

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

English Edition ▼ | Print Edition | Video | Podcasts | Latest Headlines

By [Ruth Simon](#) - Follow The Wall Street Journal
Sept. 26, 2022 5:33 am ET

Nearly 60% of small companies report that worker shortages are affecting their ability to operate at full capacity, according to a September survey of more than 725 small-business owners by Vistage Worldwide Inc., a business coaching and peer advisory firm.

Southeast Constructors Inc. in Des Moines, Iowa, is addressing the labor shortage by creating its own training school. The new academy, set to open early next year, will offer three months of instruction in construction basics such as how to hang drywall, paint and drive a Bobcat. The heavy-construction firm hopes to hire some graduates of the program, which is expected to start with 50 students.

“During Covid, it was really hard as far as hiring. After Covid, it was even harder,” said Perlla Deluca, president of the 22-year-old company, which specializes in bridges, roads, parking lots and other government projects.



Perlla Deluca, president of a company that specializes in bridges, roads and other government projects, says hiring has gotten harder since earlier in the pandemic.

PHOTO: PERLLA DELUCA

Ms. Deluca borrowed nearly \$750,000 to buy and renovate a former middle school to house the program; she plans to charge \$4,200 for the three-month class.

Overall, small-business confidence inched up slightly in September, as expectations for the national economy improved and the portion of entrepreneurs who expect profits to increase or remain at current levels edged upward, the Vistage survey found.

Nearly 80% of small-business owners said they have increased wages and compensation in response to hiring challenges, according to the survey, and another 11% plan to do so. In addition, 60% of small businesses have refined their recruiting strategies, while 46% have boosted employee benefits.

