

Hackathon Rules

2026 E4C AI Pilot

1. Overview

The E4C AI Engineering Hackathon (“Hackathon”) is a virtual, time-bound event where participants form teams, ideate, and build solutions aligned with the event theme. By registering, all participants agree to these Rules. Participation in this hackathon is free.

2. Eligibility

- Participants must be 18+ and register before the deadline.
- The event is global; prize distribution may be subject to local laws and compliance checks.
- Organizers, judges, and mentors may not compete. Individuals with access to judging materials may not assist any team.

3. Registration & Team Formation

- Teams consist of 1–5 participants
- Teams must be finalized by April 11, 2026 at 12:00 PM ET (UTC-4)
- Each participant may belong to only one team
- Register team name and members via form on landing page:
<https://www.engineeringforchange.org/challenge/2026-e4c-ai-pilot-hackathon/>
- Up to 150 teams may participate. If registrations exceed capacity, teams will be selected based on availability, registration form completeness, and relevant skills. Remaining teams will be placed on a waitlist

4. Schedule & Time Zone

All dates refer to Eastern Daylight Time (EDT, UTC-4) unless otherwise stated.

- **Registration closes:** April 8, 2026, 11:59 PM
- **Team’s Confirmed by E4C:** April 9, 2026
- **Welcome & E4C AI Pilot Demo:** April 10, 2026, 8-9 AM
Note: recording will be made available after for those not able to attend live
- **Hackathon launch, access to tools granted:** April 12, 2026

- **Live Q&A Drop-in Session:** April 13, 2026, 7:30-9 AM
- **Submission deadline:** April 18, 2026, 11:59 PM
- **Tier 1 Deliberations:** April 19–21, 2026
- **Live Solution Demo Day:** April 24, 2026, 7-10 AM
- **Tier 2 Deliberations:** April 22 - 27, 2026
- **Winners announced:** by April 30, 2026

5. Submission Requirements

Due by the submission deadline via the submission form:

<https://airtable.com/appqUPYnuMe81YLpJ/paqW497Bxq8a6WZMB/form>

Team Information

- Team Name:
- Team Members (Names & Roles):
- Contact Email:

Problem & Context (150–250 words)

Clearly explain the problem your team is addressing. Describe the context in which this problem exists and who is affected by it (e.g., a specific community, industry, or user group).

Solution Overview (150–250 words)

Provide a high-level overview of your solution. Explain what your configuration does and the main idea behind it. Focus on how it addresses the problem you described and what makes your approach effective or innovative.

Use of E4C Knowledge (100–200 words)

Detail how you incorporated Engineering for Change (E4C) knowledge into your solution. Specify any datasets, frameworks, standards, or tools you used and explain how they were applied or integrated into your system.

AI Approach (150–250 words)

Describe the AI methods or tools used in your solution. Include the types of models, algorithms, or platforms utilized, as well as the data sources that support them. Mention any assumptions made and limitations of your approach.

Responsible AI & Evidence (100–200 words)

Explain how your solution ensures trustworthy and responsible use of AI. Describe any measures taken to improve reliability, reduce bias, or validate outputs. Include any testing, evaluation, or safeguards (guardrails) you implemented.

Feasibility & Implementation (100–200 words)

Summarize what your team has built so far (e.g., prototype, model, demo). Then describe what additional steps, resources, or partnerships would be needed to deploy your solution in a real-world setting.

Target User & UX (100–150 words)

Identify your primary users and describe how they would interact with your solution. Outline the user experience, including how simple, accessible, and intuitive the system is for your intended audience.

Key Differentiator (1–2 sentences)

State what makes your solution unique and describe its most compelling feature.

Short Demo Video (2-3 min)

Description: Upload a clear and concise demo video that shows your product in action, highlights key functionality, and demonstrates the expected user flow. We recommend using Loom (<https://www.loom.com/>) or a similar tool to easily record and share your demo via a link.

Submissions must be created during the hackathon timeframe, be original, and free of harmful or inappropriate material. You are limited to one submission per team.

6. Judging Criteria

The evaluation process consists of **two tiers of review**. In the **initial phase**, submissions are reviewed by a panel of junior judges, who assess all entries and down-select the top teams. These selected teams (top 15-20) advance to **Demo Day**, where they present their solutions for a second round of evaluation by senior judges.

Both phases use the **same core judging criteria**, but are applied through slightly different lenses: the initial review focuses on clarity, completeness, and overall promise based on the written submission, while the Demo Day review places greater emphasis on live demonstration, depth of execution, and the team's ability to communicate and defend their decisions.

All judges' decisions are final.

Criterion	Weight	What judges look for
Mission & Knowledge Alignment	25%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Meaningful use of E4C datasets, frameworks, or standards● Clear grounding in real-world engineering and development contexts● Relevance to practitioners, innovators, or decision-makers
Responsible & Evidence-Grounded AI	30%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Clear sourcing and traceability of claims● Explainable logic, assumptions, and limitations● Appropriate use of public or external datasets● Guardrails that prevent unsupported conclusions
Technical Execution, UX & Feasibility	30%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● The system is well-structured, integrated, and stable.● The solution is viable beyond a one-off demo.● The user flows are clear and intuitive.● The design supports human judgment and ease of use.
Communication & Demo	15%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Clear explanation of the solution● Well-structured demo● Ability to articulate tradeoffs, constraints, and value● Fit between stated goals and delivered prototype

7. Prizes

The total prize pool is USD 7,500. Three prize category winners will receive USD 2,500 each: 1) Best Overall, 2) Best Technical Execution/Innovation, 3) Best Domain Impact/ Use Case. Distribution may be subject to tax reporting, identity verification, and regional restrictions.

8. Intellectual Property (IP)

Unless otherwise stated, teams retain ownership of what they create. Participants grant E4C permission to showcase submissions (recordings, screenshots, demos) for promotional and educational purposes. Participants must comply with any open-source licenses used.

9. Code of Conduct

We require a safe, inclusive environment. Harassment, discrimination, and disruptive behavior are prohibited. See the [Code of Conduct](#) for details.

10. Acceptable Use & Responsible AI

Participants must follow the [Acceptable Use & Responsible AI Policy](#), including source traceability, proper handling of uncertainty, permitted data use, transparency, and human oversight.

11. Privacy & Data Use

Names, team names, and submissions may be public. Sessions may be recorded. No personal data will be sold or used outside the hackathon context. Communications may be sent via email or platform notifications.

12. Tools & Platform Access

Participants may receive access to E4C tools and datasets subject to account, usage, and rate limits. Access may be changed or revoked for misuse or security concerns.

13. Disqualification

Grounds include: prior work submitted as new, plagiarism/IP theft, rule violations, harassment, unsafe or misleading outputs, or failure to meet submission requirements. Organizers may disqualify at their discretion to preserve event integrity.

14. Limitation of Liability

The Hackathon and provided tools are offered “as-is.” E4C is not responsible for lost data, downtime, or indirect damages. Participants are responsible for compliance with applicable laws and third-party rights.

15. Acceptance of Rules

By registering, you confirm that you have read, understood, and agree to these Rules, the [Code of Conduct](#), and the [Acceptable Use & Responsible AI Policy](#).

17. Superiority of the Rules

These Official Rules supersede all other communications, including emails, Slack messages, onboarding materials, or verbal statements. In the event of any conflict, these Rules take precedence.

18. Rule Modifications & Clarifications

E4C may modify these Rules at any time to preserve fairness, safety, or technical feasibility. All updates will be announced in the #announcements Slack channel. Participants may submit clarification questions via #rules-questions or support@engineeringforchange.org.

Code of Conduct

This hackathon is dedicated to a safe, inclusive, respectful environment for all participants. By joining, you agree to the following standards.

Participants must:

- Treat all individuals with respect and professionalism
- Use inclusive, non-discriminatory language
- Respect differences of opinion and approach
- Collaborate in good faith
- Follow event instructions from organizers and moderators
- Respect the boundaries and availability of mentors and volunteers

The following are strictly prohibited:

- Harassment, intimidation, or discrimination of any kind
- Offensive comments related to gender, race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, age, etc.
- Sexual or inappropriate content
- Aggressive or hostile behavior
- Unauthorized sharing of others' personal information
- Spamming in communication channels
- Sabotaging another team's work
- Using AI tools to generate harmful, plagiarized, or copyrighted derivatives

Participants experiencing or witnessing misconduct should report it immediately via email to support@engineeringforchange.org. Organizers will respond promptly and confidentially.

Violation of the Code of Conduct may result in:

- Warning
- Removal from communication channels
- Disqualification
- Banning from future events

Organizers have discretion in determining appropriate actions.

Acceptable Use & Responsible AI Policy

The purpose of this policy is to ensure safe, ethical, and evidence-grounded use of AI during the Hackathon.

Transparency & Traceability

- Cite all ultimate sources used for facts, claims, and datasets.
- Show how data flows through your workflow (input → processing → output).
- Clearly label AI-generated content and note model/tool versions when relevant.

Evidence & Uncertainty

- Disclose limitations and confidence; avoid overstating certainty.
- No claims of clinical, legal, safety, or regulatory validation unless supported by proper evidence and human expert review.
- Note and account for possible biases in AI tools used.

Human Oversight

- Keep a human-in-the-loop for critical steps; do not position the system as an autonomous decision-maker in safety-critical contexts.

Data Rights & Privacy

- Use only permitted datasets; follow all applicable licenses and terms, including any restrictions on use with AI or machine learning tools. Participants are responsible for ensuring they have the right to use, upload, and process any datasets with AI systems used during the Hackathon.
- Do not include personal data without consent and necessity.
- No scraping or unauthorized access.

Prohibited Uses

- Harassment, discriminatory, or harmful content
- Misinformation or deceptive practices
- Plagiarism or IP violations
- Attempting to bypass platform safeguards or rate limits

Documentation

- Provide a short Evidence & Responsible AI Disclosure with your submission: sources, datasets, models, prompts/workflows, limitations, and human oversight.

Enforcement

- Violations may result in content removal, access revocation, disqualification, or bans from future events.