scholarships, Affinity Programs, and collaborative projects such as the Mountain Skills Technical Video Series.

Together, we were able to:

- Provide 20 Mountain Guide Program Scholarships
- Raise over \$25,000 in the AMGA Annual Silent Auction
- Offer seven AMGA Affinity Programs serving 38 students with scholarships totaling over \$57,000
- Support AMGA members with special access to the most high performing equipment, apparel, mapping tools, rescue services, communication devices, and business management software available today

BRAND PARTNERS

SUMMIT: \$35,000+



CIRQUE: \$15,000+



SPIRE: \$10,000+



CLIFF: \$6,000+



CRAG: \$4,000+



BUTTRESS: \$2,000+



CAIRN: \$1,000+





HOW TO SUPPORT

The American Mountain Guides Association is a 501(c)(3) educational nonprofit organization.

Please join us in furthering the mission of the AMGA: To be the leader in education, standards, and advocacy for professional guides and climbing instructors.

Every contribution to the AMGA is tax deductible to the extent allowable by law.

CHOOSE YOUR IMPACT

[DONATE TO THE AMGA](#)

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MEMBER](#)

[PLANNED OR ESTATE
GIVING](#)

[SUPPORT THE ANNUAL
SILENT AUCTION](#)

[BECOME A PARTNER](#)





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