Official Competition Rules

General

1. The Future City Competition is open to eligible 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students who are enrolled in a public, private, parochial, or home school environment or are members of a nationally, regionally, or state-recognized organization, such as the Scouts, Boys and Girls Clubs, 4-H, etc. If you are unsure if your organization is eligible to participate, please contact FutureCity@DiscoverE.org. Future City has the sole and exclusive authority to determine whether an organization is eligible to participate and has the right to require additional documentation to verify eligibility.

2. Student team members must be from the same school or organization, unless otherwise approved by Future City staff. Students cannot be on multiple teams.

3. Organizations may register in only one region. If they wish to transfer to a different region, they must petition and obtain the approval of the Regional Coordinator and the Program Manager. Teams must commit to a specific region by October 31, 2023.

4. An official competition team is made up of the three official presenters (students), one registered educator and one register mentor. No educators or mentors, parents or additional team members may present or answer questions from the judges during the Presentation and Q&A deliverable.

5. Team mentors are defined as the person officially registered within DiscoverE's Future City Competition Management System (a.k.a. Future City Dashboard), have cleared our background check, and been assigned to a team by January 5, 2024. No exceptions.

6. The team members that compete in the Finals Competition must be the same team members that won the Regional Competition. You may select one student to act as the alternate for both Regionals and Finals. The alternate may only be utilized if one of the original three students cannot compete due to illness or family emergency. The alternate may only compete upon the approval of the Regional Coordinator (for the Regional Competition) and the Program Manager (for the Finals).

7. At least 20 schools/organizations must be registered in a region by October 31, 2023 in order for that region's winner to advance to the Finals Competition.

8. Home school educators must submit an affidavit to their Regional Coordinator stating that the students are covering the material in the 6th, 7th, or 8th grades. Regions reserves the right to require proof of home school students' registration for participation in program.

9. Deliverable deadlines vary by region and are listed in the Future City Dashboard. If deadlines are missed at the Regional or Finals level, points will be deducted.

10. At regional competitions, only one team from a school or organization can advance to the final round of judging. At competitions with a single judging round, only one team from a school or organization may be awarded a place in the top five overall teams.

11. All team members must sign and submit the Honor Statement online prior to the regional deadline.

12. Judges evaluate each deliverable in accordance with the rubrics. The score a judge assigns is final. Teams will not receive raw scoresheets or be able to review scores from individual judges.

13. Actions or comments by any team member or any team supporter that maligns, disparages, or harasses other team members, Regional Coordinators, Future City volunteers, or Future City staff will result in the team's disqualification from that year's competition and could result in the school/organization being ineligible to participate in the future.

14. If a dispute or disagreement occurs at the regional level, an official Future City Team Educator shall bring the matter to the attention of the Regional Coordinator. An official Team Educator is the only person who may submit a complaint to the Regional Coordinator. The Regional Coordinator will thereafter conduct an investigation and make a determination regarding the complaint. All decisions by the Regional Coordinator shall be final and cannot be appealed.

15. In the case of a tie at the Regional Competition, the team with the higher City Presentation and Q&A score will be awarded first place. If the tie still remains, the team with the higher model score will be awarded first place.

16. Educators can see their team's average scores by logging in to the Educator Dashboard at FutureCity.org after the Regional and Finals competitions. Educators may download their team's score information by following the instructions online. Scores will not be saved in the system indefinitely.

17. A person who volunteers in the capacity of a judge (at any level) during the competition cycle may not serve as a mentor or an educator during that same cycle. Nor may they provide guidance, coaching, tips, etc. to any active team member, teacher, engineer mentor, etc. during that same competition cycle. If violated, that judge's scores will be invalidated.

18. If a team is located outside the typical geographical parameters of a region, whether or not they are permitted to participate in said region is at the discretion of the Regional Coordinator.

19. The team's educator must be present any time team members meet virtually or in person with the team mentor.

20. Future City is an educational program established to encourage children to consider and explore careers in science, technology, engineering, and math. Future City participants and their supporters acknowledge that participation in Future City is not a right. By participating in the Future City Competition, team members and team supporters agree and are bound to behave with respect and dignity for their team and for their fellow participants.

21. Future City reserves the sole and exclusive right to amend these rules at any time.

City Essay

22. Students must include a reference page citing at least three sources of information with the essay. (Note: Wikipedia cannot be cited as a reference.)

23. The maximum word count is 1,500. Initial tabulation is done by the "word count" tool within the word processing software. The final word count does not include the title and reference list but does include captions and words that appear within a graphic, illustration, or table. A maximum of four graphics or illustrations are allowed.

24. The City Essay file must be uploaded as a word processing document, not a PDF.

25. If any part of a team's City Essay is determined to be plagiarized, the team will earn zero points.

City Model

26. Each model should feature a Model ID card, a 4" x 6" index card with city name, organization name, team members' names (three student presenters, educator, mentor), and the scale(s) used.

27. Rotating city models are acceptable. The model will be measured from the tabletop up, including dimensions of any turning device below the model itself.

28. Teams must design a new model or model segments. Teams may not use previous years' models. Previous models may be broken down and scavenged for materials, including the bare model platform. Any previously used materials must be reconfigured in a new and original manner and assigned a current market value. Teams do not need to include the cost of their flat empty base (e.g., the cost of plywood or similar material) in the expense form.

29. The city model in its basic state must not exceed 25" (W) x 50" (L) x 20" (H). During the Presentation and Q&A, it is permissible to have extended parts, such as access doors, compartments, and pullouts, as long as they are fully self-supported by the model, or—if removable—held by a presenter. If the team makes multiple model segments, they must adhere to the overall size restrictions noted above when placed together on a tabletop.

30. Prohibited model items: live animals, perishables/food, drones or other flying objects, hazardous items (including dry ice), and fire. If water is used in the model, it must be self-contained or drainable.

31. Each model must include a moving part. A team with multiple model segments is only required to create one moving part, not one for each segment.

32. Power sources must be self-contained, (e.g., a household battery/ simple circuit). Use of electrical wall or floor outlets is not allowed.

33. The total value of the materials used in the Model, Presentation, Q&A, and special awards (including visual aids, costumes, color copying/printing, 3D printing, and other demonstration aids) may not exceed $100.

34. All materials used must be listed on the Competition Expense Form and their value documented for the Model, Presentation and Q&A, and special awards. This includes donated and borrowed items at fair market value.

35. A team may use up to four distinct scales if they are clearly defined, easily determined by sight, and indicated on their index card.

36. Use of 3D printers for any model materials must be assessed using the following values, which account for the cost of filament and the hardware/printer:
    - White 3D printing: $2.00 per cubic inch
    - Color 3D printing: $5.00 per cubic inch
    - All 3D printed materials used—whether new or reused— must be reported on the competition expense form using these values.

37. Programmable circuit boards (ex: Raspberry Pi, Arduino) are permitted as long as the full cost is listed on the expense form. A minimum $35 value is required to be listed.

City Presentation and Q&A

38. At both Regional and Finals Competitions: Only the official three student presenters may participate in the Presentation and Q&A deliverable. The Presentation portion may not exceed 7 minutes. When the timer signals time, the team must stop immediate question and answer sessions immediately following the presentation will be 8 minutes.

39. Presenters may use their model/model segments, posters, graphics, costumes, and other visual aids.

40. Laptop computers, overhead projectors, DVD/video players, battery-operated audio equipment, any mobile devices, and drones may not be used in the presentation.

41. Visual aids, such as flip charts, foam boards, poster boards, etc. must not exceed these parameters: the display(s) cannot be larger than standard size (24" x 36" for poster boards, 25" x 30" for flip charts, 36" x 48" for tri-fold boards); up to two poster boards or flip charts may be displayed concurrently, or one tri-fold at one time.

42. With the exception of a handout/brochure (limited to one 8.5"x 11" sheet of paper) and costumes, any other demonstration aids including pointers, small mock-ups, musical instruments, etc. used to assist with the presentation must collectively fit in a 6" x 6" x 12" volume (e.g., a shoe box). Guns or replicas that could realistically be mistaken for a gun are not permitted. Nonrealistic items (such as a water gun that is clearly a toy) are permitted.