



Frequently Asked Questions

What is Destination ImagiNation®?

Destination ImagiNation® is an exhilarating afterschool activity in which students work in teams to solve mind-bending Challenges and present their solutions at Tournaments. Teams are tested to think on their feet, work together and devise original solutions that satisfy the requirements of the Challenges. Participants gain more than just basic knowledge and skills—they learn to unleash their imaginations and take unique approaches to problem-solving. A Destination ImagiNation Challenge is a fun exercise that socially and intellectually activates students by prompting them to use creativity and teamwork to solve a problem.

Who runs the Destination ImagiNation Iowa program?

While the headquarters for Destination ImagiNation, Inc. is located in New Jersey, the Destination ImagiNation program is administrated by volunteers in every Affiliate. Students for a Creative Iowa (cre8iowa) is the Iowa Affiliate of Destination ImagiNation, a non-profit 501 (c)(3) organization striving to provide a safe and culturally rich environment that promotes creative problem-solving and team-building skills by encouraging students to build on their natural strengths and discover skills they may not realize they possess. To achieve this goal, cre8iowa has selected the Destination ImagiNation program.

Cre8iowa is proud to be part of the world's premiere creativity and problem-solving program for youth of all ages, reaching over 72,000 students in the United States and more than 30 countries. This international non-profit organization, based in Cherry Hill, New Jersey, has more than 1.3 million alumni and a global network of 38,000 volunteers.

Destination ImagiNation teaches life skills and expands imaginations through youth-centered, team-based creative problem-solving. The program stresses unique and critical life skills including teamwork, critical and creative thinking, project management, resource management, mutual respect, research and presentation skills and—as all challenges must be strictly team-solved—self-reliance. These skills make Destination ImagiNation participants more valuable to their communities and as future employees.

Major corporate sponsors of the Destination ImagiNation (DI) program include 3M, Ameresco Canada Inc., indie rock band mae, and the Center for Creative Learning.

Specific Challenge sponsors during the 2011-12 program season include AMERESCO for scientific Challenge B, *The Solar Stage*; 3M for structural Challenge D, *Hold It!*; indie rock band mae for the service-learning project OUTREACH® Challenge, *The World Canvas*, and the District 46 Education Foundation for Noncompetitive for Early Learners *Rising Stars!®* Challenge, *Built to Last*.

Among Destination ImagiNation's partners is America's Promise Alliance, which was founded in 1997 by General Colin Powell and is chaired today by Alma Powell to improve lives and change outcomes for children. Another partner is the Afterschool Alliance, which is dedicated to raising awareness of the importance of afterschool programs by working with the Administration, U.S. Congress, governors, mayors and advocates across the country. The United States Air Force has partnered with Destination ImagiNation to bring the creative problem solving program to bases across the country to provide both the core program and summer camps to their youth. NASSP (National Association of Secondary School Principals) Leading Schools works to provide school leaders with the information and resources they need to address the many challenges in today's schools. Since 1982, ESF (Education, Sports and Fun) Summer Schools has had a profound impact on children by building life skills through a dynamic staff, high-quality programs, premiere locations, time-honored traditions, and commitment to safety and fun. The Motorola Foundation focuses its funding on education, especially programs that support math and science teacher-training programs and charitable organizations that excite young people about these subjects. Finally, Destination Imagination's partner, Staples, is the world's largest office products company and a trusted source for office solutions.

In 2010-11 cre8iowa fielded about 65 teams, 16 of which qualified to represent Iowa at Destination ImagiNation Global Finals in Knoxville, Tennessee on May 25-28, 2011.

Who is eligible to join?

All students may participate on a competitive team of 2 to 7 members. Most teams consist of 5 to 7 members, and students are grouped by age. Competitive teams range in age from grades 2 through 12, while Noncompetitive for Early Learners teams (known as Rising Stars!®) have students from preschool through grade 2 (ages 4 to 7). Beginning this year, project OUTREACH®, the service-learning Challenge, is open to all competitive levels, Elementary through University. Students are eligible to participate in one (or more) competitive Challenges.

What does a team do?

Students work together for 8 to 16 weeks during the school year to solve their choice of one of 6 competitive challenges that address different academic areas. Each challenge has its own focus:

Challenge A – Technical
Challenge B - Scientific
Challenge C - Fine Arts
Challenge D - Improvisational
Challenge E - Structural
projectOutreach – Service-Learning

The team then presents a rehearsed or improvisational solution in a 5 to 8 minute Presentation and solves an *Instant Challenge* (on-the-spot problem) at the Sub-State Tournament held in Iowa during late February or March. If a team advances, it competes at the Iowa Affiliate Tournament during April in Ames. First place Iowa Affiliate teams earn the opportunity to travel to Global Finals held in Tennessee in May.

A team can start working on a *Team Challenge* as soon as members are recruited, but it is recommended that Team Managers and Coordinators familiarize themselves first with program materials and take advantage of training resources. It is not required for Team Managers and Coordinators to attend training, but it is highly recommended.

In October a Basic Training Podcast for Team Managers & Coordinators is offered online by cre8iowa. In December, Team Managers and Coordinators may register for an Advanced Training Workshop held in Ames. Both trainings are included in the Iowa Membership Fee. Participants receive materials and practice exercises that prepare their teams for participation in the Tournament experience.

Students have the opportunity to learn how to solve *Instant Challenges* by attending an Instant Challenger workshop in January. The team fee for an Instant Challenger workshop is \$20, which helps offset workshop expenses.

Various resources that help a Team Manager plan meetings effectively are available for purchase at cre8iowa workshops.

How often do teams meet?

Once a team is formed, the members decide how competitive they want to be and how often they want to meet. Historically, teams meet once a week, but as they approach Tournament, they may meet two or more times a week. This is entirely dependent on a team's work style, other activities that compete for students' time, on the goals the team sets, and the availability of the Team Manager. Some teams meet frequently for short periods, others get together less often but for longer periods, and other teams use a combination of these approaches.

Who manages the teams?

Any adult 18 or older may manage a team. (Assistant Team Managers may be younger.) Generally speaking, a parent or two parents share the management of a team, but a teacher or other interested adult may also manage a team. The solutions that students generate are their own, not a Team Manager's or anyone else's outside the team. As a result, Team Managers need no special talents or skills—simply an interest in young people, a sense of humor, a willingness to help students stay focused—and the ability to read program materials that provide step-by-step instructions for how to manage a team.

Who evaluates teams at competition?

DI is a volunteer, team-based organization at every level. Appraiser teams are assembled from trained volunteers to score student teams at Regional and Affiliate Tournaments in Iowa. Every team must provide one annually-certified and trained Appraiser in order to advance from the Sub-State to Iowa Affiliate Tournament. Appraisers commit to a three-day time commitment—one full day of training on one of three different Saturdays in January or February (Appraiser's choice of dates), one full Saturday at the Sub-State Tournament, and one full Saturday at the Iowa Affiliate Tournament in Ames. Training, which is included in the Iowa Membership Fee, is provided by a team of volunteer trainers recruited by the Students for a Creative Iowa Board.

What costs are involved?

Official participation costs include a Destination ImagiNation® Team Pak and Iowa Membership fees, which total \$200 for a competitive team, or \$100 for a noncompetitive Rising Stars!® team that participates at the Sub-State Tournament. Often a sponsoring organization such as a school, school district, parent/teacher organization or other civic organization, or a business will sponsor a Team Pak, but a group of families can also split the cost. A typical competitive 1-Team Pak for an entire year breaks down as follows:

4 students = \$50.00 per person
5 students = \$40.00 per person
6 students = \$33.33 per person
7 students = \$28.57 per person

Price breaks occur for schools once they have 3 or more teams. If a school purchases a 5-Team Pak, for example, it pays for the first 3 teams and the remaining 2 teams are free. In this instance, a typical 5-member competitive team would cost about \$28 to \$38 per person, depending on the number of participating teams. There is also an Institutional Customer 30+ Team Pak for large school districts.

Other costs, which are dependent on a team's work style and the Team Challenge it selects, are for working materials and a team training workshop. Team Managers will usually request that parents of team members

contribute a working materials fee to cover the cost of items used to *practice Instant Challenges* and to solve the *Team Challenge*. Parents may also be asked to bring snacks to meetings, gather working materials, and help transport students and props to Tournament. The fee for Team Manager & Coordinator training is included in your Iowa Membership. If a team elects to attend an Instant Challenger workshop, there is a \$20 per team materials fee to offset workshop expenses.

How do I START A TEAM?

Recruit a team of 2-7 students (no limit on Rising Stars!@ teams) as soon as possible. You may e-mail Judy Nolan at judynolan@aol.com with any questions you have.

Recruiting Kit materials are available at the cre8iowa Web site (<http://www.cre8iowa.org>) under the "Recruiting Kit" menu to help you plan an information meeting.

Sponsoring organizations or an independent team need to purchase a Team Pak by December. The quickest way to do so is online at <http://www.ShopDI.org>. Once payment is received and verified, you may download program materials from <http://www.IDODI.org> (click on Resource Area). One set of printed program materials per team will be shipped to you. You may pay for a Team Pak by credit card or purchase order, or by check through the mail.

Iowa's Membership Registration forms are posted on the Web site at <http://www.cre8iowa.org> by October. The contact person for each Team Pak will be e-mailed when the forms are available. The Membership Registration deadline is in early January.

Although the Team Pak purchase and Iowa Membership Registration deadlines for Destination ImagiNation are in January, you will want to get your team started before these deadlines to take advantage of every training opportunity. These include a Basic Training Podcast for Team Managers & Coordinators in October, an Advanced Training Workshop for Team Managers & Coordinators in December, and a fee-paid Instant Challenger team workshop for students in Ames during January. Online support is available at the state Web site (<http://www.cre8iowa.org>). This site provides tips, practice exercises and additional information throughout the season.

Note: It is not necessary to select a *Team Challenge* before recruiting a team. Ideally, this selection is made by the team during one of its early meetings. When the team registers by January, then the selection must be announced.

Where can I find more information?

Contact

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Web sites

Destination ImagiNation Iowa:
<http://www.cre8iowa.org>

cre8iowa Support Blog:
<http://www.cre8iowa.org>

cre8iowa Instant Challenge Library:
<http://www.cre8iowa.org/team-support/instant-challenge-library>

Team Support Links:
<http://www.cre8iowa.org/team-support/team-support-links/>

Destination ImagiNation, Inc.:
<http://www.IDODI.org>

ShopDI (for purchase of Team Paks):
<http://www.shopdi.org>