



Pilot Workforce and Small Community Air Service Trends

March 2022

66%

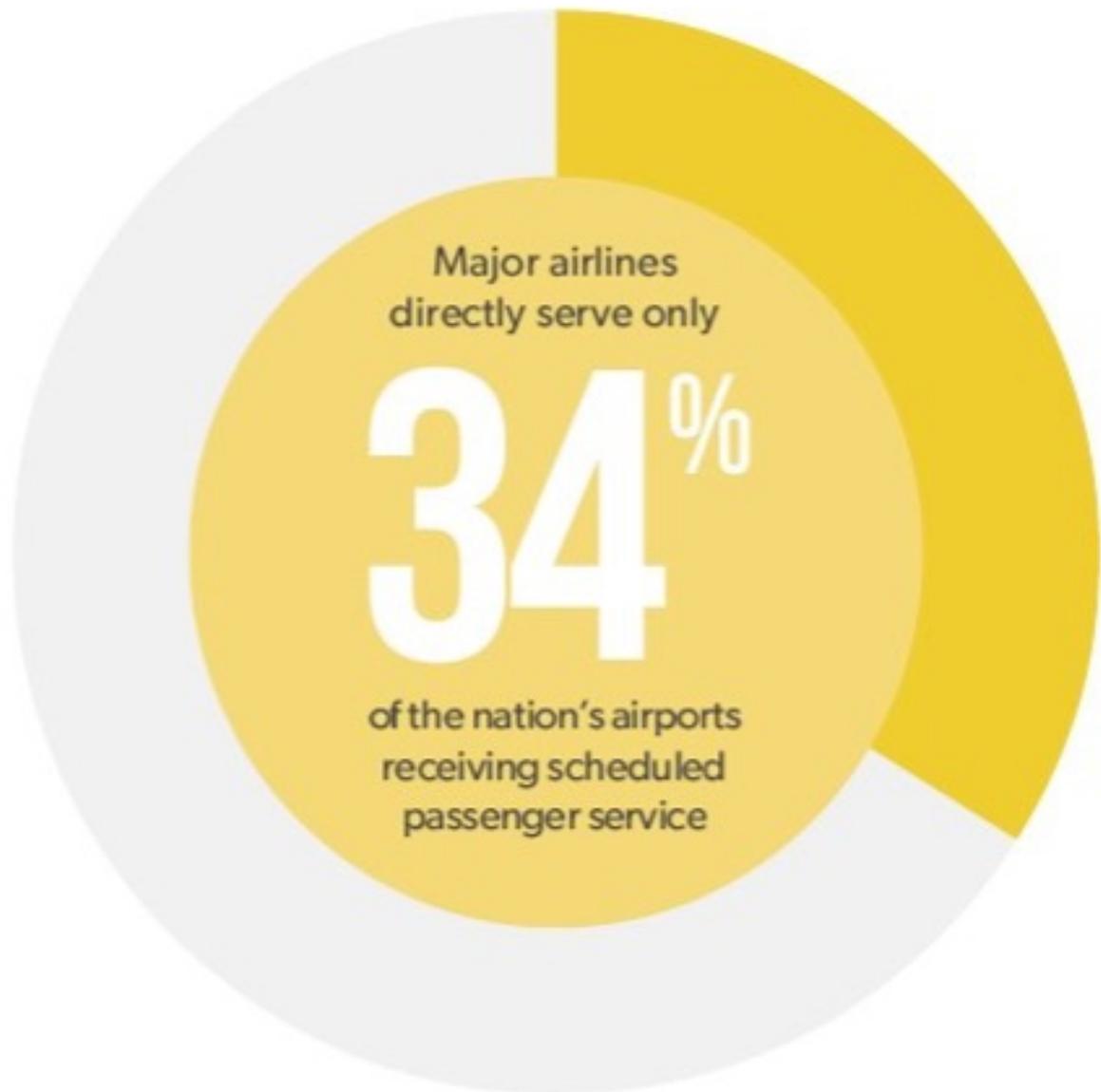
of U.S. airports with scheduled passenger air service get their **ONLY** source of air service from regional airlines.



43%

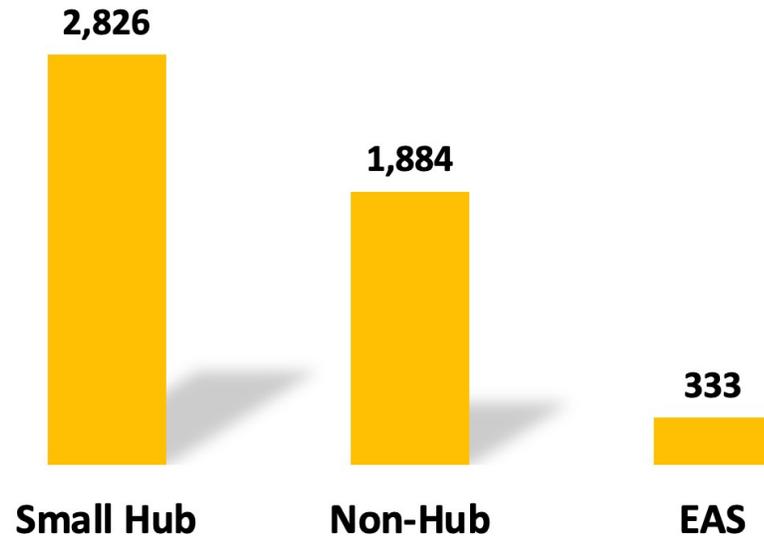
of scheduled passenger departures were operated by U.S. regional airlines.





Economic Impact:

Small communities had over 5,000 daily departures in 2019; 70% of those departures were on regional aircraft (aircraft with 76 seats or smaller). Air service to these small communities drove significant economic activity for the year.



Source: Airline schedules via Airline Data Inc. online portal, CY 2019



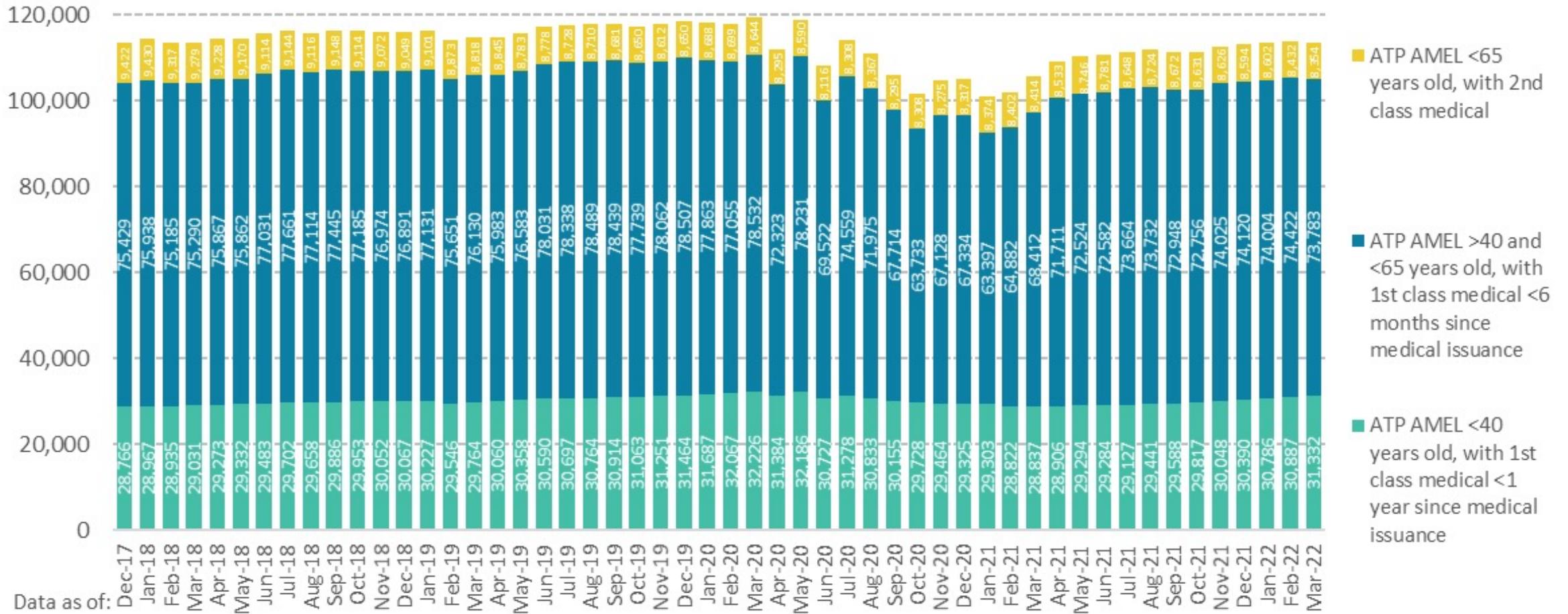
Source: Swelbar-Zhong Consultancy for RAA, based on modeling in FAA's Economic Impact Study 2019



Headwinds for Small Communities

- An existing pilot shortage, accelerated and amplified by pandemic forces, poses a very high threat to small community air service.
- US regional carriers must fight the hardest to attract talent given the variety of competition; this increases labor costs and worsens margins on lower density markets.
- Low revenue and higher cost environment reduces the ability for strong markets to help bring along weaker markets.
- **Decisions are more likely to turn on highest, best use.** Marginal markets are exposed to higher risk with faster consequences. Marginal aircraft with higher unit costs get parked.
- When industry shock forces network carriers to retract air service, small communities are hit first and worst.
- During the Great Recession, smaller communities lost more than 31% of their departures, and lost departures at a rate that was five times greater than losses at larger airports.

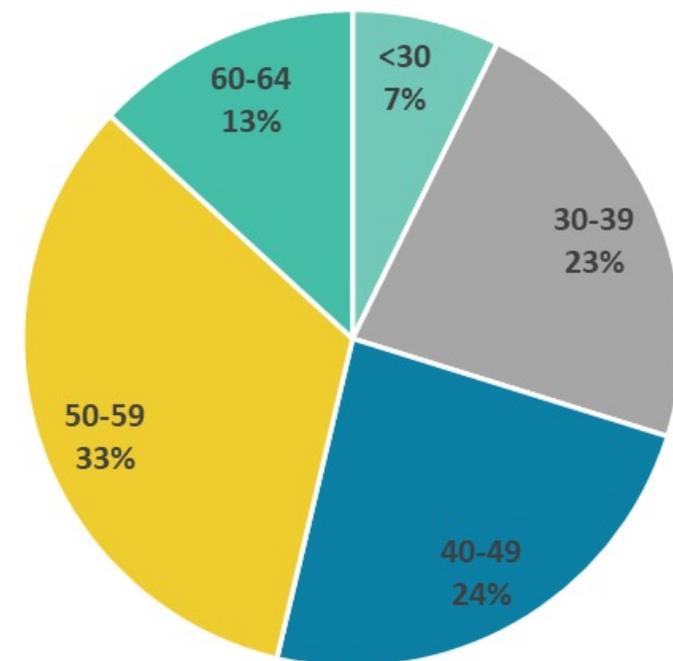
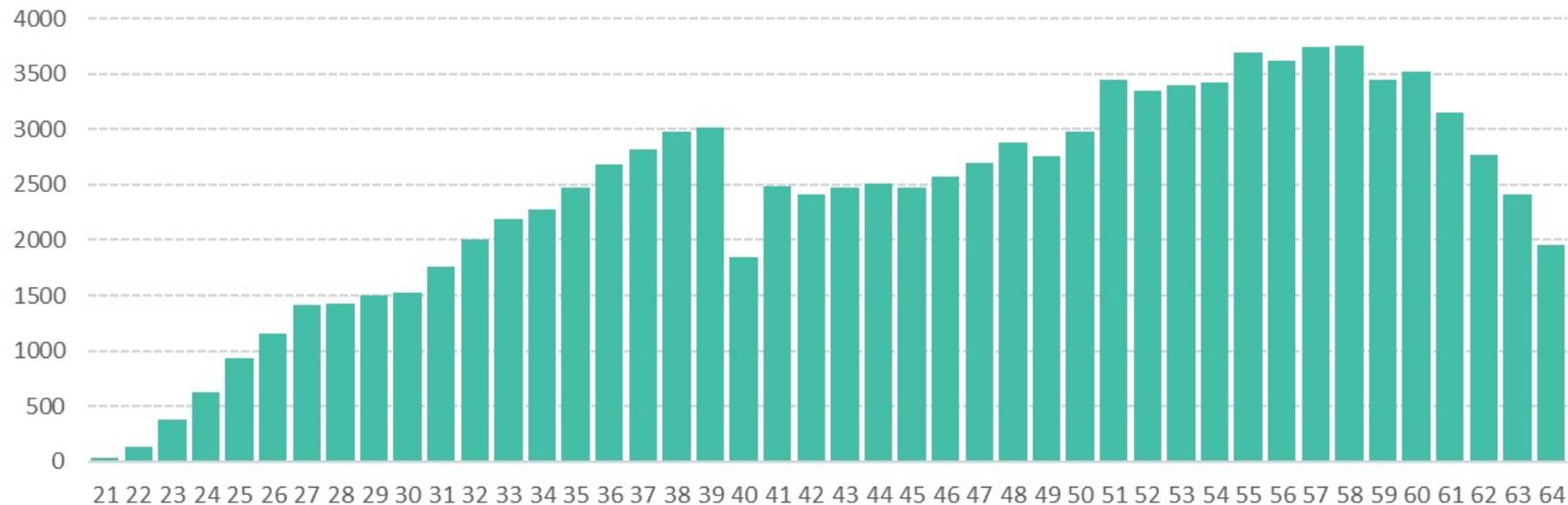
Persistent Deficit of Qualified Pilots Show Early Exits



Despite rebound from sharp 2020 decline, the deficit has held steady around 5-6,000 pilots.

Mar-2022 compared with Mar-2020, 5.1% fewer ATP AMEL pilots with valid 1st class medicals (-5,643 pilots)

More Pilots Face Near-Term Age 65 Retirement



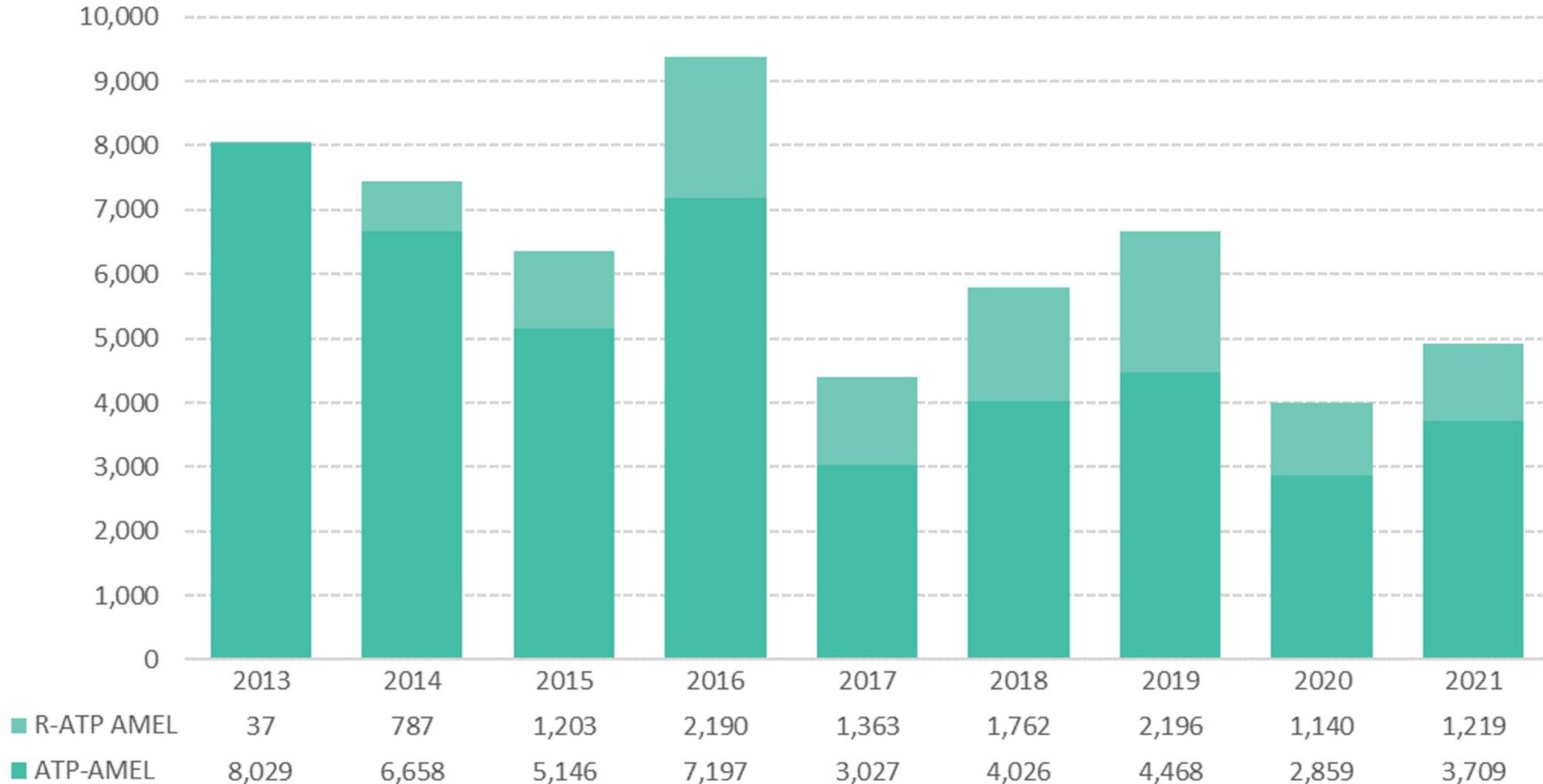
ATP AMEL Pilots with Valid 1st Class Medicals by Age

46.3% of qualified pilots will reach mandatory retirement age within 15 years (48,680 pilots).
 13.1% of qualified pilots will reach mandatory retirement age within 5 years (13,820 pilots).

Data Source: FAA's Registry Services and Information Management Branch, AFB-730

COVID Dramatically Slowed Issuance of New Certificates

Original Issuance ATP AMEL and R-ATP AMEL

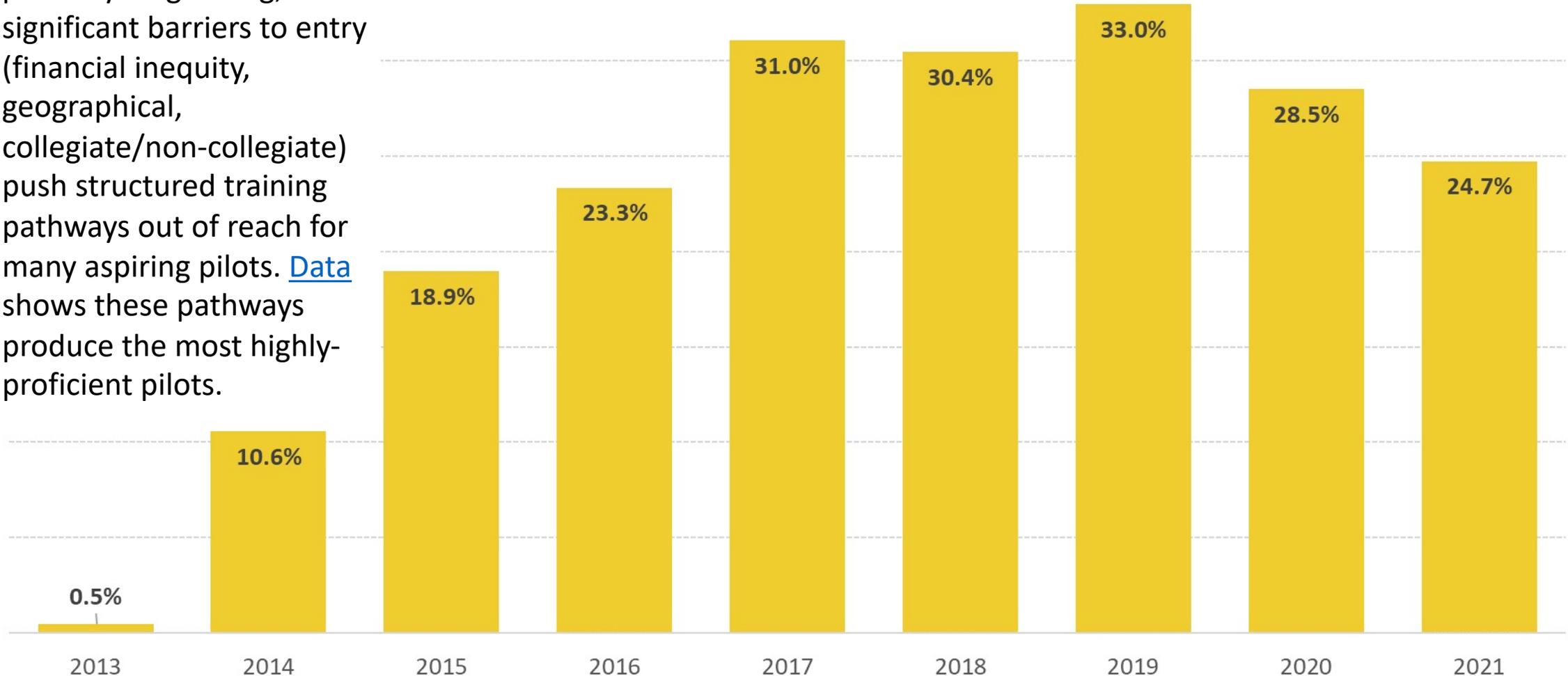


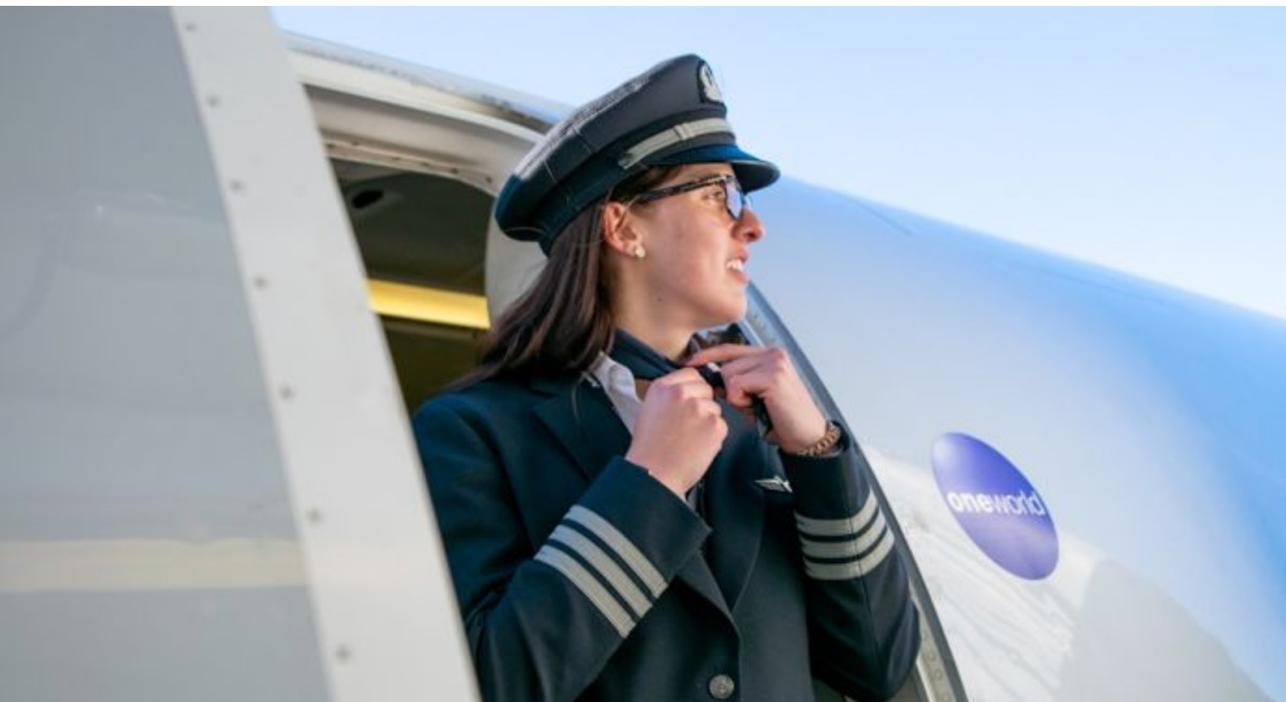
Source: FAA's Registry Services and Information Management Branch, AFB-730

Structured Training Pathways Improve Proficiency and are Underutilized

Percentage of Original Issuance ATP AMEL with Restricted Privileges

Demand for R-ATP pathways is growing, but significant barriers to entry (financial inequity, geographical, collegiate/non-collegiate) push structured training pathways out of reach for many aspiring pilots. [Data](#) shows these pathways produce the most highly-proficient pilots.





Select Large Airline Estimated 2022 Hiring

- American, Delta and United pilot hiring announcements average 200 pilots per month – well over **5000 pilots in 2022**
- Alaska announcements and order book suggests **604 pilots will be hired in 2022**
- JetBlue announced it would hire **680+ pilots in 2022** alone.
- Frontier + Spirit combined order book and hiring announcements suggest **1,000 combined pilots in 2022**
- Allegiant, Sun Country, Breeze, Avelo hiring combined estimate is over **1500 pilots in 2022**
- FedEx announced it would hire **1,492 in 2022**
- Atlas announced it would **1,250 in 2022**

Estimated hires for above* airlines in 2022 = 11,526

*Does not include Southwest, UPS, hundreds of public charters, business aviation, cargo and other airlines who may begin hiring; does not include any regional airline hiring.

How a pilot shortage could leave travelers with higher fares and fewer options

Ethan Klapper
2h ago

A very real pilot shortage threatens to upend the U.S. airline recovery

Regional airlines are acutely exposed to the new shortage.

Pursuits

Airlines Face Shortage of Pilots, Other Workers, Execs Say

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

December 15, 2021, 6:23 PM EST Updated on December 15, 2021, 8:02 PM EST

AW Daily

United Ends 17 Routes as Airlines Manage Worsening U.S. Pilot Shortage

Edward Russell • March 1, 2022

The pilot situation in the U.S. is getting worse before it gets better. United Airlines will end 17 routes, and exit one city, in its latest round of staffing-related schedule reductions.

The Chicago-based carrier will exit Alexandria, La., on June 2 when it ends flights from its Houston Bush Intercontinental hub, Cirium schedule data show. The city joins at least eight other smaller communities that United has exited citing a pilot shortage at its regional affiliates.

BUSINESS • News

Delta airlines' pilot shortage prompts cuts to regional service

Delta expects to add 100 to 200 pilots a month into next year, Chief Executive Officer Ed Bastian said.

AW Daily

American Airlines Cites Pilot Shortage For Route Suspensions

Edward Russell • January 18, 2022

American Airlines will temporarily suspend at least seven regional routes facing U.S. regional carriers.

BUSINESS

Pilots Are in Demand Again, as Strained Airlines Go on a Hiring Spree

Carriers press to refill their cockpits after the Covid-19 shutdown

United Airlines CEO says 100 of its regional jets are grounded because of a pilot shortage

Kate Duffy

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A Massive Pilot Shortage Is Coming: What It Means for Airlines

By Adam Levine-Weinberg - Jun 27, 2021 at 9:10AM

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AVIATION

Airlines facing a new pilot shortage as planes, but not personnel, return

By Robert Silk | Sep 07, 2021

Pilot Shortage, by the Numbers:

COVID 19 early exits started 2022 with a deficit of (5,500) pilots

Age 65 mandatory retirements in 2022 = 2000 pilots

Fleet expansion in 2022 = 4,350 pilots

ATP/R-ATP new entrants expected 2022: (6000)

Total shortfall/(surplus) = 5,850 too few pilots

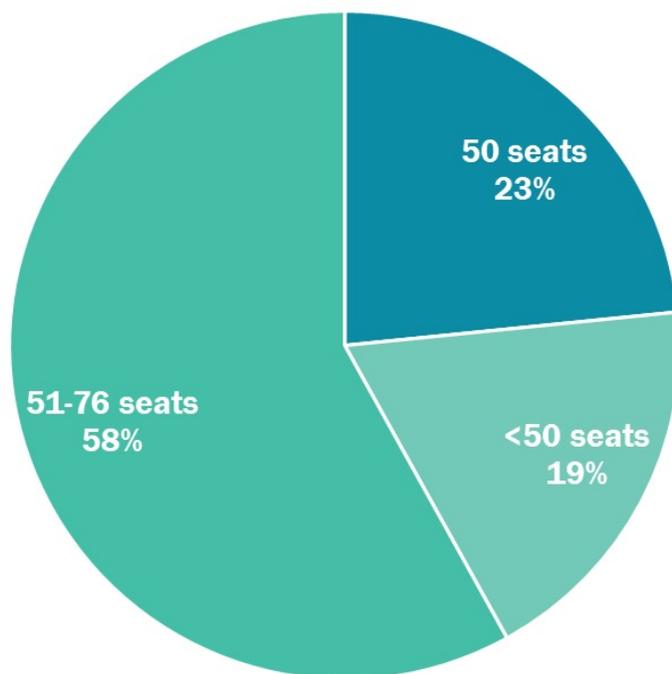
At 5 crews (10 pilots) per tail suggests 585 aircraft parked at year's end.

Capacity will also be drawn down through lower utilization of the remaining fleet.

Smaller Aircraft, Big Network Presence

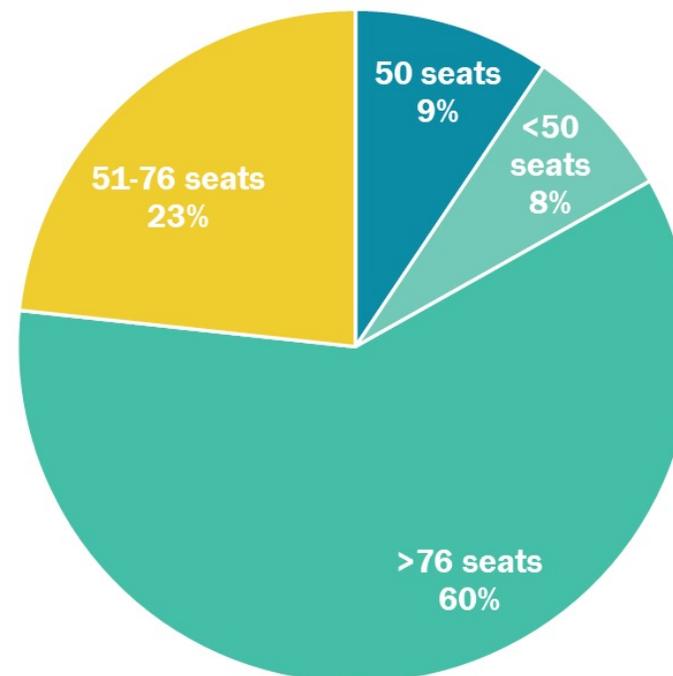
- 50 seat aircraft are present in 45% of airports w/ scheduled air service.
- Aircraft \leq 50 seats are present in 92% of airports w/ scheduled air service.
- Aircraft \leq 76 seats are present in 96% of all airports w/ scheduled air service.

2021 U.S. Carrier Fleet (up to 76 seats)
Percentage of Category Departures



Source: OAG Schedule Analyser

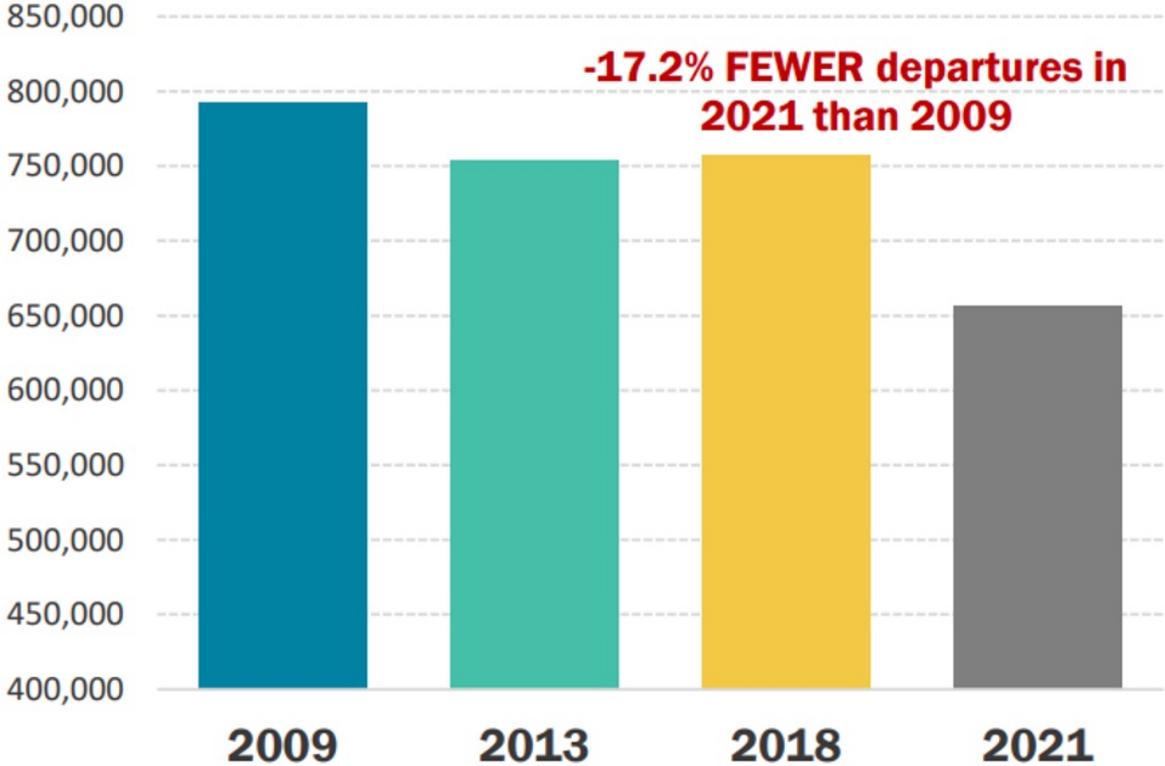
2021 U.S. Carrier Fleet
Percentage of Total Departures



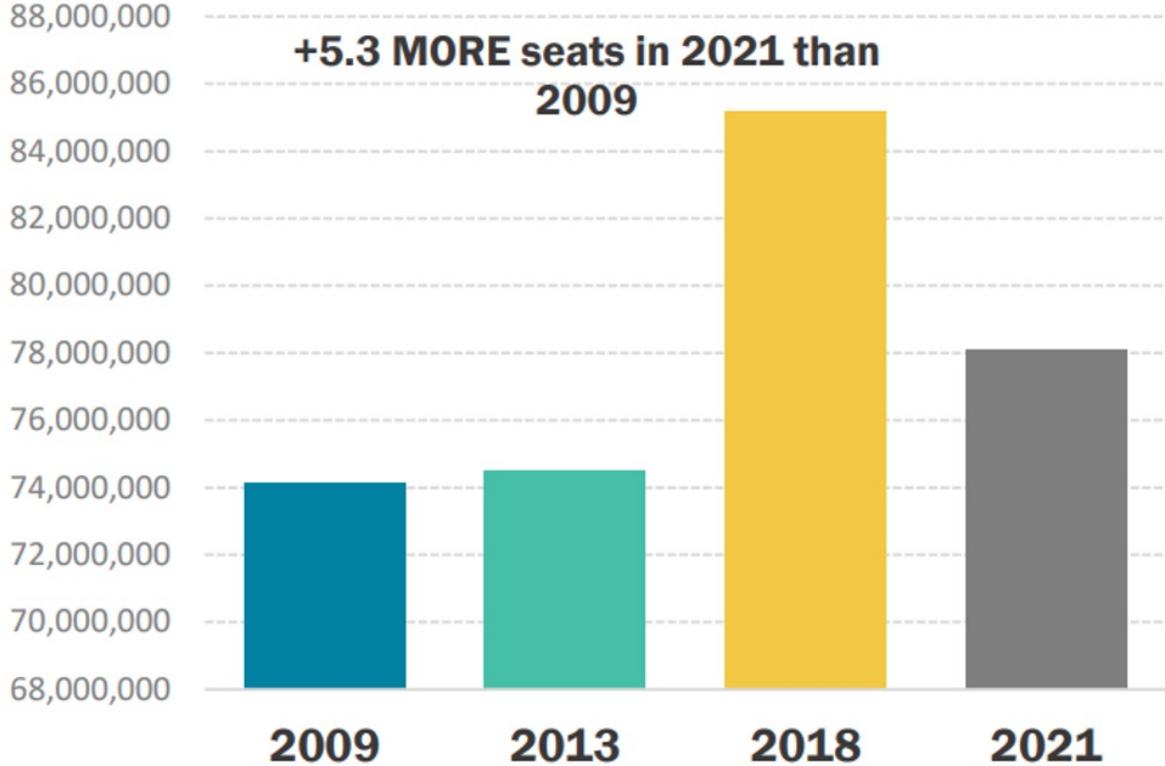
Source: OAG Schedule Analyser

US Air Service Trends – July Schedules (US Carriers/Domestic Operations)

SCHEDULED DEPARTURES

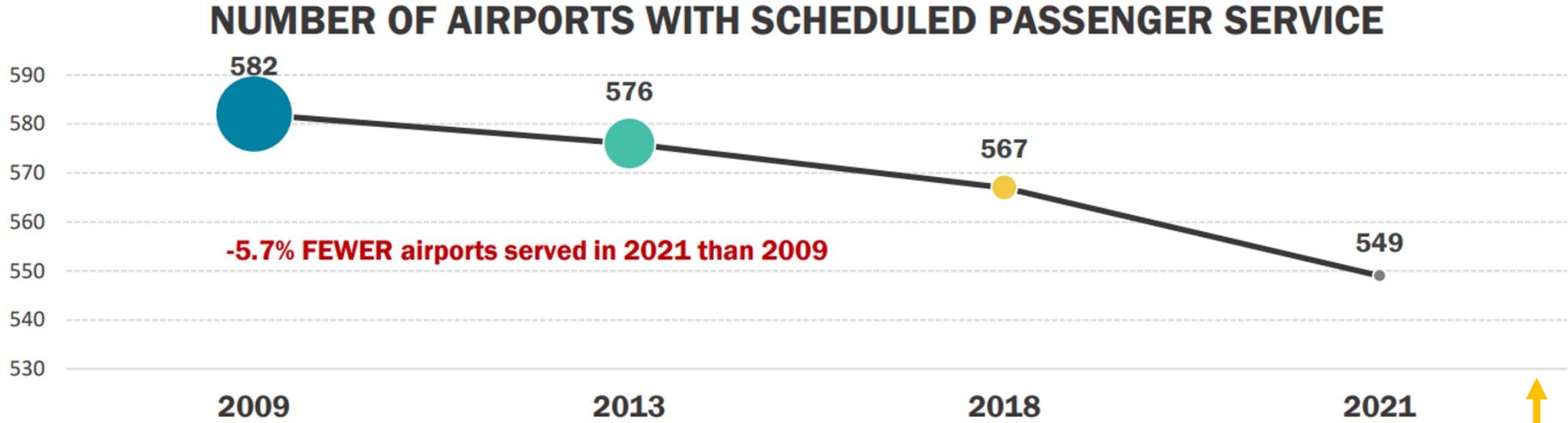


SCHEDULED SEATS



Source: OAG Schedules Analyser Tool

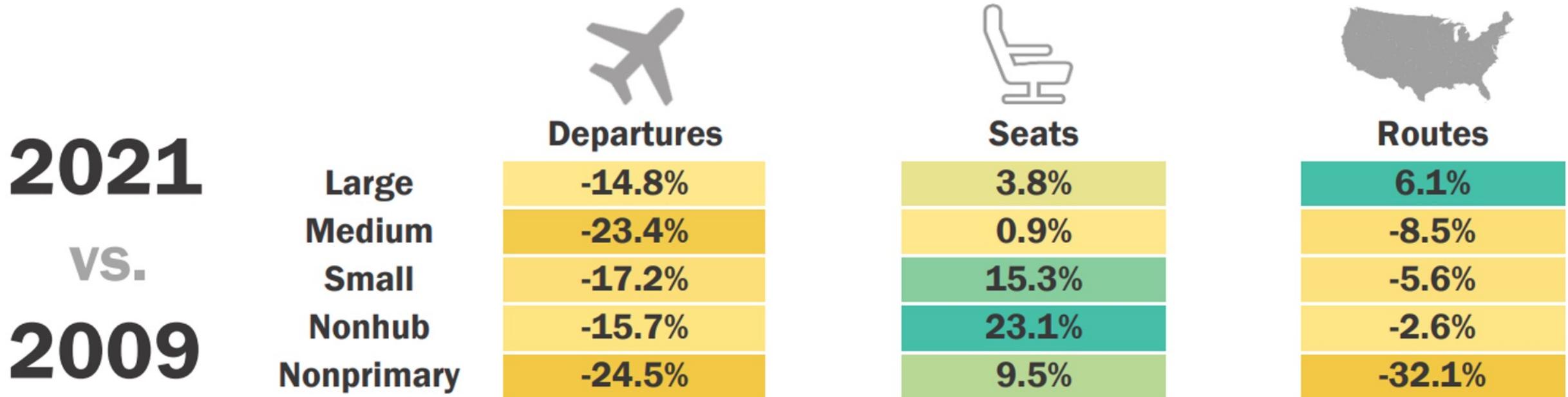
Dozens of Airports Have Lost all Air Service as Shortage Grows



Analysis of currently available July schedules suggests **more than 9% of airports served July 2019 will not have air service in July 2022**. Notably, recently announced air service cuts **do not yet reflect** in the schedules and analysts predict greater schedule volatility than usual under pilot shortage.

Air Service Contraction Hurts Small Communities

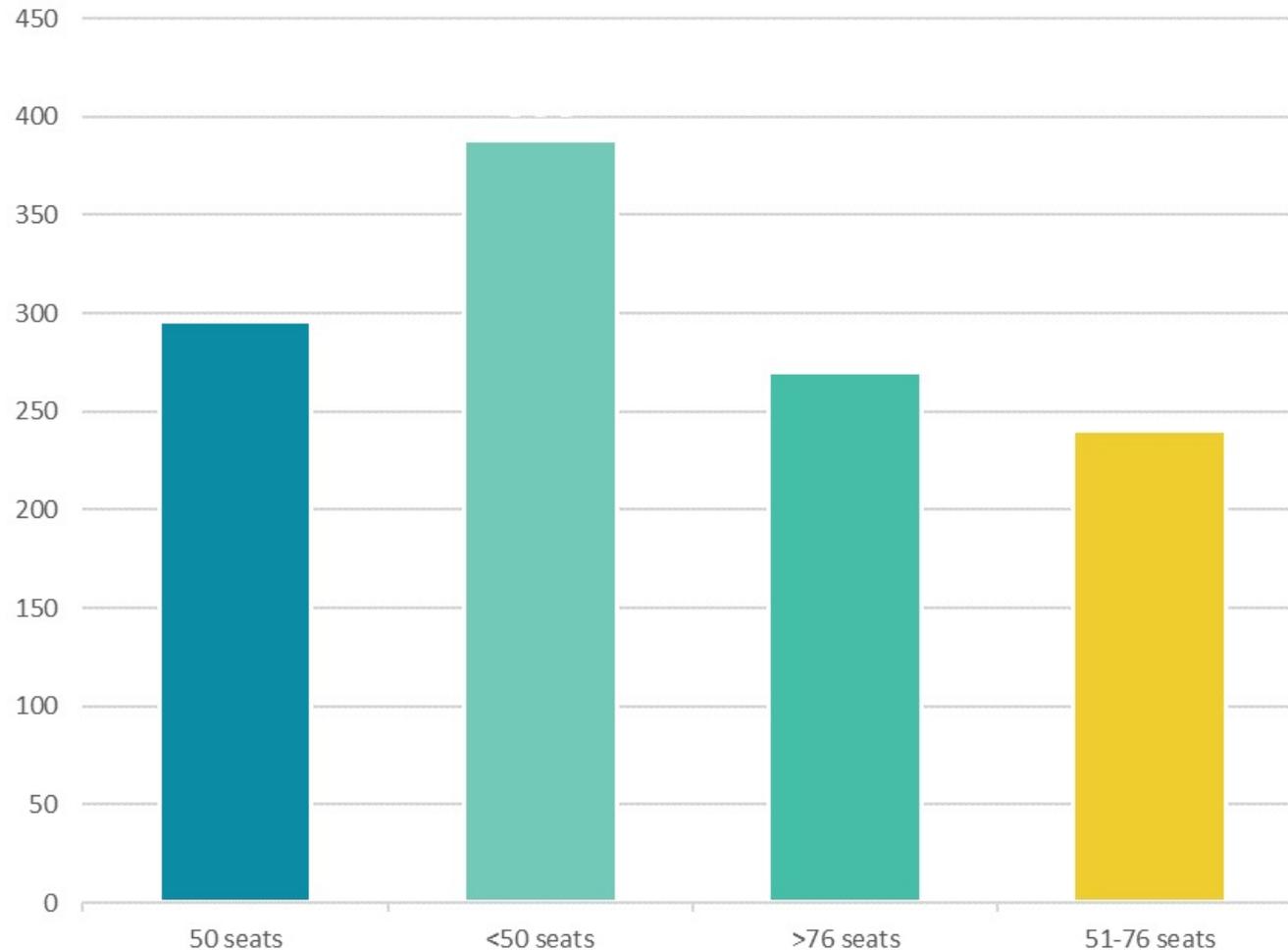
- Vast majority of recent air service growth has been limited to just 30 airports in the large hub NPIAS category.
- While all categories have gained seats, all but the largest airports are losing departures and destination options – vital for connectivity.



Source: OAG Schedules Analyser Tool

Smaller Aircraft, Big Network Presence

2021 U.S. Carrier Fleet
Count of Airports Served



Source: OAG Schedule Analyser

- Headlines Note Parking of 50 Seat Aircraft under Pilot Shortage
- 56% of airports are only served by aircraft with 50 seats or fewer in 2021.
- 12% of airports are only served by aircraft with 50 seats in 2021.



Steps for a Strong Pilot Supply

- Aviation stakeholders (USG and industry) must continue to **invest in priorities** that keep the airline industry healthy and attractive.
- **In addition to attracting and supporting pilots, we must reduce substantial barriers of entry blocking career access and equity.**
- The cost of pilot training and education exceeds the limits on student loan dollars by about \$80,000; making flight education unreachable for students without wealth or private financing. RAA backs the **Flight Education Access Act** to close this gap.
- Proficiency-based structured pilot training pathways produce pilots with the highest proficiency; but schools are full and qualified candidates often lack financial access. **More and better qualification pathways** hold the key to improving career access.
- It is no longer simply about bringing new pilots to the industry. Solutions to **improve training also create opportunity and career access** for candidates traditionally blocked from the career.
- Diversifying the pilot career begins with meaningful **equity and inclusion in the training pipeline.**



Regional Airline Association

Questions? Please contact media@raa.org.