

Nearly 400 Aspiring Cosmonauts Apply to Go to the Moon

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Cosmonaut Training Center Press Service

Up to 400 aspiring cosmonauts have submitted applications this year to go to the moon, the head of Russia's cosmonaut training center [told](#) the pro-Kremlin Izvestia newspaper in an interview published Monday.

The Roscosmos space agency [announced](#) an open recruitment drive last spring to train a team of up to eight cosmonauts to become the first Russians to go to the moon before 2040.

Yury Lonchakov, head of the Yury Gagarin Cosmonaut Training Center, told Izvestia that the number of applications received so far exceeds a previous recruitment drive in 2012 by 100. Even so, the deadline this year has been extended.

“Yes, we consider this number of applications small, so with the consent of Roscosmos, we extended the submission deadline until December to select the most suitable [candidates],” Lonchakov said.

Russia currently has 31 trained cosmonauts, though nearly half have never traveled to space. Lonchakov explained the need to beef up Russia's roster of cosmonauts saying there was an expected thinning out of the corps beyond 2021.

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Eight people were picked out of 304 applicants when the Roscosmos space agency first began the open recruitment process in 2012.

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