

Calling All Creatives, Technologists, and Change-Makers!

Social Impact BuildFest is a weekend-long event where students team up to prototype immersive tech experiences that tackle real-world challenges. With guidance from technical mentors and Social Impact Experts, you will learn how to design experiences that are thoughtful, responsible, and genuinely useful.

BuildFest is a supportive environment. It is not about being the best coder in the room. It is about curiosity, collaboration, and building something meaningful.

The top team will be invited to showcase their project at the Student Lab at the 2026 Infinity Festival in Los Angeles, an event bringing together entertainment, technology, and innovation. Students will have the chance to present their work, connect with industry professionals, and gain valuable exposure. Additional prizes will also be awarded to outstanding teams as well!

2026-27 THEME: (UN)SEEN

What stories, systems, people, places, or possibilities are hiding in plain sight? (UN)SEEN invites students to reveal what is overlooked, hidden, misunderstood or difficult to perceive and use immersive media to help audiences encounter it in a new way.

The theme is intentionally open: teams may explore climate, accessibility, cultural memory, invisible labor, algorithms, loneliness, public infrastructure, migration, privacy, future anxieties - or issues unique to their own communities.

Application Opens: October 1, 2026

Application Link:
https://forms.gle/1JEuqpzzDyzNXFos5

SCHEDULE

Friday, November 6

Saturday, November 7

Sunday, November 8

BuildFest FAQs

Is there a fee to participate in BuildFest?
No. The event is free for participating students. Additional details about meals will be shared soon.

What should I bring with me to BuildFest?
Please bring a laptop, charger, and headphones. Additional information about any devices or technology needed for the weekend will be shared once the tech partner is confirmed.

I have never written code before. Is that okay?
Yes! Previous coding or development experience is not required. BuildFest is designed to support beginners, and participants will be guided through the building process with workshops and support from technical mentors.

Do I have to attend the whole weekend?
Participants are encouraged to attend as much of the weekend as possible so they can get the full BuildFest experience and work closely with their teams. Specific attendance requirements will be shared with accepted participants once the schedule is finalized.

Do I have to form a team before I sign up?
No. You are welcome to apply individually. Team formation will be part of the BuildFest experience, giving participants the opportunity to meet and collaborate with students interested in similar ideas.

I'm interested in being a volunteer or technical mentor. How do I get involved?
Details about volunteer and technical mentor opportunities will be shared soon.

How can I find out more about accessibility accommodations?
Accessibility information and a contact for specific accommodation questions will be shared soon.



Social Impact Buildfest 2026 is a national series of events produced by Texas Immersive Institute and the Immersive Experience Alliance (IXA) at IXA member institutions: The

University of Texas at Austin, The University of Maryland, College Park, University of Colorado Boulder, and Georgia State University.

BUILDER NETWORK

BY SCOUTHOUSE

Builder Network by Scout House is the local community partner for Social Impact BuildFest 2026 at USC.