

# The 2025–2026 REC Foundation Online Challenge Series

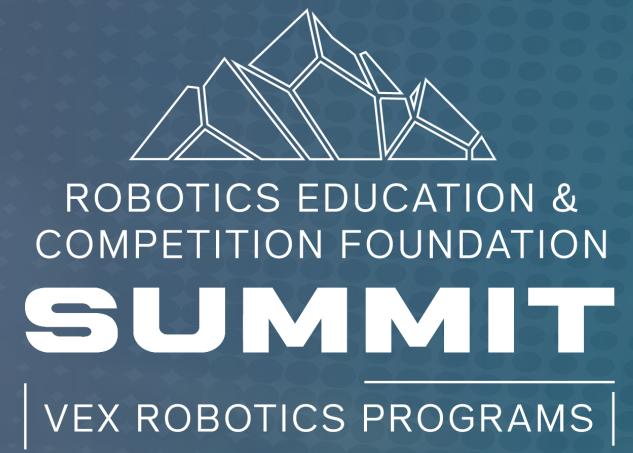
Presented by:

**Leslie Cruse**

Senior Regional Support  
Manager South

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Regional Support  
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# Welcome

The Online Challenges give students an exciting opportunity to explore areas beyond the field—like workforce development, game design, storytelling, and more. It's a great way to showcase different strengths and passions while staying connected to the world of robotics.



**ONLINE**  
CHALLENGES

EXPANDING

# Student Engagement

We're thrilled to roll out something that not only keeps students engaged year-round but also helps them discover new interests and talents beyond just building a robot



## 3 Distinct Cycles

More chances to compete and create new ideas.

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## New Themes and Prizes

Fresh ways to motivate students.

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## Beyond the Robot

Develop storytelling skills, coding, leadership and more.

**ONLINE**  
CHALLENGES



Our county's public school robotics teams have also begun to see more funding. Team 97987A, one of our county's public school teams from Heritage High School, even won the Judges Award at a recent tournament for their resilience in continuing their school's STEM programs. Seeing the students in our county finally receive equitable access to STEM education is truly the ultimate victory for our team. By involving our local government, STEM education programs are thriving in Loudoun County, and we are just getting started. Our team has managed to connect with employees of many STEM companies to help us continue our outreach. We hope that through our continued efforts, we can reach all of the 80,000 students in our county. We can't wait for what the future holds.



Team 71999A after winning the Excellence and Robot Skills Champion & Robot Skills tournament



ONLINE CHALLENGES

## Soft Skills

Think of Online Challenges as a playground for soft skills—where students learn to tell their story, pitch ideas, and explore new parts of themselves.

girl powered.

Presented by 8838A:  
Amelia Kim, Elizabeth Kim, Erin Suh, Frances Miller, Heather Kim, and Jamie Tran  
Irvine, California

- Inclusive of all ages and team types
- Flexible formats: PDFs, videos, and more
- Built for student-led teams
- Reinforces skills beyond the field (marketing, storytelling, advocacy)



BUILDING

# Future Ready Skills

*These challenges don't just check a box—they build a resume.* These are not just technical competitions—they're powerful tools for developing the soft skills that matter most in school, work, and life.

According to the World Economic Forum, the top skills needed in the future include:

- **Critical Thinking**
- **Creativity**
- **People Management**
- **Emotional Intelligence**



The background image shows a group of students in a workshop or classroom setting. In the foreground, a student wearing a white cowboy hat holds a VEX robot built from a LEGO Technic chassis. The robot has a black motor and various sensors. Other students are visible in the background, some looking at the robot. The image has a blue and purple color overlay.

# ONLINE CHALLENGES NEW THIS SEASON





### Bigger & Better Prizes

World Championship  
qualification in Cycle 3

- VEX gift cards
- Trophies
- Event registration prizes

### Real-World Connections

Sponsor-involved  
challenges that reflect  
current industry needs

- Safety in the Workplace
- Community Involvement

*Each cycle is designed with intention—so whether your students are creatives, coders, builders, or changemakers, there's a challenge just for them.*

**ONLINE**  
CHALLENGES

REBRANDED INTO 3 CYCLES

# New This Season

1

## Cycle 1 Ignite

Spark creativity

2

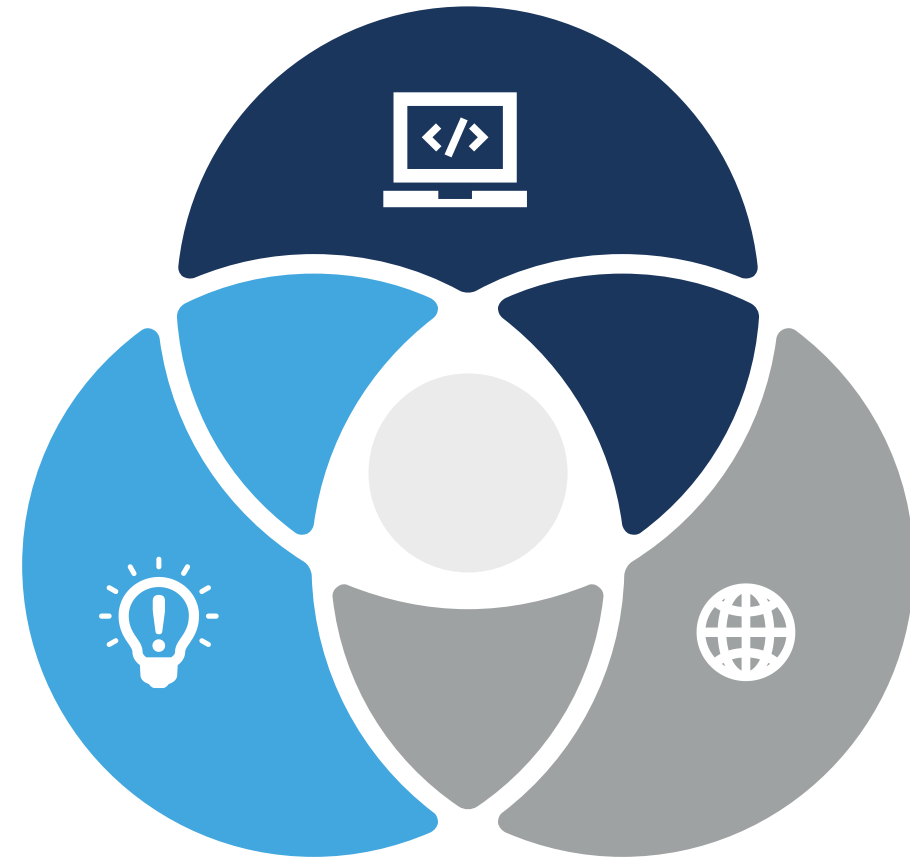
## Cycle 2 Innovate

Deepen technical skills

3

## Cycle 3 Impact

Highlight real-world change





## Cycle 1 – Ignite

Students get to showcase their personalities. It's a celebration of creativity—and a perfect entry point for students who are new or unsure about where they fit in.



# Cycle 1 Ignite

Creativity, Leadership & Team Identity



## Prizes

- Gift cards
- Certificates
- Trophies

## Sample Challenges:

- Game Design with upcycled materials
- Poster Marketing Challenge
- Meme My Team: Expectations vs. Reality
- Innovate to Elevate: Trophy Design

**ONLINE**  
CHALLENGES



## Cycle 2 – Innovate

Students who think in gears, lines of code, or frames of animation. It's where the technical minds can really shine.



# Cycle 2 Innovate

Technical skills and Design thinking



## Prizes

- VEX Robotics gift cards
- Trophies
- Spotlight Articles

## Sample Challenges:

- CAD Game Element Design
- Virtual Skills Challenge (VEXcode VR)
- Robot Remix Music Video
- Girl Powered Challenge

**ONLINE**  
CHALLENGES



## **Cycle 3 Impact**

Robotics meets the real world. Cycle 3 is for students who want to make an impact—on their school, their community, or even the world.

These challenges encourage students to reflect, advocate, and document the powerful journey they're on.

# Cycle 3 Impact

Community, Advocacy and Real-world skills



## Prizes

- Registration vouchers
- VEX Robotics gift cards
- VEX Robotics World Championship qualifying spot

## Sample Challenges:

- Community Challenge (Google Sponsored)
- Build Instruction Guide
- STEM Advocacy Video
- From Day One to Done (Story of the Season)

**ONLINE**  
CHALLENGES



# How Coaches Can Use These

## Great for New & Returning Teams

- Engages new students early in the season
- Keeps experienced teams active between events

## Program-Wide Benefits

- Showcases your program to admins, sponsors, and community leaders
- Encourages documentation, student ownership, and creative thinking



*Try a “Challenge Friday” during practice to explore submissions. You might be surprised which students step up when the robot isn’t the focus.*

# Redefining Participation in Robotics

**Not just for the “extra” kids.**

Online Challenges are a core part of a balanced robotics experience—building **confidence**, **creativity**, and **leadership** in ways the field can’t always reach.

**Why They Matter:**

- Give every student a voice
- Create low-barrier entry points for new members
- Help students discover and grow their unique strengths
- No driver’s station or power tools required

Common

# Misunderstandings



**“Do I need a fancy video setup?”**

(No, phone video is fine!)



**“Can younger students participate?”**

(Yes, all levels!)



**“Are winners only chosen from high school?”**

(No! Equal chances for all levels.)







# Prizes and Recognition

*Online Challenges are a fun way to get recognized for your creativity, hard work, and big ideas—plus, prizes are awarded and may change depending on our sponsors.*

## VEX EQUIPMENT

Winners can earn VEX Robotics Parts, Gift Certificates and Field and Game Elements

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## TROPHIES & DIGITAL CERTIFICATES

Winners can earn trophies and digital certificates to celebrate their hard work and creativity.

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## TEAM OR EVENT REGISTRATION PRIZES

Winners can earn team or event registration prizes that can be used now or in the future.

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## VEX ROBOTICS WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

Some Cycle 3 winners may earn spots to the VEX Robotics World Championship—but only if their entry meets the minimum rubric score. Even if a team doesn't qualify for Worlds, they can still win other awesome prizes!



**Every student can  
contribute**

**Every team has a story  
worth sharing**

**Challenges reflect the heart of  
student-centered robotics**

Why do they matter?

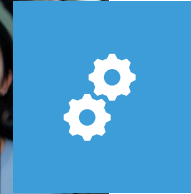
# **Importance of Online Challenges**

We want your input!

# Upcoming Challenges

What types of challenges would your students love?

What topics or formats do you wish we'd offer?



## New Challenge Ideas

**New topics**

**Creative formats (video, CAD, storytelling, etc.)**

**Real-world themes or industries to explore**

**Student feedback and suggestions**



# Contact

## We are here for you

Event Partners and Coaches are the core of our Programs here at the REC Foundation. Please reach out to us with any questions or concerns. Thank you for all of your support.

### Address

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### Phone & Email

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[support@recf.org](mailto:support@recf.org)

### Resources



ROBOTICS EDUCATION &  
COMPETITION FOUNDATION

# SUMMIT

VEX ROBOTICS PROGRAMS