

# Airline Pilot Career Planning Guide



**2022**

# PILOT CAREER OUTLOOK

## CURRENT DEMAND

The airline industry is facing an unprecedented shortage of pilots over the next two decades, creating an exceptional opportunity for those interested in a career in aviation.

The pilot shortages and flight cancellations you read about in today's headlines are part of a long-term shortfall made worse by pilot early retirements during the pandemic. The FAA predicts that air travel demand will continue to grow at a rate of 4.3 percent per year, even as more than 4,100 pilots per year retire in the US alone.

**863,000**  
 pilots needed  
 in the next 20 years  
- Boeing: Pilot and Technician Outlook

What does that mean for pilot jobs? It means that more than 34,000 newly trained pilots – about 10 percent of the total workforce – will be needed by 2025. This roughly corresponds to the timeframe for prospective pilots who begin their training today to be entering the workforce.



And because the shortfall is, according to a study by Boeing, expected to endure for 20 years, those pilots entering the workforce now are better positioned to take advantage of advancement opportunities as they gain seniority.

Airlines are responding to this long-term shortfall – and the rapid return of airline passengers post-pandemic – with unprecedented incentives for new cadets. This can include partial tuition coverage, new financing options, and starting bonuses once a cadet is flying for the airline. Now is the right time to begin conversations with recruiters about the career paths available through flight schools like HAA.

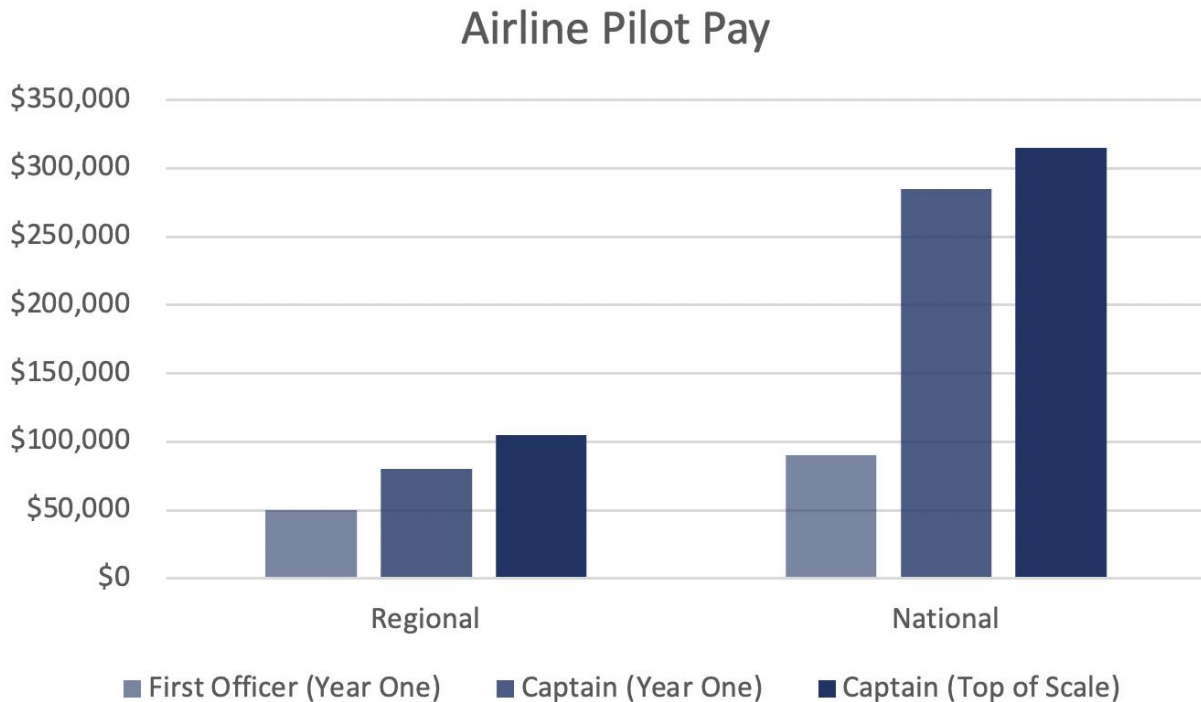
## PILOT SALARIES

Pilot salaries are based on two primary factors: regional vs. major airlines, and seniority/role within those two airline types.

Nearly all pilots begin their careers with a regional airline that’s affiliated with one of the majors, because the majors use their regionals as proving grounds to develop their pilots. For instance, Alaska Airlines pilots begin with their regional affiliate Horizon Air, and United Airlines begins their pilots with United Express.

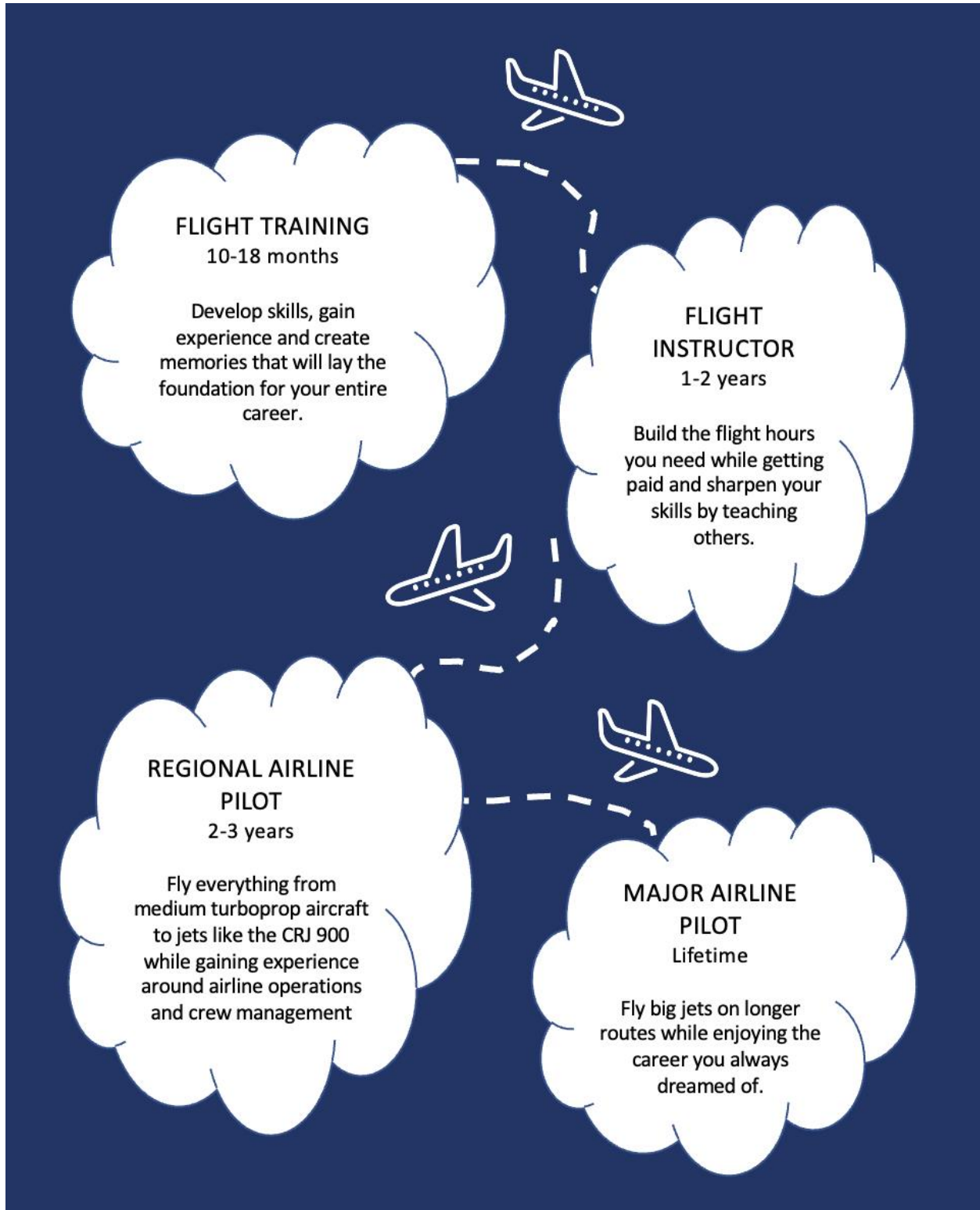
New pilots start at a regional as a First Officer, typically flying for about two years and earning around 2,000 additional flight hours. Depending on the market need as well as their own abilities and preferences, they may move up to the Captain role at the regional, or move directly on to the major airlines as a First Officer. The ultimate goal for most pilots is to achieve the role of Captain at a major airline.

The chart below, provided by Alaska Air Group, indicates average salary bands for pilots at each level of seniority across several regional and major carriers.



## CAREER PROGRESSION

The chart below illustrates typical career steps and average timelines on the path to a dream career as an airline pilot.



# BECOMING A PROFESSIONAL PILOT

## TRAINING STAGES

The stages below represent the typical process and timeline for students training for a commercial airline pilot career.



**Private Pilot Certificate**  
(3-4 months)

The Private Pilot Certificate is the first step toward building the skills needed for a Commercial Pilot Certificate. You'll be in the cockpit from day one, getting hands-on experience.



**Instrument Rating**  
(2.5-4 months)

The Instrument Rating enables you to fly in weather conditions that require the use of your instruments – a crucial step in the experience needed to safely transport passengers.



**Commercial Pilot License**  
(2.5-4 months)

The CPL is the longest and most crucial stage in the journey to becoming a commercial pilot. Students learn advanced aerodynamics, crew management, commercial rules, and more complex aircraft.



**Certified Flight Instructor (CFI)**  
(3-4 months)

A Certified Flight Instructor (CFI) Rating is required for a pilot to instruct other pilots – often the first step in a pilot's career and a great way to gain flight hours while improving your skills.



**CFI Instrument**  
(3 weeks)

This course combines the techniques developed in the prior instructor course with the knowledge learned in instrument training to ensure readiness to teach students to fly in instrument conditions.



**Multi-Engine Instructor**  
(3 weeks)

The Multi-Engine Instructor Rating gives you an edge in competition for instructor positions by imparting the training necessary to instruct students in a multi-engine plane.



## COSTS & FINANCING

For aspiring pilots, the cost of flight training can get in the way of pursuing their dream career. At HAA, we work hard to make that cost burden easier, from flexible payment structures to special financing options.

### **Pay As You Go**

Many flight schools require students to pay a portion of their tuition upfront before training can begin. We require no upfront deposit; students pay at the completion of each flight lesson.

### **Meritize Financing**

We have partnered with Meritize Loans' "Core for Aviation" program to provide our students with financing options. With a Meritize Loan, students can get credit for their merit and potentially improve their loan options by sharing academic history, military background, or work experience. If approved, full deferment during school is available for certain products.

### **Alaska Airlines Ascend Academy**

This new program provides a more financially accessible path to becoming a commercial pilot: among other incentives, enrolled cadet pilots will be eligible for

low-interest financial aid and a stipend of up to \$25,000 upon signing on to work for Horizon Air and eventually Alaska Airlines. HAA will also contribute the cost of the Certified Flight Instructor Instrument (CFII) Rating to eligible cadets.

### **Program Costs**

The cost of the program varies by student since each student completes each rating at their own pace and ability. A complete breakdown of average program costs and flight hours at each stage may be viewed here:

<https://flyhaa.com/airplane-rates/>

## ACCELERATED PACING

Our Accelerated pacing track gives students the opportunity to complete the entire program of pilot classes, inclusive of all three Certified Flight Instructor ratings (single, multi, and instrument) in less than 12 months vs. a more typical 16-18 months.

The FAA-approved flight hours reduction in our accelerated syllabus means that students who are committed to daily training can now have the best of both worlds: a faster, more cost-effective timeline to completion and all the quality standards and rigor of a Part 141 training program.

The Accelerated track isn't for everyone. It requires students to commit to seven-days-per-week availability, and to complete six flight activities per week. The reduced minimum syllabus works well for these students because consistent activity greatly improves training efficiency -- most students retain more and advance more quickly at a steady pace. But some students simply learn better at a slower pace or have commitments that limit their availability, and our Standard track, with an average 16-18 month completion across all pilot classes, is right for them.



# ABOUT HILLSBORO AERO ACADEMY

## WHY HAA?

### Environment

Flight schools in sunny climates often rely on simulators to teach instrument flying. But the best pilots have built flight hours mastering the kinds of challenging weather conditions, diverse geographical features, and urban/rural mix that only the Pacific Northwest can offer.

### Experience

We are one of the longest-standing flight schools in the world, with a reputation that spans the globe. Over more than four decades, our pilot training school has built our international reputation by helping aspiring pilots from 75+ countries to achieve their career dreams.

### Safety

We hold the prestigious IS-BAO (International Standard for Business Aircraft Operations) certification, the recognized standard for aviation safety. HAA is both the first flight school to achieve this certification and the **only** school holding Stage III, the highest level of safety management.

### Accreditation

Accreditation means a flight school is held to the same academic standards as universities. With our Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges (ACCSC) accreditation, we must be able to show proof of our training standards, which gives incoming students assurance of the highest quality training.

### Visas

Most flight schools can only offer international students the M-1 visa, which requires the student to return home upon completion of their training. With our F-1 visa, students can add up to 23 months of employment as a Certified Flight Instructor (CFI), to build the hours that employers require.

### Industry Partners

A flight school's professional partnerships – its relationships with airlines and other aviation industry employers – are critical to its students' ability to gain employment at the completion of their training. Our partnerships exemplify HAA's reputation as a trusted flight training provider over four decades.



## CAMPUSES

Our airplane pilot career training takes place on two campuses in Oregon in the spectacular Pacific Northwest region of the United States. Each has their own unique identity and flight environment, but both offer top-notch facilities for ground and simulator training, experienced flight instructors, and diverse and well-maintained aircraft fleets.

### Hillsboro

Our Hillsboro Campus is just west of Portland, Oregon, consistently named one of the ten most livable cities in the US. Nestled in a broad valley between mountain peaks and less than 60 miles from the Pacific Ocean, this campus features a temperate year-round climate and the diverse weather and terrain that aspiring airline pilots need to build the skills that employers are seeking.



### Redmond

Located in the world-renowned outdoor playground of Central Oregon, our Redmond Campus boasts abundant year-round sunshine in a high desert environment among Cascade peaks, but enough weather diversity to create the real-life instrument flying conditions that students need. And KRDM is a class D airspace: its control tower allows students to practice communication with ATC on every flight.

## FLEET

Hillsboro Aero Academy maintains a fleet of more than 70 training aircraft across our two campuses to ensure high availability for our students. The fleet comprises the most reliable and student-friendly training aircraft available, outfitted with state-of-the-art Garmin avionics. And unlike most flight schools, we operate an onsite FAR Part 145 repair station, with 32 maintenance personnel on staff to ensure the highest quality control and aircraft availability.

### Cessna 152

The Cessna 152 is probably the first airplane for more professional pilots than any other, thanks to the simplicity of its controls and its ease of handling.



### Cessna 172

The ultra-versatile 172, a 4-seater big brother to the 152, is the most popular plane ever built.



### Piper Seminole

By far the most popular twin-engine plane in flight training, the Piper Seminole is beloved by generations of pilots for its safety and reliability.



## STUDENT LIFE

At HAA, life outside the cockpit can be just as exciting. Sure, you're here to fly, but the vibrant communities, lifelong friendships, and beautiful surroundings are part of the package. At Hillsboro Aero Academy, we truly have it all.

Our campuses are located near the bustling cities of Portland and Bend, both known for their thriving young communities. For those at our Hillsboro campus, the Oregon Coast and the Columbia River Gorge are short drives away, and let you get your adrenaline fix through surfing, kite boarding, paragliding, hiking and more.



For students at our Redmond campus in Central Oregon, a vast outdoor playground awaits, with epic skiing, hiking, and water sports in the Cascade Mountain Range.



We offer student housing at each of our campuses to allow students a chance to live near campus and connect with other HAA students.

Our Portland-area campuses also feature easy access to public transportation so students can explore the city, including attractions its best known for such as the Portland Rose Gardens, Washington Park, and Powell's City of Books. For those at our Central Oregon campus, the city of Bend is less than 20 miles from Redmond and features attractions such as the High Desert Museum and the Old Mill District.

In addition to the diverse off-campus activities near our campuses, we host regular student activities on campus as well, such as BBQs, game nights, and movie nights.

## NEXT STEPS

If you are ready to learn more about a career as a professional pilot, we invite you to meet with a member of our admissions team or sign-up for our [informational webinar](#). Phone meetings or in-person campus tours are also great options to learn more about our program. You can contact us using the QR code below.

Follow us on social media to see more of our training operations as well as our students and staff.

IG: @HillsboroAero

FB: /hillsboroaero

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YouTube: /HillsboroAeroAcademy1

