

Workforce Development: Aerospace Innovation Alley

Problem/Issue Statement

Multiple sectors of aviation and aerospace including pilots, aviation technicians, and unmanned aircraft system (UAS) operators are currently facing workforce shortages. The FAA Aerospace Forecast for federal fiscal years 2018 to 2038 predicts that commercial sUAS activities “may require over 300,000 new remote pilots in 5 years, providing tremendous opportunities for growth in employment associated with commercial activities of the UAS.” Additionally, the Emerging Boeing’s Pilot and Technician Outlook 2020–2039 executive summary cites that in the next 20 years, 763,000 pilots will be needed nationwide, 208,000 of them in North America. The outlook report goes on to reiterate that “meeting the projected long-term demand” for aviation positions “will require a collective effort across the global aviation industry.” The company says educational outreach and career pathway programs “will be essential to inspiring and recruiting the next generation.”

Request Description

The aviation assets located at the Salina Airport Industrial Authority and at Kansas State University’s Aerospace and Technology Campus is an underrecognized asset to the state. Educational and training facilities inherited from the federal government require significant maintenance, renovation, or demolition. Funding for \$10M to support the development of the *Aerospace Innovation Alley* will provide Kansas with globally recognized training and expertise in aerospace training, research, and technology transfer that support the recruitment of new business and industry to the community and state. Located within the Aerospace Innovation Alley, is the expansion of our workforce development programs to support UAS, Aviation Maintenance, Composites and Advance Simulation. As one of only two institutions in the state to offer degrees in aviation, the Salina Campus is uniquely positioned to support and expand the local and state technical workforce needs for certified aviation technicians, UAS operators, manned pilots, and advanced manufacturers.

Request Goals and Expected Outcomes

Kansas State University’s Aerospace and Technology Campus aims to be a global leader in aerospace innovation and talent development. The campus’ Global Aeronautics Initiative provides a plan for global market leadership for the aviation academic and research programs on campus including manned aviation, unmanned aircraft systems, automation and robotics, composites and advanced materials, AI/mixed reality/simulation, and engineering. The intended results are aerospace-focused programs that lead the industry within their focus areas and also have a positive economic impact on this region. This initiative focuses on collaborative, multi-sector efforts that support all pillars in the Kansas Framework for Growth and meets the pressing needs of industry and of society at large.

Appropriations Subcommittee

Transportation & Housing, Urban Development and Related Agencies

Request Type

Funding Request

Bill Language Request



