



Contact:
Lee Condon
Director of Communications
Harbor Freight Tools for Schools
lcondon@hftforschools.org
Phone: 424.299.2320

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

High School Skilled Trades Teachers Can Apply for \$1.5 Million in Cash Prizes

**Deadline to Apply for the Harbor Freight Tools for Schools Prize for Teaching
Excellence is May 3**

LOS ANGELES, Calif.— Outstanding U.S. public high school skilled trades teachers can apply for a total of \$1.5 million in cash prizes starting today.

Since 2017, more than \$7 million has been awarded to 133 skilled trades teachers and their programs. The deadline to apply for the 2024 prize is Friday, May 3. Teachers can apply at: HFTforschoolsprize.org.

This year, a grand total of \$1.5 million will be awarded to 25 teachers and their skilled trades programs. Winners will be announced in the fall.

The mission of Harbor Freight Tools for Schools is to increase understanding, support and investment in skilled trades education in U.S. public high schools. The prize is its flagship program.

“Through the prize, we have built a national network of outstanding high school skilled trades teachers who share best practices and collaborate to expand opportunities for students across the United States,” said Danny Corwin, executive director of Harbor Freight Tools for Schools. “We look forward to hearing from applicants about their passion for teaching the skilled trades and how their programs connect students with many exciting opportunities after high school.”

The Harbor Freight Tools for Schools Prize for Teaching Excellence was started in 2017 by Harbor Freight Tools owner and founder Eric Smidt. The prize recognizes outstanding

instruction in the skilled trades in U.S. public high schools and the valuable work of teachers who inspire students to learn a trade that prepares them for life after graduation.

There is an ongoing nationwide shortage of skilled trades workers and high school teachers can play a significant role in helping to address this problem.

In September 2023, an Association of General Contractors survey found that 88 percent of construction firms surveyed had difficulty finding skilled workers. The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that there will be 73,500 job openings every year in the next decade for electricians alone.

“The prize is our way of saying thank you to the dedicated teachers across the country who are educating the next generation of skilled tradespeople. Given the troubling shortage of skilled trades workers in the United States, we know they’re urgently needed,” Smidt said. “We appreciate their expertise and dedication and want to celebrate their exceptional programs.”

The best skilled trades programs embody what great hands-on teaching and learning should look like in any classroom. Excellent skilled trades teachers are deeply knowledgeable and passionate about their subject matter and the potential of their students, teach skills in leadership and collaboration, and offer a relevant curriculum that is connected to skilled trades career pathways.

The five Harbor Freight Tools for Schools Prize for Teaching Excellence grand prize winners will receive \$100,000 each, with \$30,000 going to the teacher and \$70,000 going to their program. Twenty additional prize winners will each win \$50,000, with \$15,000 going to the teacher and \$35,000 going to their program. Teachers whose school, district and/or state policy prohibits receipt of the individual portion of prize earnings are eligible to apply on behalf of their school’s skilled trades program.

About Harbor Freight Tools for Schools

Harbor Freight Tools for Schools is a program of The Smidt Foundation, established by Harbor Freight Tools owner and founder Eric Smidt, to advance excellent skilled trades education in U.S. public high schools. With a deep respect for the dignity of these fields and for the intelligence and creativity of people who work with their hands, Harbor Freight Tools for Schools aims to drive a greater understanding of and investment in skilled trades education. We believe that access to quality skilled trades education gives high school students pathways to graduation, opportunity, good jobs, and a workforce our country needs. Harbor Freight Tools is a major supporter of the Harbor Freight Tools for Schools program. For more information, visit htfforschools.org.

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