



Emerging Leaders Program: Summer Associates (Multiple Roles)

Position Announcement - September 4, 2026

Compensation: \$23.00/hour, temporary, non-exempt

Priority application date: October 16, 2026

Season dates: February - September 2027

- February through May 2027, 10-15 hours per month
 - Including 8 hours in-person on February 20, March 20, April 17 and May 15
- June 14 through September 3, 2027, 40 hours/week
 - Including Saturday June 26, 2027
- *See each position description for additional availability requirements*

Base of operations: WTA Seattle Office*

About Washington Trails Association

Washington Trails Association (WTA) is the nation's largest state-based trail nonprofit. For 60 years, we've been mobilizing public lands advocates, trail stewards and on-the-ground hiking experts in pursuit of our vision of Trails for Everyone Forever. Each year, with the support of over 24,000 donating members, WTA staff and over 3,500 volunteers perform over 150,000 hours of trail maintenance across the state. Through our online Hiking Guide and Trailblazer app, we help 4.6 million people find trails, from everyday adventures to backcountry explorations. Our vision depends on fostering an organization and outdoor community where all people are welcome, represented and included. Together we can ensure there are trails for everyone, forever.

Emerging Leaders Program Summer Associates Overview

WTA is committed to creating systemic change in the outdoor recreation industry by providing an entry point for early professionals from communities with less exposure to and experience in the outdoors. This program offers hands-on learning while supporting WTA's work and builds leadership skills to support future career interests in natural resource stewardship, outdoor recreation and environmental nonprofit work.

Summer Associates will participate in community-building, networking and professional development activities throughout their period of employment, while also building connections with one another, WTA and our community partners. Associates who complete the program will be given priority hiring for future open positions at WTA that align with their skills and interests for up to 2 years.

Experience, Skills, Knowledge and Values

- This program is designed for early career professionals with little to no work experience in the outdoor, recreation or nonprofit sectors. If you have extensive experience in any of these areas, please consider applying for another WTA position
- Demonstrated commitment to [WTA's mission](#) and values on [diversity, equity and inclusion](#)
- Demonstrated ability to create a group/community space where every member (people of diverse races, ages, genders, sexual orientations, abilities and economic backgrounds) feels included and valued
- A deep understanding of experiences and community issues affecting Black, Indigenous, people of color (BIPOC); preferably with understanding of experiences of BIPOC folks in outdoor spaces
- Demonstrated ability to work both independently and as a member of a team as these roles will involve both in person work in a variety of spaces and remote work
- Demonstrated ability to accept and integrate feedback graciously and give effective feedback to peers

Program Schedule Overview

By applying, you agree that you are available for the entirety of the program on the following dates:

- **February through May 2027: 10-15 hours per month**
 - Including 8 hour in-person days on February 20, March 20, April 17 and May 15
 - Additional hours of remote work will be required the week leading up to each of these in-person sessions but can be done at various times to accommodate each individual's schedule
 - Reliable internet for remote work will be necessary. If technology is a barrier to applying, we can work with candidates to find WTA-provided technology options
- **June 14 through September 3, 2027: 40 hours per week (mix in-person & remote)**
 - Including 8 hour in-person day on Saturday, June 26, 2027 for Washington Trails Day
 - WTA has a hybrid work model of 2 days in-person per week (Tuesdays and Thursdays) at our Seattle office* and remote work on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays
 - There is a 2-night backpacking trip in July. WTA can provide necessary gear for the trip.
- **Some Associate roles will require weekend work and all have different commitments for in-person and virtual work hours. Please read the job descriptions carefully**

Compensation

Compensation is \$23.00 per hour. Positions are eligible for sick leave and become eligible for paid holidays, health stipend, transportation (ORCA pass) and an employer-match retirement plan after June 14, 2027. For more information about WTA's benefits, please visit our website: www.wta.org/benefits.

The Associate is responsible for their own transportation to worksites or carpool location and a reliable mode of transportation will be necessary. When using a personal vehicle for transportation to a worksite that is not the base of operations, mileage reimbursement is provided up to 250 miles per round trip from the base of operations to the worksite or carpooling location. Carpooling options may vary depending on trail project location. If you have barriers, questions or concerns about transportation we can talk about additional options during the interview process. For the 2-night backpacking trip this position is paid a supplementary per diem rate of up to \$50/day.

Emerging Leaders Program Summer Associate Roles

There are six different Summer Associate roles available through the Emerging Leaders Program

All Summer Associates can expect to spend approximately 30% of their time together as a cohort, participating in activities such as:

- Professional development workshops (resume building, career panel, leadership workshops)
- Outdoor experiences (2-night backpacking workshop, WTA trail work party, group hikes with community partners)
- Networking opportunities (with WTA staff groups, community partner organizations and land managers)

Summer Associates can expect to spend approximately 70% of their time in their individual roles, which are described in detail below.

- Each role is designed to give Associates maximum exposure to the teams on which they will be working, as well as a few opportunities to network across other teams at WTA
- In addition to specific tasks they are assigned, Associates will have the opportunity to express additional areas and skills for professional development which can be explored in partnership with their supervisors and team members
- Specific requirements for each role, in addition to variety in schedules and expectations are outlined below. Please read each role description thoroughly before applying

Summer Associate Quicklinks

- [Communications Associate Role Description](#)
- [Development Associate Role Description](#)
- [Community Engagement Associate Role Description](#)
- [Gear Library Associate Role Description](#)
- [Volunteer Program Associate Role Description](#)
- [Hiker Education Associate Role Description](#)

Communications Associate Role Description

Support WTA's Communications team during their busiest season when summer hiking is at its peak. 4.6 million people rely on WTA's online resources, and this position will play an important role in supporting WTA's education, engagement and marketing efforts. This entry-level position is ideal for someone looking for exposure to a wide range of communications and public relations activities.

The Communications Associate will develop skills through performing the following tasks (among others as assigned):

- Write content for WTA's website, blog and social media accounts
- Support public relations activities including tracking press mentions and drafting press releases
- Monitor WTA trip reports, reviewing them for adherence to community guidelines
- Perform administrative support tasks including cataloguing WTA's extensive photo library with photographer information and tags, which are critical to our communications work
- Participate in Communications Team meetings, brainstorming and editorial review processes in addition to WTA Staff-wide activities

Additional Requirements for Communications Associate

- An interest in a career in communications, public relations or social media within the nonprofit, recreation or outdoor industries
- Experience and interest in writing in various forms for a variety of public audiences

Development Associate Role Description

WTA is supported by donations from more than 24,000 members each year. WTA's Development Team stewards and manages these members through a variety of events, campaigns and marketing strategies. Each summer, WTA hosts [Hike-a-Thon](#), our signature community peer-to-peer fundraising event. This entry-level position is ideal for someone looking to gain fundraising experience and will offer hands-on support of Hike-a-Thon as well as other donor stewardship activities.

The Development Associate will spend the majority of their time developing skills through performing the following tasks (among others as assigned):

- Steward the community through mailing welcome packets, t-shirts, prizes and acknowledgment letters
- Support select Hike-a-Thon and other WTA member and community events (requiring limited evening and weekend work with advanced notice)
- Draft written communications to the Hike-a-Thon community
- Steward Hike-a-Thon Facebook group, reviewing posts for accuracy and adherence to community guidelines
- Participate in Development Team meetings, brainstorming and fundraising appeal development processes in addition to WTA Staff-wide activities

Additional Requirements for Development Associate

- An interest in a career in development, fundraising or communications within the nonprofit, recreation or outdoor industries
- Comfort communicating both orally and in writing in a professional manner and an interest in working with nonprofit donors
- Successful completion of a background check

Community Engagement Associate Role Description

WTA's Community Engagement & Impact Team represents WTA and hikers at more than 100 community events and trailheads across Washington state each year. This entry-level position is ideal for someone who enjoys engaging with the public and volunteers and is interested in learning what it takes to run a statewide community outreach program.

The Community Engagement Associate will support this work and develop skills through performing the following tasks (among others as assigned):

- Coordinate outreach supplies for events staffed by WTA volunteers in the region
- Attend outreach events on behalf of WTA, sharing information about our work and opportunities to get involved with members of the public
- Develop activities and materials for outreach events
- Drive to and staff WTA outreach booths at popular trailheads to help educate the public about best practices and share information about WTA and how to get more involved
- Participate in Community Engagement team meetings, brainstorm and program development processes in addition to WTA Staff-wide activities

Additional Requirements for Community Engagement Associate

- An interest in a career related to outreach, community engagement and partnership development within the nonprofit, recreation or outdoor industries
- An interest in speaking with members of the public about WTA's mission and hiker education work
- Valid driver's license and ability to drive on highways and dirt roads for access to trailheads, company car may be used with completion of Driver Training and advance notice
- Ability to stand for extended periods of time on uneven terrain outdoors in various weather conditions
- Ability to lift and carry up to 30 pounds, including setting up outdoor canopies

Gear Library Associate Role Description

WTA's [Outdoor Leadership Training](#) (OLT) program assists in fostering inclusive communities by empowering educators and youth program facilitators with the skills and resources they need to lead safe and fun outdoor experiences. In 2025, WTA's two gear libraries supported over 175 outings to provide more than 6,000 experiences with the help of our Seattle Gear Library. This entry-level position is ideal for someone who is detail oriented and passionate about empowering communities to get outside.

***This role is based at WTA's Seattle Gear Library near downtown Seattle.** The Summer Associate must be available to work in person at the Seattle Gear Library Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursdays with possible remote work depending on community appointments the other days.

The Gear Library Associate will support this work and develop skills through performing the following tasks (among others as assigned):

- Process gear lending requests using myTurn, a cloud-based inventory platform (training provided)
- Prepare lending requests and gear returns for community organizations
- Assist with gear inventory, repair, cleaning and maintenance
- Engage with community-based organization leaders
- Support community outreach, storytelling and partnership development
- Transport gear between libraries and offsite locations to support requests and maintenance
- Participate in Community Partner & Leadership Development team meetings, brainstorm and program development processes in addition to WTA Staff-wide activities

Additional Requirements for Gear Library Associate

- Valid driver's license; company may be used with completion of Driver Training and advance notice

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- An interest in a career related to community engagement, inventory management or partnership development within the nonprofit, recreation or outdoor industries
- Ability to maintain organized systems in a dynamic work environment
- Ability to regularly lift 30 lbs and perform repetitive physical tasks associated with cleaning and shelving gear

Volunteer Program Associate Role Description

Thousands of people come out to volunteer with WTA on trail each year, contributing more than 150,000 annual hours of trail maintenance to our state's trail system. It takes a lot of coordination and work behind the scenes to make all of this happen. This entry-level position is ideal for someone who is organized and excited about learning what it takes to run a top-notch statewide volunteer program. This position regularly works hands-on, outside for 8-10 hours at a time learning more about trail maintenance as a potential career path. WTA provides safety hard hats, glasses and work gloves as well as a \$300 gear reimbursement.

The Volunteer Program Associate will support WTA's outstanding volunteer program and develop skills through performing the following tasks (among others as assigned):

- Monitor the volunteer@wta.org email to communicate with volunteers about trail work party details
- Organize and assist with distribution of volunteer awards and work party supplies as needed
- Develop a deep understanding of WTA's volunteer management tools, processes and policies
- Attend one trail work party per week as a participant to understand the ethos of WTA's volunteer program and build relationships with volunteers
- Participate in Trail Maintenance team meetings, brainstorm and program development processes in addition to WTA Staff-wide activities

Additional Requirements for Volunteer Program Associate

- An interest in a career related to volunteer or program management or trail maintenance within the nonprofit, recreation or outdoor industries
- Comfort communicating both orally and in writing in a professional manner and an interest in working with nonprofit volunteers
- Ability to perform repetitive tasks with hand tools in various weather conditions on trail
- Valid driver's license and ability to drive on highways and dirt roads for weekly access to trailheads, company car may be used with completion of Driver Training and advance notice
- Availability for 20 additional work hours May 14-17 to attend WTA's Crew Leader College in North Bend

Hiker Education Associate Role Description

Support WTA's Communications team during their busiest season when summer hiking is at its peak. Over 4.6 million people rely on WTA's online resources and this position will play an important role in supporting the team that manages these resources. This entry-level position is ideal for someone looking to spend the majority of their time reading, talking and learning about hiking trails in Washington state both online and over the phone.

The Hiker Education Associate will develop skills through performing the following tasks (among others as assigned):

- Monitor WTA trip reports, reviewing them for adherence to community guidelines
- Operate WTA's "Hiker Hotline," responding to calls and messages from the public inquiring about trail conditions, utilizing WTA's resources to educate people about our resources and hiking trails
- Calling land managers to verify updated trail conditions or information
- Occasionally develop content for WTA's website, blog and social media accounts, including updates to WTA's Hiking Guide
- Participate in Communications Team meetings, brainstorm and editorial review processes in addition to WTA Staff-wide activities

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Additional Requirements for Communications Associate

- Familiarity with hiking and interest in researching trails and public lands in Washington
- An interest in a career in communications or outreach within the nonprofit, recreation or outdoor industries
- Experience and interest in communicating both orally and in writing in a professional manner with members of the public

Join our team

Our hiring process

At WTA, we consistently evaluate and update our hiring process to align with current best practices for equity and inclusion. The hiring process for this role will include a phone screen, virtual panel interview, reference check and potential in-person conversation at the Seattle office. The Development Associate role will require a background check. WTA's practice is to run a background check with the opportunity to discuss any results before final hiring decisions are made. If you have any questions or need accommodation in our recruitment process, please contact seasonaljobs@wta.org.

Equal opportunity

We believe WTA, and Washington's outdoor community, is stronger when made up of people with varied backgrounds, identities, abilities and lived experiences. WTA is committed to advancing equity and continually working to become a more inclusive organization. People of color and people with other identities that are underrepresented in the outdoor industry — including but not limited to gender identity, class, sexual orientation, age, ability and background — are strongly encouraged to apply. To read our complete Equal Opportunity Employer statement, please visit www.wta.org/careers.

How to apply

Complete an [application form](#) and email a resume to seasonaljobs@wta.org. Please use "Emerging Leaders Program" in the subject line and title your resume: "Last name, First name - Resume." We appreciate your attention to detail. The position is open until filled, with priority given to applications received by **October 16, 2026**. If you have any questions, please contact seasonaljobs@wta.org. We look forward to hearing from you!