

SECRETS TO

10 tips for a winning scholarship application

Every year, Women in Aviation International makes more than 100 scholarships available that in total are worth hundreds of thousands of dollars. The scholarships are available for multiple aviation and aerospace disciplines, for different ages, different stages of careers and life, and many are available to applicants all over the world. **by Molly Martin**

After 20 years of awarding scholarships, in 2016 WAI will award a cumulative \$10 million. Thousands of WAI members have realized aviation dreams or furthered their aviation or aerospace career after winning a WAI scholarship.



WAI2016

The process is simple: Select up to two scholarships to apply for from our website at www.WAI.org and submit the required application materials. Past scholarship winners will tell you that it pays to put your best foot forward, pay attention to details, and deliver an application package that truly sets you apart. We've compiled a Top 10 list of tips to help you get started.



1

Be a Women in Aviation International member!

Be sure you have completed the membership application and paid dues before November 2, 2015.

2

Tell the truth.

Don't stretch the truth; don't get creative with the truth. No exaggerations. Period.

3

Follow the rules and pay attention to details.

Be sure to read the requirements for each scholarship, as they can all be a little bit different. Remember that if you don't follow the rules for each scholarship, you could be disqualified.

- Do the requirements call for two one-page letters of recommendation? If so, send two letters. No more. No less.
- Does the scholarship you're applying for require a transcript from your school?

Does it need to be certified? Be sure to include the correct number of copies, and be sure that if they need to be certified, they are.

- Do the rules require that you send two copies of your whole original application package? Then send two copies!
- Does the essay need to be 500 words or less? Remember that the team reviewing the scholarship applications is considering dozens and dozens of applications. If your essay doesn't meet the exact requirements you will be disqualified.
- Type all elements of your application, including your essay.

- If the scholarship requirements call for it, be sure to send clear copies of your government licenses, ratings, logbooks, and other required materials.
- Do the requirements specify that the materials be stapled? If so, staple them. Don't send bulky folders, files, or bound documents.
- Be sure to use the official application form, and fill it out completely. Type the application if possible—if not, be sure it is legible. Imagine if you were chosen as the winner of a scholarship, but the committee cannot read your e-mail or mailing address.

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Spend time on your essay and tell your unique story.

- Be passionate and communicate about who you are and why you are the best candidate for the scholarship.
- Don't submit a generic, one-size-fits-all application.
- This is your opportunity to speak to the scholarship committee. Help them get to know YOU, and help them feel your passion and enthusiasm.

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Complete the application process in full.

- Answer all the questions—don't leave anything blank!
- Provide all the requested information and supporting documents. If you forget to include a required document, you could be disqualified from that scholarship entirely.
- Include all the required documents and materials in one package.

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Don't send additional stuff.

The scholarship committees work hard to give each application equal attention and equal weight. Don't ruin your chances of winning by including photos, videos, or portfolios that are not requested.

5

Don't miss the deadline...

In fact, send your complete application package in early.

- The deadline for all WAI scholarships is November 16, 2015. That means that your submission **MUST** be postmarked on or before November 16, 2015. If it is marked for any date after November 16, 2015, your submission will not count.
- If you can, send your submission in early! Imagine WAI headquarters in the week following the November 16 deadline—hundreds of applications arrive all at once. However, if you've sent your submission in early, and if there is anything missing, there is a chance that the review team will spot it and you'll have time to send in the missing piece, so your submission will be considered.

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Speak directly to the scholarship for which you are applying.

- There are more than 100 scholarships available—read the qualifications of each one carefully and apply for the scholarships for which you are best qualified. Remember that you can only apply for two WAI scholarships per year.
- Don't send the same application, letters, and essay for both scholarships you are applying for—remember that a successful application will appeal directly to the intent, subject, and requirements of that specific scholarship.

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Start early!

- It takes time for people to write meaningful letters of recommendation and get them back to you. Allow your chosen writer enough time to complete the letter.
- It takes time for college transcripts to be processed and sent to you. Refrain from waiting until the last minute to make the request for your official transcripts.
- It will definitely take time to gather certificates, make copies, and arrange shipping—give yourself plenty.
- It should take time for you to write a winning essay. So, start early!

10

Proofread your submission and keep a full copy for yourself.

- Ask someone else to review the requirements and be sure your application is complete. Also ask them to read your essay and submission. Check for typos, errors, and proper grammar.
- Be sure to keep a complete copy for yourself.
- To be sure your application is received, send your submission via a service that provides a record of delivery, such as FedEx, UPS, or certain USPS special services. All scholarship applicants will receive an e-mail confirmation of receipt from WAI. This can take several weeks since most scholarships arrive on or near the deadline and it takes a while to open and process all the applications.



Following these tips won't guarantee that you'll win, but you will be more likely to be fully considered, and will avoid being disqualified. The full list of scholarship opportunities available, as well as the WAI scholarship application form, and details on basic application components are available at www.WAI.org. WAI is also here to help! Don't hesitate to call or e-mail headquarters and ask for clarification if there is something you are unsure of.

Remember, you miss 100 percent of the shots you don't take. Give yourself a shot this year and apply for a scholarship—see what doors it opens for you and where it can take you. We can't wait to cheer you on in Nashville! ➔

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WAI's 2016 scholarships will be awarded during the annual International Women in Aviation Conference in Nashville, Tennessee, March 10-12, 2016.