



## “Explore The Trades Skills Lab, Built by Ferguson”

### **About the initiative:**

Explore The Trades is focused on bridging the technical talent gap to the service trades of plumbing, heating, cooling and electrical. Ferguson Enterprises is committed to building up the communities in which their branches are located. Together, both organizations are dedicated to building the next generation of plumbers and HVAC technicians.

Explore The Trades would like to thank Ferguson Enterprises for their continued support of the skills lab initiative that will be used to create new and refurbished plumbing and HVAC classrooms, in middle schools and high schools, throughout North America. We are pleased that this program can continue as we commit to building partnerships - and technicians - in our own communities.

The focus behind this initiative is simply to introduce the trades to middle and high school students. This may be the first time that they learn about water heaters or understand what a furnace does!

The “Explore The Trades Skills Lab, Built by Ferguson” program will be accepting applications from October 1, 2022 - March 31, 2023. Recipients will be announced on May 3, 2023.

### **Who is eligible?**

Middle and high schools (grades 6-12) located in the U.S. and Canada, including public, private, CTE or charter schools. If a contractor is part of the project, too, that would be great, but it is not required.

### **If a school wished to participate, but isn't able to “open” the skills lab for the 2023-2024 school year, is that OK?**

Equipment needs to be ordered by July 31, 2023. All skills labs, both new and refurbished, need to be operational for student use by Fall 2023 for the start of the school year.

### **How many skills labs will be created?**

There will be **four (4)** awards to create brand **new** skills labs (equipment and products worth up to \$25,000 each) and **nine (9)** awards to **refurbish** an existing plumbing or HVAC space (equipment and products worth up to \$10,000 each.)

### **How do recipients receive equipment?**

Once recipients are selected, they will select their chosen equipment and products. The items will be shipped directly to the school site from the closest Ferguson store. Explore The Trades will review the final quote prior to ordering and will pay the Ferguson store directly. Checks will not be sent to the school sites.

### **As applicants, are we responsible for selecting the equipment options best suited for skills labs?**

The product list will be included in the application materials. Applicants will have the ability to design their skills lab based on the equipment options available. The equipment selections must fit into the skills lab space and be identified on the proposed classroom floorplan.

For those schools who are submitting applications for refurbishments, information is required for space refurbishments and/or equipment and product requests.

### **May multiple units of the same product be requested? (Ex: water heaters, HVAC units, etc.)**

No. To outfit as many training labs as possible, please limit requests of larger equipment to one. For smaller items, multiple requests may be made.

### **After being selected as a recipient of the equipment, will there be follow-up reporting to complete?**

Yes. The recipient may expect to provide success metrics at intervals following the equipment donation. Regular reporting may include, but is not limited to: student and/or instructor surveys, number of students enrolled in the class, student success rate for completing tasks and skills, student and/or instructor testimonials about the new skills lab, in-person and/or virtual site visits.

**Can the equipment be installed in a different space other than the school?**

No. The initiative's focus is to create plumbing and HVAC training spaces within the physical plant of the school.

**Our school has an established relationship with a local contractor. May the contractor request equipment for the company's training needs?**

No. All equipment requested must be installed and used at the identified middle school or high school. Please note that all equipment requests must match the proposed skills lab floorplan and curriculum.

**If a residential contractor can partner with a local school, will they be recognized for their efforts?**

Yes! All contractors involved in helping their school build out a lab will be recognized. Permanent signage will be displayed in the skills lab and on the equipment and news releases will also be shared nationally and in their local market.

**If a local contractor is involved in this initiative, what is their anticipated time commitment?**

The time commitment will vary by situation and the partnership will need to be outlined between the contractor and the school.

\*Please note: the contractor is NOT expected to be the instructor, but rather a local point person for the instructor and the students.

Examples may include: helping the instructor select the right equipment for the physical space, being a guest teacher for the class, hosting the students at the shop, assisting with curriculum questions, etc.

**Should they decide to get involved, what are the benefits for a contractor?**

This program is designed to expose students to plumbing and HVAC careers and introduce them to a career that they might not otherwise know about.

- Making students aware of plumbing & HVAC careers
- Being a local leader in serving the school

- Mentoring the students
- Building the talent pipeline to one's company
- Helping schools build out a training space if budget funds are scarce
- For smaller or mid-size companies, this can be a way to help build a talent pipeline without building an in-house school

### **Who at the school should be involved for this initiative?**

There are many people at the school who could be a part of this initiative. Start by talking to the main administrative office and they should be able to help you narrow down who you need to speak with to get this project in place at your school.

### **Who should individuals contact with questions?**

Kate Cinnamo, Executive Director: [katec@explorethetrades.org](mailto:katec@explorethetrades.org) or 651-789-8518

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