Our Challenger Learning Center Partnerships

In partnership with Challenger Center, Challenger Learning Centers are hosted by a range of organizations, including community and technical colleges, colleges, universities, school districts, museums, and science centers.

JOIN OUR NETWORK

Entities that host a Challenger Learning Center enter into a licensing agreement with Challenger Center, enabling them to:

- Use our award-winning, space-themed simulated STEM missions and receive ongoing support and updates.
- Leverage the internationally-recognized Challenger Learning Center brand.
- Join the Challenger Learning Center network, including hundreds of informal STEM educators.

The initial agreement includes the construction of the Challenger Learning Center space mission simulator, which is the physical environment in which our programs are delivered. Challenger Center installs the hardware and software components into rooms provided by the host facility and provides training to use the simlator and programs.

Once the facility is up and running, the new Challenger Learning Center is fully integrated into our network, receiving ongoing support, program updates, cross-network collaboration, professional development, and partnership opportunities.

All Challenger Learning Centers pay an annual fee to Challenger Center to renew their license and continue using the name, brand, programs, and resources.

FUNDING A NEW CHALLENGER LEARNING CENTER

Establishing a new Challenger Learning Center is a large project. The host institution is responsible for:

1	Identifying the building space
2	Raising the funds to build the Center
3	Preparing the physical space for simulator installation
4	Sustaining the Center's operations through program fees and fundraising

The space where a Challenger Learning Center simulator is installed can include the construction of a new building or reconfiguration of an existing space. The host instituion and Challenger Center work closely to identify and configure the layout of the simulator to ensure the space meets all of the reuqirements. While the host institution prepares the space for installation, Challenger Center begins fabricating and sourcing the parts. Then, we install those parts, test the hardware and software components, and provide training to your team.

Costs for the physical components and Challenger Center's expertise in the design and installation is more than $2 million. Host institutions may require several million dollars to create a Challenger Learning Center and ensure the space is ready for installation, especially if design includes building a new facility. Host institutions typically source funding from state and federal agencies, local foundations, and private donors. Challenger Center supports communities in raising these funds; however, the host institution takes primary responsibility.

Our Simulator

Challenger Center's space mission simulator is a highly immersive environment in which students role-play as scientists, engineers, medical professionals, and other STEM occupations during a realistic space mission.

KEY FEATURES INCLUDE:

- A design that reflects the expectations of today's digital natives and mirrors those currently employed in the space industry.
- Real science equipment, computer workstations, audio-visual equipment, and new technologies.
- Instructional software that guides students through hands-on experiments and data analysis.
- Software and hardware within the simulator designed for durability, ease of maintenance, and accessibility.
- Background articles and reserach on science topics, data analysis tools, and team communication tools.
- Compliance with current Americans with Disabilities Act guidelines.

IDEAL SPACE CONFIGURATION

- 4,000 square feet for the four simulator rooms.
- Additional space for other program delivery, restrooms, staff offices, and amenities.
- Easy access for student arrival and departure.

Students begin their experience in the **Briefing Room**, where they are assigned team roles, receive a pre-mission brief, learn about Mission goals before launch, and are assigned to either the Mission Control team or Spacecraft crew.

Once the Spacecraft crew enters the **Transport Room**, students buckle into jump seats and the launch sequence begins. Video and audio communications combined with specialized lighting bring the launch experience to life.

Mission Control contains large high-definition screens that enhance the visual experience and enable students to observe flight paths, conduct research, check on Mission status, and watch a live feed of their teammates in Spacecraft.

In **Spacecraft**, students navigate through the Mission, conduct experiments, monitor crew health and safety, complete research, and communicate with teammates in Mission Control.

Challenger Learning Center Network

When you join the Challenger Learning Center network, you immediately receive:

TECHNICAL AND OPERATIONAL SUPPORT

We provide ongoing technical support for hardware and software used to run the simulated space missions, as well as provide operation recommendations, including guidance on staffing, marketing, fundraising, and other business matters. A key benefit to being part of the Challenger Learning Center network is the expertise, experience, and accessibility to the team members at other Centers across the country.

LEARNING AND COLLABORATION WITH PEERS

New Challenger Learning Centers instantly become part of a community of informal STEM educators with whom you can learn, exchange ideas, and collaborate. Challenger Center headquarters connects Centers through a range of virtual and in-person communications and events, including group calls, an e-newsletter, an online community/ intranet, webinars, and annual conference. We offer professional development opportunities on common and trending topics like diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility; fundraising; and board management.

FUNDING, PARTNERSHIP, AND MARKETING

One significant and unique strength of Challenger Center's model is the breadth of both its physical and digital reach. Local, national, and international organizations recognize our brand and want to partner with us to reach their communities with STEM-themed programs.

Challenger Center regularly engages in partnership opportunities designed to benefit Challenger Learning Centers, like fundraising to develop new programs or program delivery sponsorships. We connect Centers to opportunities like film screenings and national teacher awards. We seek media attention that raises awareness of the Challenger Learning Center brand regionally and nationally.

Challenger® CENTER

Opening A New Challenger Learning Center

Challenger Center is committed to ensuring new Challenger Learning Centers are set up for success to maximize service to their community and be sustainable for decades. We do so through a robust process:

Discovery

To explore the feasibility of bringing a Challenger Learning Center to your community, we support you in evaluating the market and engaging key community stakeholders, including K-12 school leadership, local government, and other partners.

Letter of Intent

Once you decide to proceed, you must submit a formal letter of intent to Challenger Center. This letter establishes your organization's objective to further explore the opportunity and explains why your institution is the right Challenger Center partner in your community.

Application

Next, you will complete a formal application that outlines your plan for making the Center a successful, sustainable institution, including plans for staffing, budgeting, fundraising, school recruitment, workforce engagement, and facilities maintenance. We support application research and development. Your institution must pay a $5,000 nonrefundable fee when submitting its application.

Contract

Once your application is accepted, we will share the Challenger Learning Center License Agreement, which outlines the installation process and establishes our licensing arrangement. Upon signature, your institution makes a $50,000 nonrefundable deposit to enable work to start on your Center's designs. A contract should only be signed if you are confident you will have full funding and ready for Challenger Center to begin fabrication within one year.

Notice to Proceed

When you have full funding and are ready for installation, you will provide a formal notice to proceed to Challenger Center. This notice prompts the start of fabrication and sourcing of simulator components. During this time, your organization prepares the building and rooms for the installation of the simulator by Challenger Center. Onboarding and training begins at this phase.

Installation

Once room preparation is completed to the provided specs agreed upon during the design process, Challenger Center and its vendors install the simulator in your facility. Our team oversees the installation process.

Onboarding and Training

Starting in the Notice to Proceed phase, Challenger Center begins integrating your team into the Challenger Learning Center network. We will provide your new team with overviews of the organization, share our strategic plan, review our support processes, train your staff to run the simulated space missions and coordinate site visits to existing Challenger Learning Centers. Once installation is complete, we will conduct on-site training at your Center, including running test missions.

Grand Opening

Challenger Center works with you to plan and execute events to celebrate your opening and introduce your Challenger Learning Center to the community.

The Mission Continues

Your Center now transitions to day-to-day operations and continued engagement with the Challenger Center team and Challenger Learning Center network.