

EXCHANGE --- Business News: Walmart Offers Bonuses, Raises to Warehouse Teams

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FULL TEXT

Walmart Inc. is offering special bonuses to many warehouse employees to work every hour they are scheduled and, in some cases giving temporary pay raises, as the country's biggest retailer ramps up for the holiday shopping season with a tight labor market and stretched supply chains.

The majority of Walmart's 190 U.S. warehouses are offering the weekly bonus or pay raises. The bonuses and raises vary by location and job type, according to a person familiar with the situation.

Some workers have been offered \$1,000 over four weeks for not skipping any scheduled shifts during the second half of the summer. Last week, some workers were also offered temporary pay raises of several dollars an hour through January 2022, this person said.

Walmart aims to acknowledge the efforts of employees with incentives, and provide opportunity in a competitive job market, a Walmart spokesman said. The retailer's distribution warehouses "continue to see high volume as we are preparing for peak season," he said. Walmart is the country's largest private employer with 1.6 million U.S. workers, most of which are hourly workers in stores and warehouses.

Retailers and other businesses are straining to hire workers and face a global supply chain snarled by the pandemic and other factors as demand for many products and services grows.

While the holiday shopping season kicks off in stores in the fall, it is already the holiday drill in the supply chain and warehouses of large retailers. Retailers aim to have warehouse operations running smoothly ahead of the season and are already handling some holiday inventory.

Companies in a range of industries, from fast-food chains to amusement parks are doling out hiring bonuses, raising pay or using other incentives to hire or keep workers on the job. New jobs at restaurants, hotels, stores, salons and similar in-person roles accounted for about half of all payroll gains in June, according to the Labor Department. And workers in those industries are seeing larger raises than other employees.

Amazon.com Inc. said in April it was raising wages for many workers, and offering \$1,000 hiring bonuses in many locations. Amazon has a \$15 an hour minimum starting wage. Walmart said it would give around 425,000 workers raises earlier this year, and kept a starting wage of \$11 an hour in some markets. At Walmart, store workers earn an average of \$14.61 an hour, the company said, while supply chain workers earn an average of \$20.37 as of Jan. 31.

Walmart has given out a series of pandemic-related bonuses to all its hourly workers. The current warehouse worker bonuses are a more targeted approach.

After early pandemic surges in demand for food and household goods such as toilet paper, Walmart's in-stock levels improved but the company still struggled to stock some items earlier this year.

Credit: By Sarah Nassauer

DETAILS

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