



Flying Start

Program Handbook



Your guide
to hosting a successful
EAA Flying Start event



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What is the EAA Flying Start Program

The EAA Flying Start program is a new tool for EAA chapters to find, educate, and inspire those adults in their community who are eager to discover aviation, but may not know how or where to take that first step.

The program consists of an EAA-prepared PowerPoint presentation and video that give the attendees information about learning to fly, with topics ranging from what is involved in flight training and which certificate would be best suited for each individual, to how much it will cost in both time and money. The hosting chapter is encouraged to customize this experience with information about their local chapter and flight training options.

Following the presentation, attendees will have the opportunity to take a complimentary Eagle Flight provided by an EAA volunteer pilot. Participants will also receive a free six-month EAA membership after EAA receives the completed Eagle Flights registration form in the mail.

Through Flying Start, participating individuals will have a pathway to get involved with their local EAA chapter, the information and guidance to pursue their interest in flying, and the opportunity to forge new friendships based on a shared passion for aviation with the potential goal of becoming a pilot.



Why Should Chapters Participate in the Flying Start Program

EAA chapters that participate in Flying Start will benefit from the program in a number of ways:

- Recruit new chapter members and engage their current members.
- Share their passion for aviation with those who have the same interest.
- Create new pilots to strengthen the general aviation community.
- Enhance the chapter's position as the local access point to aviation.

Program Goals

The primary goal of EAA's Flying Start program is to grow participation in aviation, starting at the chapter level. To achieve this goal, the program will provide the following pillars:

- A place for aviation newcomers to learn about recreational aviation.
- A way for local EAA chapters to grow their membership.
- Opportunities for local EAA members to share their aviation experience by mentoring program participants.
- The sense of belonging and camaraderie that is at the core of our EAA community.

Program Requirements

To host a successful Flying Start event and to ensure participants become fully engaged, the chapter should be able to provide or ensure the following:

- Availability of local flight instruction with the capability for flight instructors to meet participants during the Flying Start event.
- Volunteer pilots available to provide Eagle Flights.
- Buy-in from chapter members to engage with participants during and after the event.
- Comfortable gathering area with restrooms, and a presentation area suitable for a sit-down discussion for around 20 participants.
- Audio/visual equipment with speakers for PowerPoint presentation and video.



Hosting a Flying Start Event

A Flying Start event is typically a three-to four-hour chapter activity hosted at the local airport. Chapters can host the event in conjunction with a fly-in or pancake breakfast to ensure plenty of airplanes and pilots are around for questions and to volunteer for Eagle Flights.

The program is intended for adults ages 18 and up who have an interest in learning to fly and have never taken initial steps or for those looking to return to flying. Your chapter may wish to prescreen potential Flying Start participants to insure that the program will meet individual expectations.

The formal program consists of an EAA-prepared PowerPoint presentation and video that give the attendees information about learning to fly. The presentation should include dialogue from a few selected chapter members who may share their aviation passion with the group, as well as a local flight instructor who can help answer questions about the flight training process.

After the presentation and video, Flying Start participants will have the opportunity to take a free Eagle Flight provided by an EAA volunteer pilot. A free six-month EAA membership is included with their Eagle Flight. We encourage chapters to match this with a free six-month chapter membership.

Pre-event Tasks

The following checklist will help you get started in identifying all of the details you will need to consider when preparing to host a Flying Start event. Our EAA chapters department will assist you in planning your event. Please contact us at chapters@eaa.org.

Register your Flying Start event

Be sure to register your Flying Start event online at EAA.org/FlyingStart. Registering your event at least 6-8 weeks in advance will ensure timely delivery of program materials and provide your chapter with sufficient time to plan and promote your event.

Organize a Flying Start event committee

Having a person or team dedicated to the planning and execution of your Flying Start event will help keep event planning on track, as well as creating a group that reports directly to the chapter board on event planning progress.

Establish your goals

Do you want to grow your chapter membership? How many attendees are you hoping to get? Establishing your goals upfront will make it easier to measure the success of your event.

Identify the facility

Ideally, the best facility will have a comfortable gathering area with restrooms and a presentation area suitable for a sit-down discussion for around 20 participants. A sound system is required for the video.

File for EAA event insurance

Complete an EAA event insurance form at least 30 days prior to your Flying Start event date. There is no additional cost for EAA-provided insurance. Apply for insurance online at EAA.org/ChapterInsurance.

Create an event budget

Minimal expenses should be incurred when hosting a Flying Start event. Some costs you might need to consider are:

- Food and beverages
- Audio/visual equipment
- Facility rental
- Printing of materials/signage

Provide preregistration

Consider including a phone interview to preregister and prescreen potential Flying Start participants to ensure their aviation interests and intentions to participate in the event are sincere and realistic. Preregistration will also help you better prepare for your event, including how many pilots will be needed and how much for snacks/refreshments to buy.

Develop an event operating plan

The day of your Flying Start event will consist of many moving parts. Creating an event operating plan will help to ensure every aspect remains on track, as well as making it easier to coordinate with volunteers and event committee members. Consider the following tasks while planning your event.

- **Setup**

Ensure all supplies and audio/visual equipment are set up and ready to go before the official start time of the event as some guests may arrive early.

- **Chapter Greeter**

Having a designated chapter greeter at your Flying Start event is a great way to ensure all guests are properly greeted and feel welcomed at your event.

- **Event Signage/Car Parking**

Adequate signage will help attendees find the event, especially those who are unfamiliar with the airport layout.

- **Information Booth/Table**

Consider setting up an information table to provide take-home information for the participants. Items such as local flight instruction brochures, aviation magazines, and EAA chapter membership information are all good materials to offer.

- **Safety briefing to volunteer pilots and ground crews**

Ensure all aircraft are marshaled in and out of parking spots. In addition, have flightline volunteers wear safety vests so they are easily spotted from the cockpit.

- **Identify and confirm Eagle Flight pilots**

These volunteers should be personable, upbeat, and excited to introduce newcomers to flight.

- **Post-flight engagement with participants**

Part of the success of your Flying Start program is to keep participants engaged and moving toward the goal of successfully learning to fly.

Promote your event

Successful promotion of your Flying Start event will lead to a great turnout and raise awareness in your community about your EAA chapter, potentially leading to new members.

EAA has provided the following materials to help your chapter advertise your Flying Start event in your community.

- 11" x 17" event posters
- Promotional rack cards
- Business cards

In addition to the provided materials above, your chapter can download the following customizable promotional materials at **EAA.org/FlyingStart**.

- EAA Flying Start stock press release
- EAA Flying Start social media posts template
- Aviation stock photos

Common Flying Start marketing methods:

- Young Eagles parents who expressed a sincere interest in aviation
- Word of mouth by chapter members
- Bulletin board at local businesses (grocery store, diner, barbershop, etc.)
- Social media / create a Facebook event page
- Local news media (TV, radio, newspaper)
- Online event calendars, including EAA's calendar of events
- Local newsletters



Outline of Flying Start Event

Typical Event Agenda

- Meet-and-greet – welcome guests as they arrive
- Presentation and video
- Classroom Q&A
- Meet the pilots/assign aircraft
- Provide Eagle Flights
- Post-flight engagement with participants

Meet-and-Greet

Having a designated chapter greeter is a great way to engage with guests as they arrive, inform them about your chapter, and invite them back for future events and chapter meetings.

Presentation and Video

The EAA-prepared PowerPoint presentation and video will provide attendees with information about learning to fly and EAA.

Contents of the PowerPoint presentation:

- Flying Start mission
- Program outline:
 - Who is EAA?
 - Why learn to fly?
 - What to fly?
 - What does it take to become a pilot?
 - Flight training process
 - Flight instruction – meet local flight instructors
 - Aircraft access
 - Cost
 - What's the next step?
 - Experience the magic - Eagle Flights

Classroom Q&A

Allow time for questions generated from the presentation.

Meet the pilots/assign aircraft

The local volunteer pilots participating in the event should provide a background on who they are and how flying fits into their lives. They can share with the participants the passion they have for flying and how it has positively affected them. Assign participants to an airplane for their Eagle Flight based on the style of flying and type of aircraft that appeal to them most. Explain the differences in the types of aircraft complexity and performance.

Provide Eagle Flights

Spend time with each participant to educate them on the operation of the aircraft and explain to them what you will be doing during the flight. The provided EAA Eagle Flights registration forms must be completed and signed by you and your passenger prior to the flight.

Membership to EAA and Your Chapter

Flying Start participants will receive a free six-month EAA membership with their Eagle Flight. Your chapter should consider providing a free six-month chapter membership to match the EAA membership.

If a participant doesn't take an Eagle Flight, he or she can still receive a free six-month EAA membership through the chapter. That membership can be found at:

<https://eaa.org/apps/joineaa/chaptertrial.aspx>



Post-event Checklist

☐ Thank Your Volunteers

The chapter leadership should make a special effort to acknowledge the efforts of all of the members and flight instructors who worked to make the Flying Start event a success. Thank-you letters, newsletter mentions, and a personal thank you will go a long way toward making your volunteers feel appreciated.

☐ Event Debrief

Ask these three simple questions:

- What worked?
- What didn't work?
- What should we do differently next time?

This is valuable information that should be documented for the planning of your next Flying Start event!

☐ Follow Up with Participants

Follow up with Flying Start attendees to ensure they received their free trial membership with your chapter and EAA. Also be sure to invite them back to future chapter events.

Summary

Often, the only live exposure the media and general public have to general aviation is at a local EAA chapter event. Your event will help define the image of the entire aviation community.

A chapter-sponsored Flying Start event can be one of your most visible, and rewarding, EAA activities. It can serve the aviation community and strengthen chapter spirit and camaraderie.

During the planning process for your upcoming Flying Start event, please do not hesitate to contact the EAA chapters department with any questions or concerns you may have at chapters@eaa.org.

Have fun, be safe, and *good luck!*

Anatomy of a Flying Start Event



1. Hang Flying Start entrance banner
2. Easy auto parking
3. Welcome area with food & drinks
4. Restrooms
5. Classroom-style area for presentation
6. EAA & chapter information materials
7. Flight training information
8. Flying Start materials
9. Aircraft viewing/Eagle Flight
10. Post Eagle Flight engagement

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