

Proposed Air Cadet League Pilot Pathway Scholarship

The Air Cadet League of Canada proposes a unique scholarship initiative that is intended to support the adage of 'air in Air Cadets'. This proposal will provide an opportunity for partnership with other organizations with the same goal of putting more pilots in the sky. It is anticipated this will garner significant interest from cadet applicants and rapidly demonstrate the support the Air Cadet League provides to youth that commit to service in the Air Cadet program.

Background

The Royal Canadian Air Cadet Program has been Canada's premier youth organization to develop good future citizens, with the motto 'To Learn. To Serve. To Advance'.

Canadian youth join the Air Cadet Program in pursuit of a consistently delivered program with many high quality opportunities, from Marksmanship to Effective Speaking, Drill to Biathlon. Summer training opportunities were available to all, regardless of family income. The skills developed build confident leaders who are encouraged to engage in the community. The most prevalent reason that youth join Air Cadets above other programs, is the opportunities for exposure and training in aviation and aerospace. Canadian astronauts Chris Hadfield and Jeremy Hansen credit the Air Cadet program as a major contributor on their pathway to the stars.

It is estimated that approximately 20,000 pilots acquired their private pilot licences through the Air Cadet program since 1946. In 1965, the Air Cadet League of Canada, in partnership with the Department of Defence, initiated the Glider Pilot program for Air Cadets, with an estimate of at least that number of glider licences earned.

The Air Cadet League owns the tow planes and gliders, and the Canadian Armed Forces provides maintenance and insurance and delivers the program, under the guidance of a renewable Memo of Understanding. Through the familiarization flying program, gliding has provided a unique aviation experience to all air cadets, whether they choose to pursue a licence or not.

Canada's aviation industry has been sustained by a consistent supply of new pilots, trained to a high standard as established by Transport Canada. The Air Cadet program has historically been a path for youth to turn a passion for aviation into a career in the industry.

Employers respect the results of the Air Cadet program and it fuels their future workforce. According to Skies Magazine, in 2016, "...65% of commercial/airline pilots got their start in the Air Cadets". Several years ago, an anecdote in the aviation industry was that at least 80% of Westjet pilots had been Air Cadets.

However, the Department of National Defence has been mandated to reduce spending, and with that, cadets see fewer opportunities. For budgetary and other reasons, the Private Pilot Licence program shrank from over 250 annual allocations across Canada to the approximately 125 spots that we see today. Disappointingly, few cadets from rural squadrons are selected due to the current formula for candidate evaluations.

Pilot Pathways Scholarship Program

For over 85 years, the Air Cadet League of Canada, as a non-profit civilian organization, has provided support to the Air Cadet program. With an almost entirely volunteer effort, the League has purchased and updated aircraft and other assets for the Air Cadet Glider program, initiated and delivered the optional Effective Speaking Program, supported music programs and provided a robust scholarship program for decades. The Air Cadet League is a catalyst for engagement with Canada's aviation and aerospace industries.

Recognizing the current shortcomings and declining aviation opportunities being provided by the Canadian Armed Forces through the Air Cadet Program, we propose a graduated scholarship program that is funded by a combination of donations from individuals and corporations and non-profit organizations, as well as a contribution from the selected cadets. This program would include multiple tiers, to provide a clear, step-by-step path to a Commercial Pilot's Licence, should the cadet choose this level of training. The program will use Transport Canada's Recreational Pilot Permit, Transport Canada's Private Pilot Licence, and then a Night Rating the following year, leaving the Air Cadet well positioned to complete a Commercial Pilot Licence on their own, as they reach the maximum age limit. Part of the program will include working with employers to provide entry level opportunities within their operation, with a path to the flight line, as they achieve their licences.

The program is an enticement for youth to continue in the Air Cadet program to age 19, to be able to reap the benefits of this opportunity. It will be available to youth from all squadrons, regardless of size or location. It will provide more opportunities for exposure to aviation and vet the cadets that are skilled and have a passion for achieving their mission to become a pilot. It will weed out youth that may have simply applied because they view the PPL opportunity as 'something that would look good on a resume'.

This program is meant to provide sponsorship of training and mentorship. Unlike the CAF Power Pilot Training Course, this program does not cover the cost of transportation, accommodations, meals, or supervision. Youth will be responsible to get themselves to and from the flight school and maintain strict attendance in ground school and flight training. Funds will be released upon

completion of a series of milestones, an incentive to promote time management and commitment.

Selected cadets will be responsible for a minimal financial contribution as prescribed in the scholarship formula. It is well known that individuals that have 'skin in the game' are far more prone to remain dedicated when they have made an investment. It provides youth and parents with a fractional glimpse into the substantial cost of flight training and is a disincentive to those who may view this as a 'free' activity provided through the Air Cadet Program. A 'Confidential Liaison' will be established for those to discuss, one-on-one, if the youth contribution poses a hardship. The evaluation committee may waive the contribution requirement on a case-by-case basis. This program is meant to be accessible by all, with no socio-economic barriers.

Just like other civilian scholarship programs, the Air Cadet League has the opportunity to design the application process, the evaluation rubric, and the selection team. The League will implement an application that is fair to all, require quality letters of recommendation, and return to the in-person interview process. This program will be implemented at a provincial or regional level, encouraging contributions from donors, Air Cadet alumni, corporate sponsors, and like-minded non-profit organizations. The number of scholarship spots available per year will be determined by the level of financial support acquired, as well as flight school availability. There is the potential to individually name each scholarship if a donor meets the requirement to cover the 3rd party contribution as noted below.

A new application period will commence each year. Recipients are not guaranteed funding at higher levels after having been selected for earlier levels. This provides an incentive for hard work, which will pay off for those that seek to return for the next level. After acquiring a Recreational Pilot Permit, they will be able to rent an aircraft and stay current, if they are able, and have the means. This will also demonstrate their level of commitment to becoming a fully licensed pilot.

To re-iterate, this is a civilian scholarship opportunity, entirely separate from any opportunities provided by the Canadian Armed Forces, and specifically for those persons with Air Cadet service. It is no different than a scholarship that an employer may sponsor, exclusively for children of their employees.

Below is an example of how the program could work. Cost of scholarship at each level are realistic amounts that have been provided by a sampling of flight training units. The proportion of contributions can be adjusted accordingly, based on the amount of 3rd party contributions and the number of scholarships awarded. It is proposed that this scholarship program will be embraced on a provincial or regional level, with provincial committees potentially fundraising toward a grouping of the scholarships being awarded in the area of a participating flight school. In speaking with the flight schools, they felt that a cohort of 4 – 6 scholars, on the same schedule, will be most efficient.

Air Cadet League of Canada (province, if applicable)/Sponsor Name Pilot Pathways Scholarship				
	Year 1 - Rec permit	Year 2 - Private Pilot	Year 3 - Night Rating	
Minimum Applicant Criteria	16 years at July 01; 3 years Air Cadet Service; CAT 3 Medical; Possession of Student P-Star	17 years at July 01; 4 years Air Cadet Service; CAT 3 Medical; Possession of Student P-Star	18 years at July 01; 4 years Air Cadet Service; CAT 3 Medical; Possession of Private Pilot Licence	
Cost of Scholarship/person	\$11,000	\$9,000	\$4,000	
Minimum 3rd party contribution	\$ 4,000	\$ 3,500	\$ 3,000	
Air Cadet League contribution*	\$ 4,000	\$ 3,500	\$ 1,000	
Scholar contribution**	\$ 2,000	\$ 1,500	\$ 500	
Total Collected	\$ 10,000	\$ 8,500	\$ 4,500	
Shortfall	\$ 1,000	\$ 500	-\$ 500	
Goal of scholarships to award/year	4	4	4	
Esimated 3rd party funds needed	\$ 16,000	\$ 14,000	\$ 12,000	
Esimated ACL funds needed	\$ 16,000	\$ 14,000	\$ 4,000	
*assistance program may be available, by request, consideration on case by case basis				

Respectfully submitted,

Raquel Lincoln
Air Cadet League of Canada (Manitoba)
204-345-3750