

Skills Surge Workshops 2026

Here are the scheduled workshops for Skill Surge 2026 to be held at UMBC on Saturday, November 14, 2026.

Take the Stage: Stage Presence for DI

It's show time! In this workshop, you and your team will get a chance to put your stage presence to the test. Break out of your box and steal the spotlight with helpful tips you can bring to your Central and Instant Challenges. We've even got ways to fight those unavoidable performance time jitters!

Fun with Junk: From Ordinary to Extraordinary

Avoid "Common" Solutions. Do something unexpected! In this workshop, your team will be challenged to transform everyday discards into innovative costumes, props, and backdrops. Be strategic with your Challenge budget and wow the Appraisers with your new transformational skills!

Bragging 101: How to Talk to Appraisers

Pack a punch with your paperwork and post-performance discussions in this hands-on workshop. Help the Appraisers award your team every point you've earned with clear and concise Tournament Data Forms, and learn how to make the most of your Appraiser conversations at the end of your performance. Don't expect Appraisers to understand your hard work by magic - we'll show you how to make sure every idea shines!

Tell Me a Story: Clear and Effective Storytelling

In this workshop, learn how to develop your DI story - and tell it effectively in eight minutes or less. Every story is about conflict - that's the key to keeping your audience involved. Learn how to make your characters and plot pop. When you learn to show it, not just tell it, you will make every second count!

Stronger Together: Working as a Team

Every DI'er knows that teamwork is the secret sauce to success, but what does it really look like in action? In this workshop, you will explore creative and fun ways to build a strong team that communicates well and uses each member's strengths. You will also learn tools to get past brainstorming roadblocks and keep ideas flowing. This session is perfect for any team that wants to strengthen their teamwork and work even better together!

Tech Talk: Deeper Dive

For teams with more tech experience, in this hands-on workshop, you will dive deeper into the world of technical design and innovation through Arduino coding. You will learn how to think like a designer by planning, testing, and improving technical elements that help your Central Challenge shine. Try out new tools, work with different materials, and show off your growing tech skills. Get ready to launch your ideas to the next level. Note: please plan for each participant to bring a laptop. Workshop limit: 10

Unbox Your Build: Effective and Creative Cardboard Construction

Unleash your creativity in this hands-on cardboard workshop! You will discover the best tools, explore different types of cardboard, and learn clever ways to cut, fold, and shape it. Turn ordinary boxes into amazing props, eye-catching structures, and inventive designs. With this DI budget-friendly material, the possibilities are endless. Think outside the box and bring your ideas to life!