12 PERSONNEL

As in most major service organizations, people are the NAS's greatest asset. Thousands of people operate the equipment used to provide NAS services to the aviators and passengers each day. The FAA employs over 47,000 people. FAA operations personnel include 17,000 operational controllers, 3,500 flight service personnel, and 8,000 maintenance personnel located at NAS sites throughout the United States. The user group includes 650,000 pilots operating more than 280,000 commercial, regional, general aviation, and military aircraft, and 2,000 manufacturers.

FAA personnel include air traffic controllers, operational controllers, flight service specialists, maintenance engineers, safety and security inspectors, environmental specialists, systems and software engineers, operations research analysts, human factors specialists, business managers, and scientists, as well as individuals skilled in a number of other disciplines.

These personnel are located at the FAA Headquarters in Washington, D.C., FAA towers, FAA air route traffic control centers (ARTCCs), and flight service stations. Air Traffic Services, which provides the majority of FAA personnel, is comprised of Air Traffic (AT), Airway Facilities (AF), Air Traffic System Requirements, System Capacity, and Independent Operational Test and Evaluation.

12.1 Factors Affecting Staffing Levels

Three primary factors affect staffing levels and costs assumed in the architecture: anticipated growth in air traffic operations, union contracts, and deployment of the NAS infrastructure management (NIM). A discussion of the effects of these changes follows.

Traffic Growth

According to FAA forecasts, worldwide aviation growth tracks with economic growth. Passenger traffic, domestic enplanements, and international enplanements are forecast to increase annually. Aircraft operations are forecast to grow at a rate of 2.0 percent per year from 1994 to 2006.[1] The growth is assumed to continue at the same rate from 2007 to 2015. Consistent with the AT staffing plan projections, center and tower/TRACON controller staffing levels will increase at a rate of 0.75 percent per year from 2003 through 2015.

As the NAS modernizes, workforce requirements and changes will need to be incorporated with a long-term view. The NAS Sustainability Core Team determined that greater efficiencies and required skill sets will be sought by users and Congress that are not in place today. Staffing knowledge, skills, and abilities of the future workforce will change as major programs are implemented. Airway Facilities positions will require increased knowledge of computer systems, software applications, air traffic operations, and NAS service management, as well as satellite and digital technology. Although no significant changes are needed in major functions performed, staffing, training, and hiring required to support mission needs should be identified early.

Union Contracts

The new labor agreement recently reached with the National Air Traffic Controllers Association (NATCA) includes a reclassification of air traffic control (ATC) facilities from 5 categories to 12. The effects of this reclassification on the total number of controllers required and their associated costs have not been considered for this architecture. *Contract negotiations are currently underway with the Professional Airways Systems Specialists (PASS). Any changes to staffing levels or costs are not included in this version of the architecture.*

NAS Infrastructure Management (NIM)

NIM is a centralized management concept for the NAS infrastructure, with maintenance control centers distributed throughout the country. Transitioning to operations control centers (OCCs), implementation of remote maintenance monitoring capability, and changes in the maintenance philosophy will improve performance. The envisioned maintenance philosophy calls for deleting the incumbent contractor maintenance and implementing in-house field and software maintenance.

1. Source: *Federal Aviation Forecasts*, Fiscal Years 1997–2008.

NIM tools deployment will result in part of the AF workforce (personnel who are not directly assigned to systems) remaining constant. Initial staffing reductions have occurred in anticipation of NIM tools deployment. Immediate effects will apply to field maintenance specialists, computer operators, and the Operational Support Service (AOS) workforce.

12.2 Assumptions

Personnel Costs

The personnel funding in this section includes personnel salaries and benefits. Other related expenses associated with personnel—such as rent, utilities, travel, training, and change-of-station funding—appear in Section 31, Mission Support. Funding for system field specialists is included in the systems' Operations (OPS) funding lines.

The yearly expense for each person on the FAA payroll is projected to grow faster than inflation. Based on past trends, the expense of a controller grows at 3 percent per year above inflation, and the expense of non-controller workforce personnel grows at 1.5 percent per year above inflation. This growth, when compounded annually, causes considerable growth in OPS funding requirements.

Personnel Categories and Costs

Personnel funding is appropriated for the following categories under Research, Engineering, and Development (R,E&D), Facilities and Equipment (F&E), and OPS:

R,E&D

- *Personnel, Compensation, Benefits, and Travel (PCB&T, R,E&D):* Includes all personnel paid by R,E&D funding.

F&E

- *Personnel, Compensation, Benefits, and Travel (PCB&T, F&E)*: Includes FAA Headquarters acquisition personnel and airway facilities installation staff paid by F&E funding.

OPS

- *Air Route Traffic Control Center Personnel (ARTCC-P)*: Includes the controller workforce at air route traffic control centers (ARTCCs). These individuals guide and direct the aircraft traffic from gate to airport surface, takeoff, and landing and flight within 40 miles of airports.

- *Airport Traffic Control Tower Personnel (ATCT-P)*: Includes the controller workforce at air traffic control towers (ATCTs) and terminal radar control (TRACON) facilities.

- *Air Traffic Planning, Development, and Evaluation Personnel (PDE-P)*: Includes non-controller workforce air traffic personnel located at FAA Headquarters and in centers, towers, and terminal radar approach control (TRACON) facilities who perform the following functions: planning, directing and evaluating; administration; and system capacity analysis.

- *Flight Service Station Personnel (FSS-P)*: Includes flight service personnel. These individuals provide preflight and in-flight weather information for millions of general aviation flights in addition to filing the flight plans for those flights. Further, flight service personnel help customs activities with aviation border crossings and preliminary support for search and rescue for potentially downed aircraft.

- *FAA Headquarters Personnel (FAAHQ-P)*: Includes staff who perform the following functions: aviation regulation and certification, security, safety, acquisition, commercial space applications, airport administration, general administration, medical, and general counsel.

- *FAA Logistics, Flight Inspection Personnel (FAALFI-P)*: Includes flight inspectors and logistics personnel.

- *Airway Facilities Non-System (Non- Sys)*: Includes Airway Facilities Headquarters staff and regional and other staff not assigned directly to systems.

- *System Level Maintenance Workforce*: This level of personnel for specific systems maintenance is in the OPS and is not identified as a separate category in this section. Approximately 20 percent of the current FAA workforce maintains the ATC system.

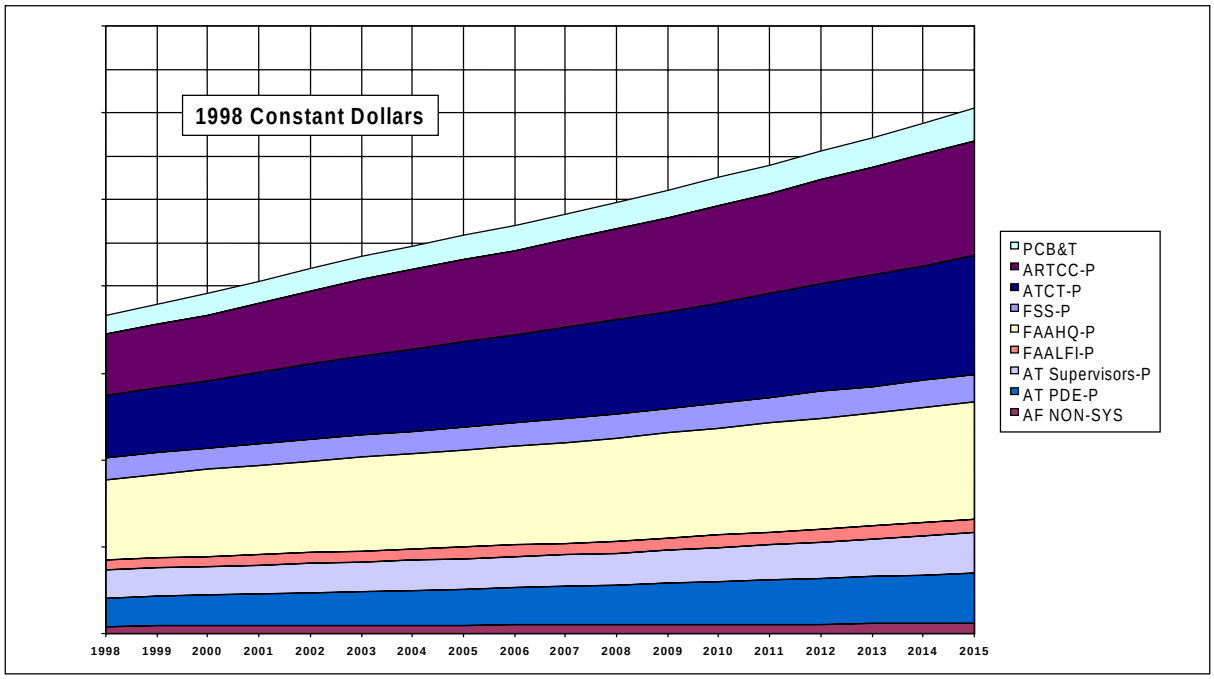

Figure 12-1. Estimated Personnel Costs

Staffing Levels

Figure 12-1 shows total personnel costs for both F&E and OPS by fiscal year, except for the AF systems field specialists whose positions are dedicated to maintaining specific systems. (The funding for those positions is included with OPS funding for the specific systems they support.) Total personnel costs forecast for 2015 are 30 percent higher than in 1998.

12.3 Watch Items

The effects of the labor agreement with the National Air Traffic Controllers Association (NATCA) in late 1998 reclassified air traffic control facilities. Contract negotiations with PASS have not been factored into this architecture.

12.4 Summary

As the architecture is implemented, the types and numbers of personnel required to operate and maintain the NAS should be reviewed and adjusted as necessary. Investigation into potential cost saving due to FAA staffing level reductions continues.