

2026 Ray Aviation Scholarship

Experimental Aircraft Association Chapter 729

Value: Up to \$12000

Initial Deadline: August 7th, 2026



Overview:

The EAA Ray Aviation Scholarship is a merit-based scholarship program that is funded by the Ray Foundation, managed by EAA, and administered through the EAA Chapters network. Through the generous support of the Ray Foundation, EAA provides up to \$12,000 to deserving youths to help cover their flight training expenses, totaling \$2,250,000 in annual scholarship funding.

Scholarship recipients receive both local and national recognition, serve as leaders and ambassadors of the chapter, and are provided with numerous opportunities to be involved in aviation. They also receive a scholarship recipient kit and, upon achieving designated milestones, are awarded a complimentary Lightspeed Zulu 3 headset. Furthermore, scholars are invited to and recognized at EAA AirVenture each year.

The EAA describes Ray Aviation Scholarship applicants as the “most engaged, excited, and motivated aspiring pilots the chapter has had the pleasure of meeting”.

Scholar Eligibility and Requirements

- Minimum Age: 16.5 years old
- Must not turn 20 before completing their checkride
- Valid Driver's License
- Possession of a student pilot certificate [See FAQ]
- Possession of FAA medical certificate [See FAQ]
- Completion of Private Pilot Ground School [See FAQ page]
- Completion of FAA Private Pilot Written Test [See FAQ page]
- Be able to begin their flight training within 1 month of receiving the scholarship
- Be able to complete their flight training within 12 months of starting training
- Willingness to be photographed and featured in Chapter 729 media and marketing, as well as that of the National EAA organization and local news outlets.

Preferred Qualifications

- Current and or prior EAA National Membership
- Current and or prior EAA Chapter 729 Membership
- Active Chapter 729 engagement
- Prior Young Eagles Flight participants

Conditions of Scholarship

- Become (if not already) an EAA Chapter 729 Member
 - Attend Monthly Chapter Gatherings
 - Engage in monthly meetings with designated chapter mentor
 - Provide monthly progress reports to designated mentor to be reported to the Board of Directors
 - Partake in two hours of chapter volunteer service per month, such as but not limited to:
 - Young Eagles rally volunteering
 - Volunteer at pancake breakfast/fly-ins
 - Chapter build project support
 - Chapter social media and website maintenance
 - Complete 2 "Flight Activities" a week (Training Flight, Ground Lesson, Practice Test, Simulator)
 - Reach designated flight training milestones, as outlined by EAA's training timeline
 - 3 months to first solo flight (if applicable)
 - 6 months to pass the written exam (**not applicable-must come in to EAA 729 program with a complete/passed Private Pilot (PAR) written exam**)
 - 12 months to pass the checkride
- *This scholarship may not cover the entire cost of the Private pilots license. It is still expected that the scholar will complete their certificate. Flight Training options and financing will be discussed during the Ray Scholarship information meeting and again during the Ray Scholarship interview.**

Application Process and Deadlines:

- *Application Opens: July 2nd, 2026
- **Information Meeting: June 23rd, 2026
- Application Closes: August 7th, 2026
- ***Interview Period: Aug 17th-28th, 2026
- Decisions Released: Aug 29th, 2026
- EAA Foundation Application Deadline: August 31th, 2026
- Chapter Award Ceremony: Sept 17th, 2026 (September Monthly Chapter Meeting)

*Jump Start Program Scholars see below "Ray Aviation Scholarship Submission"

**There will be an information meeting hosted by the Scholarship Committee and Chapter at the EAA Chapter Hangar 4750 Kelly Street, Columbus, IN 47203. This meeting will address general information and questions regarding the scholarship, as well as provide insight into the requirements of flight training and possible options. It is highly encouraged that applicants and parents attend this information session to understand the expectations and options in full.

***Interviews will be in person only

Tips for Success:

- It is encouraged to use the application period to become involved in aviation and begin working towards your goals. **Late applications will not be accepted**, however applicants will not be considered on a rolling basis (i.e. it does not matter when the application is submitted so long as it is before the deadline).
- Review your application multiple times and have someone else review it for you as well. It is recommended that you do not fill the application out and submit it immediately, rather give yourself time to make adjustments and provide the best application possible.
- Consider reading through the expectations and information located on the EAA's Ray Aviation Scholarship Fund Webpage: [Ray Aviation Scholarship Fund | EAA](#)

General Application:

Personal Information

Name: _____

Email: _____

Phone Number: _____

High School: _____

Age: _____

Birthday: _____

Eligibility and Background:

Do you have a valid driver's license?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Are you willing to be pictured and featured in Chapter 729 media and marketing, as well as that of the National EAA organization and local news outlets?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you have a student pilot's license?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you have an FAA Aviation Medical?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, what class medical?

☐ First ☐ Second ☐ Third

Have you completed any portion of Private Pilot Ground School?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, describe what you have completed and what resources have been used:

Have you passed the FAA Private Pilot Written Exam (PAR)?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Have you completed any flight training?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, list your total number of hours, if you have completed your first solo, and describe how you have accomplished this training.

Aviation Involvement

Please describe any aviation-related involvement. This includes plane spotting, Young Eagles events, chapter membership (including other aviation organizations), projects, plane washing, jobs in the field, etc.:

How do you plan to become more involved in aviation as you begin flight training?

Extracurricular Activities & Leadership

Please describe any extracurricular activities and leadership roles you are or have been involved in:

Essay Questions

(Please limit each response to 300 words.)

1. Describe your goals in aviation or aerospace. Tell us what you have already accomplished in pursuit of these goals and how this award will help you continue your progress.

2. Describe the obstacles you foresee needing to overcome in order to complete your intended aviation-related career, or flight training in general. Tell us how you might meet these challenges.

3. **This scholarship most likely will not cover the entire cost of flight training. It is a requirement that you complete the rating regardless.** Please explain how you expect to finance any extra training. There may be more financial assistance available from the chapter, however please describe your plan assuming you only receive the scholarship funds.

4. Is there any other information you would like the scholarship committee to know?
Please include any special family or personal situations which the selection committee may need to know to give adequate consideration to your application.

[illegible]

Required Documentation:

- GroundSchool Completion Certificate
- Written Test Results
- Medical Certificate
- Student Pilot Certificate

Optional Supporting Documentation:

- Current Resume
- 1 Letter of Recommendation