

**VISIONS**  
SERVICE ADVENTURES

# MONTANA ROOTS GAP PROGRAM

## OUTDOOR EQUIPMENT AND CLOTHING SUGGESTIONS

Choosing the right equipment for your program can help make your time in Montana more enjoyable. We request that all students come well prepared. However, we also understand that outdoor stores can often feel like a daunting and overwhelming experience, and we hope this list will help you navigate equipment and clothing options.

A few key recommendations that we like to mention: don't break the bank; function over fashion; 'cotton is rotten' (an outdoor saying as wet cotton does not provide insulation and takes a long time to dry); less is more, and break in your boots!

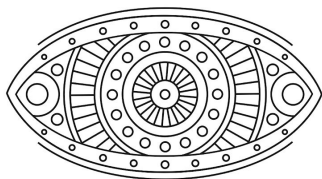
**TENT:** VISIONS provides each student their own [REI Co-op Passage 2 person tent](#) for portions of the program. You are also welcome to bring your own if you prefer. Here are a few examples of another durable option: [Big Agnes Blacktail 2 person tent](#)

**SLEEPING BAG:** You will need a warm sleeping bag in which you will sleep in every night for the entire duration of the program. We recommend a down or synthetic-insulated, mummy-style sleeping bag rated to at least 5°F. Please remember that it will get very cold in Montana, and your sleeping bag needs to be warm. Here are a few examples for reference: [Marmot Ouray](#), [Big Agnes Benchmark](#), [The North Face Furnace](#), and [REI Down Time](#)

**SLEEPING BAG LINER:** We recommend also purchasing a silk or fleece sleeping bag liner. This keeps you extra toasty when nights get cold! Here are a few examples: [Cocoon Silk Liner](#), [Sea to Summit Thermolite Liner](#), and [Rab Silk Neutrino Liner](#)

**BACKPACK:** You will need a backpack for the backpacking portion of the program. You are welcome to rent one from VISIONS for \$30, or you can also bring your own. If you choose to bring your own, it should have a sturdy, padded hip belt that is 60 liters of space. Some recommendations include: [Osprey Archeon](#) or [Arcteryx Bora AR](#)

**SLEEPING PAD:** VISIONS also rents backpacking sleeping pads for \$15 (we provide the larger ones to use in the front country). It is first come first serve as we have a limited number of sleeping pads. However, if you choose to bring your own, some popular brands include [Thermarest](#) and [Big Agnes](#).



# VISIONS

SERVICE ADVENTURES

**BOOTS:** Make sure that you try them on and break them in! We suggest a waterproof boot and recommended brands include: [Merrell](#), [Salomon](#), [Vasque](#), and [Asolo](#). This is a helpful link from REI on [How to Choose Hiking Boots](#).

**SOCKS:** Wool or synthetic socks for working, backpacking, and hiking. Synthetic and wool socks keep your feet warm when wet and dry faster. If you get cold easily, bring a thick pair for sleeping. Some recommended brands include [Darn Tough](#), [Smartwool](#), and [Icebreaker](#).

**RAIN JACKET AND PANTS:** We suggest a waterproof “shell” which is uninsulated that will keep you warm and dry. The rain jacket should have a good hood and fit over other layers. Rain pants should also fit over other clothes. Make sure that both are *waterproof, not water-resistant*. Recommended brands include [REI Co-op](#), [Patagonia](#), [Marmot](#), [The North Face](#), and [Mountain Hardwear](#). An additional helpful link is [How to Choose Rainwear](#) from REI.

**BASELAYERS:** Mid-weight non-cotton tops and bottoms (long underwear) made with synthetic or wool fibers to keep you warm even when wet. Brands have different weights and thickness and we recommend at least a mid-weight. Some recommended brands include [REI Co-op](#), [Under Armour](#), [Patagonia](#), [Smartwool](#), and [Icebreaker](#).

**HIKING PANTS:** We suggest nylon hiking pants and shorts because nylon is durable, lightweight, and insulates when wet. Some recommended brands include: [ExOfficio](#), [Patagonia](#), and [REI Co-op](#).

**MIDDLE LAYER PULLOVER:** This is a layer that you will most likely wear daily. It needs to be a good fit so that you can still layer two additional jackets over it. A good example is the classic [Patagonia Synchrony](#). You may also choose to bring a wool sweater instead.

**SYNTHETIC JACKET:** This is part of your layering system. We recommend something similar to the [Patagonia Nano Puff](#) or [Montebell Thermawrap](#).

**TOP LAYER JACKET:** The weather in Montana is incredibly variable in the fall, with cold temperatures and snow. All students will need a warm down or synthetic parka with a hood that will fit over other layers. Examples include: [ArcTeryx AR Hoody](#), [Marmot Guide's Hoody](#), and [Rab Positron](#)

**FLEECE OR PUFFY PANTS:** When the weather gets cold and snowy, these pants will be a welcome warmth for basecamp. Some examples include: [Patagonia Nano Puff Pants](#) and [Montebelle Down Pants](#)

**MESS KITS:** This is an eating utensil set and should include a mug, bowl, and spoon or fork. An example includes [GSI Outdoors](#) one person table set.

In addition, some recommended stores that often have sales include [Backcountry.com](#), [Sierra Trading Post](#), [REI Garage](#), and [CampSaver](#).

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions!