



November 16, 2020

PDX Women in Tech
221 SE Ankeny Street
Portland, Oregon 97217

It is PDX Women in Tech's great pleasure to express support for Aviation Youth Empowerment Fund (AYEF), an organization deeply committed to cultivating and nurturing a diverse and inclusive aviation industry.

PDXWIT exists to dismantle inequities and create access to the field of technology for individuals from all backgrounds, particularly those who have been and continue to be underrepresented in the industry. The mission of AYEF is in direct alignment with our mission and filling an important need in the state of Oregon.

The aviation industry in Oregon is a large and rapidly growing industry. It includes transportation (passenger and cargo), aircraft maintenance, training, airframes, components, and avionics, general aviation aircraft equipment and accessories, heavy lift helicopters, public safety, fire fighting, airfield systems and equipment, and unmanned aerial vehicles and systems. All of these require technology to be successful and keep pilots and passengers safe, and transport millions of tons of cargo every year. By breaking down barriers to the necessary education individuals need to have careers in the industry, AYEF is directly building a robust pipeline of technologists that will shape the future of the industry.

The aviation industry at large is dominated by white men. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, fewer than three percent of U.S. commercial pilots are Black. Around seven percent are women, and fewer than one percent are Black women. According to [Sisters of the Sky](#), there are only ~150 black women pilots in the United States. These numbers are unacceptable and AYEF is taking direct action to change them.

We are grateful to AYEF for taking on this initiative and we look forward to partnering with them.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Stock
Executive Director, PDX Women in Tech
pdxwit.org

