**BACKGROUND PAPER**

**ON**

**YOUTH AVIATION OFFICER PROPOSAL**

Proposal seeks to create a permanent wing-level duty assignment to support Youth Aviation Initiative (YAI) programs.

1. The YAI was created to support the USAF’s broader diversity improvement programs.
2. CAP receives yearly federal funding of $2.4 million to support cadet flight training, career exploration, STEM kits, and orientation flights.
3. One paid employee and five national-level volunteers oversee the cadet flight training funding.
4. Each Wing Commander appoints a Point of Contact from their wing to national for youth aviation matters.
5. AFJROTC cadets have a limited opportunity to use CAP aircraft for proficiency flights.
6. Current challenge with the YAI include:
	1. The number of cadet applicants for the funded programs is far lower than the available slots.

b. Some wings have had many cadets utilize the funds while others have had zero.

c. Feedback from cadets, parents, instructors, and senior members is that there is lack of guidance. Also, no idea who to ask questions.

d. Some wing-level Cadet Programs staff thought Operations staff were handling and vice versa occurred.

1. To address these challenges:

a. Create a permanent wing-level Youth Aviation Officer (YAO) position to serve as a mentor to cadets, liaison to national, communicator between Cadet Programs and Operations staff member.

b. Eliminate the current point-of-contact system and have the new YAO report directly to wing commander

1. Implementation steps can include:
	1. At the next Command Council Meeting, let the appropriate National staff present the new position to the Wing Commanders.
	2. Allow 3 months from the meeting for Wing Commanders to select their new staff members.
	3. Schedule initial training sessions for the new YAOs within two months of appointment.
	4. Allow the larger wings to appoint assistant YAOs as appropriate. Cadets who have gone through the funded program(s) will be valuable assistant YAOs.
2. Goals for this proposed position include:
	1. By the end of 12 months from appointment, get 15% of the cadets in each wing to apply for a Youth Aviation Initiative opportunity.
	2. By the end of 24 months from appointment, have at least 2% of cadets in each wing to be Private Pilots.
3. Additional factors that should be considered include:
4. Overseas units in Germany, Japan, Korea, and the UK will have limited opportunities for flight training. How to practically implement in those units needs further research.
5. Many of these programs rely on funding from external sources. The mission needs of various partners is constantly evolving. Everyone from CAP-USAF, AETC, AF Recruiting Service, ROTC/JROTC, and others have stakes. CAP regulations and procedures must be quickly adaptable. Time-relevant training is critical.
6. This duty assignment can be a lot of work and credit for a specialty track should be given. Because it combines operations and cadet programs, it is difficult to analyze which track makes more sense.
7. Creation of a permanent duty assignment will raise the visibility of Youth Aviation opportunities to both cadets and seniors. This gives members a primary person to ask questions and seek mentorship. They will be able to communicate to both cadets and pilots to bring together quite different CAP worlds.