

The \$12,500 Flight Scholarship

“Show Me the Money”

by

Don Wolfe

As the AAA Scholarship Director, I've been amazed at the lack of effort many of the scholarship applicants put in to applying for a flight scholarship. A few years ago it was obvious that the applicants were putting in very little time on the essay and even less time preparing for the interview. Candidates often reported in casual attire, some wearing flipflops, t-shirts and baseball hats.

Things have changed. Individuals getting flight scholarships these days have a solid application with proper English and correct spelling. They download the application, complete their essays on a word processor, then copy and paste their answers to the application. These applicants do not wait until the last minute to apply. A system crash or internet failure on the closing day will not derail their application because it's already been filed.

Candidates that are awarded an interview report early, are dressed appropriately and are well prepared. They've completed dozens of practice interviews and videoed the sessions for review and critique. Those that are denied a scholarship apply year after year, often achieving success. We like people that come back again and again, they make good pilots. Those that are awarded a scholarship go on to earn their pilot license. If you want a flight scholarship, this is your competition.

Congratulations, you've made it to this paragraph so pay attention and take notes. Let's do the math on spending time to research application techniques and interview preparation. To net \$12,500 after paying Federal and State income taxes you'll need to earn \$14,125. At \$16 per hour, it takes 882 hours of work to gross \$14,125. That's over 5 months of 40-hour work weeks. If you spend just 10 hours preparing your application and getting ready for an interview, you'll probably set a new world record around here. You'll also be earning \$1,250 per hour for a successful scholarship award. Hello, is anyone home? It will be an exceedingly long time before you ever earn \$1,250 per hour again! **When it comes to scholarships and grants, several hours of study and preparation can net you big bucks.**

Who's in the flying club? It is also worthy of note that 12 scholarship awardees from 2022/2023 earned their pilot licenses and ratings. Others from that group are getting close to certification. These new pilots made the effort to submit a good application and to prepare for an interview. They went on to use the funds efficiently, work hard and achieve their flying goals. If you put in the effort, you too can earn a flight scholarship and join them as a certified aviator. All you need do is put in the time, make a good effort and be well prepared.