



# Member Event Guidelines

2022 Hackathon Season

**Last updated on:**  
*September 28th, 2021*



## A message from our CEO:

### Hello there!

We couldn't be more excited to hear that you're interested in organizing a hackathon as part of **MLH's Official Hackathon Season**.

Each year, our team has the privilege of partnering with passionate event organizers and community leaders (like yourself!) to put on world-class hackathons. **Together, we have empowered hundreds of thousands of hackers by creating opportunities for them to learn, build, and share their amazing creations.** Today, you're taking the first step toward joining us on changing the lives of countless hackers!

As an MLH Member Event hackathon, you and your team will have access to MLH's full suite of support and resources. We'll make planning your hackathon a breeze by providing mentorship with best practices, advising your team, and helping you create unforgettable experiences for hackers. We'll even be right there alongside you in-person or digitally during the weekend to make sure everything goes according to plan and that your hackathon is a huge success.

This document contains everything you need to know to partner with MLH: a step-by-step overview of the application process including what your team needs to do at each step of the process, prerequisites to qualify, the benefits MLH provides to you and your team, and what we expect from you.

If you have questions at any step along the way, please reach out to your personal Hackathon Community Manager by emailing [league@mlh.io](mailto:league@mlh.io). Thank you for everything you do and for being part of the MLH community. **We can't wait to see the positive impact your event will have on your hackers' lives and your local tech community.**

Happy hacking,

Swift

*CEO & Co-Founder*

*Major League Hacking (MLH)*

# Member Event Overview

*This section contains an overview of how to apply for Member Event status in the upcoming MLH Hackathon Season. Please read this section carefully before starting your application.*

## What is an MLH Member Event?

An **MLH Member Event** is a hackathon that Major League Hacking has verified as a high quality event by evaluating the event's progress in key areas such as sponsorship, marketing, logistics, and more.

Throughout the entire Member Event process, each event will be supported by a **Hackathon Community Managers** (HCMs) from MLH to help answer any questions, talk through challenges, and brainstorm new ideas.

## What are the types of MLH Member Events?

As different regions of the world slowly open up post COVID-19, this means hackathons may start to slowly transition from fully digital to hybrid hackathons with digital and in-person components. Below are the types of events that we're currently partnering with:

1. **Fully Digital Hackathon** - All aspects of the hackathon are online/digital.
2. **Fully Physical Hackathon** - All aspects of the hackathon are at a physical venue. Hackers from other schools are permitted to attend the hackathon in-person.
3. **Physical First Hybrid** - Majority of hackathon is physical (e.g. food, hacking spaces, etc.) with some digital components. Hackers from other schools are permitted to attend the hackathon in-person.
4. **Digital First Hybrid** - Majority of hackathon is digital (e.g. ceremonies, hacking spaces, events, etc.) with some physical components. Hackers from other schools are not permitted.

## Before you Apply.

1. **Read the “Membership Process Overview”.** Becoming a Member Event doesn't happen overnight. Due to the volume of applications we receive and information we need to review, this process takes at least a few weeks. Make sure you familiarize yourself with the process (noted on the next page) before you get going.
2. **Review the Prerequisites.** To ensure that we are able to use our resources to empower as many hackers and organizers as possible, we have created a list of requirements that you must meet to become a Member Event.
3. **Prepare your documents.** To ensure that you're on the right track to put on a great Member Event, you will need to submit supporting documents (*See Appendix 1*) during the application process.
4. **Set aside 45 minutes.** Find 45 minutes where you can sit down comfortably at a computer and fill out the application and submit your documents. This helps us maximize the time we do have together during your interview call by allowing us to focus on the areas where you need the most help.

# Application Process Overview

*Throughout this process, our team will be in touch regularly to collect any additional information we need for your application before you move on to the next stage.*



## Prerequisites

*To be considered for membership your event must meet the following requirements in addition to upholding the [Community Values](#).*

1. **Application Date.** We want to ensure all organizers have enough time to implement our guidance and achieve their fundraising and registration goals. To successfully support your hackathon, the event must submit an application to MLH at least four (4) months before the event.
2. **Event Date.** Your hackathon must take place during the current or upcoming academic year (August 2nd, 2021 - June 30, 2022).
3. **Free to Attend.** Member Events do not have entry fees, which makes them open and accessible to all participants, regardless of their financial situations.
4. **Primarily Students.** At least 80% of your hackathon's attendees must be students at the time of the hackathon or have left school within the current academic year.
5. **Level of Study.** Student attendees can be enrolled at any level of study at a traditional (middle school, high school, university, etc.), nontraditional (code bootcamp, home school, online, etc.) institution, or graduated in the past year.
6. **Hackathon Locations.** We are only able to currently support physical Member Events and their organizers that are based in the following regions:
  - a. **North America:** United States, Canada, and Mexico.
  - b. **Europe:** United Kingdom, the European Union, and select other European countries.
  - c. **Asia-Pacific:** India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and select countries in Southeast Asia, East Asia, and Australasia.
7. **Attendance.** We require Member Events to have a minimum number of attendees. To qualify to be a Member Event, you must be planning to have at least:
  - a. **United States:** 150+ attendees
  - b. **All Other Countries:** 100+ attendees
8. **Duration.** Member Events are 24 to 48 hours long and take place over a weekend (usually Friday to Sunday).
9. **Language.** We are only able to work with events that have an English-language website and make announcements during the event in English. If you live in a country where English is not the native language, we encourage you to make announcements and provide information in both languages.

- 10. Physical Event Requirements.** A physical event is an event with *any* in-person component, such as hardware, food distribution, or hacking spaces. If you are planning for an event with any physical component, we must see thorough plans for the following:
- a. Accessible Participation.** If an event contains both in-person and digital aspects, then all activities must be equally accessible by any hacker. This includes, but is not limited to, opening and closing ceremonies, workshops, mini-events, and judging.
  - b. Overnight Accommodations.** We require Member Events to leave their venues open overnight or provide alternate overnight accommodations for any off-campus attendees, as many hackers may travel long distances to attend hackathons.
  - c. Digital Backup Plans.** As the status of hosting large scale physical events may change frequently with COVID-19, we require all events to have plans for hosting a digital event in parallel. We want all event organizers to have plans to host a successful hackathon regardless of external influences.
  - d. COVID-19 Regulations.** With any large gatherings on a campus, like a hackathon, we want all attendees, organizers, and sponsors to remain safe. Organizers must comply with regulations set by their institution, local authorities, and national institutions. You must demonstrate clear plans for how you will observe these during the document review process.

## Benefits

*By partnering with MLH, you get access to all of the following benefits.*

Before your hackathon:

- 1. Dedicated Support & Mentorship.** Our team of HCMs supports hundreds of Member Events every year. We've helped organizers like you handle all sorts of problems and questions. As a Member Event, you'll be paired with a HCM who can answer any questions or talk through ideas/challenges via emails and calls.
- 2. Templates and Tutorials.** Over the years, we've created a library of templates and tutorials for all organizers to use while planning and hosting their event. We've recognized some pain points for organizers, such as organizing finances and judging, so we've created these templates including a budget, sponsor list, judging, and more.
- 3. Season Schedule Listing & Event Marketing Promotion.** We'll list your event on the official MLH Season schedule. Hundreds of thousands of hackers and sponsors visit this page every single year and use it to discover the events they want to participate in. We'll also promote your event to thousands of hackers and sponsors via social media and the MLH community communications, like the MLH hacker and events newsletters.

- 4. Preferred Vendors & Discounts.** Organizing a great hackathon can be expensive. To help you save time and money, we have vetted and partnered with amazing vendors that are offering exclusive discounts and priority access to Member Events. Whether it's catering, stickers, or swag, we've got you covered!

### During your hackathon:

- 1. Day-of Support.** A representative from MLH will join you and your team to support you during the hackathon as an extension of your organizing team. They're able to help you with anything you need, from making sure the event runs on-time to mentoring hackers to coordinating judging alongside the event's organizers to practicing the opening ceremony with you. They also have extensive experience resolving conflicts with hackers, sponsors, or even organizing teams.
  - a. In-Person Staff.** Representatives travel to events and therefore it will only be possible for MLH to provide a physical representative if travel is both permitted and deemed safe by authorities and the representative themselves. If travel is not possible, the representative will support organizers digitally.
- 2. Software Lab.** As an MLH Member Event, we offer software to everyone involved:
  - a. For Hackers:** Every hacker who participates in a Member Event gets access to discounts and freebies for the latest & greatest APIs and developer tools through the MLH Software Lab. This includes services like web hosting credit to free domain names and more.
  - b. For Organizers:** Every organizing team will have access to premium [Zoom](#) and [Streamyard](#) accounts for free during the week leading up to and the weekend of the hackathon. These tools will help elevate the hacker experience of each hackathon while reducing event costs.
- 3. MLH Emergency Budget.** On average, hackathons see about a 50% attrition rate between their signups during registration and the actual day-of check-ins. As a result, we encourage organizers to overbook for the hackathon up to 200%. However to help plan for the instance if more hackers show up than intended, we recommend all events to budget an additional cost of one meal as a buffer. If the following criteria listed below are satisfied on the day-of your event, then we'll cover the difference in costs (up to \$1,000) to make sure your event doesn't go over budget if:
  - a.** More hackers show up than your target attendance on the day-of your event
  - b.** All event funds have been exhausted, including but not limited to emergency budget, total sponsorship raised, and savings
  - c.** Purchasing extra resources will cause event finances to run into the negative and/or debt.



4. **MyMLH Support.** Member Events who utilize [MyMLH](#) for registration will receive priority support for setup and troubleshooting from our engineering team. MyMLH is an OAuth API that makes registering for hackathons a breeze for hackers by storing their information in a centralized MLH Database which allows them to easily share it with multiple events.
5. **Mini-Events.** Our MLH representative on-site will run a 1 hour mini-event during your hackathon (before 9pm) to provide a fun break from hacking and create a bonding experience for your attendees. Mini-events options may include Cupstacking, !Light, Painting with Bob Ross, Wikipedia Races, and more.
6. **Season and Sponsor Swag.** Your event will receive assorted swag including Season stickers, event specific "I Demoed" stickers, MLH Stickers, and select MLH sponsor swag. Events may also receive assorted swag from MLH Season sponsors such as pens and t-shirts. Swag availability may vary depending on supply.
7. **Judging Support.** We know that judging is one of the most stressful periods during a hackathon. We offer judging templates, resources, and tutorials for all Member Events to utilize. In addition, our MLH representative can assist you with running demos and judging during your event in a fair, standardized way. *You are still expected to recruit and coordinate the arrival of judges prior to the event.*
8. **Prizes.** All Member Events are provided with special prizes to hand out to hackers such as medals for winners and select [MLH category prizes](#) (such as "Best Domain.com Domain Name" or "Best Use of Google Cloud Platform"). *MLH will confirm the final prize list with your event before your event weekend.*

## After your hackathon:

1. **Surveys.** Anyone who participates in your Member Event will receive a post-event survey about their experience. We'll share this data with you, show you how you compare to other Member Events, and identify some areas of improvement for your next event.
2. **Scoring.** Hackers who participate in Member Events are earning points for their school in the MLH Season rankings. At the end of every Season, hackers can see how their schools performed against other schools and be in the running to win the MLH Season trophy to take back to their hacker club.
3. **Swag Fulfillment and Shipping.** As an MLH Member Event, any event with digital attendees can opt-in to utilizing MLH's fulfillment and shipping resources to send hackers swag. MLH offers hacker fulfillment and shipping logistics "at cost" to any event which means there's no mark up for these services. Additionally, through this benefit, events will have access to MLH's discounted bulk shipping rates on domestic and international packages. We also discount organizers a fixed cost per digital hacker to account for MLH's standard costs. For more information, [check out our guide](#). *Applicable to digital attendees only.*

4. **Project cheating resolution.** If there are project(s) suspected of cheating submitted to your hackathon, the MLH team will follow our [Cheating Response Procedure](#) to investigate the project(s). We will investigate the project and make a recommendation, but the event organizers will make the final decision.

## Requirements

*MLH was built by passionate community members. To ensure that Member Events are as high quality as the hackathons we fell in love with, organizers must meet the following requirements:*

### Onboarding:

1. **Read and sign the Member Event agreement.** All Member Event lead organizers are expected to read and sign the following documents to ensure that everyone is on the same page:
  - a. **[Member Event Guidelines](#)** - This document outlines the things that we need you to do before, during, and after your hackathon and the things we're doing for you as well.
  - b. **[Community Values](#)** - This document presents a set of principles shared by every Member Event that serve as examples of excellence to your attendees and sponsors, as well as other hackathons and communities. All Member Events are expected to uphold these Community Values.
  - c. **[Code of Conduct](#)** - This document contains the guidelines for expected behavior of all attendees (including volunteers, mentors, sponsors, organizers, judges, etc.) at MLH events. Having a single code of conduct that is used by every hackathon helps us ensure that MLH events are safe and inclusive spaces for everyone and that expectations for behavior and incident response remain consistent for people who attend multiple MLH events. As an organizer of a Member Event, you are expected to adopt, make publicly available, and enforce the MLH Code of Conduct. If an incident is reported, organizers must immediately involve the onsite MLH Representative or MLH Incidents Team who will work with you to follow our official [incident response procedure](#).
2. **Project Submission Platform.** MLH brings prizes to all of our Member Events on behalf of the sponsors that support us. The project submission platform used during any hackathon must be able to add custom prizes and allow hackers to opt-in to submitting any prize category.

3. **Attendee Registration Platform.** An event's registration portal is one of the first points of contact for a lot of hackers. Consistency is key for the hacker experience of new and returning hackers. Because of this, we require all MLH Member Events to have a consistent registration platform with the following features:
  - a. **Hacker communication.** As hackers register for your event, it's important to communicate any updates or changes to the event via email. The chosen registration platform must allow the event organizers to contact all hackers through their platform or via export to other platforms.
  - b. **Control hacker data.** All hackers should expect their data to be protected and only accessed by those given permission. The platform must enable organizers to request and receive this permission on behalf of themselves and/or partners.
  - c. **Add customizable opt-in questions.** We require all hackers who attend a Member Event to agree to the MLH Code of Conduct and optionally MLH Data Sharing and Terms & Conditions. The platform must allow organizers to add in questions that enable organizers to collect opt-in information. For more information on the policies, see Registration Form (#4) listed below.
4. **Registration Form.** We require Member Events to update their registration form to include a set of basic fields and checkboxes. This ensures that we know who is attending Member Events and that attendees know what they are agreeing to. *We do not collect, utilize, or share any personal information without an attendee opt-in.*
  - a. **Required Contact Info.** Your registration form MUST ask for: *first name, last name, age, email, school, phone number, country, and current level of study.*
  - b. **Optional Demographic Info.** We also encourage you to also ask for: *gender, race/ethnicity, major, and expected graduation year.*
  - c. **MLH Code of Conduct, Data Sharing, and Terms & Conditions Checkbox.** Add checkboxes for each of the following into your registration form:
    - i. *MLH Code of Conduct: "I have read and agree to the [MLH Code of Conduct](#)."*
    - ii. *Event Logistics Information: "I authorize you to share my application/registration information with Major League Hacking for event administration, ranking, and MLH administration in-line with the [MLH Privacy Policy](#). I further agree to the terms of both the [MLH Contest Terms and Conditions](#) and the [MLH Privacy Policy](#)."*
    - iii. *Communication from MLH: "I authorize MLH to send me pre- and post-event informational emails, which contain free credit and opportunities from their partners."*
5. **MLH Website Branding.** On your hackathon's website, you must display the MLH Season Trust Badge in the header and the MLH logo under your partners section. Hackers and sponsors see the presence of these logos and know that you have achieved the level of quality guaranteed by being a Member Event. You can find these assets on our official [Brand Guidelines](#).

6. **Brand License.** We will include your event on the official season schedule and promote it to our community, but we need your permission to do so. By signing this agreement, you grant MLH an indefinite license to use your event name, branding, and materials to market your event and the season of Member Events. Additionally, we grant Member Events a non-exclusive license to use the MLH name and brand in conjunction with the event. MLH reserves the right to terminate the organizer's license at any time at our absolute discretion.
7. **Content Agreement.** We love posting photos and videos of Member Events on our website and social media, but we can't do that without your permission. By signing this agreement, you grant MLH permission to record and publish photos and video of the event and the right to produce commercial video content (this does not include TV news or sponsor/event recaps).
8. **Property Care Agreement.** Member Events recognize that any MLH property they borrow (hardware, signage, mini-event supplies, etc.) will be used by other Member Events during the year. If any supplies are lost, damaged, or late, other events will be unable to utilize them. You agree to see that, to the best of your ability, all MLH property is cared for and returned on time by your hackers, organizers, sponsors, and volunteers.

## Before your hackathon:

1. **Event Details.** In order to send our staff and resources to your hackathon, we need you to submit the following information at least two (2) months before the event:
  - a. Event start and end times
  - b. If a physical hackathon:
    - i. Venue Address
    - ii. Package Shipping Address and point of contact (full name, email, address, and phone number)
    - iii. Loading Dock Address & Hours and point of contact (full name, email, address and phone number)
2. **Pre-Event Call.** Attend a call with your MLH Representative about two (2) weeks before the event. We'll use this time to review your final schedule, preview plans for demos and judging, and work through any other issues you are facing. We will also let you know what shipments and packages to expect from us, if any.
3. **Prize List.** Update your list of prizes to include any MLH categories (full list provided by your HCM) and add "MLH Winner Pins, MLH Season Tees, and MLH Fellowship express interviews" to the list of prizes that your top team's receive. We partner with both Devpost and Hacker Earth to make this easier. As a result, by becoming a Member Event, your hackathon page may automatically include MLH branding, prizes, and/or allow us direct access.

- 4. Registration Data.** Submit all registration data to your Hackathon Community Manager no later than one (1) week prior to your event's start date. We use this data to 1) ensure that no repeat violators of the Code of Conduct are attending the event, 2) send attendees a pre-event email with info about the resources MLH is bringing to the event for them to use and 3) send an email asking them to opt-in to the MLH newsletter for future info about hackathons and the League. *If there are Code of Conduct issues with any attendees prior to the event, we will contact you with a resolution.*

### During your hackathon:

- 1. Opening Ceremony.** Reserve 5 minutes for your MLH representative to speak (with slides) during the opening ceremony and share any resources/swag available for your hackers to use during the hackathon.
- 2. Closing Ceremony.** Reserve 5 minutes during your closing ceremony for your MLH representative to make a few remarks on behalf of MLH and award prizes to the teams that won any MLH category prizes. As the overall winners of the event are announced, your MLH representative will help you distribute finalist pins to each of the teams and take photos of each winning team.
- 3. Mini-Event.** Reserve a 1-hour block in your schedule (before 9pm) for your MLH representative to run a fun mini-event for attendees. Mini-events are a great way for participants to take a break and network with each other.
  - a. Required mini-events.** At EU Member Events, we'll run a Blackrock Coding Challenge. At US Member Events, we'll run a US Airforce Capture the Flag event. All events are subject to change.
- 4. Hacker check-ins.** Collecting check-in information from all hackers will allow organizers to get accurate attendance numbers. This will help all event organizers better predict workshop attendance, project submissions, and utilise this information for the following hackathon iteration. Additionally, if your hackathon is hybrid, it must have separate check-in processes for physical and digital hackers.
  - a.** MLH will send out a form to all attendees to opt-in to receiving physical MLH swag in the mail during the check-in process.
- 5. MLH Table.** Reserve a table (*4x6 feet or 1.2x1.8 meters minimum*) for your MLH representative to engage with attendees and distribute swag/credits (stickers, website domains, hosting credit, t-shirts, etc). *Applicable to Fully Physical/Physical First Hybrid events only.*
- 6. Signage.** Display MLH Season and informational signage in key areas during the event. Much like displaying the Trust Badge on your website, having MLH signage on-site during the event signals your commitment to hosting a high quality event and makes your attendees feel like they are part of a larger movement. *Applicable to Fully Physical/Physical First Hybrid events only.*

- 7. Check-in swag.** Allow your MLH representative to distribute MLH swag and promotional items at the attendee check-in area. Distributing these at check-in creates a great first impression and ensures that everyone gets some. *Applicable to Fully Physical/Physical First Hybrid events only.*

### After your hackathon:

- 1. Check-in & Submission Data.** Submit all check-in and submissions data to your HCM on the last day of your hackathon. We use this data to calculate Season rankings and to send attendees a post event survey to collect their feedback. For specific fields for both data:
  - a. Check-in data field requirements:** hackers' first name, last name, age, email, school name, phone number, country, and current level of study.
  - b. Submission data field requirements:** project title, the team members (names, emails, college name), the URL to discover their project page, a project description, and any prizes that project applied for and/or won.
- 2. Post-Event Call.** Attend an optional call with your assigned MLH Community Manager about three weeks after the event. We'll use this time to run a short retrospective on working together, provide feedback, and start planning for future events!

---

*Major League Hacking reserves the right to revise, make exceptions to, or otherwise amend these policies in whole or in part. If you have any questions regarding these policies, please email us at [league@mlh.io](mailto:league@mlh.io).*

## Appendix 1

### Required Documents Overview

We couldn't be more excited to hear that you're interested in organizing a hackathon as part of **MLH's Official Hackathon Season**. Hackathon organizers should prepare the following supporting documents to submit with their initial application. These are key documents to help you get on the right track to put on a great event.

#### Here's what you'll need:



*(Fully physical/Hybrid events only)* **Venue Confirmation** - Documentation that shows the reservation / facilities booking for the event along with the start and end times, dates (including overnight acknowledgement), and the venue location.

- [Here's a template you can use!](#)
- Be prepared to submit written regulations and authorizations for each of the following: (1) your country's stance on large gatherings, (2) university's stance for each in-person component, and (3) local and/or venue stance.



**Itemized Event Budget** - Your budget should take into account the estimated vs. actual cost of all meals per attendee, swag, venue fees, or other costs your team anticipates to incur. Please reference [our guide](#) and [budget template](#) for more information on budgeting.

- [Example of 200 person](#) event
- [Example of 500 person](#) event



**Sponsorship packet/prospectus** - A document designed for your potential sponsors to learn about your event and evaluate whether to support you. Keep in mind that the prices of your tiers should be established relative to your event cost.

- Check out past [sponsorship packets](#)



**Potential Sponsors List** - We've discovered that sponsorship funding is all about increasing your initial pool of sponsor outreach. So we can help advise on sponsorship best practices, we're requiring all events to submit a list of all companies your team either has reached out to already, or plan to contact regarding sponsorship.

- [Example template](#)