

Alaska Airmen Association Scholarships

Scholarship Tips & Guides

Our Goal for this Guide

Applying for scholarships can sometimes be difficult and confusing. Because the Alaska Airmen can only provide scholarships to 8 well-qualified applicants in 2020, we are providing a helpful guide to ensure that students can maximize their potential and submit applications confidently.

Apply for the Correct Scholarships

Because the aviation industry is a broad network of interconnected trades, we seek to cover as many aviation-related fields as possible, not just pilots. Each scholarship we provide is specifically geared toward students specializing in a specific field. Therefore, we recommend that applicants carefully look over each scholarship and make sure their credentials and career paths align with the award's specifications.

Example 1: Student A wants to become a commercial pilot, so they apply for the *John P. Calhune Professional Pilot Scholarship*. However, they have yet to obtain their private pilot's license and/or have little experience in the air. Because of this, the Airmen are more inclined to award this scholarship to a student that has already completed his/her private pilot's license and wish to pursue a career in professional piloting.

Student A's best choice, then, is to apply for a private pilot scholarship such as the Lake Hood Pilot and Joe Stancil Jr. Flight School Training Scholarship.

We encourage students to apply for multiple scholarships but advise that you keep multiple applications relevant to one another as well as your career goals.

If applying for multiple scholarships within the same category (aircraft maintenance for example), only form is needed. If applying for multiple scholarships in different categories (such as aircraft maintenance and professional piloting), please submit a form for each type of scholarship.

Example 2: Student B wants to become an aircraft mechanic and applies to all 8 scholarships. In this situation, the Airmen would only consider Student B for the *F. Atlee Dodge Maintenance* and *Don & Carol Bedford Memorial* Scholarships. All other applications by Student B would be considered irrelevant and discarded.

Consider these options before applying, as it will likely save you and everyone else involved in the process a considerable amount of time and effort.

List Your Experiences & Accomplishments

The Airmen value students who are not only interested in aviation, but also have experience in the industry. Students who demonstrate that they are knowledgeable and familiar with the ins-and-outs of their respective fields.

The Airmen take pride in their scholarships and want to ensure that all award winners are neighbor-guaranteed to contribute to Alaska's strong aviation community after school. As such, relevant experience shows that applicants can competently navigate through programs with a low chance of dropping out.

However, this does not mean that the scholarship committee does not consider applicants without aviation experience. Many of our applicants have little-to-no experience in the field but demonstrate a strong desire to break into the industry.

Tip: If you do **not** have aviation experience and wish to become a scholarship awardee, be sure to write a strong essay explaining why you are the best pick for the award over another applicant who would have said experience.

1. Glowing letters of recommendation and high GPA scores are heavily weighed by the committee, regardless of applicant experience.
2. Powerful and well-written essay answers can overshadow a lack of experience.

Be Confident, Thorough, & Precise

The key to writing a successful scholarship essay is to be direct, confident, and informative.

Conveying to your audience that you are not only qualified, but also the best choice for an award requires the following steps:

1. **Be clear and direct in your mission statement.** What do you want to do and how will a scholarship help you do it?

- 2. Explain precisely why you are the best candidate of all applicants.** This is a competition, so there is no need to be humble! Boast your accomplishments, qualifications, GPA, etc.
- 3. Stay on topic.** Do not fill your application with tangential or unrelated information. All information provided should be to forward your narrative and highlight your viability.

Here is an example of how to respond to a common scholarship question:

Example 1: Q: Why are you the best candidate for this scholarship award?

A: Given my previously mentioned education and training in addition to my strong GPA and familiarity with the field of aviation, I believe that I am the strongest candidate for the XYZ scholarship. My career goal is to become ABC by the year 20XX and I fully understand the necessary requirements I will have to meet to do so. By awarding me with the XYZ scholarship, I can firmly assure you that not only will I be able to obtain my DEF license, but that I will also go on to make strong contributions to Alaska Aviation through my work.

Get Strong Letters of Recommendation

Saying good things about yourself is certainly helpful, but having others say good things about you goes a long way. Make sure that when applying, you have glowing recommendations from trusted people close to you.

Tip: Don't just use anybody for your letter of recommendation! Make sure the person of interest is a credible professional and not your parents or friends.

- **Relevancy is Key:** Seek out professionals in the aviation field to write your letters. Their recommendation says a lot about your capabilities.
 - If you don't know any aviation-related professionals, no worries! Your teachers, professors, or bosses are all valid sources to get references from.

Don't Worry About Location

The Alaska Airmen Association does not discriminate against applicants based on their current location or program. As an organization, we are open to any-and-all applicants within the state of Alaska. Whether you are applying from Anchorage, Ketchikan, Barrow, Fairbanks, or any other location, your application is valid *so long as you are studying in Alaska and seek to contribute to Alaskan Aviation through your future career endeavors.*

Additional Tips & Information

- Give yourself plenty of time to carefully craft your application. **Don't procrastinate!**
- Have a peer or writing tutor look over your application before you submit.
- Double and triple check your answers for minor errors.
- Look through our Other Scholarships page for additional relevant scholarships.

Contact Us

If you have any questions about the scholarship process, technical issues with submitting your application, or other general inquiries, please reach out to us.

Email: scholarships@alaskaairmen.org

Toll-free: 1-800-464-7030 | Fax: 1-888-558-1684