

Preparing Your General Aviation Award Nominee Package: A Judge's Advice

Jackie Spanitz, Chief Judge, August 2024

Since 1963, the General Aviation Awards program (<http://www.GeneralAviationAwards.org/>) has partnered with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and aviation community experts, businesses, and sponsors each year to seek candidates and applications for three district, and national awards in the areas of flight instruction, aviation maintenance, and safety. These awards serve to recognize excellence and inspire others to join the aviation ranks.

For a nominee to receive one of the awards for Certificated Flight Instructor (CFI), Aviation Maintenance Technician (AMT), or FAA Team Representative (REP) of the Year, they must have a proven record as an expert in their field. Additionally, their nomination application must be complete, accurate, and provide enough information for a judge to understand what sets the nominee apart from the rest and why they are worthy of this award.

Remember, judges are volunteers. Their time is as valuable as yours. When filling out the application, *provide what is asked* for on the application. Providing too much information is as bad as not providing enough.

Here are some ideas on how best to complete the nomination application.

The Nominee

If you are nominating someone else, be sure to involve them in the application process. While it may sound like fun to surprise the nominee, this makes things much more difficult for several reasons. One is that you are cutting out your best resource. The nominee likely has documentation needed to complete the application, but they also have the personal details and memories necessary to make the best application possible. Who knows more about the nominee than themselves?

Privacy is another reason surprise isn't a good idea. You are going to have to share details about this person that they may not want to willingly share with the world. Respect their privacy. If they cannot be involved in the process, at least keep them in the loop as the application develops and allow them to read the whole package before sending it in.

Page 1

FILL IN EVERYTHING!

Be sure to choose the box next to the award being sought. If you don't know the representing FAA Office, ask the nominee.

If you have No Answer or the question is Not Applicable, enter "NA." The judges won't know if you missed it, ignored it, or if it doesn't apply. Enter something. Blank responses are not acceptable.

Complete the form and sign. The application must be signed.

Required Items

These are the absolute *minimum* items needed to apply. Be sure to include them. Incomplete packets will not be considered.

Optional Items

These answers help set the nominee apart, but DO NOT go overboard. The instructions were written for you to follow. Read them and provide the asked for information. If you think you have included too much, you probably have. Get another opinion; ask a friend to read the optional items list and help you narrow down your submission.

Trim down any additional resources you provide by eliminating the unnecessary. If it's a newspaper article on three different pages, do what you can to reduce clutter. Cut the ads out, cut and paste the pieces into a new document, do whatever you can to make the important parts easy to find.

FAA Certificates

Provide the front and back; the expiration date is important.

Resumé

You are asked for your "aviation-oriented resumé." This does not mean non-aviation-related information can't be included, for example, part of your job history may not be aviation related. Keep it clean, simple, easy to read, and under two pages.

Recommendation Letters

In addition to the required letter, you may submit up to two more. However, asking for 4 or 5 won't hurt. Some potential recommenders may not give you the letter you hoped for, and others may not respond at all. If you get all five, great! Pick the best two. If you only get two, then you have all you need. You will want to submit a letter from a peer or co-worker, and one from a client familiar with your work. Avoid recommendation letters from family members.

Getting a recommendation letter from someone may take some time, so get started early in the application process. If a week goes by, you may need to remind them. If they don't respond within a few days of that, consider asking someone else.

Page 2

Essay Questions

The three essay questions relate to the nominee's work experience, education, and volunteer experience. Not everyone is a wordsmith, author, or editor. Writing thoughts down can be hard. Be sure to *answer the question*. If you are not sure, ask a friend. Then, write your answers down and leave them. Come back later and read them again. Look for what you missed, and what you included that doesn't need to be there. When you almost think you are done, have a couple of other trusted people read it. It does not need to be poetry, but it should highlight the nominee's accomplishments. Strive for 100-250 words, however, no more than 500.

Putting It All Together

Your application will be submitted digitally and reviewed on a computer, then awardees will be notified via email. While it is inevitable that *some* paper will be involved, do not send original documents. Scan your documents and save them to a safe file on your computer.

If you *must* submit paper, contact info@generalaviationawards.com for information on who and where to send it, so they are aware it is being mailed.

To summarize: Use care, take your time, follow the instructions, read everything, fill in all the blanks, and provide the proper and correct amount of documentation. If you have read this far, you should have no trouble completing and submitting an impressive application. Good luck!