"Every year, the gods of HackOlympus summon the most brilliant and daring mortals from all corners of land—visionaries, inventors, and champions of code—to prove their worth in a legendary trial.

For 36 hours, heroes must craft a relic of unparalleled ingenuity, a testament to their technical mastery, boundless creativity, and divine ambition.

By the final dawn, their creations will face the judgement of the gods of HackOlympus. Only the most remarkable will withstand the challenge, their creators etching their names into myth.

The gates have opened. The trials have begun.
Pursue your prophecy at...

HACKOLYMPUS

HackIllinois 2025 Attendee Guide

Welcome!

Thank you for participating in HackIllinois 2025. Before you embark on your epic quest, read this hero's guide to find your footing, navigate the trials ahead, and carve your path to glory!

The guide is meant to serve as a comprehensive overview of the hackathon. It will cover the vital information you need to know for the event. Additionally, use the table of contents to quickly navigate this guide and make haste on your journey!

We hope this guide answers any questions you might have, but feel free to send a message on Discord or send us an email at contact@hackillinois.org if you have any questions! You can also visit hackillinois.org for more information such as our **FAQ section**, **schedule**, **and mentor/judge bios**.

Note that all times on this document are in CST (GMT - 6:00).

Table of Contents

About the Event

HackIllinois 2025 is a fully in-person 36-hour-long hackathon running from February 28th to March 2nd. During this time, attendees are challenged to build a software project while learning development skills from industry-led workshops and expert mentors.

Before the Event

Todos

Join our Discord! If you RSVPed, you should have received an invitation link via email. We will be sending out announcements through Discord, and you can also use our channels to talk to other attendees, network and ask staff any questions!

Download our app! Please download the HackIllinois app ahead of time and sign in as an attendee using your GitHub account — this will streamline the check-in process and make it faster for you to get started with our event! The HackIllinois App is now live on both the Apple App Store and the Google Play Store.

Packing List:

- Student ID
- Reusable water bottle (we will NOT be providing water bottles)
- Laptops & chargers
- An umbrella (just in case)
- Warm clothes
- Change of clothing
- Personal items such as toiletries
- Make sure to arrange your own lodging!

Due to safety considerations, DO NOT bring power-heavy, dangerous, or illegal items, including, but not limited to,

- Desktop computers
- Extra monitors
- Weapons
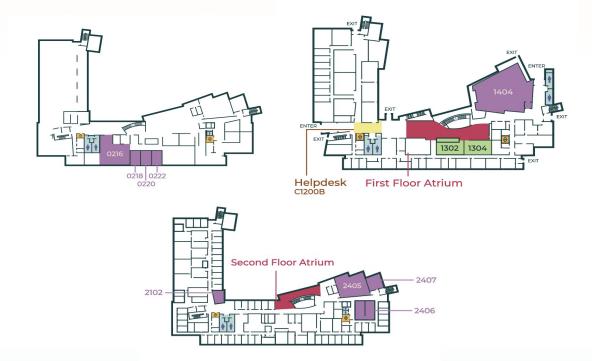- Alcoholic beverages, drugs, and other illicit substances

Event Infrastructure

Location

HackIllinois will be at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) in Thomas M. Siebel Center for Computer Science (Siebel). Check-in begins at 2:30 PM on Friday, February 28th in front of the ACM Room (1104). Parking information can be found here.

HackIllinois won't be able to provide sleeping rooms, so you must find separate lodging on-campus or off-campus for the night.

Building Closing and Opening Times

The Siebel Center will close at 1:00 AM every night and will reopen at 7:00 AM. **There will not be sleeping lounges available after closing times.**

Doors lock at 9:30 PM. You must have an iCard with swipe access to enter the building after.
DO NOT PROP OPEN THE DOORS – please help us keep Hack attendees, staff, and their belongings safe.

Apps

The HackIllinois App

The HackIllinois App is now live on both the Apple App Store and the Google Play Store. It'll display the schedule, help you scan codes for points, and redeem those points for items at our Point Shop (read more below)!

Watch this video to learn how to use the app!

Note: You get points by attending mini-events, workshops, and company showcases. Points translate into prizes! Learn more in the Points Section.

HackIllinois Social Media

Follow the HackIllinois Twitter and the HackIllinois Instagram to learn more about HackIllinois. You'll get an opportunity to see the work that goes into making the event a possibility through insights from teams and profiles of staff members! Follow us on Instagram and Twitter (@hackillinois) for the latest updates!

Discord

You can use our Discord server to communicate with attendees and company representatives, get help from mentors, and receive event reminders. To join our server, please check your email—you should have received an invite if you RSVPed! Accept our Terms and Conditions and you'll be good to go!

Note: To get the best experience out of HackIllinois Discord Server, we highly recommend using the Discord Desktop App!

Wi-Fi

If you do not attend UIUC, please use the IllinoisNet-Guest network. When you connect, a browser window will open and prompt you for information.

Check-In

Check-in for HackIllinois will be on the first floor atrium of the Siebel Center for Computer Science building on Friday, February 28th from 2:30 PM - 5:00 PM. If you are unable to check in during this time, you are free to go to the check-in desk any time during HackIllinois.

Please download the HackIllinois app ahead of time and sign in as an attendee using your GitHub account — this will streamline the check-in process and make it faster for you to get started with our event! As you approach the front of the check-in line, please pull up your profile on the HackIllinois app to show to the staff checking you in.

Event Schedule

HackIllinois is excited to present a large variety of events, including technical workshops, fun mini-events, and thrilling game-based challenges. You can find the schedule for this weekend on our website and our app!

Food Waves

Each attendee will be assigned a Wave (1 or 2) that can be viewed on the app. We will be calling up attendees by their wave number to receive meals, and you will receive a notification on the HackIllinois app when your Wave is being called up. The dietary/allergen info guide is linked for all the foods that are being served throughout the weekend.
- Wave 1 should line up at the time listed on the app
- Wave 2 should line up 30 minutes after the time listed on the app

Team Guidelines

The guidelines for team formation are as follows:

- Teams can have a maximum of **4 members.** Note that you do not need to have a team to compete, although we strongly recommend working with others for the best Hackathon experience!
- All team members **must be registered, RSVPed, and checked in to HackIllinois 2025.**
- Teams can change as the weekend progresses. If your team has at least 1 general attendee, then your team submission will automatically be considered for the General Path. However, mixed teams may still compete for Company Sponsored Tracks

Creating a team is as simple as asking a friend, old or new, to join your project — you do not need to tell us at the beginning of the event! We also have a team formations channel on Discord and an in-person team matching event to help you look for teammates.

Date & Time	Event	Location
February 28th, 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM	Team Matching	0216

When you submit your project through Devpost, make sure to add every person to your team so that we can award them prizes! Please note that **we cannot award prizes to people who are not on the Devpost submission.**

Paths

When you were accepted to HackIllinois, you were selected as either a **HackOlympian** or a **General** attendee. This is your **Path**. By submitting a project, you are eligible to win the prize designated for your respective Path. Note: If your team has at least 1 general attendee, then your team submission will automatically be considered for the General path.

Path Prizes

Path	Prize
General	$1,750
HackOlympian	$2,000

Tracks

You also have the opportunity to submit to a Track by tailoring your project to a theme or guideline provided by our company sponsors. Tracks are optional and your project does not need to fall under the scope of one. That being said, building and submitting a Track project qualifies you for that Track prize in addition to your Path prize!

Note: You may only submit to one Track. If you submit your project to multiple Tracks, it will be disqualified.

This year, HackIllinois 2025 is proud to announce tracks sponsored by Capital One, John Deere, WARP, AGCO, and Solana!

Best Financial Hack With Capital One

Sponsored by Capital One

Our track is The Best Financial Hack! This is your chance to change the game in fintech. Whether it's an innovative payment solution, helping consumers shop smarter, making financing more accessible, or a creative way to improve financial literacy, we want to see your boldest ideas in action. Judging will be based on the project's creativity, complexity, and completeness. Take advantage of Capital One Hackathon API, Nessie, for real public facing data to help spearhead your innovative idea.

Judging Criteria

- Be creative!

Resources For Track

- Discord channel: #financial-hack-cap1
    - Speak to Capital One representatives about your ideas and discuss how to develop them!

Prize

Up to **$1,000** to the winning team!

Autonomous Vehicles with John Deere

Sponsored by John Deere

Design, build, and code your own autonomous vehicle in this hardware hack! Attendees in the John Deere track will be given one of 5 types of hardware kits on a first-come-first-serve basis— **the RSVP form will be open from 6:00PM to 8:30PM on Friday, February 28th**! You must fill out the RSVP form to attend the Track Introduction Workshop, and attendance at the Workshop is mandatory to participate and receive a kit.

Note: Attendees of this track must also be present with their submission for track judging at **9:00 AM on Sunday, March 2nd**. The exact location and further instructions will be shared via Discord the night before. Submissions must include a Devpost writeup, containing the problem description, solution explanation, link to Codebase, and link to video of the vehicle working

Judging Criteria

- Problem Complexity: how complex is your problem?
- Solution Creativity: how creative is your solution?
- Functionality: how successfully does your vehicle solve your defined problem autonomously?

Resources For Track

- Track Introduction Workshop
    - Time: Friday, February 28th, 8:30PM to 9:30PM
    - Location: Siebel Room 0216
- Attendees will head to Sydney Lu Mechanical Engineering Building after the Track Introduction Workshop (Sydney Lu)
- Discord channel: #autonomous-vehicles
    - Speak to John Deere representatives about your ideas and discuss how to develop them!

Prize

1 Raspberry Pi 4B for the team and **Vehicle Kit** for each team member of the winning team!

Best Developer Tool with WARP

Sponsored by WARP

Build a project that focuses on improving the developer experience in some meaningful way. This could tackle any part of the development lifecycle, including but not limited to creating, modifying, or testing software!

Resources For Track

- Discord channel: #dev-tool-warp
  - Speak to Warp representatives about your ideas and discuss how to develop them!

Prize

4 Keychron Mechanical Keyboards for the winning team!

AI-Powered Agricultural Planning Optimization With AGCO

Sponsored by AGCO

Design a chatbot that leverages LLMs to transform raw data into actionable tillage recommendations. Analyze farm and environmental conditions to suggest optimal tillage dates, methods, and cost comparisons. Create clear, data-driven insights that empower farmers to make smart, sustainable decisions!

Resources For Track

- [Here is a guide](#) on the problem statement, data, video resources, and more!
- Discord channel: #agco-ai-planning
  - Speak to AGCO representatives about your ideas and discuss how to develop them!

Prize

$1000 for the winning team!

Most Innovative Use Of Solana

Sponsored by Solana

We're looking for boldness, creativity, and the unexpected. Build a project on Solana that showcases what you can do on a Blockchain.

Judging Criteria

- Project must use Solana or data on Solana.

Resources For Track

- Track Introduction Workshop
    - Time: Friday, February 28th, 8:30PM to 9:30PM
    - Location: Siebel Room 2405
- Getting started with Solana? Check this for more information.
- Discord channel: #solana-innovation
    - Speak to Solana representatives about your ideas and discuss how to develop them!

Prize

$2000 for the winning team and **$1000** for the second place team!

Special Prize

This year, we're introducing a fan favorite prize!

On Sunday morning, a Devpost link will be sent via Discord. You will have the opportunity to review all submitted projects and vote for your favorite one. The winning team will receive **$250**!

We encourage all attendees to participate and support their fellow hackers!

Project Requirements and Submission

Submitting Your Project

Use the [HackIllinois Devpost](#) to submit your project!

Submission Checklist

To qualify for submissions, you will need to meet these criteria:
- Everyone on your team **must be registered, RSVPed, and checked in for HackIllinois.**
- You must submit your project before the submission deadline **(Sunday, March 2nd at 7:00 AM CST)**.
  - We recommend submitting earlier so that you don't miss the deadline. Late submissions will not be accepted.
- You must be registered with only **one team**.
- Your team must have **four members or less**.
- Your project must have been created **during the 36 hours of the event**.
- Your project must have only been submitted to HackIllinois 2025.
- **You can only submit up to <u>one track and one path</u> for the event.**
- **Your project submission on Devpost must contain a public GitHub Repository, a video demo or presentation video (made unlisted or public) that is no longer than 3 minutes, and a description addressing the respective track.**

Failure to adhere to these may result in disqualification; final discretion lies with HackIllinois staff. If you are unsure about anything related to Devpost Project Submission, please contact us through contact@hackillinois.org or the Help Desk role on Discord!

Judging Overview

Track Judging

All teams that have submitted their project to a company-sponsored track will be judged asynchronously based on their Devpost submission.

Path Judging

Path judging will take place separately from Track judging. Attendees must present at the Path Showcase to be eligible for a path prize. The General Path will be judged by a science fair-type project showcase, and the HackOlympians Path will be judged by a Shark Tank-style pitch.

Structure

7 AM: Devpost Submission – After submitting your Devpost at 7:00 AM, please **check your email and Discord regularly**, as communication regarding your room allocation and other instructions will be sent through the channels.

9:00 AM: HackOlympians Showcase – If you are competing for the HackOlympians Path prize, see **HackOlympians Showcase section**.

12:00 PM: General Project Showcase – If you are competing for the General Path Prize, see **General Showcase section**.

HackOlympian Project Showcase

Inspired by the hit TV series Shark Tank, the HackOlympian Showcase is focused on promoting entrepreneurship in technology by having teams pitch their HackIllinois project to a panel of judges. Moreover, **in the past, our company sponsors have reached out to standout Shark Tank presenters to further invest in and develop their projects!**

Note: All group members *must* be HackOlympians for the project to qualify for the HackOlympian Showcase. Groups with a mix of HackOlympians and General members will present at the General Showcase.

Format
1. Plan to arrive at the event location **at least 15 minutes (8:45 AM) before the official start time** so that we can go over the presentation format and requirements.
2. Presenters will check in at **Siebel 2405** and wait to be called to pitch in either **Siebel 2406, Siebel 2407 or Siebel 2102.**
3. During this 120-minute time period, you will be given 5-minute time slots to present to judges and receive feedback for your project.
   a. You will have 3 minutes to pitch your project. After 3 minutes, we will ask you to wrap up your presentation within two sentences.
   b. The judging panel will conduct a 2-minute Q&A session following the presentation.
4. Your presentation materials may include anything that can be projected and shared as a link. Still, keep in mind that time is limited and too many presentation materials will take up time!
5. Here is the judging rubric.

General Project Showcase

HackIllinois' General Showcase is akin to a science fair for coding enthusiasts. You will have the opportunity to come together with other teams and showcase your innovative projects to our esteemed judges!

Format

1. Plan to arrive at the event location at least 15 minutes (11:15 AM) before the official start time so that we can go over the presentation format and requirements. **If you arrive over 10 minutes past the official start time, your project will be disqualified and removed from final consideration**.
2. **Presenters will set up in Rooms 1404 and 0216** (you will be assigned and notified of your team number and room on Sunday morning).
3. During this 120-minute time period, you will be given 5-minute time slots to present to judges and receive feedback for your project.
   a. You will have 3 minutes to present your project. After 3 minutes, we will ask you to wrap up your presentation within two sentences.
   b. The judging panel may conduct a 2-minute Q&A session following the presentation.
4. Here is the judging rubric.

Mentoring

During HackIllinois 2025, you might need to seek some technical help and advice from mentors. **You can find Mentor Office Hours Information [here](#)!**

Our mentors provide technical advice and help from across the board. Stay tuned on our website for more information about each mentor including their background and skills!

Mentor Office Hours

- In-person mentors will be located in **Siebel 2406**, and you may ask any of them for assistance on your projects.
- You may ask for help in the **#office-hours-text** Discord Channel by using the @Mentor tag.
  - When you receive a response from a mentor, you should then proceed to use one of the Mentor Room Voice Channels or direct message with your mentor to chat privately.
- Attendees can earn 50 points by consulting with a mentor about their project, after which they may ask the mentor to show a redeemable QR code (Max: 1).

We ask that you be gracious and patient when seeking help from mentors. Our mentors have kindly volunteered their time to help attendees have a meaningful experience at HackIllinois. **No abusive language directed at our mentors will be tolerated and doing so will result in disqualification from participating in HackIllinois 2025.**

Points

Earning Points

Attendees can engage in workshops, mini-events, and other activities to earn points! Here is a breakdown of all possible ways to earn points at HackIllinois 2025, but you can also check the schedule on our website or app for the point values of attending specific events!

Event/Activity	Point Value
Company Expo	10 points per company booth x 10 booths
Workshops / Tech Talks / QNA / Speaker	75 points
Mentor Office Hours	50 points (redeemable once)
The Labyrinth	50 points per puzzle booth x 3 booths
Agora	50 points per booth x 4 booths
The Vault of Athena	Level 10: 80 points Level 8: 60 points Level 5: 25 points
Movie & Game Night	50 points each

Redeeming Points

Attendees can exchange points for exciting items and raffle tickets at the Point Shop! Redeem points by talking to the current staff on shift at the Point Shop, located by the ACM Office and next to the Help Desk. You can reserve an item by purchasing it via the app and showing the given QR code at the Help Desk.

Point Shop Items

Check out the Point Shop on our app to see what items are available as well as their prices!

Items	Price (Points)
Ambrosia and Nectar	
Chips and Fruit Snacks	30
Monster	100
Curious Trinkets	
Temporary Tattoos	30
Pandora's Box (Mystery Box)	100
Bread Boards	200
HackIllinois Specialties	
Extra HackIllinois Stickers	15
Past HackIllinois Stickers	30

Items	Price (Points)
Past HackIllinois T-Shirts	250
Mythical Treasures	
Golden Blanket	850
Logitech Keyboard	850
Logitech Mouse	850
LED Strip Lights	750
Test Of Fate	
Bella Air Fryer Raffle Ticket	150
JBL Speaker Raffle Ticket	100
Amazon Echo Raffle Ticket	100

Where and When?

Location: Next to the Help Desk, near the ACM Office, Siebel 1st Floor
Opens: February 28th, 6:00 PM
Closes: March 2nd, 10:30 AM

*Point shop closes at 1:00 AM every night and reopens at 9:00 AM the next day

Other Resources

Full Stack:
- Mern stack: https://www.mongodb.com/mern-stack
- CRUD apps: https://www.codecademy.com/article/what-is-crud
- Building CRUD apps with MERN: https://blog.stackademic.com/building-a-basic-crud-using-mern-stack-7a9d951f2e02

Backend:
- Free cloud databases
- **Staff Picks:**
  - MongoDB
  - Firebase
  - Flask

Frontend:
- Choosing front-end frameworks

AI/ML
- https://streamlit.io/ allows you to rapidly build and showcase machine learning and data science web apps.
  - Example

Presenting & Pitching Projects
- Helpful tips
  - For our Project Showcase, it is important to keep timing in mind. Check out the Project Showcase section of the Attendee Guide to see more info.

Reimbursement Policy

For HackIllinois 2025, we are excited to offer travel reimbursements to qualifying attendees. To be considered for reimbursement, participants must opt-in during the registration process for HackIllinois.

It's important to note that opting in for reimbursement consideration will not impact your chances of being admitted to the event.

To qualify for reimbursement, attendees **must** meet the following criteria:
- Receive an acceptance to HackIllinois with a specified reimbursement amount notified in their acceptance portal.
- RSVP 'Yes' to attend HackIllinois.
- Attend HackIllinois 2025 in person.
- Submit a qualifying project for the HackIllinois hackathon.

Please be aware that failing to meet any of these requirements will result in disqualification from receiving any reimbursement.

The determination of reimbursement amounts is influenced by several factors, including but not limited to an applicant's geographic location and their distance from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign campus. Although a preliminary reimbursement amount may be indicated upon acceptance, please understand that this amount is not guaranteed and may be subject to adjustments based on the final review of eligibility criteria.

For further questions regarding travel logistics or reimbursement, please contact travel@hackillinois.org

Terms & Conditions

By registering for this event, you are agreeing to the HackIllinois terms and conditions. Refer to our Discord for the full code of conduct for HackIllinois 2025.

Thank you very much for your interest in our event! We look forward to seeing your projects, and happy coding!

Contact Information

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns during the event please feel free to reach out to us at contact@hackillinois.org, type @Help Desk in any of our Help Channels or create a ticket via Discord, or come to our in-person help desks at Siebel, located right outside of the ACM Office!

Thank You!

Thank you for taking the time to read through this guide. We are really excited to have you at our event! For more details and the official event schedule, please refer to the HackIllinois website here. We sincerely hope that you have an enjoyable experience participating in HackIllinois 2025.