



HackIllinois 2026 General Prizes

HackIllinois has over **\$75,000** in prizes this year. Check them out below!

Sponsor	Name	Description	Prize
HackIllinois	Best Voyager Hack	The Best Voyager Hack is awarded to the team whose project demonstrates exceptional innovation, functionality, and overall excellence in the HackVoyager Path . This category encompasses projects that excel in various aspects, including creativity, technical complexity, impact, and execution. It recognizes the team that has pushed the boundaries of what is possible in 36 hours and built something incredible.	\$5000 for the team
HackIllinois	Best General Hack	The Best General Hack is awarded to the team whose project demonstrates exceptional innovation, functionality, and overall excellence in the General Path . This category encompasses projects that excel in various aspects, including creativity, technical complexity, impact, and execution. It recognizes the team that has pushed the boundaries of what is possible in 36 hours and built something incredible.	\$2500 for the team

Sponsor	Name	Description	Prize
HackIllinois	Best Beginner Hack	The Best Beginner Hack prize recognizes the outstanding achievement of a team with limited prior experience in coding or hackathons. This category celebrates the journey of learning and discovery, rewarding teams that demonstrate impressive creativity, effort, and progress in their first hackathon endeavor. <i>Note: at least half of the team members need to be first time hackers to qualify for this prize.</i>	EPOMAKER Mechanical Keyboard for each member
HackIllinois	Most Popular	Most voted hack on Devpost by attendees.	SONY Headphone for each member

*Note: Each team can apply for up to **2 prizes** below.
All prizes are opt-in (you have to apply on your Devpost submission).*

Sponsor	Name	Description	Prize
HackIllinois	Best Social Impact	The Most Impactful prize recognizes the project that has the potential to create the most significant positive change or address a pressing societal issue. Whether through addressing environmental concerns, improving accessibility, or tackling social injustices, among many other possibilities, this category highlights projects that aim to make a tangible difference in the world.	MARSHALL Speakers + \$50 donation to a charity of choice for each member
HackIllinois	Best UI/UX Design	Awarded to the team that delivers the most intuitive, polished, and delightful user experience. This prize recognizes thoughtful design decisions, strong visual hierarchy, accessibility, and seamless interaction—from first impression to final click. If your product feels effortless to use and looks great doing it, this one's for you.	FUJIFILM Instax Mini 12 Camera (film included) for each member

Sponsor	Name	Description	Prize
HackIllinois	Most Creative	The Most Creative prize celebrates the team that shows the highest level of originality, imagination, and ingenuity in their project. This category rewards innovation and unconventional thinking, honoring projects that showcase unique approaches to problem-solving or introduce novel concepts and ideas.	NINJA Coffee Machine for each member
HackIllinois	Most Useless	This award celebrates projects that are delightfully impractical — but still well-designed and fully functional. We're not looking for broken demos or unfinished apps, but thoughtfully built projects that explore fun, novel, or whimsical ideas rather than serious real-world problems.	NERF Gun + Walkie Talkie for each member

Sponsor Challenges

*Note: Each team can apply for up to **3 sponsor prizes** and **as many MLH prizes**.
All prizes are opt-in (you have to apply on your Devpost submission).*

Sponsor	Name	Description	Prize
Cloudflare	Best Use of Cloudflare Developer Platform	You might know Cloudflare from just stopping the bad guys with DDoS protection, security, and global scale. But there's much more than that. There is an entire developer platform, including primitives that you can use to build whatever you build during this hackathon. Show us what you got!	\$5K Cloudflare credits for each member
OpenAI	Best Use of OpenAI API	More info coming soon!	\$5K OpenAI API credits for the team + \$150 gift card of any type for each member

Sponsor	Name	Description	Prize
CapitalOne	Best Use of Capital One Nessie (Hackathon API)	More info coming soon!	\$300 gift card for each member
Supermemory	Best Use of Supermemory	Use Supermemory's Context Engineering APIs to build an app that remembers, understands, and adapts to its users. Leverage Retrieval, Memory, User Profiles, Connectors, or Multi-modal Extractors — or combine them all. Use the free tier here! If you run out of credits feel free to go to the Supermemory booth to top up.	Meta RayBans for each member
Solana	Best Use of Solana	The world of development is evolving fast and Solana is leading the charge with a network built to handle all of your infrastructure needs. Forget high fees and slow confirmations, it's time to build applications that are fast, efficient, and scalable. Harness Solana's core advantages like blazing fast execution and near-zero transaction costs to make your hackathon ideas become real world projects. With Solana, the possibilities are endless. • Create a game, social app, or consumer product that relies on instant, high-frequency transactions. • Design a sophisticated trading, lending, or decentralized exchange (DEX). • Build a prototype for supply chain, identity, or payments that can handle massive, real-world volume. Show us how you can innovate with Solana for a chance to win some cool prizes for you and each member of your team!	\$5K in Crypto for the team + Ledger Nano S Plus

Sponsor	Name	Description	Prize
Actian	Best Use of Actian VectorAI DB	Challenge Description: Build an AI application using Actian VectorAI DB. We're looking for creative implementations that showcase vector search capabilities - examples include RAG systems, recommendation engines, semantic search applications, or real-time AI solutions. How to Participate: Participants can access our closed beta through: • Docker: `docker pull williamimoh/actian-vectorai-db:1.0b` • GitHub Repository	1st Place: \$300 in prepaid AmEx gift cards for the team 2nd Place: \$120 in prepaid AmEx gift cards for the team 3rd Place: Anker USB-C Hubs for each team member Note: Prizes are quality-gated. If fewer than 3 teams meet our quality standards, we'll award prizes only to qualifying teams (e.g., if only 1 team qualifies, they receive the combined prize pool). Feedback for Actian is required.

Sponsor	Name	Description	Prize
Aedify.AI	Best Deployed on Aedify	This prize will be awarded to the most novel project that best utilizes Aedify's deployment and platform resources. This project must be successfully deployed with a live, external domain and it must be functional.	\$300 in Platform Credits, and 5 months free for OpenClaw (\$100 value) for each member
MLH	Best Use of Gemini API	It's time to push the boundaries of what's possible with AI using Google Gemini. Check out the Gemini API to build AI-powered apps that make your friends say WHOA. So, what can Gemini do for your hackathon project? • Understand language like a human and build a chatbot that gives personalized advice • Analyze info like a supercomputer and create an app that summarizes complex research papers • Generate creative content like code, scripts, music, and more Think of the possibilities...what will you build with the Google Gemini API this weekend?	Google Swag Kits

Sponsor	Name	Description	Prize
MLH	Best Use of ElevenLabs	Deploy natural, human-sounding audio with ElevenLabs. Create realistic, dynamic, and emotionally expressive voices for any project, from interactive AI companions to narrated stories and voice-enabled apps. ElevenLabs will empower you to build rich, immersive experiences without the need for actors or complex audio production, using simply the power of AI. Integrate fully autonomous audio experiences into your hack with ElevenLabs and give your project a voice, along with giving your team the chance to win some wireless earbuds!	Wireless Earbuds
MLH	Best Use of Snowflake API	Play with industry-leading LLMs on a single account using the Snowflake APIs. Adding AI capabilities into your application can be as simple as a single CURL command to Snowflake's REST API. Build customized applications, RAG powered chat bots, or embed AI-powered features into your app in half the time with half the hassle. Get started for free with a special, student 120-day Snowflake trial and check out this repository for an example of the Snowflake REST API in action.	M5Stack Tab5

Sponsor	Name	Description	Prize
MLH	Best Use of DigitalOcean	DigitalOcean offers a reliable and easy-to-use cloud platform for every stage of your project. Leverage core services like Droplets, Managed Databases, and App Platform to build, deploy, and scale your application effortlessly. Building with AI? DigitalOcean Gradient™ AI enables you to build, train, and deploy machine learning models, including access to GPU infrastructure and serverless inference! Sign up for DigitalOcean today and get \$200 worth of free credits that you can use towards building your next great hack. Build with DigitalOcean's robust cloud infrastructure for a chance to win some great prizes for you and each of your teammates!	Retro Wireless Mouse
MLH	Best Use of Presage	Presage is pioneering the Human Sensing Layer, enabling any application to understand a person's real-time physical and emotional state. With Presage, you can leverage clinically-proven vital signs, movement, emotion, and/or focus tracking to build a project that gives the standard camera super powers. Use any of the Presage SDKs to integrate capabilities like real-time heart rate, breathing rate, engagement levels, and facial expressions into your hack with just a few lines of code. Immersive Gaming & Entertainment: Dynamically change game difficulty or story elements based on a player's excitement or focus levels.	Fitbit Inspire & Presage Perks

Sponsor	Name	Description	Prize
		• Contactless Wellness & Fitness: Build a non-invasive app that monitors stress, recovery, or fitness performance. • Accessibility & Security: Utilize vital signs for effortless authentication, or to enhance accessibility. • Productivity: Design a tool that tracks focus or stress. Build your next hack with Presage and show us the future of human-computer interaction! Win awesome prizes along for with the following perks from the Presage team: • Free refills for Presage Development credits to accelerate you through your next three months of building • 30% off all Presage usage charges for your first year after going live	
MLH	Best .Tech Domain Name	Make your Team's Achievements timeless: Win a .Tech Domain Name for up to 10 years to Showcase and Expand Your Project, Plus Desktop Mics for Effortless Collaboration on Zoom, empowering you to build even more cool things together!	Desktop Microphone & a Free .Tech Domain Name for up to 10 years!

Other

Event Prizes

Sponsor	Name	Description	Prize
HackIllinois	Highest Win Rate in Duels	Play the duel through the HackIllinois App with other attendees! The person with the highest win rate will be announced during the closing ceremony.	Xbox Gift Card
HackIllinois	Clash Royale Tournament	 Saturday 2/28 @ 10:30 PM - 11:30 PM  Siebel CS 1404 Put on your space suits, gather your elixirs, and build your deck! Compete in a Clash Royale tourney to declare yourself the strongest of the crew! Prizes and intergalactic glory await! HEE HEE HEE HAW!	1st Place: Nintendo Switch 2 2nd Place: Surprise~
IMC	Poker Tournament	 Friday 2/27 @ 11:00 PM - 1:00 AM  Siebel CS 2405 The intergalactic navigation skills you possess translate well to other activities...come show off your skills to the rest of the space crew at HackIllinois' first ever Poker Tournament.	1st Place: PlayStation 5 Digital Edition 2nd Place: IMC Poker Set
CapitalOne	Ultimate Smash Tournament	More info coming soon!	Capital One merch

Engagement Raffle

Tier	Prize
Gold	LEGO space shuttle
Gold	300hz monitor
Gold	Pair of shoes of your choice up to \$200
Gold	Yearly AI Subscription of choice up to \$200
Gold	LeetCode Pro Subscription
Gold	Sony XM5
Silver	Dinner for 2 up to \$100
Silver	Cooking knife set + \$75 doordash gift card
Silver	Yearly subscription to streaming service of choice
Silver	\$100 steam gift card
Bronze	North Face Borealis Backpack
Bronze	YETI Rambler 20 oz Cocktail Shaker
Saturday Morning Raffle	AirPods Pro 3
Sunday Morning Raffle	AirPods Pro 3



HackIllinois 2026 Track Info

*Note: Each team can only compete in **AT MOST ONE** track.*

Sponsor	Name	Description	Prize
Stripe	Best Web API	Build a well-crafted API, focusing on the surface, developer experience, and correctness. Focus on clarity, predictable behavior, and useful documentation that will delight developers. More info here.	1st Place: \$2000 for the team, JBL Tour One M2 Headphones for each team member 2nd Place: \$500 for the team, \$100 Amazon gift card for each team member
Modal	Best AI Inference	Modal is AI infrastructure developers love, used by companies like Ramp, Suno and Lovable. With flexible GPU compute, code sandboxes, and storage, you can use Modal to run inference or train coding agents, voice agents and more. For the Inference Track, we're looking for ambitious applications running inference on Modal to solve a real-world problem.	1st Place: \$2000 for the team, \$5K in Modal Credits per person, trip to SF or NY Office with lunch with Modal team 2nd Place: \$500 for the team, \$1K in Modal credits,

Sponsor	Name	Description	Prize
		Use code VVN-YQS-E55 to redeem \$250 worth of credits for the event at modal.com/credits *Winners must claim their prize in the Siebel Center for Computer Science immediately after the closing ceremony.	Airpods for each team member 3rd Place: \$1K in Modal Credits and AirPods for each team member
Caterpillar	Best AI Inspection	Use your creativity to build an AI solution that pushes the boundaries of what's possible in field operations and logistics. Show how AI can make inspections, parts identification, and site planning smarter, faster, and safer. More info here.	1st Place: \$1500 for the team, Ray-Bans Meta AI glasses for each member, CAT swag + pitch presentation to a Caterpillar Executive team member 2nd Place: \$700 for the team, gaming keyboard for each member, CAT swag + a pitch presentation to a Caterpillar Executive team member 3rd Place: \$300 for the team, gaming keyboard for each member, CAT swag + sharing the hack with a Caterpillar Executive team member
John Deere	Best Hardware Hack (John Deere Mechathon)	The Best Hardware Hack prize honors the team that demonstrates excellence in integrating hardware components into their project. From IoT devices to robotics, this category celebrates projects that leverage physical computing elements to create innovative solutions and interactive experiences. More info here.	1st Place: \$2000 for the team, Ride Along at Coal Valley Ranch Demo Site on May 15th, Conference call presentation with John Deere leadership, extra hardware kit 2nd Place:

Sponsor	Name	Description	Prize
			\$500 for the team, Yeti Rumbler for each team member 3rd Place: John Deere merch for each team member