

# Get Involved!

## FIRST LEGO League

### What is it?

For students age 9-14, teams of up to 10 students plus adult coaches.

FIRST LEGO League (FLL) is a tremendously successful program to expose kids to science and technology, and have a great deal of fun. Teams compete to score the most points on the field with their robots, are judged on the robot's hardware and software design, present a 5-minute research project related to the year's Challenge theme, and are judged on teamwork.

Maryland teams can go to a qualifier competition in December or January, held in locations around the state, to earn the right to compete at the **Maryland FLL Championship** at UMBC in January-February.



### Where are the teams?

We had nearly 400 Maryland FLL teams last season. Some were affiliated with elementary or middle schools, others with community groups, scouts, home schools, or simply families or groups of friends.

The best way to get involved is to form a new FLL team. Existing FLL teams rarely seek or accept new team members from outside. **Please note: FIRST and their**

**representatives do not create the teams, or place children onto teams.** We can help you connect with other coaches, once you're registered, but we are very mindful of each team's security and privacy.

You can also use the *FIRST* Team Up! utility on the [usfirst.org](http://usfirst.org) website to find additional members or mentors for your team, or to connect with others in your area who may be interested in forming teams.



## How do I start a team?

Team registration opens in May and remains open through September or until the U.S. league is fully subscribed. The 2015-2016 FLL season really gets underway in August with the unveiling of this year's **Trash Trek<sup>SM</sup>** Challenge, focused on the fascinating world of trash.

FLL team budgets start under \$1,000 for the first year and can be under \$500 in subsequent years because you reuse the LEGO Mindstorms robot kit. You'll need two adults (over 18) to be the team coaches. Coaches don't need robot or technical experience, but do need to be good organizers and facilitators to keep the team on track.

You need 3-10 kids for a team (4-6 is an optimal number for many teams). Team members must be 14 or under on January 1, 2015 to participate in the Trash Trek season. *FIRST* suggests kids be at least 9 years old, but there's no strict minimum age. An individual child can be on only one FLL team per season.

FLL teams can meet anywhere; the game mat is 8' x 4' and it's easiest to place it on a plywood table. Teams typically meet one or two times per week for up to two hours from September - November, often more frequently as they approach a tournament. The team works not only on designing and programming the robot, but also researching the Project and preparing a 5-minute presentation for the tournament.



Lots of great information on how to get a team started is at:

<http://www.mdfirst.org/programs/first-lego-league/start-an-fll-team>

## How do I become a volunteer?

We need hundreds of volunteers of all types to help make *FIRST* programs successful in Maryland. You can help at an event for a day, work with a team through their season, or be part of our community year-round. All types of skills are welcome, but enthusiasm is at the top of the list. **Contact us** for more specifics.

## How do I become a sponsor?

Sponsors underwrite our competitions and tournaments, fund our teams, support activities and encourage their employees to volunteer as event staff, team mentors, coaches and more. We welcome the support and contribution of sponsors at many levels. *FIRST*, *STEMaction* and *UMBC* are or have 501(c)(3) Public Charities, and all donations are tax deductible to the extent provided by the IRS tax laws and regulations. *UMBC* is our Maryland Operating Partner for *FIRST* LEGO League. **Contact us** for more information on how to help our Maryland-specific programs.