



JETBLUE WANTS TO TRAIN ASPIRING PILOTS WITH DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS

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Aspiring pilots, rejoice. JetBlue has launched a program to select and train everyday folks to fly a commercial jet.

JetBlue's pilots don't like the idea, saying there are already plenty of experienced pilots ready to work for JetBlue.

The pilot recruiting and training program, dubbed Gateway Select, is designed to make “the profession more accessible to a broader range of candidates with diverse backgrounds and experiences.” But only 24 people will be picked to go through the four-year training course, starting this summer. The price tag: \$125,000 per pilot.

A labor union representative for JetBlue's pilots said that pilots hired by JetBlue now have an average of 5,000 to 8,000 hours of flying experience. But the new program would put pilots into JetBlue cockpits with 1,500 flight hours' experience — the minimum required by the Federal Aviation Administration.

“We believe that the best pilot-training program is one that is able to ensure that the safest and most experienced pilots are in the cockpit,” said Jim Bigham, chairman of JetBlue's pilot's master

executive council.

A JetBlue spokesman said the airline will continue to hire experienced pilots through other channels.

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