



Engineering Design Challenge Coach/Volunteer Description

For volunteer coaches of the 4-H Engineering Design Challenge (EDC).

Purpose

- Foster positive youth development through leading youth in the 4-H Engineering Design Challenge (EDC).
- EDC volunteers work with participants as “coaches” to create a safe, welcoming, and positive learning environment for all youth.

Time commitment

- Work with youth teams and meet approximately twice/month for a total of 20-30 hours (or more) prior to the showcase machine at the local county fair or Minnesota State Fair General Encampment.
- Times and dates will be determined by the coach and youth participants (along with parent/guardians).

What you will do

- Complete the MN 4-H [volunteer screening process](https://4-h-volunteer.extension.umn.edu/welcome-or-renew/) to become a 4-H adult volunteer. (<https://4-h-volunteer.extension.umn.edu/welcome-or-renew/>).
- Review and follow all guidelines and rules posted for the current year's [Engineering Design Challenge](https://extension.umn.edu/4-h-events/4-h-engineering-design-challenge) (extension.umn.edu/4-h-events/4-h-engineering-design-challenge)
- Recruit and invite youth to be part of an EDC experience (or work with an existing group of youth). Share 4-H enrollment information. (<https://extension.umn.edu/4-h/join-or-re-enroll>)
- Lead youth members in the 4-H EDC (Rookie Level, Level 1, and Level 2).
- Use the [Engineering Design Process](#) to guide youth as they create an EDC machine. Help youth experience the [8 Practices of Science & Engineering](#).
- Model and guide cooperation, respect, communication, and ways to respond to failures and frustrations as a normal part of the learning experience.
- Register for the county fair (or local showcase event), and/or state showcase event.
- Assist members in fulfilling the requirements of the challenge, including keeping a journal, building an EDC machine, and meeting deadlines for participation in a local and state learning showcase.
- Communicate with members/families regularly.

- Celebrate progress and accomplishments.
- Follow all 4-H guidelines and policies of the University of Minnesota Extension, the Minnesota 4-H program, and the local 4-H program.
- Have the ability to communicate effectively with youth, parents, and other adult volunteers and staff.

Benefits

- Be the spark that inspires the next generation of engineers or scientists
- Opportunity to share your passion and be a mentor to young people
- Receive training to enhance personal skills and knowledge
- Opportunity for personal growth:
 - Increased confidence
 - Learn problem-solving skills
 - Practice time management
- Potential to gain technical skills that are transferable to professional work and community environments.
- Satisfaction of contributing to the positive development of youth, families, and community.

How to serve

- Visit the [Minnesota 4-H Volunteer](https://extension.umn.edu/volunteering-4-h/apply-become-4-h-volunteer) webpage to learn specifics of the volunteer application, background check, and orientation.
(<https://extension.umn.edu/volunteering-4-h/apply-become-4-h-volunteer>)

To learn more

- Contact your [Local 4-H Educator](#) to volunteer today!
- For program questions, contact: Anne Stevenson, steve020@umn.edu

Updated April 2025, 2026