IRON Cal
INSPIRATION ROBOTICS
OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

RECF ENGAGE · 2026-2027 SEASON

EVENT VOLUNTEER GUIDE

Thank you for volunteering at our RECF Engage robotics event. Engage events are the elementary and middle school level of Robotics Education and Competition Foundation (RECF) competition, and they run on volunteers. Most roles need no technical background, just a positive attitude and a willingness to help students have a great day.

Only two roles require an RECF certification: Head Referee and Judge Advisor. Every other role is trained on site. Not sure which role fits you? Read the roles on pages 2 and 3, then choose one when you register.

START HERE

1. Sign up at https://www.ironcal.org/event: open the event, click Register, and choose a role or shift. Details on page 2.
2. Take our free online training, RECF Engage Volunteer Training. Scan the code or go to https://www.ironcal.org/slides.
3. Head Referee or Judge Advisor? Finish this season's RECF certification at training.recf.org before event day.

Free online training

VOL-100 · about 25 minutes

BEFORE THE EVENT

Please do these things in the week before the event:

1. Read the RECF guide for your role at RECF Library, Volunteers.
2. Finish any required certification (Head Referee or Judge Advisor) before event day. Certifications are tied to the current season.
3. Take the optional training for your role if one is listed on page 3.
4. Watch a few matches of this season's game on YouTube so the action makes sense.
5. Check the minimum age for your role. Volunteers under 18 must have an adult (18 or older) on site who is responsible for them in case of emergency. This can be a parent, guardian, or coach, or an IRON Cal event lead we assign when you check in. We'll ask for their name when you sign up.

WORKING WITH KIDS

You will be working with children, so keep it positive and encouraging. Kneel down to talk at their level, speak firmly but kindly, and never touch or grab a student.

Judges and Judge Advisors may not be part of a team competing at the event. Anyone with a conflict of interest should tell the event organizer ahead of time.

VOLUNTEER ROLES

Roles are grouped by how much experience they need. Minimum ages are for RECF Engage events. Source: Volunteer Roles Available at RECF Competitions.

Key roles (certification required)

ROLE	WHAT YOU DO	ACTIVITY	MINIMUM AGE
Head Referee	Lead and train the scorekeeper referees. Enforce the game rules consistently, score each match, and make the final call on disputes and inspection questions.	High, on your feet all day	16
Judge Advisor	Train and guide the judges as they interview teams, review notebooks, and watch matches. Run the awards deliberation and step in as a judge if needed. Prior judging experience strongly recommended.	Moderate	21, not on a competing team

Experienced or detail-oriented roles

ROLE	WHAT YOU DO	ACTIVITY	MINIMUM AGE
Judge	Interview teams, review engineering notebooks, and watch on-field performance to decide judged awards. Prior judging helps but is not required.	Moderate	18, not on a competing team (16 to 17 if paired with a judge 18 or older)
Scorekeeper Referee	Record match scores on a tablet or paper, confirm them with the drivers after each match, flag possible rule issues to the Head Referee, and make sure the field is reset. New volunteers can be trained quickly.	High	15
Inspector	Check robots against the size and parts rules using a provided checklist. Knowing VEX parts helps but is not required.	Moderate	None listed
Emcee	Call the action during matches, explain the program between matches, and keep energy high in the room. Experience preferred.	High	None listed

HOW TO SIGN UP

1. Go to https://www.ironcal.org/event and open your event.
2. Click Register, then choose a role or shift in the window that opens. Each option shows its times and what the role involves.
3. Answer the sign-up questions. Register one person per registration, so each volunteer gets their own confirmation and reminders.

League sessions are separate events, so register for each date. Volunteered with us before? Sign in first at https://www.ironcal.org/web/login.

VOLUNTEER ROLES (CONTINUED)

Great first roles (no experience needed)

ROLE	WHAT YOU DO	ACTIVITY	MINIMUM AGE
Field Reset	Put game pieces back in their starting spots after each match using the field diagram. Energetic students and younger kids do well here.	High	None listed
Queuing	Line up teams for their upcoming matches and keep the schedule moving.	High	None listed
Team Check-in	Greet teams, verify registration, hand out materials, and collect notebooks.	Moderate	None listed
Volunteer Check-in	Greet volunteers and guests, confirm assignments, and send people where they need to go.	Moderate	None listed
Practice Field Official	Keep practice fields orderly so every team gets fair practice time.	Moderate	None listed
Pit Admin Assistant	Answer team and guest questions about the event and venue.	Low, mostly sitting	None listed

We may also ask for help with setup the night before and teardown at the end of the day. No experience needed for either.

EVENT DAY

Plan to arrive at least 30 minutes before your shift for on-site training. Sign in at Volunteer Check-in, and you will be sent to your area.

What to wear and bring

- Comfortable closed-toe shoes (many roles are on their feet all day)
- A plain polo or t-shirt with jeans or slacks. Skip team shirts so you stay neutral.
- A water bottle
- Safety glasses if you will be near the fields or practice area

Food, flexibility, and hours

We provide water, snacks, and lunch for full-day volunteers.

Be flexible: if your area is quiet, we may ask you to help another team of volunteers.

Need a community service certificate for school or work? Tell Volunteer Check-in and we will track your hours.

CERTIFICATIONS AND TRAININGS

All RECF courses are free, self-paced, and taken at training.recf.org. Pick the course for this season's RECF Engage game. RECF is still adding 2026-2027 courses, so check back if yours is not posted yet.

ROLE	REQUIREMENT	COURSE	HOW OFTEN
Head Referee	Required	Head Referee Certification Course, plus this season's referee training videos	Every season
Judge Advisor	Required	Judge Advisor Certification Course	Every season
Judge	Strongly encouraged	Judge Training Course	Each season recommended
Scorekeeper Referee	Recommended	Scorekeeper Referee Training Course	Each season recommended
All other roles	None	Read your role guide in the RECF volunteer library	Before each event

Helpful links

- RECF Volunteer Certifications: overview of every course
- How to use training.recf.org: creating an account and finding courses
- Judging Roles in the RECF Guide to Judging: judge and Judge Advisor requirements
- Questions about a certification: volunteercerts@recf.org
- General RECF volunteer questions: volunteers@roboticseducation.org

SEE SOMETHING WRONG?

If anyone is in immediate danger, call 911 first. Then tell the Event Partner or an event lead right away. Don't investigate or confront anyone yourself. IRON Cal's Incident Report and Youth Safety Concern Report forms are at Volunteer Check-in.

EVENT CONTACTS

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