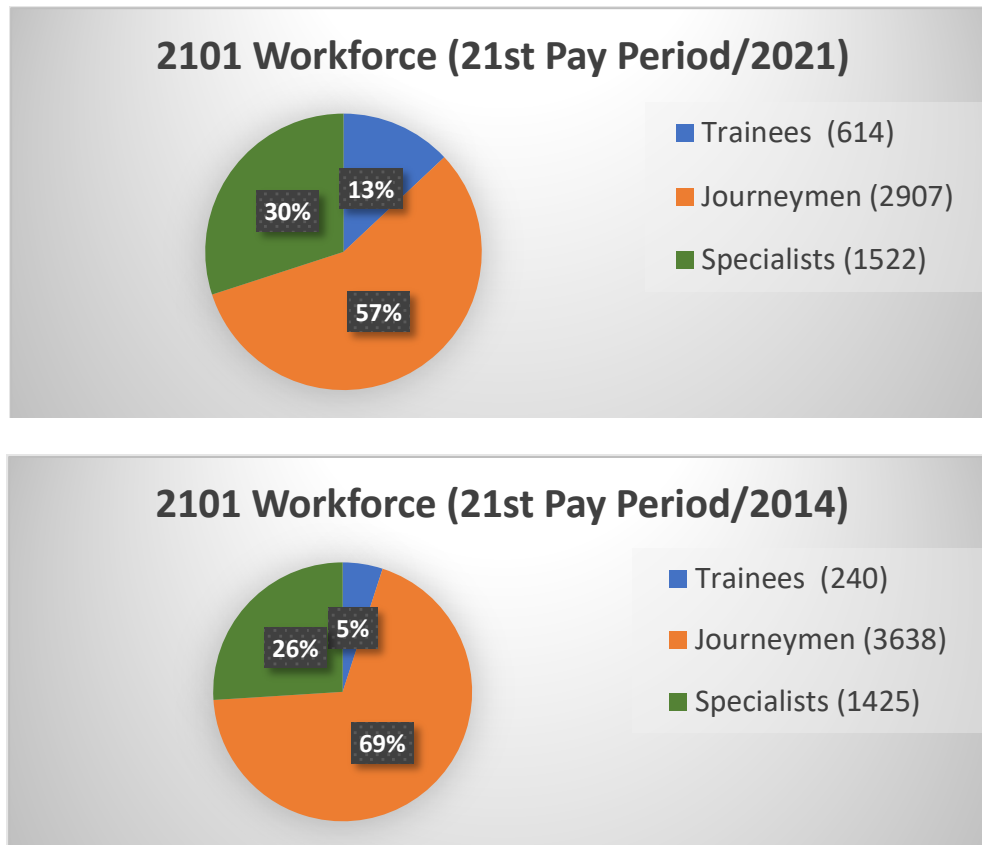




FAA Technical Operations Workforce Plan Working Draft

The Technical Operations workforce at the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has diminished to a level that may lead to crises regarding maintenance, repair, and certification of the National Airspace System (NAS). According to the FAA, in October of 2014 there were 5,810¹ technical employees (consisting of occupational series 2101, 856, 802). Since then, the numbers have steadily declined, to approximately 5,523², while the COVID-19 pandemic has stopped training for these highly skilled employees. The 2101 occupational series makes up the bulk of the Technical Operations workforce.

The current staffing of 2101 employees (21st pay period of 2021 and 2014 sent to PASS from the agency) is as follows:



The workforce can be broadly defined in three categories. Apprentices, also known as trainees or developmental employees, are auxiliary to the workforce because they are still officially in developmental training. Journeymen have been recently certified but will continue years of “on-the-job training” to then specialize in skills and do the bulk of certification and restoration work on the NAS. However, there is no clear definition of progression for a journeyman. Lastly,

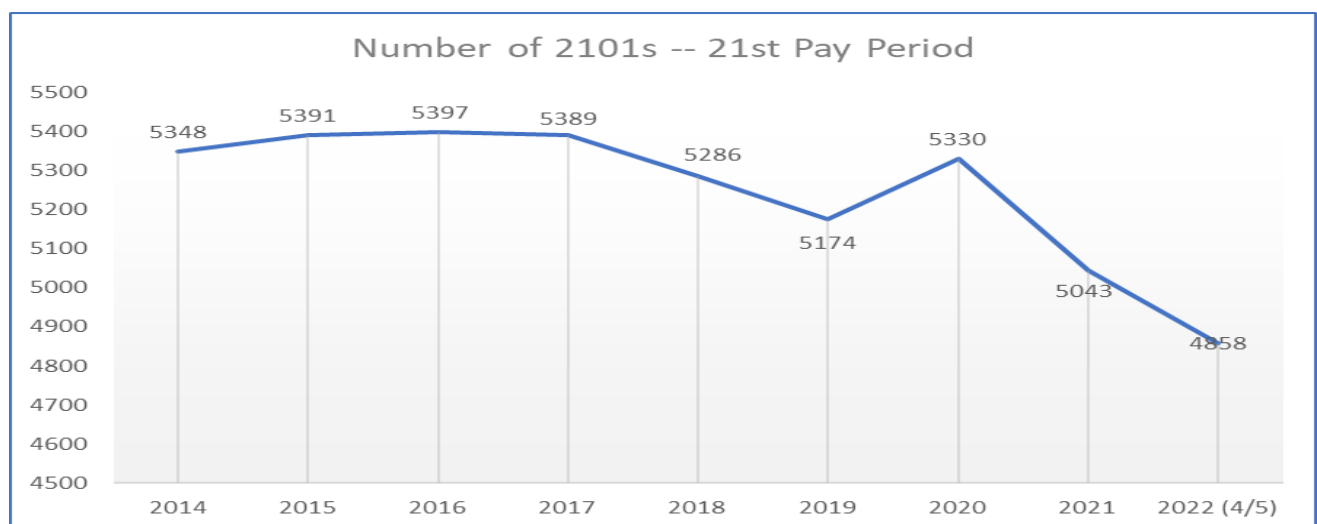
¹ FAA collective bargaining contract data, 21st pay period of 2014.

² FAA collective bargaining contract data, 21st pay period of 2021.

specialists have been working in their field for a significant time and are experts in their given skill or subject area.

The data suggests that the journeymen portion of the workforce has decreased substantially, by 776 employees, and represents the bulk of attrition of the 2101 workforce. Alternatively, the percentage of apprentices has nearly tripled since 2014. These trainees should be certified at a higher rate and join the workforce as journeymen in a much timelier manner. Specialists have stayed the same in part to their long training time.

This potential crisis is exacerbated by the fact that training has slowed considerably due to the pandemic. As a result, the percentage of trainees has increased to a level that is unacceptable. Journeymen are left to handle the bulk of the work. This has led to a workforce that is understaffed, under trained and overburdened.



The FAA needs to engage with PASS to create long-term staffing models through a Workforce Plan. Simply developing a Technical Operations staffing model based on the current workforce does not take into consideration the growth of the NAS through Next Generation Air Transportation Systems (NextGen) technologies nor does it take advantage of the skills and abilities of this highly technical group of employees.

2101 Workforce				
Age	> 55	> 60	> 62	> 65
Number	1825	849	508	233
%	36%	17%	10%	5%

Recommendation: We recommend that the FAA hire 200 new 2101 series employees in fiscal year (FY) 2023 as a first step, including all requisite training, and create a workforce plan for Technical Operations, working with the appropriate bargaining unit, to establish annual attrition and hiring estimates for FY 2024 and beyond.

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