

# NASA sending African-American to space station for the first time

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NASA is sending an African-American astronaut to the International Space Station for the first time.

The traveler is Jeanette Epps, a physics and science whiz who used to work for the CIA as a technical intelligence officer.

Epps will head to the ISS as a [flight engineer](#) in 2018. Her commander will be Andrew Feustel, a veteran astronaut.

"Each [space station crew](#) brings something different to the table, and Drew and Jeanette both have a lot to offer," said Chris Cassidy, chief of the Astronaut Office at NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston.

"The space station will benefit from having them on board," said Cassidy.

A dozen or so African-American astronauts have traveled on US space shuttle missions but Epps will be the first African American on the [space station](#).

She was selected in July 2009 as one of 14 members of the 20th NASA astronaut class. Her training included Russian language, so as to be able to talk to cosmonauts on the ISS.

Epps holds a PhD in aerospace engineering from the University of Maryland.

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