



AMERICAN MOUNTAIN GUIDES ASSOCIATION
ANNUAL REPORT 2024



THE AMERICAN MOUNTAIN GUIDES ASSOCIATION (AMGA)

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The AMGA mission drives a robust set of core competencies—education, standard setting, and advocacy—that serve to advance the AMGA community and the guiding industry. The mission positions the organization to tackle big industry challenges while also serving individual guides with career development and community.

In 2024, the AMGA executed high-impact initiatives that touched on all three areas of the mission. On the advocacy front, the passage of the EXPLORE Act in December 2024 was a landmark achievement for guides that will give rise to a new era of increased access and streamlined permitting. In the realm of education, the AMGA redesigned the entrance to the Alpine Guide Program to provide terrain-specific training in snow and glacier guiding, and alpine rock guiding. The new programs will enable guides to quickly gain qualification to work in the classic alpine ranges and will better meet the needs of AMGA Accredited Businesses. As a standard-setting organization, the AMGA made important refinements to the AMGA Scope of Practice including the introduction of a terrain complexity scale.

Each of these initiatives will have a positive impact on guides' careers for years to come, but we're not stopping there. In 2024, the AMGA Board of Directors completed an intensive strategic planning process—with engagement from the AMGA membership—that will ensure the AMGA continues to support guides through education, standards, and advocacy into the future.

Read on to learn more about AMGA's progress in 2024 and the exciting 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.*

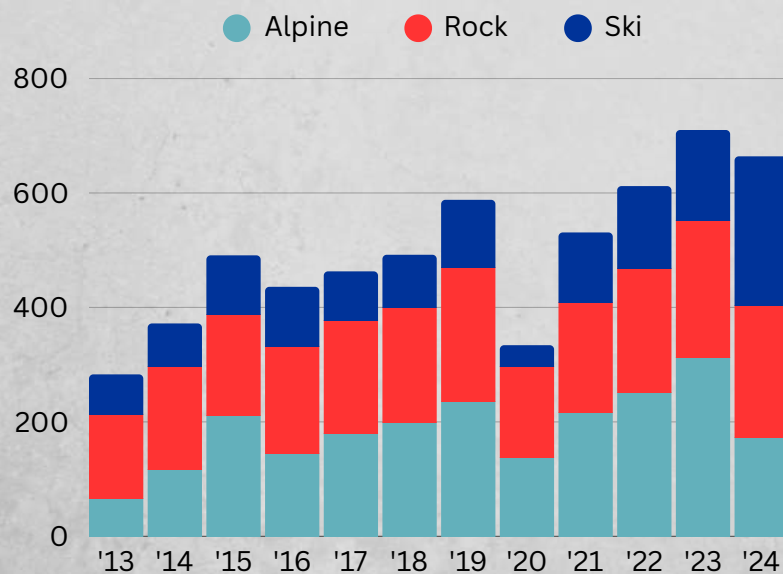


MOUNTAIN GUIDE PROGRAMS

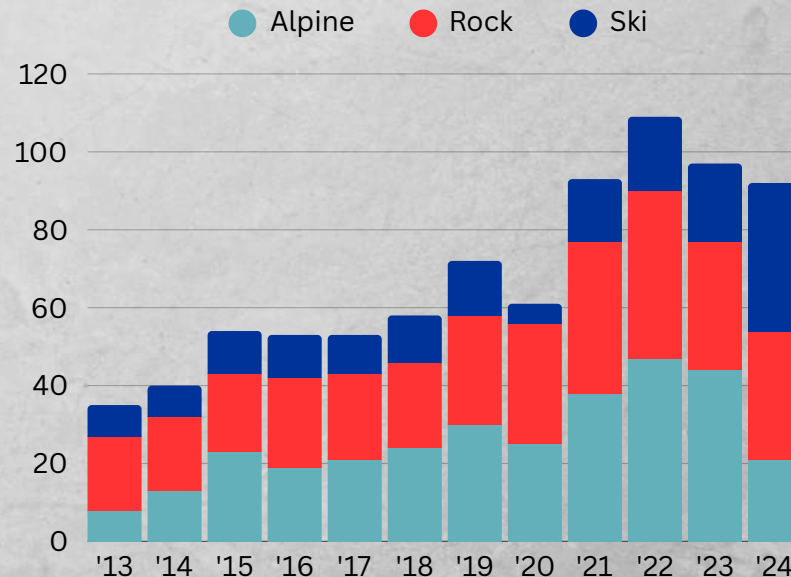
The AMGA Mountain Guide Program (MGP) provides comprehensive training for individuals pursuing careers in alpine, rock, and ski guiding. In 2024, guides from across the country continued to advance through the program, building their technical skills, refining decision-making, and growing as professionals in complex mountain environments. Whether working toward IFMGA certification or developing in a single discipline, participants engaged in hands-on education led by experienced AMGA Instructor Team members, contributing to a strong and connected guiding community.



STUDENTS BY DISCIPLINE ANNUALLY



PROGRAMS BY DISCIPLINE ANNUALLY





EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE

AMGA ALPINE GUIDE PROGRAM REDESIGN

Since the first AMGA Alpine Guide Course and Exam in 1991, the AMGA has been training and certifying guides to reach new heights—in the mountains, in their careers, and in providing exceptional alpine experiences for the public. Just as climbing and guiding have changed over the last 35 years, so have the educational needs of students and the hiring requirements of guide services. To meet the ever-changing needs of the guiding industry, in 2024, the AMGA embarked on a rigorous process to redesign the AMGA Alpine Guide Program. Two, new entry-level training modules were developed to enable students to enter the alpine discipline in their preferred area of focus: alpine snow and glacier guiding, or alpine rock guiding. The new format will enable guides to quickly gain qualification to work in the Pacific Northwest, Sierra, Rocky Mountains, and Northeast, and the training progression will better meet the needs of AMGA Accredited Businesses.

AMGA ALPINE GUIDE PROGRESSION

36 DAYS OF TRAINING

5 PROGRAMS

3 YEARS TO COMPLETION
(ON AVERAGE)



The first AMGA Alpine Guide Course and Exam in the North Cascades in 1991. PC John Cleary Collection



An AMGA Alpine Guide Course in the Front Range of Colorado in 2024. PC Buster Jesik



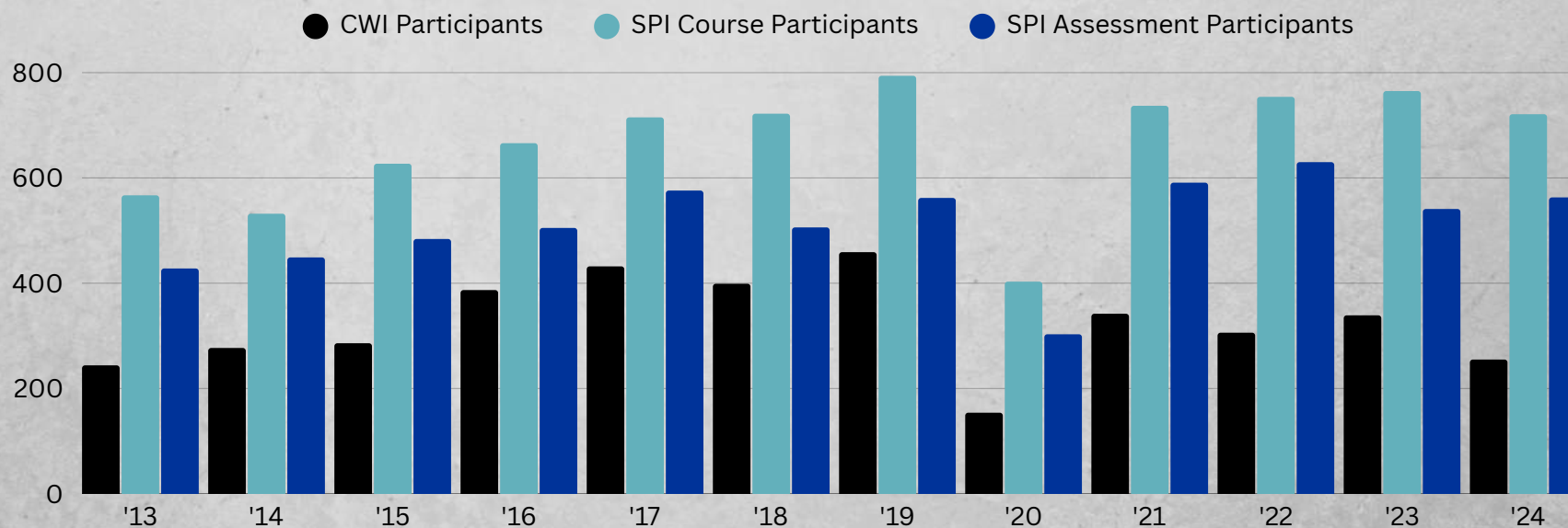
CLIMBING INSTRUCTOR PROGRAMS

The AMGA Climbing Instructor Program (CIP) plays a critical role in the professional landscape of climbing instruction, offering certification for those who teach and guide in single-pitch and climbing gym environments. For many, it serves as a foundational step into the guiding profession; for others, it is a career benchmark that leads to a lifetime of fulfilling work as an instructor.

In 2024, AMGA Single Pitch Instructor (SPI) programs remained one of the most widely attended AMGA programs, supporting instructors nationwide with training that emphasizes technical proficiency, risk management, and teaching excellence.

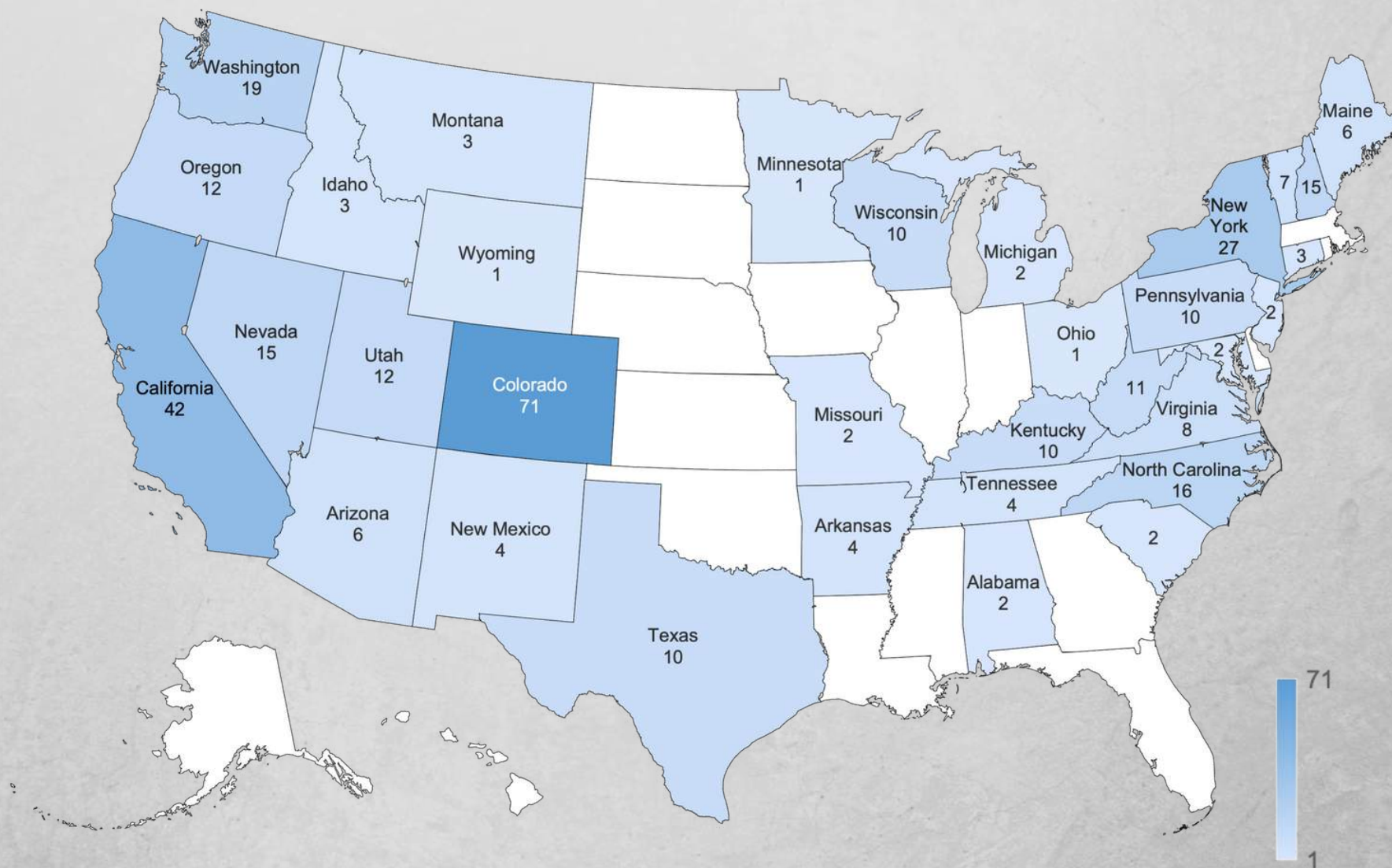


CLIMBING INSTRUCTOR PROGRAM STUDENTS BY PROGRAM ANNUALLY





CLIMBING INSTRUCTOR PROGRAMS



2024 SPI & CWI PROGRAMS BY LOCATION

SETTING STANDARDS

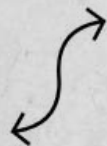
AMGA SCOPE OF PRACTICE

Since the AMGA Scope of Practice (SOP) was implemented in 2022, much has been learned through observation and feedback. In 2024, the AMGA reviewed the feedback received and developed a range of significant improvements to the Scope of Practice. The improvements simplify the SOP, make it inclusive of all training levels, address inconsistencies, and clarify the type of terrain a guide can work in through the development of a terrain complexity scale.

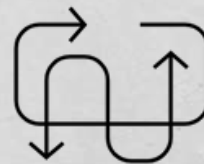
The new, updated version of the AMGA Scope of Practice will make it easier for guides to operate under a clearly defined set of minimum standards, which in turn will support public safety and a high-quality guided experience.



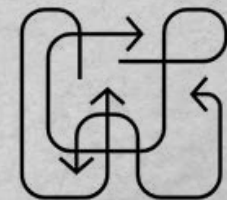
AMGA TERRAIN COMPLEXITY SCALE FOR ROCK AND ALPINE TERRAIN



Simple terrain can be managed with straightforward guide techniques. Approaches and descents have minimal or no short roping. Hazards rarely overlap at one time.



Challenging terrain requires more demanding guide techniques. Approaches and descents present extended short-roping challenges. Overlapping hazards that require management and prioritization may be common.



Complex terrain requires advanced guide techniques. Approaches and descents have significant sections of short roping. Creative solutions and multiple transitions are common. Many overlapping hazards may exist that require advanced awareness and prioritization.



2024 MEMBERSHIP

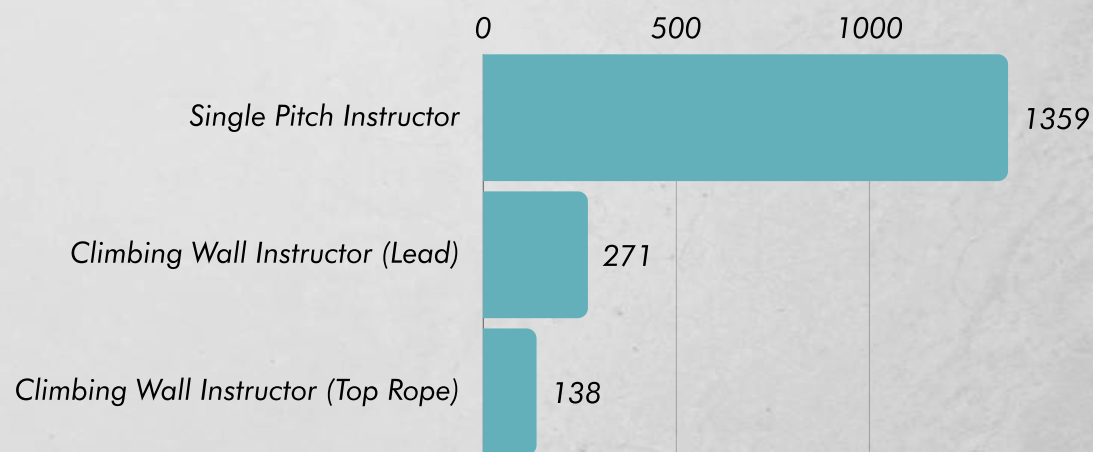
4626
TOTAL AMGA
MEMBERSHIP

2238
CERTIFIED
GUIDES &
INSTRUCTORS

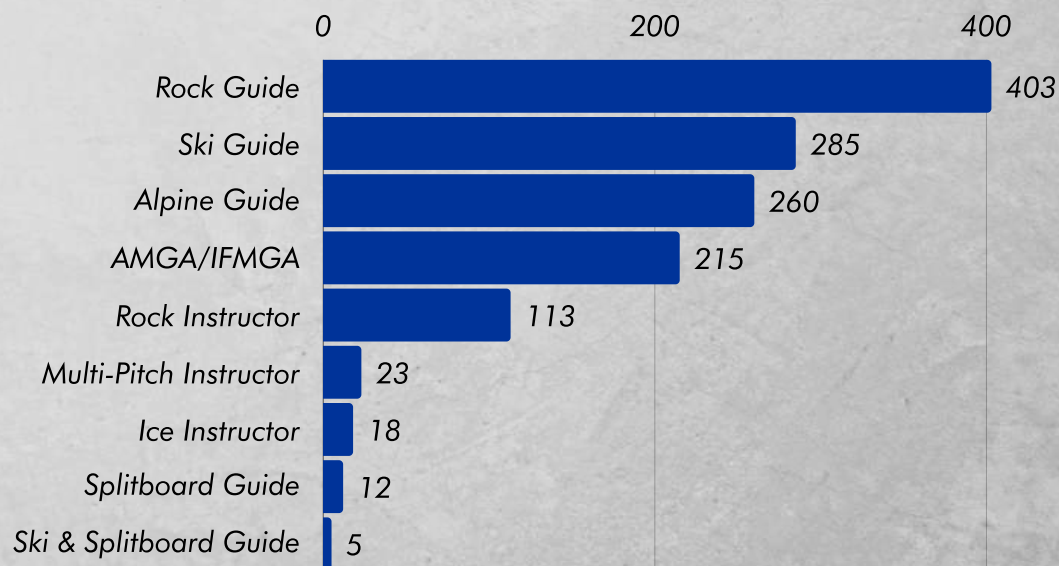
572
APPRENTICE &
ASSISTANT
GUIDES

1816
NEW MEMBERS,
SPI COURSE,
SUPPORTER
MEMBERS

CERTIFICATIONS HELD IN 2024 (CLIMBING INSTRUCTOR PROGRAM)



CERTIFICATIONS HELD IN 2024 (MOUNTAIN GUIDE PROGRAM)





REDUCING BARRIERS

AMGA AFFINITY PROGRAMS

AMGA Affinity Programs continue to play a crucial role in fostering an inclusive environment and breaking down barriers to empower individuals who have historically faced limited access or representation in the industry. These programs provide identity-affirming spaces, mentorship, and networking opportunities to ensure aspiring guides and instructors from underrepresented communities feel supported as they develop their skills and pursue careers in the field.

In 2024, the AMGA offered nine programs serving 49 students with scholarships totaling over \$83,000. We are thankful for the corporate partners and private donors who invest in these spaces to provide financial assistance to participants. By making these courses more accessible and inviting, we can support a diverse AMGA Membership to more accurately represent the guiding and instructing community.

AFFINITY PROGRAMS IMPACT 2018-2024

\$337k SCHOLARSHIPS

280 PARTICIPANTS

43 PROGRAMS



PC EDDIE NEGRETE

"This course solidified my desire to pursue guiding as a career. I gained invaluable technical skills, learned how to manage people in challenging environments, and formed lasting connections with four incredible women. This course and the opportunity it provided were truly unmatched—an unforgettable experience in every sense."

*-Fiorella Falquero-Donoso
2024 Affinity Program Participant*



ADVOCACY & POLICY

ACCESS TO PUBLIC LANDS

2024 will go down in history as a transformative year for guides' access to public lands. On December 19, 2024 the U.S. Congress passed the EXPLORE Act, a bipartisan package of recreation bills that includes the Protecting America's Rock Climbing Act (PARC Act) and the Simplifying Outdoor Access for Recreation Act (SOAR Act).

The PARC Act puts a stop to recent proposals that would have created a prohibition on climbing fixed anchors in wilderness areas. With the PARC Act now the law of the land, guides will be able to continue placing, using, and maintaining fixed anchors in wilderness areas across the country.

The SOAR Act will make it easier for guides to obtain permits to operate on federally managed public lands. The bill contains over a dozen provisions that will shorten the permitting process, increase the availability of user days, enhance guides' mobility, provide protections from liability, and contain permit costs. The AMGA has been involved in the development of the SOAR Act since 2017. AMGA Executive Director, Matt Wade, testified before the House Natural Resources Committee on behalf of the bill in 2019 and AMGA members sent hundreds of communications to lawmakers over the course of four congressional sessions.

The passage of these bills is a watershed moment that will give rise to a new era of opportunity for guides—and the public we serve. But on top of that, the legislative victories showcase the tremendous capacity of the AMGA community to organize around a common cause, advocate for our interests, and create the future we want to see.





2024 FINANCIALS

AMGA 2024 REVENUE \$3.60 MILLION

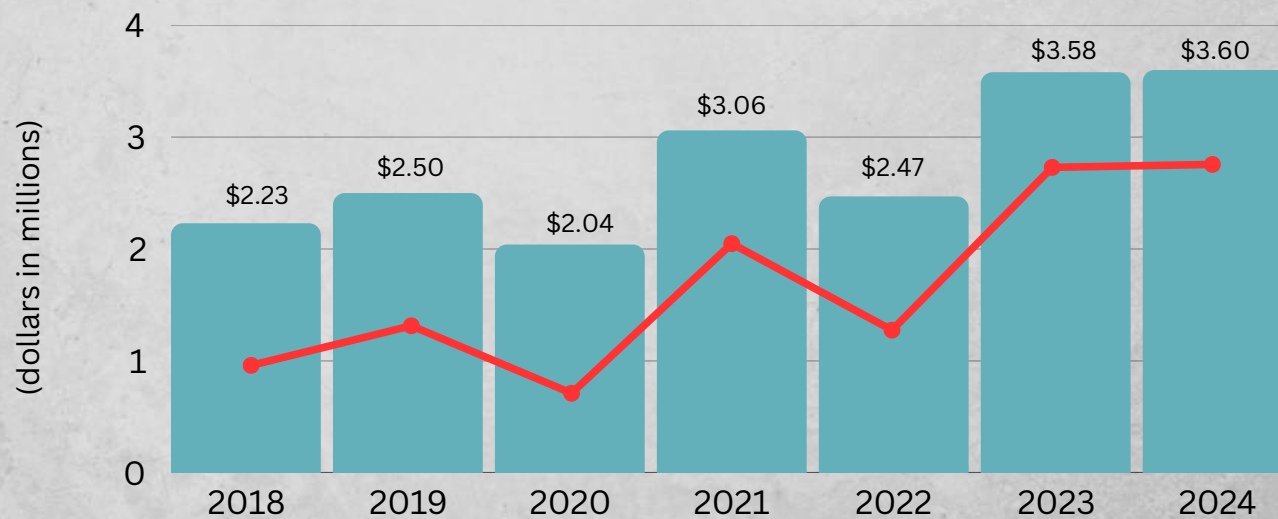
- 71% revenue from programs
- 16% of revenue from membership
- 13% of revenue from fundraising

AMGA 2024 EXPENSE \$3.40 MILLION

- 69% of expense from programs
- 11% of expense from membership
- 4% of expense from fundraising
- 14% of expense from general and administrative
- 2% of expense from scholarships

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

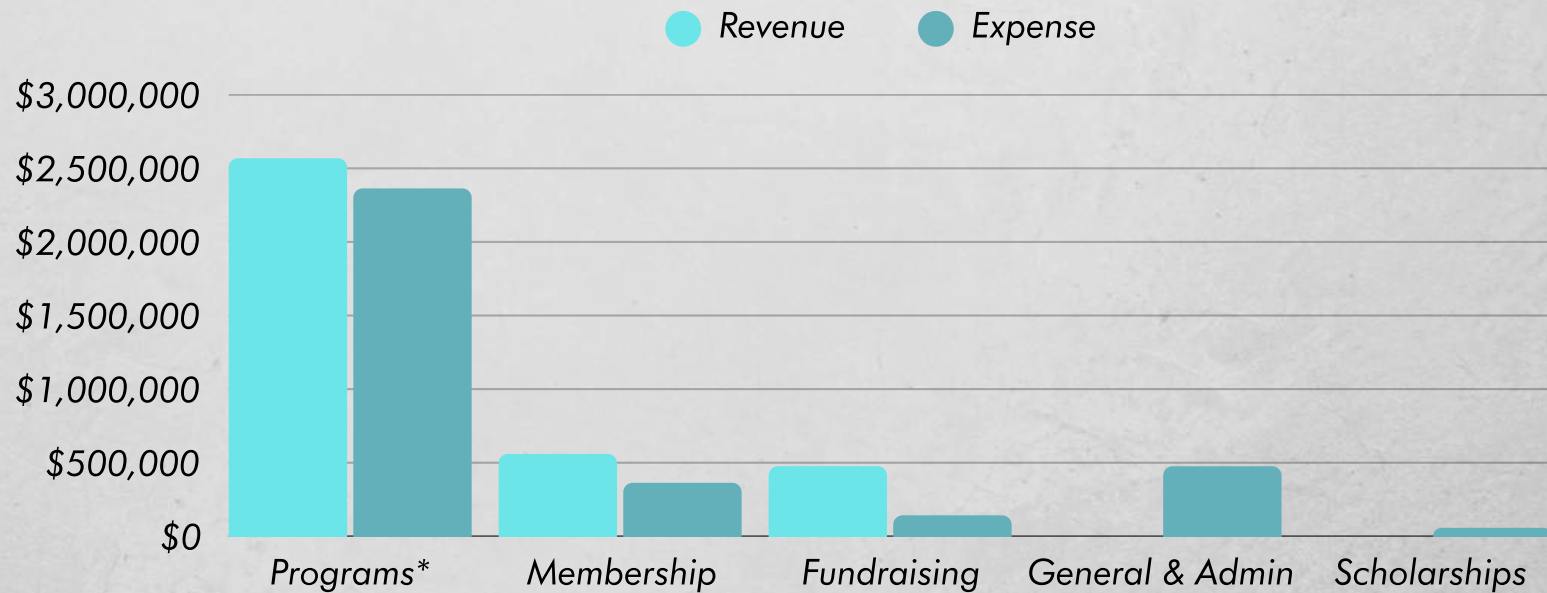
GROWTH IN AMGA ANNUAL REVENUE





2024 FINANCIALS

2024 REVENUE AND EXPENSE BY CATEGORY



AMGA 2024 net operating income was \$204,797

The 2024 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 TO THE FUTURE

AMGA 2025-2029 PRIORITIES

In 2024, the AMGA Board of Directors embarked on an ambitious strategic planning initiative to develop a set of 5-year priorities. After surveying the AMGA membership, the board identified the following priorities for 2025-2029:

- **Public Lands Access** - increase access to public lands for guides and advocate for guides with land managers
- **Marketing AMGA Training & Certification** - produce a marketing campaign to educate the public on the advantages of hiring AMGA trained or certified guides
- **Course Accessibility** - improve access to AMGA programs by reducing financial barriers (grants, student loans, etc.)
- **Finance** - continue to build the AMGA reserve fund
- **Prerequisites/EEC** - update program prerequisites and develop essential eligibility criteria for all programs
- **Risk Management** - complete a comprehensive risk management review
- **Ski Program Review** - update the ski guide program to improve educational outcomes, increase access, and meet industry needs
- **Staff Support** - Expand human resources support for the AMGA staff and promote the continued development of the AMGA Instructor Team

"I learned to trust my ability to move guests through complicated transitions in consequential terrain while managing the pressure of examination and time."

-Kody Yudkin, Apprentice Alpine Guide, Assistant Rock Guide, Apprentice Ski Guide





PARTNERSHIPS

As we look back on the accomplishments of 2024, we're proud to recognize the critical impact we've been able to make with the support of AMGA corporate partners. These dedicated brands played a key role in advancing our mission—positively impacting AMGA members and the guided public through their support of scholarships, Affinity Programs, and collaborative efforts like the Mountain Skills Technical Video Series.

Together, we were able to:

- Provide 29 Mountain Guide Program Scholarships
- Raise more than \$27,000 in the AMGA Annual Silent Auction
- Offer nine AMGA Affinity Programs serving 49 students with scholarships totaling over \$80,000
- Continue supporting AMGA members with special access to top-tier equipment, apparel, mapping tools, rescue services, communication devices, and business management software

BRAND PARTNERS

SUMMIT: \$35,000+



PEAK: \$25,000+



CIRQUE: \$15,000+



SPIRE: \$10,000+



CLIFF: \$6,000+



CRAG: \$4,000+



BUTTRESS: \$2,000+



CAIRN: \$1,000+





THANK YOU DONORS

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Paylocity
Scott Soden & Alpina
Capital
Shumin Wu
Steven Sloss
Timothy Taylor

HOW TO SUPPORT THE AMGA

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](#)

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GIVING](#)

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For more ways to support the AMGA, contact claudia@amga.com



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