

What is Community Problem Solving?

In Community Problem Solving (CmPS) students initiate a project to identify real problems and implement real solutions in a community –local, state, national, or even global. CmPS projects are student-driven and produce young leaders ready to solve problems they may encounter throughout their lives.

CmPS engages students in the real world, stimulates critical and creative thinking skills, fosters collaboration and teamwork and encourages students to develop a vision for community improvement

Students choose an Area of Concern, identify challenges, select an Underlying Problem, generate solution ideas, determine which solution ideas are best, and then develop an Action Plan. Then students implement their Action Plan in their community and document their progress towards their goals. Students also create different multimedia products to showcase their work and complete a written Proposal and Report for competition. Resources can be found at [our Resource Links page, https://www.fpspi.org/resource-links/](https://www.fpspi.org/resource-links/).

Why Community Problem Solving?

CmPS is ideally suited for students who are committed to a long-term project, usually the length of an academic year, and who are interested in making a positive change in their community. CmPS develops reading, writing, speaking, and analysis skills, so students of all levels of literacy proficiency can participate in CmPS on a well-balanced team.

Students who complete CmPS projects see many benefits, such as:

- opportunities for real life application of critical and creative thinking;
- practice identifying and addressing real problems;
- increased engagement in their local communities;
- the development of project management skills;
- more choice and voice in their own learning;
- community service beyond service learning or volunteer hours; and
- deep, authentic learning and application of the problem-solving process.

And, importantly, students develop agency through the implementation of the problem-solving process within their communities.

Who can compete in Community Problem Solving?

Students may compete in CmPS in three divisions (equivalent to grade levels in the USA):

- Junior (grades 4-6)
- Middle (grades 7-9)
- Senior (grades 10-12)

Students of mixed age teams will compete in the highest division represented on the team. For instance, if three 6th graders and two 7th graders want to compete together, they would compete as a Middle Division project.

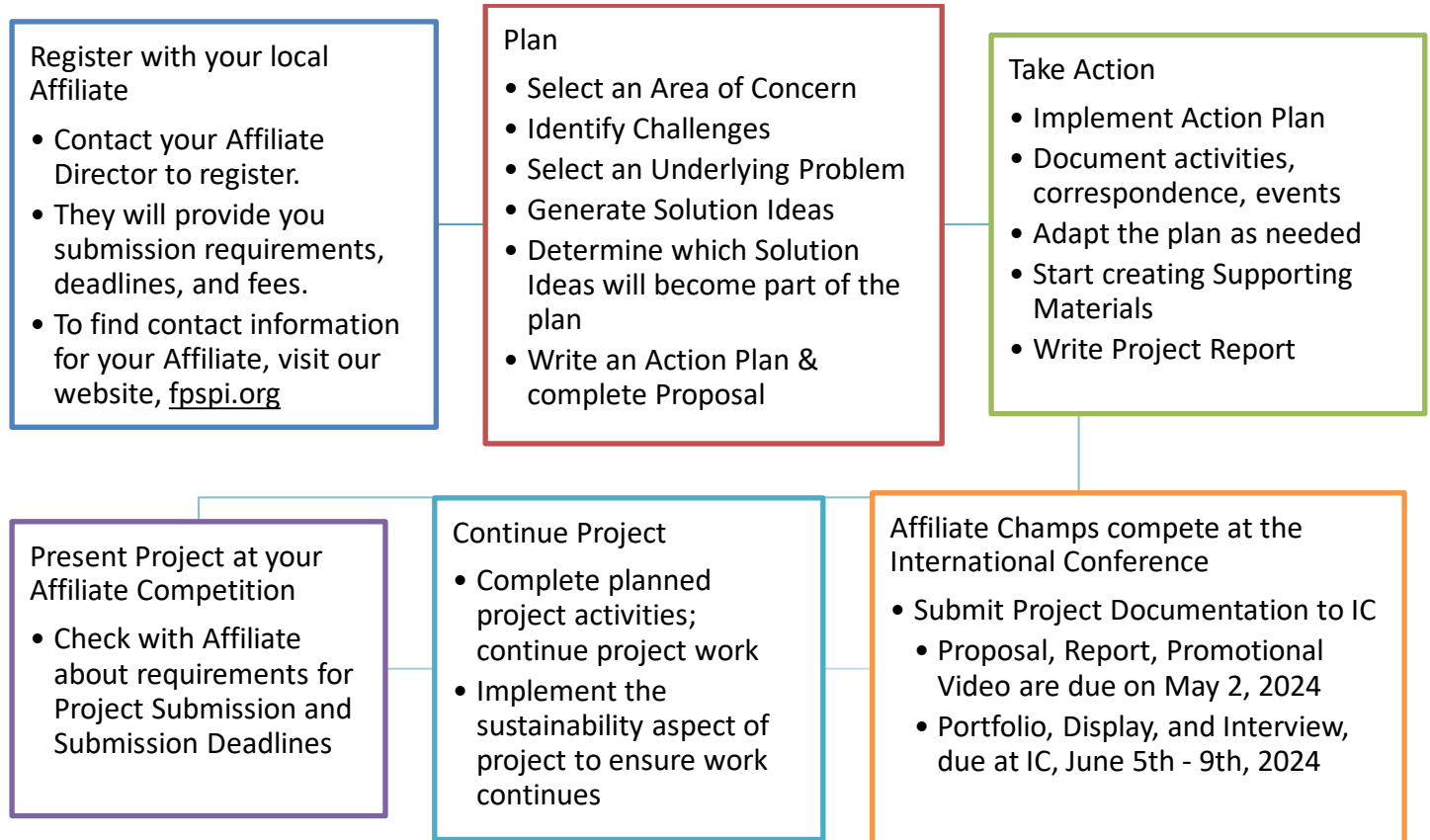
Students can compete as teams or as individuals. Teams can range from two students to as many as would like to participate, though only 15 participants can participate in on-site competition activities.

What does a Community Problem Solving project require?

There are three elements for project completion. Students write a Proposal, which is an overview of their identified topic and community, their intended actions, and their problem-solving process. Then, students implement their plan and document this in the Report. Students who compete at the International Conference complete the Supporting Materials - a Promotional Video, a Portfolio, a Display, and participate in an Interview. Detailed information can be found in “CmPS Project Information for Coaches and Students” and “CmPS Project Elements for Competition”.

What does the timeline for Community Problem Solving look like?

Ideally, students form teams and project ideas at the onset of the academic year. Here is a visual “year” of CmPS.



Competitions

Affiliate Competition

- Affiliate Directors will determine the submission method for individual Affiliate Programs. Please contact your Affiliate Director for specific information regarding registration and submission. To find an Affiliate, visit our website at fpspi.org or email cmps@fpspi.org

International Conference (IC)

- CmPS participants will submit the Proposal, Report, and Promotional Video to FPSONline on May 2, 2024
- The Portfolio, Display, and Interview will be evaluated on-site
- Students will exhibit their project to the IC community at the CmPS Showcase