

# **HARBOR FREIGHT**

## **TOOLS FOR SCHOOLS**

### Thousands of Skilled Trades Students Nationwide Receive Tool Kits from Harbor Freight Tools for Schools

*Tools aim to support students learning essential hands-on skills from home during the continuing COVID-19 pandemic*

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Contact: Danny Corwin  
c: 818-798-4170  
[dcorwin@hftforschools.org](mailto:dcorwin@hftforschools.org)

CALABASAS, Calif.—As many schools across the country plan for a socially distanced start to the school year due to COVID-19 concerns, Harbor Freight Tools for Schools announced today that it will distribute an initial 4,000 tool kits to U.S. public high schools to loan to their students enrolled in skilled trades classes.

Like laboratory or other career courses, skilled trades classes can be particularly challenging to teach online because they require the use of tools not always available at home.

With more than one million students studying trades like construction, welding, manufacturing, automotive and electrical, take-home tools are one way to allow students to keep honing their hands-on skills even if their schools operate entirely or partially remotely. The donated tool kits may include a tool bag, assorted hand tools, measurement tools, and/or safety gear. Harbor Freight Tools for Schools may expand the tool kit effort to more schools as it evaluates impact and demand over the course of this semester.

"We have been humbled by the incredible ingenuity and resilience we've seen from skilled trades teachers and students during the pandemic," said Danny Corwin, executive director of Harbor Freight Tools for Schools. "We're providing these tool kits because we believe that skilled trades jobs are essential to our country, now more than ever, and that means skilled trades education is essential, too."

trades jobs are “important,” according to a NORC poll commissioned by Harbor Freight Tools for Schools.

Despite being regarded as crucial, and despite the middle-class wages they offer, however, skilled trades jobs routinely ranked among the hardest to fill over the past several years, and a forthcoming wave of retirements is expected to worsen existing shortages well into the next decade. That means today’s skilled trades students have the opportunity to find meaningful and sustaining work in these fields.

“Our country is going to come out of this pandemic stronger—and skilled tradespeople and jobs will be essential to that recovery,” said Eric Smidt, founder of Harbor Freight Tools for Schools. “With many high school students preparing to enter a trade immediately after graduation, we want to make sure they can keep learning and growing their skills at home.”

The tool kits come courtesy of donated tools and tool bags from Harbor Freight Tools, the nationwide tool retailer. Smidt, the founder and owner of the company, created the Harbor Freight Tools for Schools program in 2014. Today, the program is operated by The Smidt Foundation, established by Smidt in 2016.



Tool kits will be made available to teachers who are past winners of the Harbor Freight Tools for Schools Prize for Teaching Excellence and are currently teaching at a U.S. public high school. Each teacher will be able to customize their requested kits depending on their students’ course of study and needs. Kits will be distributed to schools, which will loan them to students to take home for the semester or school year, similar to the way schools loan laptops.





The tool kits expand on a project implemented last spring at Enumclaw High School in Washington State by construction teacher Bob Kilmer. Kilmer, a 2017 Prize for Teaching Excellence winner who recently retired from Enumclaw High and now consults for Harbor Freight Tools for Schools, provided tools to his students to pick up on campus. Students used the tools to complete projects such as those shown above.

"These tool kits will be essential to keeping learning on track for students who love thinking with their hands," Kilmer said. "We hope these tools make life a little easier and keep students on the path to meaningful post-secondary and career opportunities."

### **About Harbor Freight Tools for Schools**

Harbor Freight Tools for Schools is a program of The Smidt Foundation, established by Harbor Freight Tools Founder Eric Smidt, to advance excellent skilled trades education in public high schools across America. 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, believing 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 us at [HarborFreightToolsforSchools.org](https://www.harborfreighttoolsforschools.org) and [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#).

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