



2025-2026 Team Coordinator Guide



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Welcome!

This guide is to assist you as a Team Coordinator for the 2025–2026 You Be The Solution Challenge. Your leadership plays a vital role in helping students prepare for Regional Challenges and create their innovative videos, all while competing for scholarships, exploring the exciting world of STEM, and, most importantly, having FUN!

“This is such an incredible competition—gives [students] the opportunity to think about the real-world problems and how they can make a difference [through STEM].”

- Passionate Team Coordinator

Please note that the Team Coordinator Guide is meant to complement and not replace other resources and documents provided by CEF (ex. the Rules and Guidelines, etc.). We strongly encourage Team Coordinators to review all available materials to stay fully informed and ensure nothing important is missed.

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Challenge Structure

What is the Challenge?

Teams of 3-4 students (grades 5-8) participate in a Regional Challenge where they answer timed science-based questions. Teams simultaneously create a video to launch a start-up company aimed at solving sustainability issues and finding community-based solutions.

Regional Challenge and video scores are combined to determine State Winners. The top 5 state winning teams advance to the National Challenge, present their innovative solution and compete for scholarships.

When?

October-December

Challenge Registration

January-March

Regional Challenge events

March

Video Submission

June

National Challenge

Who is involved?

CEF Team	Provides support, resources, training, and communication throughout the Challenge
Challenge Organizers	Organize and host local Regional Challenge events
Team Coordinators	Lead and support students throughout the Challenge journey
Teams/Participants	Teams of 3-4 students from grades 5-8

Where?

In-person Regional Challenges events take place across the US and Canada.

Virtual Regional Challenge is for those without a nearby in-person event.

Communication And Trainings

Communication with CEF:

CEF is committed to guiding you throughout the Challenge cycle with consistent communication, helpful resources, and personalized support:

Weekly Communications

Delivered through:

- **Brevo** (our email marketing platform)
- **Outlook** (direct communications)

Training & Support

- Training sessions throughout October-December
- Virtual office hours in February-March to answer questions about video submission

Communication with Challenge Organizer:

When to contact?

- For event-day questions or for team updates the week of your Challenge (their email can be found under “Challenge Locations” on our website).
- Please keep emails concise, and infrequent to respect their volunteer time.

If you have any questions or concerns at any time, please contact us at: Challenge@CEFinSTEM.org.

Resources Provided By CEF

Resources for Team Coordinators:

A page dedicated specifically to Team Coordinators on our website:

Programs > The Challenge > **Team Coordinators**

This page includes:

- All necessary **forms, links, and documents** for your role
- An **archive of all email communications** in case you miss an update

In-person Challenge Locations

You can view all in-person Challenge locations on our website:

Programs > The Challenge > **Challenge Locations**

This page includes:

- Date, time and location
- Challenge Organizer contact information

Resources for Students:

A page dedicated for students (accessible to parents and guardians):

Programs > The Challenge > **Student Resources**

This page includes:

- **All materials** specifically for students
 - Note: It is **not as comprehensive** as the Team Coordinator page

FAQs Page:

Our FAQs page is a great place to find quick answers to common questions:

Programs > The Challenge > **FAQ**

- We highly recommend Team Coordinators review this page first
- It is often the fastest way to get your questions answered
- Still need help? Feel free to email us!

Challenge Timeline

October 1

All forms opened, and resources released

CEF releases all forms and resources required for the Challenge cycle (unless specified otherwise).

Forms:

- **Challenge Registration** → To get started, you will need to create an account on **Submittable**, our official submission platform.
 - [Ensure you get notifications from Submittable](#)
 - [View your submissions on Submittable](#)
 - **Regional Challenge Preparation:**
 - Utilize the **SPARK Kit** (password given after registration).
 - **Administer the SPARK Quiz** as a practice Regional Challenge, either using the slide deck or by administering the paper quiz.
- **Team Submission** → This where you will complete information about your teams.
 - Team submission deadline is **January 14**, but we strongly encourage you to submit it as early as possible.
- **Video Submission** → encourage students to start preparing for both the Regional Challenge and video submission
 - Video submission deadline is **March 20**, but students can start on their video right away

January 14

Team Submission deadline

Ensure you meet this deadline (earlier the better as mentioned previously).

January 17-March 2

In-person Regional Challenges

Format:

- There will be **four rounds**, with **10 questions per round**, for a total of **40 questions**.
- **Timing:**
 - Teams will have **30 to 45 seconds per question**, depending on the difficulty level.
 - During this time, teams can discuss and write their answers on the provided answer card.

March 4 and 7

Virtual Challenge

If you do not have an in-person Regional Challenge nearby, we offer the option to participate **virtually**. A few days before the event, CEF will email the access link and key preparation details.

Dates and Times (Eastern Time Zone):

- **Wednesday, March 4:** 3:00 – 5:00 PM
- **Saturday, March 7:** 1:00 – 3:00 PM

March 20

Video Submission

- All teams can submit a video even if they don't place at a Regional Challenge
- All team videos are due by this date
- All submissions must be made via Submittable

Video Content Guidelines

Focus Areas:

- **Careers Integration:** Include at least 3 careers related to the solution with varied education levels (e.g., trade/certification and degree). Integrate job roles into the solution, not as standalone descriptions.
- **Sustainability & Future Choices:** Address at least one [UN Sustainable Development Goal \(SDG\)](#).
Possible themes:
 - Green tech & renewable energy
 - Consumer products/services
 - Workforce shortages & production issues
 - Raw material demand
 - Single-use plastic reduction
 - Social justice, inclusion, and diversity
 - Environmental regulations
 - Emerging tech (AI, data, cybersecurity, VR/AR in STEM)

Encourage a community-focused approach and tie solutions to Health Sciences and the fundamental scientific principles presented in the study guide.

Example Videos

- [Previous Winners](#)
- BASF – [Defoamers](#)
- Tide – [HE Turbo Clean](#)

Research & Citation:

Use Storyboard resource banks for problem, industry, and career ideas. Students must cite sources using tools like:

- Science Buddies
- Grammarly APA Citation Generator
- Google Docs or Microsoft Word bibliography guides

Video Creation & Submission:

- Use the CEF storyboard template and review the video rubric. Sample videos are provided for inspiration (not quality benchmarks).
- Video editing tools: [CapCut](#), [WeVideo](#), [Canva](#), [iMovie](#)
 - Format: MP4 (≤1GB)
 - Include: PDF of storyboard, Team ID, correct spelling of all names
- As the **Team Coordinator**, you have two options for submitting:
 - **Submit on behalf of your teams**
 - If you have multiple teams, you must submit **each team's video separately**.
 - **Have teams submit their own videos**
 - Each team can submit their own video and forward the **submission confirmation email** to you for your records.
 - Be sure to **share the Video Submission link** with your teams if they are submitting independently.

Late April/Early May

State Winners and National Finalists

CEF will announce:

- **State Winners** from each participating state
- The **Top 5 State Winning Teams become the 5 National Finalist Teams** who will advance to the National Challenge in Houston, TX in June and compete for scholarships

May

Challenge Feedback

CEF provides Regional Challenge, Video Submission and the Overall Score as percentiles for all teams with feedback.

Team Coordinator Survey + Debrief

Your role as a Team Coordinator is essential, and we sincerely value the time, energy, and dedication you bring to supporting your students.

To help us enhance the Challenge experience, we invite you to participate in two end-of-cycle feedback opportunities:

1. **Survey**
At the end of the Challenge cycle, you will receive a short survey to share your thoughts, suggestions, and overall experience.
2. **Team Coordinator Debrief**
Join our virtual debrief session to:
 - Reflect on your Challenge experience
 - Share insights and feedback
 - Connect with fellow Team Coordinators

June

National Challenge

CEF's National Challenge festivities begin in June.

Challenge Calendar

Oct 2025						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

Nov 2025						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

Dec 2025						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

Jan 2026						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Feb 2026						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

Mar 2026						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Apr 2026						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

May 2026						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

Jun 2026						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

**Deadlines**
Oct 1-Dec 19-Registration
Jan 14-Team Submission
Mar 20-Video Submission
Apr 24-Announce St Winners

**Virtual Challenge**
March 4 & 7

**National Challenge**
June 2-3

**In-Person Regional Challenge**
Jan 17-March 2

**Holiday's**
Oct 13-Columbus Day
Nov 11-Veteran's Day
Nov 27-Thanksgiving
Dec 25-Christmas
Jan 1-New Year's Day
Jan 19-MLK Day
Feb 16-President's Day
April 5-Easter
May 25-Memorial Day

For easy access to all referenced forms and resources, please visit the **Team Coordinator** page on our website. You can find more details about this page in the **“Resources Provided by CEF”** section of this guide.



Thank You!

CEF extends our heartfelt gratitude to all Team Coordinators for your time, dedication, and unwavering commitment to the Challenge. Whether you are a passionate educator, an inspiring parent, or a devoted mentor, your support is what empowers students to explore and thrive in the world of STEM through the Challenge. Together we are Creating Exciting Futures in STEM!

“Throughout this journey, I’ve grown immensely as an educator, a leader, and above all, as a learner. I’ve learned to persevere and adapt to each students’ personal needs; to prepare them not only for the hard core [science] but also for the soft skills needed to be a successful entrepreneur; and finally, to emphasize the importance of giving back.”

- Passionate Team Coordinator