

Business News: Aldi to Hire 20,000 U.S. Workers, Ramping Up in Tight Labor Market

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FULL TEXT

Discount supermarket chain Aldi aims to hire more than 20,000 workers in the U.S. this year as its network grows and as it prepares for holiday shopping, the company said Monday.

Jobs that Aldi is hiring for include cashiers, stockers and associates at its more than 2,100 American stores and its 25 warehouses.

The company will be drawing from a tight U.S. labor market in which openings have recently exceeded the number of people looking for work.

Against that backdrop, wages have been rising, including for low-skilled workers. Following a recent internal wage rise at Aldi, workers in the new positions will earn a national average of \$15 an hour for store jobs and \$19 an hour for warehouse jobs, the company said. The jobs come with healthcare and retirement plans and paid time off, Aldi said.

Other large retailers have cited hiring as a challenge in recent months.

"We're seeing some pressure on labor in certain markets and in some of our distribution centers," Albertsons Cos. Chief Executive Vivek Sankaran told analysts on a call last month. "The way we're seeing the pressure there is more from turnover and the ability to fill jobs."

Kroger Co. has been trying to hire 10,000 people this summer, Chairman and Chief Executive Rodney McMullen said in late June.

On Monday, Aldi's career website showed job openings at locations in dozens of states and in Washington, D.C. Its stores and warehouses will host interviews in late September as part of a national hiring week, the company said. The closely held German retailer is known for simple, limited product offerings and low prices. It has grown rapidly in the U.S. over the past decade as its streamlined model has found a footing with American shoppers. By stocking a pared-down product set that includes a large share of store-brand food, Aldi reduces costs and increases inventory turnover.

Aldi opened its first U.S. store in 1976 and its store count has more than doubled over the past decade.

As it has gained popularity in the U.S., Aldi's model has picked up more competition. Lidl, another German limited-assortment chain with a smaller American presence, has been growing in recent years through its 2018 acquisition of 27 stores from Best Market, a regional supermarket chain.

Trader Joe's, owned by a different branch of the German family that owns Aldi, has grown in the U.S. following a similar retail strategy.

The expansion of Aldi and similar chains has pushed traditional retailers to offer more of their own store-brand products and to lower prices, executives at other supermarket companies have said.

Credit: By Matt Grossman

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