

The Official Guide to

USAII's Global **AI Hackathon** 2026



Table of Contents

- 1** About USAII® Global AI Hackathon 2026
- 2** Who Can Participate
- 3** Challenges To Solve
- 4** How It Works: From Registration, Readiness Qualifier to Global Showcase
- 5** USAII® AI Bootcamps: Build Your Foundation Before You Compete
- 6** Prizes & Certification Scholarships Opportunity
- 7** Rules, Tools, Platforms & Judging Criteria
- 8** Your Opportunity to Be a Judge, Mentor & Speaker
- 9** Opportunity for Sponsorship: Invest Where AI Innovation Begins
- 10** Your Next Step: Register, Contribute, or Partner

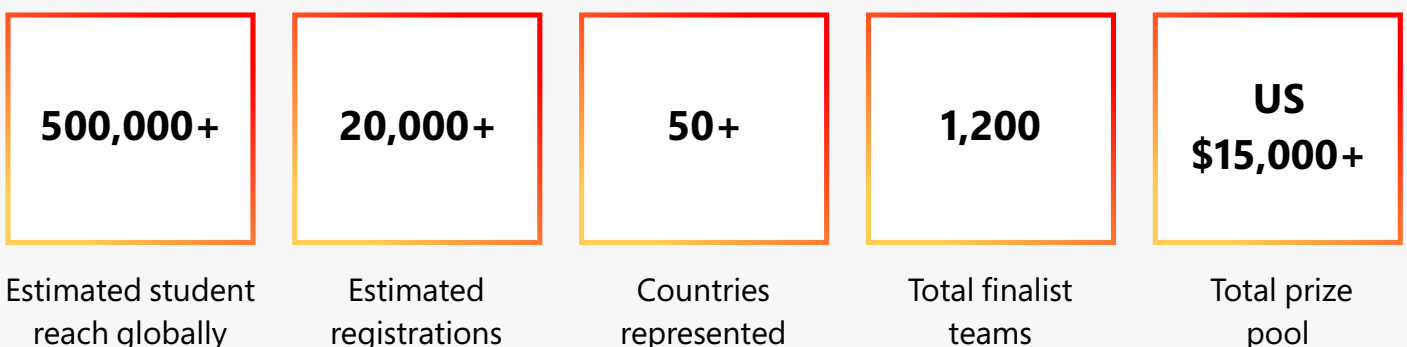
About USAII® Global AI Hackathon 2026

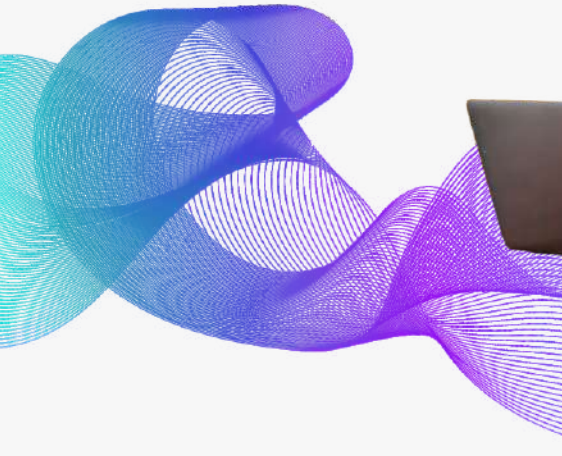
Building responsible AI solutions requires more than technical skill, it requires structured thinking, collaborative design, and real-world judgment. The USAII® Global AI Hackathon 2026 fosters the development of that combination.

What It Is

A fully free virtual, multi-phase student innovation global competition hosted by the **United States Artificial Intelligence Institute (USAII®)**, open to students across high school (Grades 9-12), undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral levels worldwide, happening in **June 2026**. Teams of 2–5 design and prototype AI solutions to real-world challenges, evaluated by industry judges using a structured, rubric-based process.

The Scale





Why It Matters

- »» The global AI in education market is projected to reach **USD 32.81 billion** by 2030 at a CAGR of **34.52%**, underscoring the urgency of applied AI learning at every academic level (*Precedence Research, 2026*)
- »» **22%** of global jobs will be transformed by AI and automation within the next five years; early skill-building is no longer optional, it is a career imperative (*WEF, 2026*)

Who It Is Built For

- »» Students seeking hands-on AI experience beyond the classroom
- »» Judges and mentors contributing industry expertise to shape responsible AI thinking
- »» Speakers connecting real-world knowledge to a global student audience
- »» Educators and institutions preparing students for an AI-integrated workforce
- »» Sponsors investing in the talent pipeline that will define how AI is built and applied

Who Can Participate

The USAII® Global AI Hackathon 2026 welcomes students at every academic level, from high school through doctoral study, competing across two primary participation tracks:

High School Track

- »» Open to students in Grades 9-12
- »» Structured **7-days** sprint format

College, Graduate & Doctoral Track

- »» Open to Undergraduate, Masters, and PhD students
- »» One-week build experience

Team Formation

- »» Teams of 2-5 members; students from different schools or countries may form a team together
- »» Teams must register in the track corresponding to highest academic level represented on team
- »» Solo registration is permitted; team formation support is available during the registration phase
- »» No prior AI or hackathon experience is required

Challenges To Solve

The Three Competition Challenges

Parameter	High School Track	College Track	Graduate & Doctoral Track
Eligible Participants	Grades 9–12	Undergraduate Students	Masters & PhD Students
Challenge Name	AI for Good in Your World	AI for Life, Learning & Work	AI for Systems & Society
Goal	A structured sprint focused on community and environment challenges, a fast, supported first step into AI problem-solving	Design AI tools that help people learn, navigate careers, and make better everyday decisions	Advanced build track focused on public-good systems, human safety, public policy, and responsible AI infrastructure

Note: Full challenge directions will be revealed during the Hackathon Kickoff.

How It Works

From Registration, Readiness Qualifier to Global Showcase

The USAII® Global AI Hackathon 2026 is structured as a multi-phase experience, designed to be fair, accessible, and impactful for students across every time zone and academic level.

Your Journey

- 1 Register and stay informed
- 2 Form a team of 2–5 via Devpost
- 3 Complete the Readiness Qualifier
- 4 Build and submit your solution during your track window
- 5 Compete for prizes at the Global Awards Showcase

Register on 

Event Timeline

Phase	Dates	What Happens
Phase 1 Registration	Now	Student register on Devpost; Mentors, Judges, and Speakers apply through interest form
Phase 2 Registration & Team Formation	April 27 - June 6	Teams form via Devpost; students enrol in AI Bootcamps
Phase 3 Readiness Qualifier	June 7-10	Teams complete an AI Thinking Assessment
Phase 4 Hackathon Kickoff	June 14	Challenge Reveal and Speaker Series Launch
Phase 5 Hackathon Build	June 14-21	Qualified teams design and prototype solutions
Phase 6 Judging	June 22-25	Submissions evaluated asynchronously across multiple rounds
Phase 7 Global Showcase	June 27	Winners announced via livestream awards event

About Readiness Qualifier

- »» Approximately **30 minutes**; no building or coding required
- »» Teams respond to a structured scenario covering problem framing, AI approach, and ethical considerations
- »» Evaluated on problem understanding, AI reasoning, responsible AI awareness, and clarity
- »» Teams receive an automated score report; advancement is communicated via email



USAII® AI Bootcamps

Build Your Foundation Before You Compete

The USAII® AI Bootcamps are structured, self-paced preparatory programs designed to equip students with the foundational AI knowledge and practical awareness needed to approach the hackathon with clarity and confidence.

Each bootcamp is delivered through recorded online content and can be completed independently of team formation or registration timelines.

While bootcamp completion is not a prerequisite for hackathon participation, students who undertake structured preparation prior to the build phase consistently demonstrate stronger problem framing, more considered AI design, and greater confidence during judging.

Who Should Enrol

- » Students with limited or no prior exposure to artificial intelligence seeking a structured entry point
- » Individuals or teams looking to develop and refine ideas before the hackathon build phase begins
- » Students seeking to understand how AI is responsibly applied to real-world challenges

High School Bootcamps *Designed for Students in Grades 9–12*

Bootcamp	Duration	Fee	Core Coverage
AI Builder 101 Beginner Friendly	1 week	USD 49	AI fundamentals, data and algorithms, responsible AI principles, no-code tools, hackathon problem framing
AI Builder 102 Applied Foundations	2 weeks	USD 99	AI solution design, no-code model building, Python fundamentals, creative AI applications, core AI concepts
AI Builder Bundle (101 + 102)	2–3 weeks	USD 129	Structured learning path encompassing both programs

College Level Bootcamps *Designed for Undergraduate Students*

Bootcamp	Duration	Fee	Core Coverage
AI Builder 201 Foundations for Application	1 week	USD 49	AI problem-solving frameworks, AI in everyday systems, responsible AI in practice, agents and automation
AI Builder 202 Systems & Advanced Concepts	2 weeks	USD 99	Machine learning principles, natural language processing, generative AI and large language models, retrieval-augmented generation, AI for business
AI Builder Bundle (201 + 202)	2–3 weeks	USD 129	Structured learning path encompassing both programs

Upon Completion

- » Recipients receive an official USAII® Certificate of Completion
- » Credentials are suitable for inclusion in academic portfolios, college applications, and professional profiles
- » Students may continue their learning through full USAII® certification programs, **CAIP™**, **CAIP-Advanced™**, and **CAIE™**

Enroll Today for USAII® AI Bootcamps

Note: Group registrations, institutional licensing, or training workshops for cohorts of 25 or more are also available.



Prizes & Certification Scholarships Opportunity

The USAII® Global AI Hackathon 2026 recognises achievement across all tracks. Awards are distributed to teams demonstrating the strongest combination of innovation, responsible AI design, and measurable social impact.

Prize Structure

The total prize pool is **US \$15,000+**. Each of the competition tracks carries a dedicated prize pool of **US \$5,000**, distributed across the following award categories:

Award	Prize
Grand Prize	US \$2,500
Runner Up	US \$1,500
Third Place	US \$500
Responsible AI Award	US \$250
Social Impact Award	US \$250

Upon Completion

Every stage of participation is recognised with a corresponding USAII® certification scholarship, applicable toward the **CAIP™**, **CAIP-Advanced™**, or **CAIE™** certification programs

Milestone	Scholarship Award
Completion of Qualifier Round	15% discount
Completion of Hackathon	25% discount
Hackathon Category Winner	100% discount



Rules, Tools, Platforms & Judging Criteria



The USAII® Global AI Hackathon 2026 operates under a clearly defined set of rules and expectations designed to ensure fairness, accessibility, and responsible AI practice across all participating teams and tracks.

Team Rules

- ››› Teams must comprise 2–5 members; mixed academic level teams compete in the track aligned with the highest education level represented
- ››› All projects must be conceived, designed, and built exclusively within the designated hackathon build window
- ››› Teams must use public datasets, synthetic data, or responsibly simulated data; private, personal, or sensitive information is strictly prohibited
- ››› All tools, AI systems, and data sources used must be disclosed in the final project submission

Permitted Tools & Platforms

- ››› Open-source models, commercial AI tools, APIs, and no-code or low-code platforms are all permitted
- ››› Free-tier tools are sufficient; no paid software is required to compete at any level
- ››› Teams are encouraged to select tools that most clearly demonstrate how their solution functions rather than those that add technical complexity without purpose

Platform	Purpose
	Registration, team formation, project submission, and tracking official deadlines
	Announcements, mentor communication, and community discussion

Submission Requirements and Responsible AI Expectations

Every team submits its final project through Devpost. Responsible AI is not an optional consideration, it is a core submission requirement evaluated as a distinct judging criterion.

Each submission must include:

- »» Project overview and explanation of how the AI solution functions
- »» A working prototype or demonstration, chatbot, workflow, dashboard, app mockup, simulation, or decision-support model
- »» A 3–5 minute demo video covering the solution, its purpose, and real-world application
- »» Full disclosure of all tools, platforms, and data sources used
- »» A responsible AI statement identifying at least one realistic risk and how the design mitigates it
- »» Clear demonstration of where human judgment remains central to the solution

Judging Criteria

Projects are evaluated by industry judges and AI practitioners using a structured, standardised rubric across the following dimensions:

Criterion	What Judges Assess
Problem Understanding	Clarity of the problem identified and depth of understanding of those affected
AI Reasoning	Thoughtfulness of the AI approach and appropriateness of the tools selected
Solution Design	Structure, coherence, and feasibility of the proposed solution
Impact & Decision Value	Real-world relevance and the tangible value the solution creates
Responsible AI	Identification of risks and demonstration of ethical, humancentred design

Judging Process

- » Projects are evaluated asynchronously across multiple rounds following submission
- » Initial screening may include automated review prior to evaluation by industry judges
- » All submissions are time-stamped; no team is advantaged by geography, time zone, or available resources
- » Judges review recorded pitch videos and project submissions.

Your Opportunity to Be a Judge, Mentor & Speaker

The USAII® Global AI Hackathon 2026 is shaped not only by the students who compete but by the professionals who guide, evaluate, and inspire them. Whether contributing as a judge, mentor, or speaker, each role carries direct influence over the quality and real-world relevance of the experience.

Why Get Involved

- »» Support the development of the next generation of AI talent
- »» Contribute to responsible AI education on a global scale
- »» Share practical industry insight with a globally diverse student audience
- »» Build visibility within a mission-driven, internationally recognised initiative
- »» Join a community of educators, researchers, and industry practitioners

The Three Roles

Role	What You Do
Judge	Review submissions asynchronously using a standardised rubric covering problem understanding, AI reasoning, solution design, impact, & responsible AI
Mentor	Guide teams on problem framing, AI design, tradeoffs, and presentation, through office hours and scheduled sessions
Speaker	Deliver keynotes, workshops, or talks connecting AI to careers, systems, and society

Key Expectations

- » Judges must have relevant professional or academic experience; no live availability required during judging, with an approximate commitment of 4 hours
- » Mentors guide thinking; they do not build, code, or complete any work on behalf of teams
- » Speaker sessions are recorded and made available asynchronously to support global participation

Apply Now to be a Mentor



Opportunity for Sponsorship

Invest Where AI Innovation Begins

Sponsoring the USAII® Global AI Hackathon 2026 is not simply supporting an event; it is an investment in the talent pipeline that will define how AI is designed, built, and applied in the years ahead. The hackathon offers sponsors a rare combination of global visibility, meaningful contribution, and measurable impact.

Why Sponsor

- » Invest early in the next generation of AI thinkers and builders before they enter the workforce
- » Align organisational values with responsible AI principles and human-centred design
- » Directly support AI education, scholarships, and workforce readiness, delivering tangible CSR and ESG outcomes
- » Participate meaningfully in a fully virtual, global event with no travel or logistical constraints
- » Begin with flexible, low-commitment engagement, award sponsorships, mentoring, or judging, and scale over time

Sponsorship Engagement Opportunities

Opportunity	What It Involves
Brand Partnership & Visibility	Strategic brand presence across the official hackathon website, digital communications, and post-event showcases
Judging & Thought Leadership	Nominate senior leaders or experts to participate in the structured, rubric-based judging process
Mentorship & Talent Development	Engage directly with student teams through guided virtual mentorship sessions
Knowledge & Insight Sessions	Host virtual talks or workshops focused on real-world AI applications aligned with organisational expertise
Challenge or Track Sponsorship	Support specific problem statements or thematic tracks, shaping the focus areas students work on
Prizes, Scholarships & Learning Support	Contribute to awards and scholarships that enable continued AI education and recognise outstanding student achievement

Sponsors & Partners Already on Board

Category	Organisation
Collaborative Sponsors	ETA, The Innovate Summit, NowSourcing
Education Partners	CISC, Gloxad, Mercer, Bar-Ilan University
Challenge Advisors	Safe Passage, Institute for Survivor Care, St. John Center

Join the Community, Become a Sponsor Today

Your Next Step

Register, Contribute, or Partner

The **USAII® Global AI Hackathon 2026** is where structured learning meets real-world application, where student curiosity meets industry mentorship, and where responsible AI principles meet global competition. It is an event built with intention, and every participant, contributor, and partner plays a role in making it matter.

Thousands of students across the globe will converge in June 2026 to design, build, and present AI solutions to challenges that extend well beyond the competition itself. The professionals who judge, mentor, and speak alongside them will shape not just the event, but the thinking of the next generation of AI practitioners.

The organisations that sponsor this hackathon are not simply funding a competition. They are investing at the precise moment talent is being formed, ideas are being tested, and responsible AI habits are being established for the first time.

Also, browse the **FAQ section** for answers on registration, judging, sponsorship, and more.

The future of AI is being built here.

Be part of it.



Official Resources for USAII® Global AI Hackathon 2026

How to Register on Devpost

Devpost is where teams register, form teams, submit projects, and move through judging.

[Download](#)

How to Find Teammates

You have two primary channels for finding teammates: Devpost and Discord.

[Download](#)

Registration Troubleshooting Guide

Having trouble registering on Devpost for USAII® Global AI Hackathon? This guide covers the most common issues.

[Download](#)

High School Challenge Brief

Design an AI-powered solution that improves everyday life in your community by making help easier to find, learning more human, or the environment easier to protect.

[Download](#)

College Challenge Brief

Build AI tools that help people learn, prepare for work, or make better decisions in everyday systems. Mission lanes include Career Readiness, Productivity, and Public Services.

[Download](#)

Graduate Challenge Brief

Design AI systems that protect people, strengthen public infrastructure, and ensure technology is deployed responsibly.

[Download](#)

Student Guide

The Student Guide brings together the practical details students need to participate with confidence.

[Download](#)

DISCLAIMER: USAII's Global AI Hackathon 2026 is exclusive to students only. Full-time students from any degree or doctoral program are also eligible. Working professionals enrolled in any Degree or Doctoral Programs are not eligible to participate in the competition. Should anyone win the competition (in any category) and be discovered as a working professional, the prize and other benefits will be awarded to the next-best team/s.

About USAII[®]

The United States Artificial Intelligence Institute (USAII[®]) is the world's leading Artificial Intelligence certifications provider for aspiring professionals and leaders at any stage of their career, organizations, institutions, academia, or governments, looking to upskill and reskill their expertise in the ever-evolving Artificial Intelligence domain.

Join
USAII[®] Global
AI Hackathon
2026

REGISTER NOW

LOCATIONS

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