

# United Adds Incentive for Flight Attendant Buy-Out

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Saying it needs more employees to accept a voluntary exit package, United Airlines has upped the ante for flight attendants by adding another incentive to its buy-out offer.

In a memo seen by Reuters News Service, United sweetened its package to flight attendants by offering a \$1,500 health credit for every year worked, up to \$45,000. The credits would be in addition to other medical, retirement and travel benefits already offered.

“While we’re seeing some glimmers of hope in the number of customers traveling, we know that we are still a very long way from returning to where demand was at the end of 2019,” United said in the email. “That means a quick recovery is not likely so we need to continue to focus on cost-cutting as we plan to be a significantly smaller airline in October.”

United and other U.S. carriers that took government grants and loans as part of the CARES Act stimulus package are bound by the provisions in the bill, which stipulates that airlines must maintain current staffing levels until Sept. 30, 2020. But come Oct. 1, most industry experts say the airlines will ‘right-size’ their number of employees based on the dramatic financial losses suffered since February due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The deadline to apply is July 8.

Last month, Reuters reported that United told staff it needed about 3,000 of its 25,000 flight attendants to accept the voluntary exit package. It is unknown if that number has changed.

