HuLC

NASA'S HUMAN LANDER CHALLENGE

2026 Proposal Package Guidelines

2026 THEME: LONG DURATION SPACE FLIGHT ECLSS

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Change Log:

- Updates and changes will be documented here, as applicable.

Challenge Overview

NASA's Human Lander Challenge (HuLC) is an initiative supporting its Exploration Systems Development Mission Directorate's (ESDMD's) efforts to explore innovative solutions for a variety of known challenge areas for NASA's Human Landing System (HLS), the transportation system that will safely ferry astronauts from lunar orbit to the Moon's surface. Through this competition, college students contribute to the advancement of HLS technologies, concepts, and approaches. Improvements in these technology areas have the potential to revolutionize NASA's approach to space exploration, and contributions from the academic community are a valuable part of the journey to discovery.

HuLC is open to teams comprised of full-time or part-time undergraduate and/or graduate students at an accredited U.S.-based community college, college, or university. HuLC projects allow students to incorporate their coursework into real aerospace design concepts and work together in a team environment. Interdisciplinary teams are encouraged.

NASA's 2026 Human Lander Challenge (HuLC) invites collegiate student teams to develop innovative, systems-level solutions that improve critical aspects of Long Duration Spaceflight Environmental Control Life Support System (ECLSS) performance. This year's theme focuses on enhancing life support functionality through more efficient hardware, quieter habitats, safer water delivery, and improved resource sharing on planetary surfaces, while considering the integrated nature of ECLSS within future exploration architectures.

Based on a review of initial proposals in Phase 1, up to 12 teams will be selected to receive a $9,000 prize and advance to Phase 2, which includes a final design review at the HuLC Forum in Huntsville, Alabama in June 2026. Teams selected to advance to Phase 2 are responsible for developing a technical paper and poster, and giving an in-person presentation to a panel of NASA and industry subject matter experts during the HuLC Forum. The overall top three placing teams will share a total prize purse of $18,000:

- First Place - $10,000
- Second Place - $5,000
- Third Place - $3,000

Context for 2026 Topic: Long Duration Spaceflight Environmental Control Life Support System (ECLSS)

As human exploration pushes beyond low Earth orbit toward sustained lunar presence and future missions to Mars, the role of Environmental Control and Life Support Systems (ECLSS) becomes increasingly vital. Designing ECLSS for deep space is uniquely challenging due to mission duration, limited resupply, and extreme environmental conditions.

Challenge Description and Proposal Subtopics

Through the HuLC competition, NASA is engaging students for ideas to help achieve their lunar exploration goals (refer to NASA's Plan for Sustained Lunar Exploration and Development and NASA's Initial and Sustained Artemis Human Landing Systems). This year's theme focuses on enhancing life support functionality through more efficient hardware, quieter habitats, safer water delivery, and improved resource sharing on planetary surfaces, while considering the integrated nature of ECLSS within future exploration architectures. The selected subtopics reflect real-world needs identified by NASA engineers and scientists and present meaningful opportunities for students to directly influence technologies that support the future of human spaceflight.

The 2026 HuLC competition asks student teams to develop and propose innovative, systems-level concepts in response to one of the following subtopic areas:

- **Noise Suppression and Control:** Currently, fans and other ECLSS hardware on the ISS create loud, pervasive background noise. Future long-duration missions require more effective noise mitigation strategies to support crew health, communication, and overall mission success. Teams should propose innovating concepts to reduce, isolate, or manage noise generated by ECLSS systems in long-duration space habitats (long term lunar stays or human missions to Mars).

- **Sensor Reduction in Hardware Health Monitoring Systems**: Current space systems monitor hardware health using a multitude of sensors to closely track and assess critical hardware performance, and reporting status to the crew. This approach is effective, but increases the overall mass, power usage, and system complexity. Future missions to the Moon or Mars require more efficient ways to monitor the health of ECLSS hardware with fewer sensors. Teams should propose solutions that lead to mass and power savings by increasing sensor capacity, capability, efficiency, or reliability of hardware health monitoring systems while reducing the total number of sensors required.

- **Potable Water Dispenser**: Potable water dispensers are necessary to rehydrate dry foods and prepare beverages in microgravity, but current systems are only capable of producing a small amount of heated water and no cold water. Future astronauts will benefit from a solution that delivers both on demand hot and cold water for daily use. Teams should design a novel potable water dispenser that can safely and efficiently deliver temperature-controlled water for astronauts' food and beverage needs, emphasizing ergonomics and throughput while minimizing waste and cleaning requirements.

- **Fluid Transfer Between Surface Assets on the Moon and Mars**: Surface assets on the lunar and Martian surface will involve multiple assets which must share or transfer fluids such as water, waste, fuel, and oxygen. Future mission success requires efficient and reliable fluid transfer between these systems despite extreme environmental conditions (reduced gravity, dust, temperature fluctuations, etc.). Teams should propose solutions for safe, reliable, and efficient fluid transfer between surface assets on the Moon and/or Mars, addressing compatibility between assets, leak mitigation, ease of use by astronauts and/or robotic systems, and other unique challenges posed by the environment.

Design Constraints and Guidelines

Environmental Control and Life Support Systems are critical for crewed space missions, responsible for maintaining breathable air and drinkable water and ensuring a safe, habitable, and efficient environment. Technologies, instrumentation, designs, and approaches developed for HuLC must survive and operate in extreme environments in cislunar space, on the moon, and on Mars. Additional constraints include:

- Minimal barriers to NASA adoption (e.g., low mass, small size, low power, etc.)
- No additional risks posed to crew
- Ability to survive launch loads
- Must have a mission operational life of 30-days for lunar surface missions, or 1200-days for Mars missions

Proposed Solutions Must Consider

Proposals must be innovative and include a clear description of the need, utilization or application, impacts, and outcomes in reducing and mitigating the risks posed by long duration space flights or lunar surface stays for environmental control life support systems. Proposing teams should clearly identify their assumptions and provide rationale to support them. The list below includes some recommended assumptions, but adjustments are permitted if accompanied by good engineering rationale.

- Targeted use within 5 to 8 years
- Cost-effectiveness with well justified estimates
    - Solutions should be affordable enough to merit consideration for implementation
- Simplicity of implementation, operational use, and interpretation
- Design for cislunar, lunar, and/or Martian environments as applicable
    - Refer to the SLS-SPEC-159 NASA Cross-Program Design Specification for Natural Environments (DSNE) Revision I
- Designed for deployment on or implementation within NASA/commercial HLS lunar surface or Mars transit assets
- Key technologies where relevant, including technology readiness levels (TRLs), as well as the systems engineering and architectural trades that guide the recommended approach
- Technical merit and rationale of mission operations in support of a sustainable space exploration program
- Supporting engineering analysis and justification of assumptions
- Appropriate assessment of project schedule and milestones, as well as appropriate development and annual operating costs (i.e., budget)
    - Appropriate assessment of costs includes technology maturation, system development, mission infusion/adoption, integration, and operations (as applicable)
- Adherence to the requirements and constraints of the design competition

How to Compete in the Human Lander Challenge (HuLC)

Phase 1

1. Thoroughly review this document and the Challenge Website.
2. Find a qualified advisor and a team of students with a variety of skills.
3. Ensure your team meets the eligibility requirements.
4. Submit a Notice of Intent (NOI) by the deadline.
5. (Optional but Recommended) Attend the Question & Answer (Q&A) Session.
6. Develop and submit a Proposal Package (5-7-page proposal and 2-minute video) by the deadline.
7. Proposal Package Submissions will be reviewed and evaluated by the Judging Panel.
8. Selected teams will receive $9,000 and advance to Phase 2 as Finalists

Phase 2

1. Submit a technical paper and poster by the deadline
2. Give an in-person presentation at the HuLC Forum in June.
3. The overall top three placing teams will share a total purse prize of $18,000

NEW THIS YEAR! Participation Agreement

Proposers must acknowledge that they have read and agree to abide by the full HuLC Participation Agreement. By submitting to the HuLC Competition, all members of your team agree to the terms and conditions contained in this Participation Agreement.

Eligibility

NASA welcomes submissions from teams from accredited U.S.-based community colleges, colleges, or universities. Teams may be comprised of a combination of full-time or part-time undergraduate and/or graduate students, and can include senior capstone students, clubs, multi-university teams, or multi-disciplinary teams. **Additional Eligibility restrictions apply. Please see the Participation Agreement for full Eligibility Requirements.**

Team Size: Team sizes vary widely and there is no limit to the number of students who can participate throughout the year on a team. However, at a minimum, teams must contain:

- One faculty advisor with a university/college affiliation at a U.S.-based institution, and
- Two students from that U.S.-based university/college who work on the project and present at the HuLC Forum.

While advisors can contribute to the team's work, it is expected that the bulk of the work is completed by the student team members. Student team members are also expected to be the presenters of their work at the Forum.

Dates and Deadlines

All deadlines must be met by 11:59 PM Eastern on the date specified below, unless otherwise indicated.

Phase 1: Notice of Intent and Proposal	
Date	**Description**
October 20, 2025	Deadline to Submit a Notice of Intent
October 24, 2025	(Noon EST) Deadline to Submit Questions for Q&A Session
November 4, 2025	Q&A Session for Interested Teams
March 4, 2026	Deadline to Submit a Proposal Package
April 6, 2026	Teams Notified of Selection Status
Phase 2: Final Deliverables and Forum	
Date	**Description**
May 20, 2026	Deadline to Register and Pay for the HuLC Forum
May 27, 2026	Deadline to Submit a Technical Paper
June 18, 2026	Deadline to Submit Presentation Chart Deck and Technical Poster Files
June 22, 2026	Team Check-In at NASA's 2026 Human Lander Challenge Forum
June 23-25, 2026	**NASA's 2026 Human Lander Challenge Forum in Huntsville, AL**

Notice of Intent (NOI)

Notice of Intent (NOI) Submission Deadline: 11:59 PM Eastern on October 20, 2025

Interested teams are strongly encouraged to submit a Notice of Intent (NOI) to compete by the deadline to stay informed of competition updates, and to ensure an adequate number of reviewers. Teams who submit NOIs by the deadline will be invited to participate in an exclusive Q&A session with the judges prior to the Proposal Package submission deadline. Visit the HuLC Competition Website to complete the brief online NOI Submission Form.

The following information will be required or requested on the NOI submission form:

- Name of U.S.-Based College/University
- Name(s) of any Collegiate or Industry Partners
- Project Title, if known
- Subtopic being Addressed, if known
- Contact Information for Primary Faculty Advisor and Student Team Lead
- Contact Information for any Additional POCs, if applicable
- Synopsis of Proposed Concept
    - The synopsis is limited to 3,000 characters to provide a high-level overview of the proposed concept or potential concepts.

Note: Submitting an NOI does not bind any participant or team to submitting a proposal. We also understand that NOIs are due early in the development process, and teams will still be in the process of fleshing out many of the details of their concepts. We fully expect that teams' concepts will change and evolve between the NOI and Proposal Package submissions, as in-depth research and analysis is conducted. Teams have the full flexibility to change ideas, concepts, and/or category selection as they work over the course of the semester. Information submitted in the NOI *does not* need to match the Proposal Package submission.

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Proposal Package Guidelines

Proposal Package Submission Deadline: 11:59 PM Eastern on March 4, 2026
To participate in the HuLC Competition, teams will submit a proposal package consisting of:

- A 5-7 page proposal,
- A 2-minute video, and
- Graphic depicting team's concept.

Teams are encouraged to review the Resources page on the HuLC Website, which provides resources to assist in the development of the team's proposal.

Robust proposals are expected to demonstrate significant progress in your design and analysis. The HuLC Judging Panel will be looking for mature mission concepts at the proposal stage. The proposal should reflect the total scope planned for the Technical Paper. All analysis results to-date (in summary form if necessary due to space limitations) should be included, leaving placeholders for analysis not yet completed.

Proposal Expectations

- Proposals should be 5-7 pages in length.
- Proposals should clearly articulate the innovation and design being proposed, including original engineering analysis planned and/or in progress. It will not be enough for teams to indicate they will address the requirements later in the Technical Paper.
- Submitting teams pledge that the team is the sole author of the submission, that the submission is wholly original, that it does not infringe on any copyright or any other rights of any third party of which the team is aware, and that the submission is free of malware. Contributions from non-team members (including the use of tools like Generative AI) are not permitted.

Required Proposal Elements

Proposing teams will develop a 5–7-page proposal that includes the following sections, at a minimum:

- **Cover Page (not included in the page limitation) with the following information:**
  - University Name
  - Project Title
  - Full Names of all Team Members with Academic Level (Undergraduate or Graduate), Major, and Email Address
  - Graphic or Image of Part or All of the Proposed Concept (No Hand-Drawn Sketches)
- **Quad Chart (not included in page limitation)**
  - Use the HuLC Quad Chart Template found on the "Proposal" section of the Resources Webpage. The Quad Chart is a way for teams to display some standardized information that helps evaluators quickly compare many projects. For the HuLC Competition, teams must use the provided template to create a quad chart and insert the chart into their proposal. Quad charts must address:
    - The team's major objectives and technical approach to the problem being addressed in their chosen subtopic
    - An image/graphic of part or all of the concept
    - Key design details and innovations of the concept
    - A summary of schedule and cost for the proposed solution's path to adoption

- **The body of the proposal should outline/include (Max of 7 pages)**
  - Summary Statement/Executive Summary (Max of 150 words)
    - An overall summary of the innovative solution, including a title of the project, a synopsis of the specific subtopic challenge being addressed, an overview of the proposed solution, and a statement of the impact the innovative solution will have on human exploration goals.
  - How does the proposed solution address NASA's human exploration challenges? (Refer to NASA's Plan for Sustained Lunar Exploration and Development and NASA's Initial and Sustained Artemis Human Landing Systems.)
  - How the proposed solution is applicable to cislunar, lunar, or Martian environments [SLS-SPEC-159 NASA Cross-Program Design Specification for Natural Environments (DSNE) Revision I]
  - Indicate *WHY* you chose your solution / design / approach in terms of *VALUE* in the areas of potential mission / system impacts, technology readiness, affordability, programmatic implementation, and risk.
  - Detailed information on the verification and validation of the solution
    - Teams need to prove their analysis is correct and believable to the judges. They should clearly detail how they are solving what they set out to solve, and that they are solving the problem in the appropriate manner with the appropriate tools/equipment.
    - Capture risks associated with development, verification, and validation of the solution – and define mitigation plans for them.
  - Innovative approaches / capabilities / technology
  - Realistic technology assumptions, including realistic NASA Technology Readiness Level Definitions and justifications where appropriate
  - Original analysis and engineering
  - Detailed information about the work conducted in various trades, concepts, and technical analyses
  - Key findings supporting the envisioned solution
  - Adherence to the Design Constraints and Guidelines
  - Mass and size estimates (as appropriate)
  - Appropriate budget assessment (including an assessment of cost margin) and **an explanation of the assumptions**. Use of analogs and NASA costing tools is strongly encouraged.
  - Proposed path-to-flight project timeline for Development, Test, and Evaluation (DT&E) of proposed solution – assuming a mission in the next 5-8 years
- **Appendices (not included in page limitation)**
  - Appendices are to be used for references and calculations *ONLY*. There is no preference in citation formatting, but references must be formatted uniformly and correctly. Just listing a link to the source is not acceptable.
  - **Judges are not obligated to look at the appendices.** Include important details in the body of the proposal paper to ensure they are reviewed.

Proposal Formatting Guidelines

Teams are responsible for the formatting and appearance of their proposal. Figures and tables should be legible without magnification. We recommend teams use image files with a minimum dpi of 150, with 300 DPI preferred.

- Proposals should be 5-7 pages in length. This includes all text that describes the concept and analysis plan, and any additional graphics, tables, and/or charts. (A well-conceived graphic can convey multiple pages worth of text and convey a deeper understanding of the problem and solution.)
    - The Cover Page, Table of Contents, Quad Chart, Theme Compliance Matrix, and Appendices do not count toward the minimum or the maximum page limitations.
    - **Appendices are to be used for references and calculations ONLY.** There is no preference in citation formatting, but references must be formatted uniformly and correctly. Just listing a link to the source is not acceptable.
        - Reviewers are not obligated to look at the appendices. Include important details in the body of your paper to ensure they are reviewed.
- Papers should be single spaced and single column.
- Margins should be a standard 1" (2.54 cm) all the way around (top, bottom, left, and right).
- **NEW!** Full page graphics are limited to standard, 8.5 x 11 sized page. Graphics larger than this may be counted as multiple pages.
- Please use fonts common to Macintosh and PC platforms, (i.e., Times, Times New Roman, Helvetica, or Arial for text Symbol for mathematical symbols and Greek letters).
- Font size should be at least 11 pt. (including in all tables, charts, and graphs). **Any text smaller than this, including text in graphics or charts, will not be reviewed.**
- Proposals must be submitted as PDF files.

Tips From the Judges

- Read ALL the HuLC guidelines and requirements found in this Challenge Guidelines Document.
- Research and justify your assumptions. **An important part of conceptual design is the ability to make reasonable assumptions to address uncertainties and to understand the consequences of those assumptions**. Provide adequate analysis and documentation (i.e., support) for your expected outcomes.
- Do not simply include information found on Google or generated by AI tools. Analyze your research findings.
- Find a balance between sound technical analysis and revolutionary concepts. Innovation will be rewarded and is highly desired, but not at the expense of fundamentals.
- Start with a big picture view of your concept, rationale, and goals. Don't jump immediately into the details of design or tool development, etc. Find balance between accurately addressing the overall approach and supporting specific focuses within your solution. If you drill down and focus your research and engineering on a particular design element to validate, you will still need to provide sufficient relevance, connection, and context to the broader solution.
- A picture is worth a thousand words and can convey a lot of information. Pictures for the proposal are a plus. Show us your innovation! (The proposal should not contain any hand-drawn sketches of your solution).
- If results/details are not available yet or are still being finalized, it is still valuable to indicate that you will have them and how you are determining them, sources of validation, etc. If it is not mentioned, judges will assume it is not being addressed.
- Consult the technical resources provided by NASA and the Judging Panel and make use of published papers and reports available to you. See the Resources Webpage for a list of resources and recommended reading.

- Do not use lengthy appendices! Appendices are for citations and references only.
- Participate in the Q&A Session.
- Utilize all available page space.
- Do not include hard-to-read figures, charts, or text in your proposal. Follow established font size requirements, because judges often will not read graphics or charts with font smaller than 11pt.
- Report quality will impact the judges' scoring. Poor grammar, typographical errors, etc. do not reflect well on your team.
- Submit all materials on time; late submissions will not be accepted.

General Video Formatting Instructions

As a part of the proposal submission process, teams will be required to include a 2-minute video. The intent is for the video to augment each team's proposal by including animation, graphics, or other creative ways of showcasing unique aspects of their proposed concept.

- Videos are limited to a maximum length of 2 minutes.
- Videos should be uploaded to YouTube, and teams will provide their video's YouTube URL on the online Proposal Package Submission Form. **Other types of video files will not be eligible for consideration.**
- Videos need to be **publicly viewable** via a link. Videos should be "Unlisted" or "Public" on YouTube.
    - Troubleshooting Tip: YouTube accounts sometimes need to be verified prior to being able to fully upload videos. If your video is stuck in the "processing" stage, check to make sure your YouTube account is verified.
- Use "*2026 HuLC Proposal – University Name, 'Project Title'*" as video title. Abbreviations and acronyms are allowable if necessary for YouTube's character limits.
- All team members should appear in the video, if possible (still images are OK).
- Your university name and project title should appear in text at the beginning of the video.
- Do not use music or images which may violate copyright law. You may use images created by NASA, but cannot use the NASA meatball.
    - It is the responsibility of the team to follow copyright law. Neither NASA nor NIA can approve the use of copyrighted material.

Submitting the Proposal Package

To upload your proposal and video (.pdf file and YouTube link), please visit the Challenge Details Webpage and complete the online Proposal Package Submission Form. Utilize the Checklist for a Successful Proposal to ensure your proposal is complete prior to submitting.

No revisions can be accepted after submission, so please proof the proposal and video files very carefully before submission. If there are any technical problems with the content of the proposal or video (for example, the file was corrupted or a URL link was broken), we will try to contact a team member immediately, so it is very important to provide up-to-date contact information on the Submission Form.

Late submissions will not be accepted, and the Submission Form will close promptly at midnight Eastern Time.

The following information will be required or requested on the Proposal Package Submission Form:

- Name of U.S.-Based College/University
- Name(s) of any Collegiate or Industry Partners
- Project Title
- Chosen Subtopic
- Contact Information for Primary Faculty Advisor and 2 Student Team Leads
- Contact Information for any Additional Points of Contact, if applicable
- File Upload for PDF Proposal Document (Max File Size is 100 MB)
- File Upload for High Resolution Graphic Depicting Team's Concept
    - Each team is required to upload a high-resolution graphic file (minimum 300 DPI) that may be used to publicly highlight the team's participation in HuLC. While this image will not be scored, it should be suitable for external sharing and may be featured on websites, social media, promotional materials, NASA reports, and similar outlets.
- URL for Team YouTube Video (Video must be "Unlisted" or "Public")
- A 2-3 sentence synopsis of the proposed project that briefly highlights any innovations (Max 600 characters)
- **Financial Information – For use only if a team is selected as a finalist.
    - Financial Point of Contact (POC): Someone employed by the university who can receive and manage funds on behalf of the team if a team is selected as a Finalist. They may be contacted to confirm receipt of any awards.
        - Student team members ***may not*** be Financial POCs.
    - Mailing Address for Prizes/Awards: Must be a university address. Awards cannot be mailed to team members or residential addresses.
    - File Upload for the Primary University's Completed Vendor W-9 Form (must be completed by the primary university's accounting department, a department admin or account specialist) – for use if the team is a selected Finalist
        - A completed IRS W9 Form from the lead institution is an acceptable substitution for the Vendor Form. Vendor Forms (or W9 substitution) should be signed and dated within the past 2 years.
- **NEW!** Acceptance of the HuLC Participation Agreement
- **NEW!** PDF File Upload for Faculty Advisor Approval Attestation Using the Provided Template
    - The attestation form serves two key purposes:
        - To confirm that the Faculty Advisor has reviewed and approved the team's proposal submission.
        - To acknowledge that the Faculty Advisor has read and agrees to comply with the full HuLC Participation Agreement. By submitting to the HuLC Competition, all team members – including the Faculty Advisor – agree to the terms and conditions outlined in the Participation Agreement.
    - **Important Note:** Submissions without a valid Faculty Advisor Approval Attestation will be deemed non-compliant and will not be reviewed.

****Information Regarding Required Vendor W-9 Form**

Immediately upon submission, HuLC program staff will verify Vendor W-9 Forms and Financial POCs for all proposing teams. If this information is incorrect at the time of submission, it could result in delays in prize disbursement. Be sure the submitted W9 is correct at the time of proposal submission.

Phase 1 Evaluation Criteria

The HuLC judging panel is comprised of NASA and industry experts who will score each submission based on adherence to the guidelines and constraints, and the published evaluation criteria. The 2026 HuLC Phase 1 Scoring Matrix outlines how the Proposal Package will be evaluated, including point value assessment. The proposal package can earn a maximum of 100 points, and will be judged based on:

- Technical Innovation (Max 40 points)
    - How innovative is the proposed solution?
    - How clearly articulated and motivated are the proposed solution's objectives?
    - How well does the proposed solution enable NASA's exploration goals and align with the HuLC Guidelines related to ECLSS? (Refer to NASA's Plan for Sustained Lunar Exploration and Development and NASA's Initial and Sustained Artemis Human Landing Systems.)
- Technical Credibility (Max 40 points)
    - Is the proposed solution appropriate for application and operation in cislunar, lunar, and Martian environments?
    - How feasible is the proposed solution in addressing the needs of ECLSS in terms of technical maturity, adherence to the HuLC constraints, and potential to directly contribute to resolving HLS challenges?
    - Has the team proposed a solution with system-level impacts, realistic assumptions, and rigorous technical analysis and design?
    - How feasible and thorough is the verification and validation for the proposed solution?
    - Are the risks associated with development, verification, and validation of the solution well captured and mitigation plans defined?
- Technical Management (Max 15 points)
    - Is the proposed development and implementation plan adequate and thorough, with a path-to-adoption schedule and milestones clearly defined and reasonable?
    - Are the estimated costs and any carried margins/uncertainties reasonable and reflective of the proposed solution's required technical development and maturity?
    - Does the proposed solution have a high likelihood of success?
    - How well written, organized, and communicated is the proposal?
- Video (Max 5 points)
    - Video highlights aspects of the team's concept(s) and/or increases understanding of the proposed solution.
    - Video content is aesthetic, organized, and flows. Ideas are communicated clearly, and viewers can easily follow the material.

Announcement of Finalists and Phase 1 Prizes

Finalist teams will be announced in April 2026 following the conclusion of the Phase 1 proposal review. Each eligible finalist team will receive a $9,000 prize issued to their university and advance to Phase 2 of the competition, which includes a final design review at the HuLC Forum. Allocation of the funds is at the discretion of the team's faculty advisor.

Deliverables for Finalist Teams

Teams selected to receive funding and advance to Phase 2 are responsible for the following project deliverables. **Additional details on these deliverables will be communicated to finalist teams after selection.**

- 10–15-page Technical Paper
- Technical Poster (for Poster Session conducted during HuLC Forum)
    - Teams must submit a digital poster file and bring a full-size printed poster for display during the Forum's poster session.
- 25-minute Presentation, with an additional 20-minutes of Q&A at the HuLC Forum

All finalists' technical papers, presentations, and posters will be posted and archived on the HuLC Website, and technical papers may be submitted through NASA's Technical Report Server (NTRS). All work published to the HuLC website may be referenced by others, including future HuLC participants.

Phase 2 Prizes

Teams selected to receive funding and move on to Phase 2 are responsible for the development of a technical paper, technical poster, and a presentation during the HuLC Forum in June 2026 at or near NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Alabama. During the culminating Awards Ceremony at the HuLC Forum, awards will include 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place, and any other panel-determined honors (e.g., Best Technical Poster, Best in Systems Engineering, etc.). The overall top three teams will receive an additional prize distributed in the same manner as the initial award, as follows:

- First Place - $10,000
- Second Place - $5,000
- Third Place - $3,000

Resources

Please visit the Resources page on the HuLC website to find resources and information for developing your HuLC concept.

Contact Information

NASA's Human Lander Challenge (HuLC) is administered by the National Institute of Aerospace on behalf of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). HuLC is sponsored by the Exploration Systems Development Mission Directorate's (ESDMD's) Human Landing System (HLS) Program Office. **For HuLC inquiries, please contact the NIA HuLC Program Team at HuLC@nianet.org.**