

# NASA Want Ad: Astronauts needed to help get to Mars

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In this photo provided by NASA and posted on Twitter on Oct. 26, 2015, astronaut Scott Kelly tries on his spacesuit inside the U.S. Quest airlock of the International Space Station. NASA opened its astronaut-application website Monday, Dec. 14, 2015. It's accepting applications through Feb. 18, 2016. (NASA via AP)

Need more office space? How about outer space?

NASA opened its astronaut-application website Monday. It's accepting applications through Feb. 18.

Contenders need to be U.S. citizens with a bachelor's degree in science, math or engineering. Expect intense competition: More than 6,000 applied for NASA's last astronaut class in 2013, with only eight picked. It's an elite club, numbering only in the 300s since the original Mercury 7 chosen in 1959.

Future astronauts will have four spacecraft at their disposal: the International Space Station, two commercial crew capsules to get there, and NASA's Orion spacecraft for eventual Mars trips. Pay is between \$66,000 and \$145,000 a year, and you'll have to move to Houston.

Astronaut criteria have changed over the years, said Brian Kelly, director of flight operations at Johnson Space Center.

"Some people would be surprised to learn they might have what it takes," Kelly said in a statement. "We want and need a diverse mix of individuals to ensure we have the best astronaut corps possible."

NASA Administrator Charles Bolden, a member of the Astronaut Class of 1980, said this next group will help "blaze the trail" to Mars.

**More information:** NASA: [www.jsc.nasa.gov/Bios/](http://www.jsc.nasa.gov/Bios/)

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