

Travel rebound: United plans to hire about 300 new pilots

April 2 2021



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United Airlines said Thursday it plans to hire about 300 pilots, another sign that airlines feel more confident that a recent increase in travel will continue.

The airline plans to start by hiring pilots who received conditional job offers or had a class for new hires canceled last year, when the industry was slammed by the [coronavirus](#) pandemic.

"With vaccination rates increasing and travel demand trending upwards, I'm excited to share that United will resume the [pilot](#) hiring process that was halted last year," Bryan Quigley, Chicago-based United's senior vice president of flight operations, told employees.

Nearly 1,000 United pilots have retired or taken voluntary leave since September. Federal payroll aid to airlines blocked furloughs. Quigley said United's need for new pilots will depend on the airline's recovery from the pandemic.

Airlines report that bookings have increased in recent weeks, and the government says at least 1 million travelers a day have gone through airport checkpoints for the past three weeks. Still, U.S. air travel remains down nearly half from the same period in 2019.

United CEO Scott Kirby said this week that domestic leisure travel demand "has almost entirely recovered," but critical business and international [travel](#) remain severely depressed.

United's hiring plans were reported earlier by CNBC.

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Citation: Travel rebound: United plans to hire about 300 new pilots (2021, April 2) retrieved 24 April 2024 from <https://techxplore.com/news/2021-04-rebound-hire.html>

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