

FAA Statement on ATC Hiring

The FAA reviewed the end-to-end process of hiring and assigning air traffic control specialists and chose to make several improvements to the way it selects, trains, and assigns air traffic controllers in order to recruit a better qualified candidate and reduce costs associated with testing and training. Improvements were made to enhance decision making and increase objectivity in the assessment of candidates. The new hiring process is blind on the issue of diversity, from start to finish, meaning we do not know the diversity of our candidates until they are hired.

The selection process for new air traffic controllers was very competitive. In the course of two weeks, we received over 28,000 applications for 1,700 positions. We expect to hire additional controllers next year and have encouraged those not selected to reapply then. The agency plans to hire more than 6,600 new controllers over the next five years to keep pace with expected attrition and traffic growth.

In previous hires, the FAA would typically keep an inventory of qualified candidates and draw from that pool as needed. In some cases applicants might wait for long durations and never receive a tentative offer letter from the agency, which was a point of criticism from candidates. In this hire, the FAA did not create an inventory and as a result the number of actual positions was very limited.

We have received feedback from Members of Congress and the public and we continue to evaluate our recruitment and applicant assessment process closely. We plan to make further improvements to the process before the next round of hiring.

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