



HackIllinois 2026

Travel Guide

Welcome!

Thank you for your interest in joining HackIllinois 2026 as a mentor or judge!

We are thrilled to have you on board this year for HackAstra! Our event is scheduled for February 27th to March 1st, 2026.

We hope you enjoy your experience with us this year!

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General Program Information

HackIllinois is a flagship collegiate hackathon with 13 years of history, hosted by the University of Illinois Urbana–Champaign — home to one of the top computer science programs in the country. As a fun fact, HackIllinois also was the first hackathon to introduce the concept of themed hackathons, a model now widely adopted across the hackathon community :)

Each year, we bring together top student engineers, designers, and founders from around the world to build projects that matter. As a mentor or judge, you're part of a selective group of industry leaders who shape both what gets built and how participants grow as builders.

Throughout the weekend, you'll guide teams through Mentor Office Hours, provide technical and product feedback, and evaluate final projects at our Project Showcase. Your expertise sets the technical standard and helps define the culture of ambition that makes HackIllinois what it is.

Many of these projects go on to become startups, research initiatives, or standout portfolio pieces. You're not just evaluating code — you're helping launch what comes next.



Schedule Overview

Friday, Feb 27 – Mentors

- 2:30 – 5:00 PM: Check-in
- Afternoon & Evening: Mentor Office Hours + Project Ideation workshops
- Meals provided

Saturday, Feb 28 – Judges & Mentors

- Mentor Office Hours continue throughout the day
- 4:00 PM – 5:00 PM: Judges & Mentors Social (Optional)
- Meals provided

Sunday, Mar 1 – Judges

- 7:30 – 8:00 AM: Check-in
- 8:00 AM – 1:30 PM: Judging orientation, demos, and deliberations
- 2:30 PM – 3:30 PM: Closing Ceremony (Optional)
- Meals: Breakfast & lunch provided

Note: A more detailed schedule with exact times and session locations will be shared closer to the event.

Besides mentoring and judging, you are welcome to attend any HackIllinois events! Feel free to check out the full event schedule on our [website](#) closer to the event.



Airport Options

Midway Airport (MDW)



Around 2 hours drive to campus

- **Peoria Charter:** book [here](#)
 - From: Midway Airport
 - To: Armory / ISR / Illinois Terminal
- **Amtrak**
 - From: CHI
 - To: CHM
- **Rental Cars**

O'Hare International Airport (ORD)



Around 2.5 hours drive to campus

- **Peoria Charter:** book [here](#)
 - From: O'Hare Multi-Modal Facility
 - To: Armory / ISR / Illinois Terminal
- **Amtrak**
 - From: CHI
 - To: CHM
- **Rental Cars**



Airport Options Cont.

Willard Airport (CMI)

- 🚀 Around 15 - 20 mins drive to campus

Indianapolis International Airport (IND)

- 🚀 Around 2 hours drive to campus
- **Jefferson Lines:** book [here](#)
 - From: IND | Indianapolis Union Station (Amtrak/Greyhound)
 - To: CHM | Champaign Intermodal Transportation Center
- **Amtrak**
 - From: IND
 - To: CHM
- **Rental Cars**

Note: UIUC students often travel through ORD. If you're flying into a farther airport, be sure to book ground transportation [†] to Champaign in advance.

Hotel Options

Close to HackIllinois:

Location Name	Address
Illini Union Hotel	1401 W Green St, Urbana, IL 61801
TownePlace Suites by Marriott	603 S 6th St, Champaign, IL 61820

A bit further:

You can take the bus ([free on and around campus](#)), Uber/Lyft from the hotel to the event, or bring a car if that is convenient for you.

Location Name	Address
I Hotel	1900 S 1st St, Champaign, IL 61820 +
Hyatt Place	217 N Neil St, Champaign, IL 61820

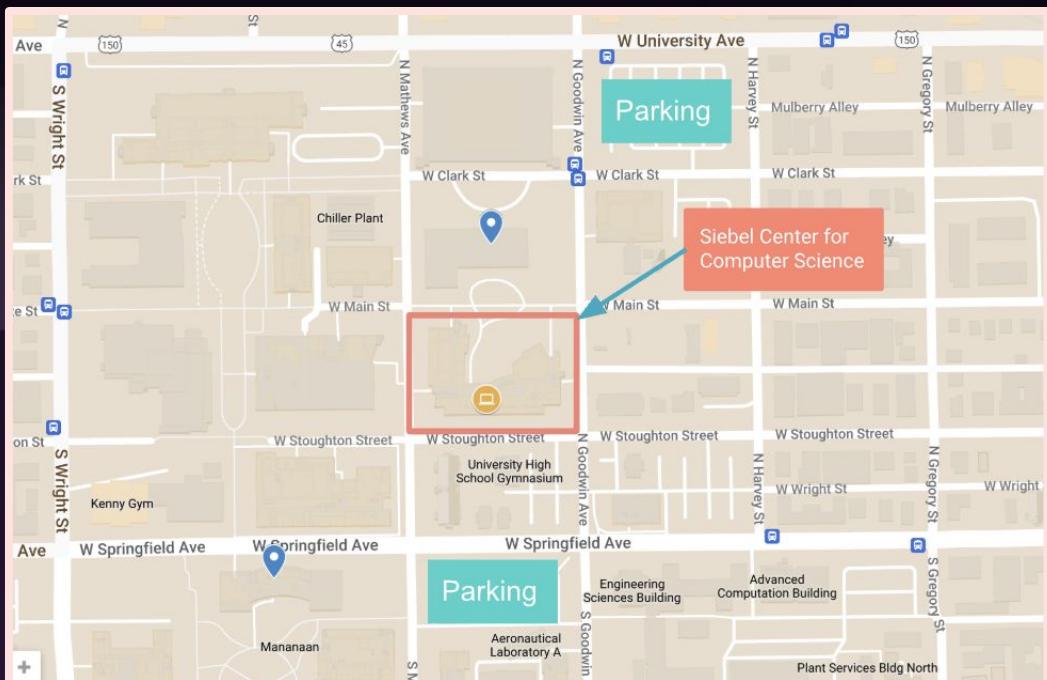
Reimbursement

- We reimburse travel and lodging on a case-by-case basis according to travel zones.
- If you would like to be considered for reimbursement, please indicate in the **confirmation form**.
- You will book your travel and lodging depending on which options you choose, and we will refund the expenses through direct deposit or any method that is convenient for you (Venmo, Zelle, check).
- We will issue reimbursements after the event, so be on the lookout for an email. In order to issue reimbursements, we will ask for photos of all your receipts via a Google Form. If you do not receive an email within one week post-event, email us at contact@hackillinois.org

Parking

For parking, there is visitor parking (free on weekends) available at the locations listed below. Additionally, metered parking is available in various locations around Siebel Center and campus.

Location Name	Address
National Center for Supercomputing Applications	1201 W University Ave, Urbana, IL 61801
Grainger Engineering Library	104 S Mathews Ave, Urbana, IL 61801

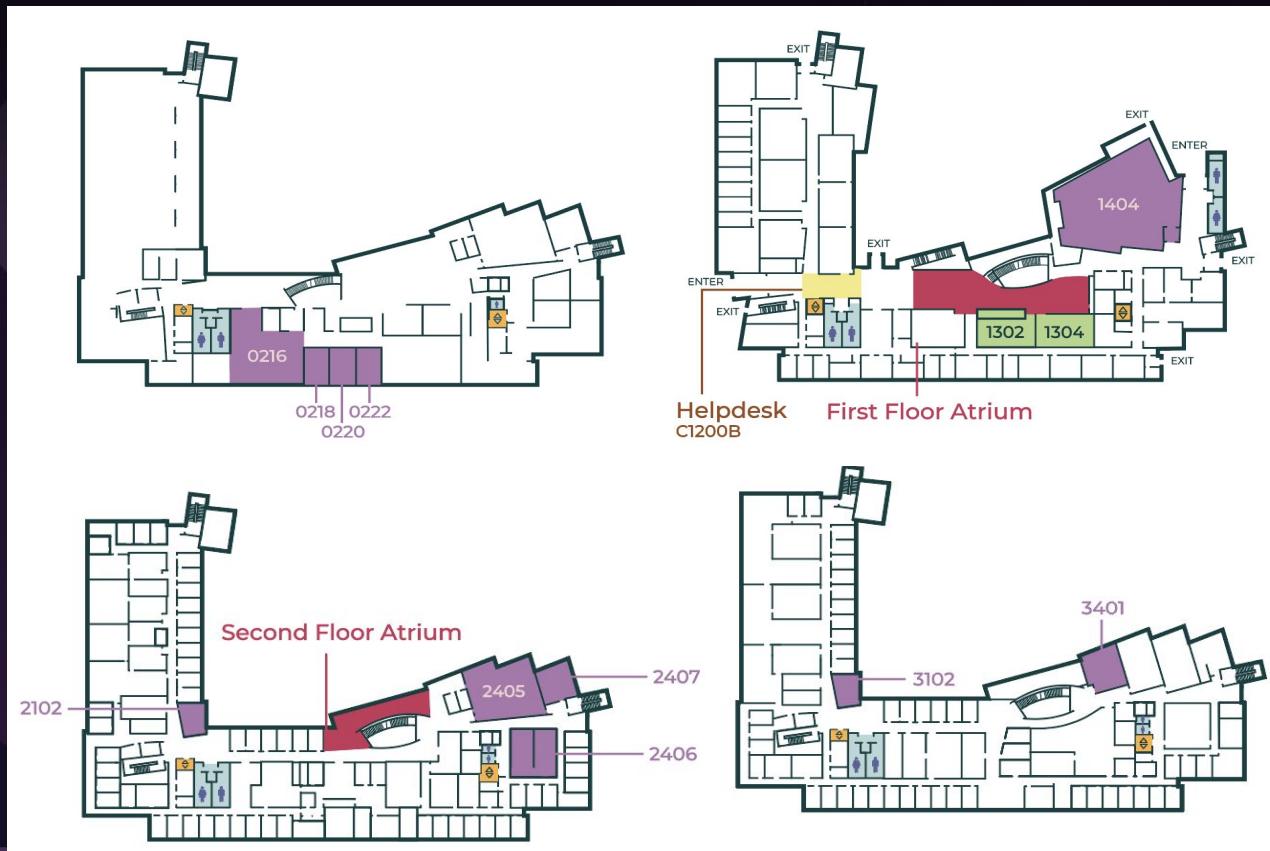


Event Navigation

After parking, enter the Siebel first floor and proceed to the atrium (the large open space located towards the center of the first floor, by the glass windows). If you check in during event hours (8 AM – 12 AM), staff members will be available to assist judges. Just let them know you are a mentor/judge upon arrival!

A map of Siebel can be accessed [here](#).

Location Name	Address
Department of Computer Science (Siebel Center for Computer Science)	201 N Goodwin Ave, Urbana, IL 61801



Health & Safety

This year, the university does not require face coverings in classrooms or campus spaces. However, you are welcome to wear a face covering if you feel more comfortable doing so. For everyone's safety, there will also be police presences on campus throughout the event.

Recommended Eats & Drinks

During your time at HackIllinois, there are plenty of great options to grab a bite, enjoy a coffee, or sip on some boba. Below are some of our favorite local spots near campus for mentors, judges, and attendees alike.

Boba & Coffee

- **Cocomero** – Frozen yogurt, seasonal boba, and coffee
- **Latea Bubble Tea Lounge** – Classic milk teas and fruit teas
- **Brew Lab / Bake Lab** – Specialty coffee and espresso drinks

Food

- **Merry Ann's Diner** – Classic American breakfast and diner fare
- **Cracked: The Egg Came First** – Breakfast and brunch favorites
- **Shawarma Joint** – Middle Eastern wraps and plates
- **The Bread Company** – Cozy bistro and bakery
- **Sakanaya** – Sushi and Japanese cuisine
- **Northern Cuisine** – Highly rated Chinese cuisine
- **Seven Saints** – Popular bar & grill with sliders
- **Ko Fusion** – Asian fusion bowls, ramen, and sushi
- **Bangkok Thai** – Thai classics, curries, and noodle dishes





Thank you!

Thank you for taking the time to read through this guide. We are really excited to have you at the event! For more details and the official event schedule, please refer to the HackIllinois website [here](#). This will be our primary form of communication during the event.

If you have any questions about the information provided in this guide, please email contact@hackillinois.org.

Thank you once again for all your help! We look forward to working with you and we sincerely hope that you have an enjoyable experience at HackIllinois this year.

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