

# **Wings Over the Rockies Flight Training Scholarships Supported by the James C. Ray Foundation 2024 Applicant Expectations**

The James C. Ray Foundation provides funding for flight training scholarships, which Wings Over the Rockies (Wings) distributes across Colorado. Scholarships are available to applicants ages fifteen through nineteen who seek Private Pilot Certification in gliders or single engine airplanes. This document provides important dates and qualifications for applicants.

## **Scholarships Available**

### **Private Pilot Glider Scholarship**

- Up to \$7,200
- Ages fifteen through nineteen (Age as of February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024)

### **Private Pilot Airplane Scholarship**

- Up to \$12,000
- Ages sixteen through nineteen (Age as of February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024)

### **Stipulations:**

- Those who have already begun Private Pilot training are welcome to apply. The award amount will be reduced accordingly. i.e. An applicant who has already completed half of their training should expect half the maximum award amount.
- The full award amount is never guaranteed. If a scholarship awardee does not meet expectations, funding can be stopped at any time.
- The amount provided is not guaranteed to complete the student's training. If an awardee incurs a balance with a flight training provider which exceeds the scholarship amount, they assume responsibility for payment. (Recommendation: Set aside additional funding. It will be less expensive to pay for the final flights than to stop training and relearn later.)
- The scholarship ends when the applicant earns their Private Pilot Certification. Charges on the date of the final practical exam will be the last payments from Wings.
- Either glider or airplane training will be funded, not both. An awardee cannot use leftover funds to begin training in the other aircraft category
- Applicants must be Colorado residents, and flight training must be completed at a Colorado business.
- Glider scholarships may be limited by glider instructor availability. Glider schools are not as common as airplane schools: applicants should not pursue a glider award unless they have a gliding operation within their commuting distance.
- Applicants have 8 months to complete training and access scholarship funds. (With exceptions for delays booking a pilot examiner or severe extenuating circumstances.)

## Selection Process

The first level of evaluation is the application form. These are received in high volumes, and many applicants will not advance beyond this phase; do not be discouraged from reapplying in 2025. Applicants who have passed the Private Pilot Aeronautical Knowledge Exam or who have taken a Private Pilot Ground School course (including online courses) will be the most competitive. Prior experience in small aircraft is also beneficial.

For those who advance, the second level of evaluation is an interview. There are multiple review committees, who will read applications and select candidates for interviews. It is possible an applicant may be chosen to interview with zero, one, or multiple committees. If an applicant is selected to interview by more than one committee, they have more than one chance to get an award. (*They will not receive more than one award.* If two committees select the same winner, one committee will give an award to their next choice.)

- The Wings Over the Rockies Captain Jeppesen Foundation is the primary committee and will review all applications. They select the majority of scholarship winners.
- Wings partners with other organizations to provide additional review committees and interview opportunities. These are Daedalian Flight 18, the Colorado Pilots Association, and the Colorado Aviation Business Association. Each organization will select one scholarship winner on behalf of Wings.

All interviews will be announced and scheduled by the Wings Pilot Programs Manager via email. Interviews will be held at Centennial Airport. A virtual option will be provided for candidates beyond a reasonable commuting distance.

Following interviews, competitive candidates will be selected for final screening. Applicants must complete the below tasks to receive award funds. Wings will provide resources to help complete these tasks. More information will follow at the expectations meeting. This meeting marks the beginning of final screening; attendance is mandatory. It will be held at Centennial Airport in Englewood. A virtual option will be provided for candidates beyond a reasonable commuting distance.

If an applicant already has all tasks completed by the expectations meeting on March 23<sup>rd</sup>, funds can be released as early as March 29<sup>th</sup>. Candidates have until June 8<sup>th</sup> to complete all tasks. If they fail to complete final screening tasks by this date, no scholarship will be awarded. Final screening tasks include:

- Pass the Private Pilot Aeronautical Knowledge Exam.
- Complete a Private Pilot Ground School course, in-person or online.
- Pass the FAA Class 3 Medical Exam (exempting glider applicants).\*
- Take a flight in a small aircraft (if no prior flight experience).
- Select a flight school and instructor, and reserve time on their schedule.
- Fill out the Final Screening Form with documentation of completed tasks.

\* Do research on prohibitive medications and conditions before taking an FAA Medical Exam. There are organizations to consult for medical questions. ***Do not take the exam unless all doubts have been resolved.*** (Note, this a final screening step and is not required at the time of application. If there are issues to navigate, there is time, and this should not be rushed.)

## **Dates to Save**

1/12: Scholarship application opens

2/17: Scholarship application closes

3/5: Interviews are announced and scheduled

3/9 - 3/10: Interviews

3/16 - 3/17: Interviews

3/20: Announce final candidates

3/23: Expectations meeting (mandatory)

3/29: Earliest date to receive awards (must have completed screening tasks)

6/8: Latest date to receive awards (screening tasks deadline)

## **Awardee Expectations**

Flight training is not without risk. Applicants should not pursue this scholarship unless they are willing to exercise skills in decision making and risk management. Aviation requires a positive safety culture. WOTR has a zero-tolerance policy for unprofessional or unsafe conduct. If a flight school, instructor, or mentor reports inappropriate behavior, funds may be halted. Scholarships are a privilege, and awardees will be held to the professional standards of the aviation industry.

To accomplish the eight-month completion goal, awardees must fly a minimum of two days per week, with the understanding that flights are canceled for a variety of reasons. Frequent flying is critical to reducing cost. For every flight, anticipate extra time for preflight and postflight procedures, as well as ground instruction. With two flights a week, an awardee should plan six to eight hours into their schedule.

In addition to time spent at the flight school, scholarship awardees are responsible for maintaining the study regimen set by their flight instructor. Ground studies are a critical to achieving Private Pilot Certification. The workload is equivalent to adding an additional class to a semester. Be prepared to interact with textbooks, regulations, aircraft manuals, multiple-choice exam prep, and oral exam prep.

Flight training is expensive, and the award amount may not be sufficient. Awardees must make training decisions in the interest of their budget.

- Aircraft rental rates greatly impact the longevity of scholarship funds. Scholarship awardees should seek aircraft under \$145/hr. Avoid high-performance aircraft and aircraft with high-end avionics "glass cockpits."

- The airport environment impacts training efficiency. If a student has limited funding beyond their scholarship, they should avoid busy metro area airports. Plan accordingly for longer commutes.
- Awardees must monitor their own spending. It is commonplace for students to exceed their scholarship amount between Wings payments. Scholarship awardees should keep copies of all their bills and should never assume the price of a lesson. Monitor how many instructor hours are charged, if aircraft pricing increases, or if new fees are added.
- If scheduling limitations with a flight training provider are hindering progress, an awardee should relocate to a more productive environment.

WOTR will track awardee progress toward certification in conjunction with volunteer mentors. Awardees must fill out all requested documentation and reports, frequently check their email, and respond to communication from mentors and Wings staff.

Monthly social events are provided, offering study sessions, networking, guest speakers, and aviation showcase events. A scholarship recipient must make every effort to attend and will notify the Pilot Programs Manager if they cannot - exempting those who have an unreasonable commuting distance.

### **Contact**

Valerie Blome, Pilot Programs Manager, is available to answer questions about the application process. Email: [VBlome@WingsMuseum.org](mailto:VBlome@WingsMuseum.org) During application season, response time on emails may be slow. Please consider calling **(303) 360 - 5360 ext. 135**.