Community Problem Solving (CmPS)

Project Information

for Coaches and Students

2023-2024

FPSPI

FUTURE PROBLEM SOLVING PROGRAM
INTERNATIONAL

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"The genius of the future will be the creative mind adapting itself to the shape of things to come." -E. Paul Torrance Creativity, (1991)

What is Community Problem Solving?

Community Problem Solving (CmPS) is a component of the Future Problem Solving (FPS) program, in which students initiate a project to identify real problems and implement real solutions in a community. CmPS projects are student-driven and produce young leaders ready to solve problems they may encounter throughout their lives.

Community Problem Solving:

- engages students in the real world using independent thought and action;
- asks students to apply the problem-solving process to real and current problems in their communities;
- stimulates critical and creative thinking skills;
- fosters collaboration and teamwork;
- develops cultural agility; and
- encourages students to develop a vision for community improvement.

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;
- an increase in self-efficacy and agency;
- 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.

> **Student agency**, according to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, in their Future of Education Skills 2030 series, is when, "**students have the ability and the will to positively influence their own lives and the world around them.** Student agency is thus defined as the capacity to **set a goal, reflect and act responsibly to effect change**…Student agency relates to the development of an identity and a sense of belonging. When students develop agency they rely on motivation, hope, self-efficacy and a growth mindset (the understanding that abilities and intelligence can be developed) to navigate towards well-being. **This enables them to act with a sense of purpose, which guides them to flourish and thrive in society.**" (2019)

Future Problem Solving Process

CmPS is where students apply the Future Problem Solving (FPS) model to the real world. The FPS model, or creative problem-solving process, is a technique for constructively looking at a topic or issue.

The FPS Model, used in Global Issues Problem Solving, is comprised of six steps:
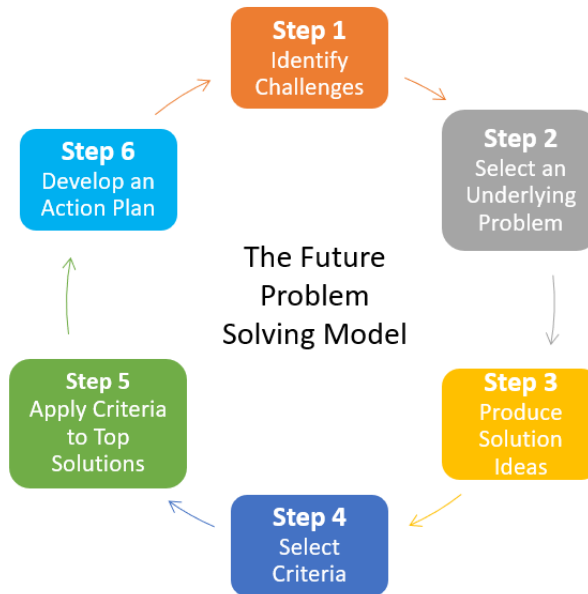
In CmPS, the Global Issues Problem Solving model is adapted. In Global Issues Problem Solving, another FPSPI component, students follow a definite linear progression from one step to the next. In CmPS, the process might be considered circular, with neither a beginning or end. The creative problem-solving process easily applies to the real world. The steps are adapted as students will use these steps through planning and implementing their Action Plan. Students will revisit the problem-solving process many times throughout the project.
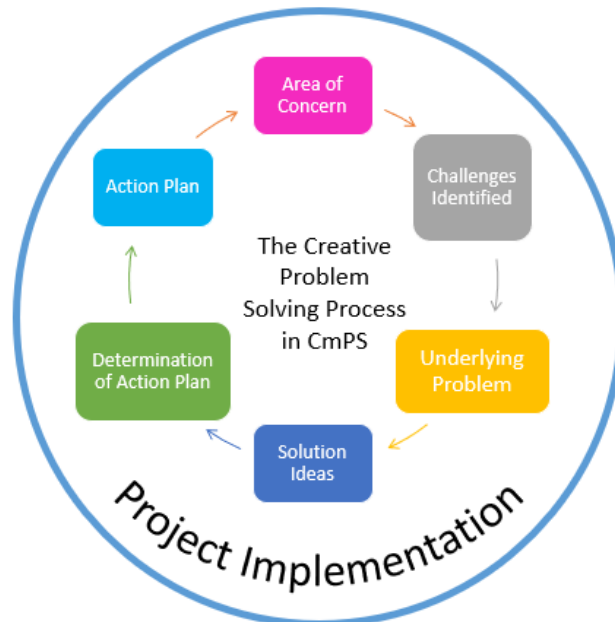
Guide to Selecting a Project

Student Choice & Authentic Concern

In Community Problem Solving, students decide the focus of their project. Coaches assist, guide, and facilitate the discussions and decision making, but do not determine a project's focus. Student agency is key to successful implementation of Community Problem Solving. This component allows students opportunities to realize their power in creating lasting change within their communities.

Genuine student interest should guide the identification of an issue for a project's focus. Topics often emerge from personal experiences and a personal connection from the student(s) often improves engagement and commitment.

Guiding Questions While Choosing a Project Focus/Topic
- Is the topic/area of concern student initiated?
- Is the team inspired to make real change?
- Will this topic sustain our interest for the long term, or the entire school year?
- Is the team passionate about this?
- Do we see a pathway to make a measurable impact?
- Will there be community support for the project?

Choosing a Community Focus
Students determine the specific community that will be the focus of their efforts. It can vary considerably in size. Coaches can help guide students to determine how to narrow down the scope of the community.

Possible communities include:
- neighborhood
- school
- local community (city, town, village)
- region (county, larger metro area)
- state/province
- nation
- world

Guiding Questions about Community Focus
- What do we know about the community we have identified?
- What community organizations may be also working on this issue?
- Will we be able to measure the impact of our actions on this community?
- Are there any major barriers to working with this community?

Plan to Act

CmPS Projects should focus on student designed actions. Students establish goals, brainstorm actions, identify resources & obstacles, and implement their plan.

A CmPS project is not a traditional research project, but research will support students in determining their actions, as well as other parts of their project. CmPS can be an extracurricular activity or part of the regular school curriculum and projects can take one or more years.

Timeline of the CmPS Season

Register with your local Affiliate

- Contact your Affiliate Director to register.
- They will provide you submission requirements, deadlines, and fees.
- To find contact information for your Affiliate, visit our website, fpspi.org

Plan

- Select an Area of Concern
- Identify Challenges
- Select an Underlying Problem
- Generate Solution Ideas
- Determine which Solution Ideas will become part of the plan
- Write an Action Plan & complete Proposal

Take Action

- Implement Action Plan
- Document activities, correspondence, events
- Adapt the plan as needed
- Start creating Supporting Materials
- Write Project Report

Present Project at your Affiliate Competition

- Check with Affiliate about requirements for Project Submission and Submission Deadlines

Continue Project

- Complete planned project activities; continue project work
- Implement the sustainability aspect of project to ensure work continues

Affiliate Champs compete at the International Conference

- Submit Project Documentation to IC
- Proposal, Report, Promotional Video are due on May 2, 2024
- Portfolio, Display, and Interview, due at IC, June 5th - 9th, 2024

International Conference:

- Submission instructions for IC 2024 will be released on March 1, 2024.
- The Project Proposal, Project Report, including the Preface, if applicable, and Promotional Video must be submitted electronically via FPSOnline on May 2nd, 2024.
- The Portfolio may be submitted electronically in PDF or provided on-site as a hardcopy.
- At the International Conference, participants will be given approximately 3 hours to set up their project display.
- Interviews will be scheduled to be held during the International Conference.
- Only IC registered students will be permitted to participate in IC activities, including the Interview, CmPS Showcase, and Awards.

Project Requirements for Competition

CmPS Competition Divisions

Students of all ages can successfully identify issues in their communities and apply the problem-solving process to create a positive impact.

Students who want to submit their CmPS project for competition purposes can do so in the following divisions:

- Junior Division: Grades 4-6
- Middle Division: Grades 7-9
- Senior Division: Grades 10-12

Grades listed are equivalent to grade levels in the USA. Students of mixed age 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.

Project Elements

There are three elements for project completion. Each element builds on or supplements the previous element. All three elements are required for the International Conference. Affiliates may have different requirements for Affiliate Competition.

1. The Project Proposal: In the Proposal, students analyze their Area of Concern and develop the Action Plan they intend to implement in their identified community.
2. The Project Report: Students describe the implementation of their Action Plan, and how they adapted their plans as needed, and how they impacted their community.
3. Supporting Materials: Students complete a Portfolio, create a Promotional Video, develop a physical Display, and participate in an Interview. Students use these elements to creatively present their project in multiple media.

Students are evaluated on each element throughout the Proposal, Report, and Supporting Materials. Student work is evaluated based on the criteria within the scoresheet. The criteria are separated by categories or steps within the evaluated element. Student work will be also evaluated holistically for creativity, student engagement, the use of the problem-solving process, and communication.

Proposal	Report	Supporting Materials
• Overview of goals and problem-solving process • Planned actions • **Up to 2,000 words, 12 pt, non-script font**	• Explains actions implemented • Discusses obstacles or changes to plan • **Up to 3,500 words, 12 pt, non-script font**	• Shows depth and breath of project • Provides evidence to support claims • Includes Portfolio, Promotional Video, Display, Interview

Project Proposal

The project Proposal is a planning document that captures the team's original analysis of the chosen topic and community, referred to as the Area of Concern, along with the students' anticipated actions. It serves as a framework for the project, outlining its vision, goals, deadlines, and the application of problem-solving. Students are encouraged to structure their Proposal using the problem-solving process. This may be due to the Affiliate Program mid-year, be sure to check for the due date.

The goal of the Proposal is to capture the problem solving process at the inception of the project. As the project progresses, it is natural for the project to evolve and for students to fluidly move between steps of the problem-solving process. Any changes from the original plan will be reflected upon later in the Project Report.

Guidelines for submission: The Proposal can be up to 2000 words, and must be submitted in a 12 pt., non-script font. Note: The Proposal should not be re-written or modified once it is submitted mid-year.

Proposal Elements

The Proposal is organized in this order to reflect the Future Problem Solving process in CmPS:

- Area of Concern
- Challenges Identified
- Underlying Problem
- Solution Ideas
- Determination of Plan
- Action Plan

Proposal Elements

Area of Concern → Identified Challenges → Underlying Problem → Solution Ideas → Determination of Action Plan → Action Plan
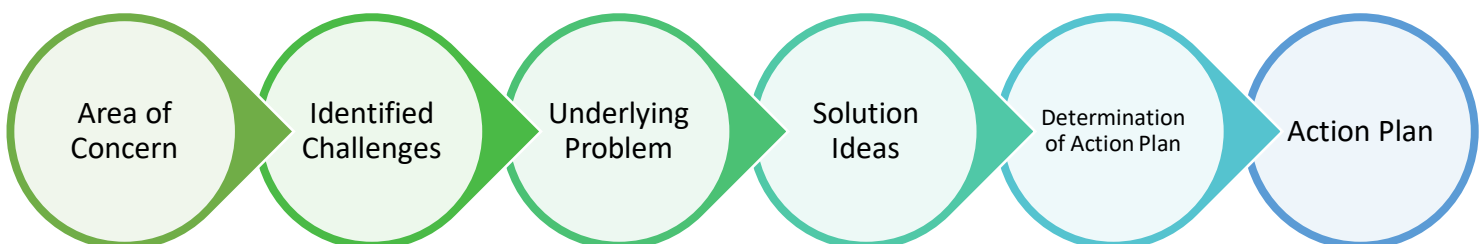
Area of Concern

The Area of Concern is the beginning of the Project Proposal. It serves as a written picture of the "before" of the project. Students should effectively establish the significance of the situation to the community and students and how the team arrived at the selection of this issue.

A good Area of Concern is grounded in an understanding of the issue and the community it impacts, current research on the issue, and the team's analysis of the current reality of the situation. Research into the topic and community is key to this step. No specific citation model is required. Short, clear references to an information source are appropriate.

Guiding Questions for the Area of Concern
- What is the situation to be addressed?
- Which people or communities are impacted by this problem?
- Do we know why this issue exists?
- What stakeholders are involved?
- Do we know what efforts to solve this problem are already in place or have been tried in the past?
- How do we think addressing the issue might impact the community?

A well-written Area of Concern:
- clearly and thoroughly explains the problem situation to be addressed;
- explains the significance of the issue;
- includes information from research about the situation;
- describes the community involved;
- conveys importance to the students and the community;
- identifies existing problems of the community; and
- incorporates factual data demonstrating a research-based analysis of the current community situation.

> E Paul Torrance, a pioneer in creativity and founder of FPSPI, said, "Outstanding creative achievement involves being different, testing known limits, attempting difficult jobs, making honest mistakes and responding to challenge." Students can use this example to guide citations, and this quote to guide their work. 😊

Challenges Identified

Challenges are issues, concerns, or problems that need attention or consideration in the Area of Concern. Students demonstrate flexible and insightful thinking by examining the Area of Concern from a variety of perspectives, indicating a thorough examination of the community's situation.

Challenges may be presented in paragraph or list form, and no specific number of challenges is required.

The team generates a list of challenges by analyzing the Area of Concern from many perspectives. These could be:

- challenges that have caused or are causing the situation;
- challenges that might result from the situation as it is presently; and/or
- challenges that may arise while trying to change the situation.

Guiding Questions for Challenges

- Have we looked at our Area of Concern from multiple perspectives?
- Have we written challenges that show flexibility in thinking?
- Are any parts of our Area of Concern left out of our list of challenges?
- Did we write the challenges with clarity?
- How might different stakeholders be experiencing the Area of Concern differently?

Well-written Challenges:

- state what the Challenge is;
- explain why it is a Challenge; and
- present how it connects with the Area of Concern.

Challenges are derived from the Area of Concern. They may be experienced by stakeholders in the community or project. Challenges are **not** issues the team has with meeting CmPS requirements or interpersonal concerns.

Underlying Problem

An Underlying Problem (UP) represents a significant challenge that directly connects to the Area of Concern and stems from the identified Challenges. It should identify an action goal based on the analysis of the Area of Concern, narrowing it down to a manageable scope, and addressing a significant aspect. The Underlying Problem (UP) should emerge from the identified Challenges and concerns, effectively communicating the desired project outcome and the community's need.

A well-written Underlying Problem (UP) demonstrates the team's critical analysis of the Area of Concern and their deep understanding of the actual issue impacting the community.

The Underlying Problem is structured as follows:
- Condition Phrase – Start with a concise rationale for pursuing the selected goal.
- Key Verb Phrase (KVP)– Then, include a well-defined primary action goal addressing an aspect of the Area of Concern.
- Purpose- Lastly, include a justification for accomplishing the goal. This is the desired result that should flow from accomplishing the KVP.

Guiding Questions for the Underlying Problem
- Where can we make the biggest impact?
- Is our issue manageable?
- Can we measure our impact?
- Have we chosen a verb we can implement?

A well-written Underlying Problem:
- narrows the goal from the entire Area of Concern to create a clear and manageable objective; and
- identifies a major, important issue that, if resolved, will have a major impact on the identified community.

Solution Ideas

Students generate Solution Ideas that address the Underlying Problem in varied ways.

Solutions may be written in paragraph or list form. Generated Solution Ideas do not need to be fully developed. They can be expanded, combined, excluded, or refined later in the problem-solving process.

Guiding Questions for Solution Ideas

- When developing our solutions, have we included enough information to clarify our idea? Ideas for inclusion:
  - Who (the team or other stakeholders?)
  - What (action related to KVP)
  - Why (if not apparent, how does this connect to the UP?)
  - When (is timing critical?)
  - Where (in person, online? If location is relevant, have we included this information?)
- Have we considered multiple perspectives on our Underlying Problem?
- Do our solutions show many, diverse ways of addressing the Underlying Problem?
- How can the team leverage our resources into our solutions?

A well-written list of Solution Ideas:

- demonstrate a variety of solutions that, using your KVP, could improve the Area of Concern;
- are clearly explained and directly related to the UP;
- reflect the research completed; and
- demonstrate flexible and insightful thinking.

Determination of Action Plan

After generating a solution list, students then need to employ a method, technique, or "thinking tool" to analyze solution ideas.

Students use this step so they can select the solution ideas that are developed into the Action Plan. This must happen after a reasoned and deliberate decision-making process, so that the Action Plan effectively responds to the Underlying Problem.

Appropriate thinking tools might include, but are not limited to, the use of an evaluation matrix, a pro/con list, ALoU (Advantages, Limitations & How to Overcome, Unique Potential), criteria, or another documented decision-making strategy.

Guiding Questions for Determination of Action Plan
- What tool will we use?
- How will we document our use of the tool?
- How will we write about our process?

A well-written Determination of Action Plan:
- provides evidence of effective application of method or tool;
- explains thought processes used in decision-making;
- shows a thoughtful consideration of the process; and
- demonstrates that students were able to select ideas that clearly respond to the UP.

This step is one of the most important parts of the problem-solving process!
Imagine someone says, "I have all the money and resources to support one student community project this year. But, I need to be convinced that your idea is the best! "
If a team has not critically evaluated their solution ideas, then they would not be prepared to discuss their reasoning behind their solutions and Action Plan.
This step is often cited by former Future Problem Solving and Community Problem Solving participants as the step they use the most in their adult lives and in their careers.

Action Plan

The purpose of the Action Plan is to write a clear plan to solve the Underlying Problem and positively impact the Area of Concern. The team should thoroughly communicate the intended course of action and show a complete plan and strategies for implementation. This should be written in the future tense and include timeframes or a timeline.

Guiding Questions for the Action Plan

- What actions will we pursue?
- How will we complete these activities?
- Did we include the "how", "when", and "with whom" in the activities?
- Have we considered who will support or resist our ideas?
- What is our anticipated timeline?
- When do we plan on meeting our goals?

A well-written Action Plan:

- explains what the project intends to accomplish and the proposed sequence of actions;
- includes the intended impact the Action Plan will have on the Area of Concern;
- is written in the future tense;
- identifies a thorough scope of activities; and
- includes these elements:
  - o strategies for implementation;
  - o description of tasks;
  - o details on how the intended solution will operate; and
  - o deadlines, activities, presentations, anticipated achievements, timeframes, etc.

> **Action Plan Considerations:**
> Be aware of your school calendar, community events, and holidays as you plan.
> If your team needs funding to support your project, the written Proposal with an Action Plan will be a great resource to share for grant applications. Teams should consult with their coach and any organization or school officials as they write the Action Plan.

Proposal Evaluation Considerations

You can see in-depth evaluation information in the CmPS Evaluation Guidelines and Scoresheets which can be accessed from our Resource Links page, https://www.fpspi.org/resource-links/

Briefly, students are evaluated on how well their Proposal fulfills the evaluation guidelines in each of the problem-solving steps used above, as well an overall evaluation of clarity, ownership, and creativity.

Evaluators of your Proposal, at the Affiliate and International Level, may not be familiar with the context in which your project is situated. Review your writing to ensure you have clearly defined and explained elements in your Proposal.

Evaluation Process:

Proposal Submitted to Affiliate
- Up to 2000 words
- Document should not change after this submission

Evaluated at Affiliate Level

Top Projects Invited to International Conference (IC)

Proposal Submitted for IC Evaluation
- This is the same document as submitted to Affiliate Competition

Proposal Evaluated for IC 2024

Proposal Rubric

Area of Concern (30 pts)				
	Developing	Proficient	Outstanding	Exemplary
Significance refers to the importance/need of the community situation being addressed	Community need for/importance of the project is unclear	Conveys basic ideas, general understanding of community's need for assistance	Community's need is identifiable, includes some details establishing importance of project	Significance of the situation to the community and students is effectively established; addressing identified concerns will have positive impact
Completeness refers to the team's ability to present a comprehensive picture of the Area of Concern	Conveys basic concept; lacks detail	Partial picture of AoC; intent vague	Demonstrates multiple views of the AoC; indicates a reasonable understanding of the present situation	Comprehensive description of the AoC, evidence of thorough understanding of the present community situation; relation to stakeholders and obstacles to be overcome effectively identified
Investigation considers the extent to which students have examined the situation and researched relevant issues, trends, previous actions, etc.	Minimal investigation of the situation was conducted	Some exploration of relevant issues considered	Multiple resources and issues considered for understanding the AoC	Comprehensive investigation of the AoC; research of issue provides evidence of thorough understanding of how the present situation emerged
Challenges Identified (20 pts)				
	Developing	Proficient	Outstanding	Exemplary
Flexibility refers to how well students analyzed the situation from a variety of viewpoints	Minimal evidence that students considered issues or aspects beyond the conventional	A small range of ideas or viewpoints were considered	Multiple aspects of the AoC were considered to develop challenges	Varied ideas and aspects of the problem considered from a range of viewpoints demonstrate a comprehensive approach to the AoC
Insight refers to how aware students were to the problems of those directly involved	Minimal connection to those directly involved in the situation	Some understanding of those involved is presented	Consideration of those involved is evident throughout	Demonstrated perceptive consideration of those involved in the situation, and the interrelated nature of their concerns
Underlying Problem (35 pts)				
	Developing	Proficient	Outstanding	Exemplary
Focus considers the scope of the Underlying Problem in terms of the Area of Concern	Overly broad goals; restatement of AoC; or lacks connection to AoC	Effort made to narrow the AoC; goals vague or ill- defined	AoC narrowed to appropriate issue for the UP	Narrows the goal from the entire AoC to create a clear and manageable objective
Adequacy examines the significance of the UP, and its impact on the Area of Concern	Tenuous link to the AoC, another idea may have been better	Connection to AoC evident; the impact on the AoC could be stronger	Appropriate issue from the AoC is addressed	Identifies a major, important issue, that if resolved will have a considerable impact on community identified in the AoC
Structure refers to the structure of the Underlying Problem (Note - only absence of an element warrants a score of zero)	Condition Phrase - appropriate	Key Verb Phrase (KVP)- appropriate single action verb with its object	Purpose - provides single appropriate reason for accomplishing KVP	

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Solution Ideas (20 pts)				
	Developing	Proficient	Outstanding	Exemplary
Relevance to the UP considers how effectively solution ideas address the KVP and support the Purpose	Relationship to the UP is minimal or unclear	Connection to the UP is present	Solid connection to the UP	Strong connection and high significance of ideas to the UP effectively demonstrated
Flexibility refers to the diversity of solution ideas, identifying a range of ways to accomplish the goals of the UP	Minimal evidence that students considered issues or ideas beyond the conventional	A small range of ideas or stakeholders were considered	Multiple actions, perspectives, and possibilities were considered	Varied ideas and consideration from a wide range of viewpoints demonstrate a comprehensive analysis of the UP
Determination of Action Plan (20 pts)				
	Developing	Proficient	Outstanding	Exemplary
Application refers to the appropriateness of the technique employed for determining the best solution(s)	Method employed was ineffective to determine the best solution(s)	An appropriate tool was identified; its application was vague/unsuccessful	Evidence of reasonable strategy being applied to consider solutions	Deliberate thought was demonstrated in the use of a technique to select the best solution(s); the selected method was used effectively
Analysis considers the extent to which solution ideas were examined/compared to determine the best solution(s) for the identified UP	Rationale for best solution(s) determination unclear	Reasoning behind best solution(s) determination minimal; needs more development	A logical explanation/presentation of determination is provided; there is a connection to the UP	A thorough and effective analysis of the solution ideas is demonstrated; selected idea(s) clearly responds to the goals established in the UP
Action Plan (30 pts)				
	Developing	Proficient	Outstanding	Exemplary
Elaboration measures the extent to which a complete strategy for implementing the Action Plan is described	Ideas are presented as basic concepts not yet ready for implementation	Some elements of the plan are developed, though a full plan has not been presented	Aspects of plan are well-developed; additional information would benefit implementation	Fully developed ideas convey thoroughly considered actions; descriptions of tasks, how solutions will operate, and how actions respond to the UP are discussed; ready for implementation
Proposed Activities identifies major goals and deadlines with suitable timeframes	Few activities listed; sequence and or timeframes are illogical	Some activities listed; additional details needed to create blueprint for future action	Activities listed with reasonable sequencing and timeframes	A thorough scope of activities are identified in an appropriate sequence with adequate timeframes; an effective blueprint for future success established
Overall (45 pts)				
	Developing	Proficient	Outstanding	Exemplary
Clarity measures the ability of the students to present their ideas and efforts, and the needs of the community, in a clear and logical manner	Hard to understand; intent unclear; cause-effect reasoning may be absent or incorrect	Conveys basic ideas; lacks detail; is vague or takes leaps in thinking	Clear explanation of ideas; some details provided	Effective communication of ideas; provides clear and thorough descriptions; demonstrates logical cause-effect thinking
Ownership examines the extent to which the project is student-driven	Student ownership of project is minimal; students involved, but not in leadership roles	Student ownership is inconsistent; shared with adults or other stakeholders	Students maintained active ownership throughout most of the project	Student initiative is central to the conception, development, and execution of the project; evidence in every element of the project
Creativity measures the creative, productive thinking in evidence throughout the Proposal	Minimal evidence of creative thinking, ideas represent conventional or commonplace ideas	Some attempt at creative thinking evidenced in some aspects of the proposal	Innovative thinking, insightful ideas, some aspects of the proposal go beyond the ordinary	Strong display of inventive, ingenious ideas throughout the proposal, unique adaptations to the community and/or AoC demonstrated throughout

Project Report

The Project Report is the team's chance to share the details of actual project implementation.

The Report should include:

- efforts from plan that were actually undertaken;
- tasks completed and goals met;
- project obstacles, modifications and adaptations;
- student reflections and lessons learned;
- progress made to fulfill the goals established in the Underlying Problem;
- the impact the project has had on the Area of Concern;
- community engagement and involvement; and
- project accomplishments and awards.

Students should include the Underlying Problem at the beginning of the Project Report for reference. If the team had to change the Underlying Problem in any way, this is the time to address those changes.

The Report should reflect the actual work accomplished by the students to date, and the progress made to fulfill the goals established in the UP. Emphasis should be placed on the explanation of the Action Plan – the role that implementation has had in the community, project accomplishments, hurdles encountered, lessons learned, adjustments to the original plan, etc.

This non-exhaustive list includes items that may be detailed in your Report:

- media outreach through articles, videos, social media
- presentations made
- changes to laws, ordinances, policies, procedure
- attendance at student events, low or high

- materials created and distributed
- events planned, hosted, or canceled
- securing venues and obtaining permits
- community outreach
- awards and honors received
- and more!

Teams should share how they used the problem-solving process throughout the project's implementation as the need to adapt and modify the project's goals and actions arose.

Students should share the breadth of the project and the range of activities they completed to address the Area of Concern and the goals identified in their Underlying Problem. Students should incorporate information that reflects the impact of the project, the community support and involvement, and events and activities carried out by the students.

An effective Report may combine prose, lists, diagrams, charts, or other descriptive elements to effectively communicate the implementation of the project.

Guidelines for submission: The Report can be up to 3,500 words, and must be submitted in a 12 pt., non-script font.

Guiding Questions for the Project Report

- How will we organize the Report? What section headings are most appropriate for the project?
- How will we ensure we address all of the elements evaluated in the Report?
- How will we organize our documentation so that writing the Report goes smoothly?
- Would someone unfamiliar with our community understand the references we make in the Report?

A well written Report:

- is easy to follow, with clear descriptions of activities and ideas;
- shows student initiative in all aspects of project implementation; and
- shares the ways in which students adapted their plans in creative and inventive ways.

Report Structure

CmPS teams can make their own decision about the structure of the Report. They are encouraged to include their Underlying Problem at the beginning, especially if the team has changed any wording of the UP.
While some teams choose to organize the Report with the same headings as the evaluation criteria, that is not required.

Project Report Evaluation

You can see in-depth evaluation information in the CmPS Evaluation Guidelines and Scoresheets, which can be accessed from our Resource Links page, https://www.fpspi.org/resource-links/. Evaluators of your Report, at the Affiliate and International Level, may not be familiar with the context in which your project is situated. Review your writing to ensure you have clearly defined and explained your project implementation and impact.

The Project Report is evaluated based on nine criteria, listed below:

- Relevance
- Organization
- Resources
- Community Impact
- Community Involvement
- Effectiveness of Action Plan
- Adaptation of Plan
- Sustainability of Project Impact
- Reflection/ Assessment

The Report is then holistically evaluated on clarity, ownership, and creativity.

The next page is provided as support for teams and coaches and includes Guiding Questions to consider and qualities of an exemplary project.

Relevance

- How well have the project achievements actually impacted the Area of Concern identified in the Underlying Problem?
- If the Underlying Problem or Action Plan was modified from the one presented in the Proposal, was the change included and justified?
- Activities planned for completion after the submission deadlines should also be described.

Organization

- Does the Report demonstrate effective management and coordination among stakeholders (students and community)?
- Tasks and responsibilities should be clearly delineated, effectively organized, and implemented.

Resources

- Resources may include media, agencies, organizations, experts, community leaders, informational sources, and more.
- Were a variety of resources and community connections identified and utilized in project implementation?

Community Impact

- What are the positive effects of the Action Plan on community stakeholders?
- Is the situation of the community improved as a whole?

Community Involvement

- Were strong partnerships between the students and community members established and utilized?
- How well did the team conduct outreach into the affected community?

Effectiveness of Action Plan

- Do the activities and actions demonstrate a strong connection to the UP?
- Did project implementations thoroughly respond to and improve the Area of Concern?
- How well have the project achievements impacted the Area of Concern and addressed the challenge area identified in the Underlying Problem?

Adaptation of Plan

- Did the team demonstrate effective utilization of problem-solving skills to adapt the Action Plan unforeseen circumstances arose?
- Goals and procedures are clearly established in the Proposal, but they should remain flexible and fluid to adapt as needed.
- Changing or reworking the project as more knowledge and experience is acquired is considered part of the problem-solving process.

Sustainability of Project Impact

- Are there strategies in place for the benefits of the project to continue after the project's conclusion?

Reflection/ Assessment

- Students should include a thoughtful and thorough analysis of the outcomes of their project.
- The team should objectively assess and reflect on the accomplishments, indicating an understanding of achievements and areas of growth, victories, and difficulties.
- Be sure to include details on effectiveness in addressing the Area of Concern and the goals of their Underlying Problem.

Report Rubric

Report- International Conference (155 pts)				
	Developing	Proficient	Outstanding	Exemplary
Relevance considers how well the implemented Action Plan relates to the Underlying Problem	Little or no relationship to the UP; another plan may have been better	Some relationship to the UP	Good relationship to the UP	Excellent relationship to the UP; Action Plan directly relates to the KVP and support the Purpose
Organization tasks and responsibilities are clearly delineated and effective management strategies are in place	Tasks and responsibilities are unclear; minimal evidence of project management strategies	Some tasks or responsibilities presented; evidence of project management strategies	Tasks and responsibilities are clearly presented and assigned; multiple project management strategies in place	Tasks and responsibilities are clearly and effectively delineated; effective management and coordination identified
Resources refers to identification and utilization of community resources in the implementation of the Action Plan	Minimal resources identified	Several resources identified; additional or more appropriate resources likely needed before implementation	Multiple resources identified, considering ways to involve the community	A variety of resources and community connections identified and utilized; excellent use of the community in implementation of Action Plan
Community Impact considers the positive effects the Action Plan has on community stakeholders	Minimal evidence of impact on the community	Some impact made on parts of the community	Positive impact on sections of the community is established	The situation is improved for the community as a whole; Action Plan has a positive impact for the future
Community Involvement refers to how well outreach into the affected community and beyond was demonstrated	Minimal evidence of outreach to the community	Some connections made with community members	Relationships developed between students and community members	Strong partnerships between the students and community members established and utilized
Effectiveness of Action Plan measures the effectiveness of the activities undertaken to accomplish the objectives explored in the AoC, and the objectives of the UP	Little relationship to the UP; unclear how the plan improves the existing situation in the AoC	Solves some aspects of the UP; alternate or additional activities may have been needed	Adequately solves UP; reasonable response to the AoC	Activities and actions demonstrate strong connection to the UP; thoroughly responds to and improves the AoC
Adaptation of Plan refers to the effective utilization of problem solving skills to adapt the project as needed	Minimal evidence of problem solving skills; difficulty adapting plan when needed	Some application of problem solving skills to account for unforeseen obstacles	Encountered obstacles, adequately responded to with problem solving skills	Effective problem solving skills employed as needed; thorough planning/response prevented project delay
Sustainability of Project Impact refers to the continuation of a project's impact even after students' direct involvement has concluded	Minimal or no evidence of the continuing impact on community after project's formal conclusion	Concerns for future impact evident; continuing impact unclear	Strategies in place for ongoing continuation of project impact	Strategies in place for benefits of project to continue within the community after the project's conclusion
Reflection/Assessment Reflection/Assessment demonstrates a thoughtful and thorough analysis of the outcomes of the project	Reflection is distorted; objective measures of success not accurately assessed	Reasonable reflections; objective measures not well used; reflections demonstrate bias	Efforts for thoughtful reflection and objective analysis present	Careful, honest assessment of actions conducted; objective analysis promotes thoughtful reflection

Report Overall– International Conference (45 pts)				
	Developing	Proficient	Outstanding	Exemplary
Clarity measures the ability of the students to present their efforts, accomplishments, and actions, in a clear and logical manner	Hard to understand, intent unclear; cause-effect reasoning may be absent or incorrect	Conveys basic ideas; lacks detail; is vague or takes leaps in thinking	Clear explanation of ideas; explanatory details provided	Effective communication of ideas, provides clear and thorough descriptions; demonstrates logical presentation of the Action Plan
Ownership Examines the extent to which the project is student-driven	Student ownership of project is minimal; students involved, but not in leadership roles	Student ownership is inconsistent; shared with adults or other stakeholders	Students maintained active ownership throughout most of the project	Student initiative is central to the implementation and execution of the project; evidence in every element of the project
Creativity measures the creative, productive thinking in evidence throughout the Report	Minimal evidence of creative thinking; ideas represent conventional or commonplace ideas	Some attempt at creative thinking evidenced in some aspects of the project	Innovative thinking, insightful ideas; some elements of the project go beyond the ordinary	Strong display of inventive, ingenious ideas throughout the project; unique adaptations or strategies demonstrated throughout

Evaluation Process:

Report Submitted to Affiliate
- Up to 3,500 words
- Report should encompass project work up to the submission date

Evaluated at Affiliate Level

Top Projects Invited to International Conference (IC)

Report Submitted for IC Evaluation
- Report should be updated with any new activities or information since Affiliate submission

Report Evaluated for International Conference 2024

Supporting Materials

All Supporting Materials are required for International Conference submissions. Affiliates may include none, some, or all. Please check with your Affiliate for details.

Students complete the Supporting Materials to present evidence of project actions beyond the description included in the Proposal and Report. The Portfolio, Promotional Video, Display, and Interview offer additional ways in which the team can share the efforts of the project and the impact it has had on the community.

Each element of the supporting documentation should add to the presentation of the project and build on the Proposal and Report, rather than only duplicating information already presented.

Portfolio

- Page count must not exceed 20 double-sided or 40 single-sided pages/slides of standard size paper (Letter or A4).
- Electronic portfolios must be accessible in an offline format.
- For IC projects can include one page (front and back) to share "Updates" since the Proposal and Report submission.
- This page does not count against the page limit.

Promotional Video

- For IC, will be submitted as one unlisted video link (likely hosted on YouTube)
- The video can be no longer than 3 minutes
- Consider different video styles: demonstration, educational event, explainer, public service announcement, interviews, testimonial, vlog, etc.

Display

- For IC, each project will be provided with a standard size backboard, typically 36"H X 48" W (1.2 m x 91.4 cm)
- The max height of the display from the tabletop is 50 inches (127cm)
- Creatively enhancing, adapting, and modifying the provided display board is encouraged.

Interview

- The interview provides evaluators with an increased understanding of the project while allowing the student(s) to share the passion for the project.
- All interviews will address the step in the problem-solving process that was most important to the project.
- Individual Projects: 15 minutes.
- Team Projects: 30 minutes.

Portfolio

Students will create a portfolio of their project for competition. In the Portfolio, students should provide documentation of the project to represent activities, decisions, community interactions, recognition, research, and more. The Portfolio should chronicle student efforts and verify the claims made in the Report. Materials included in the Portfolio provide visual evidence of the actions and accomplishments described in the Report and should present a complete picture of the project. The Portfolio provides an in-depth look at the work and may be used throughout the evaluation as a source to verify assertions made in the Proposal and/or Report.

This non-exhaustive list includes items that may be included in your Portfolio:

- thinking tools
- planning documents
- graphs and charts
- event programs/brochures
- meeting agendas
- interview or podcast transcripts
- community feedback
- media coverage
- surveys
- photos of project activities
- correspondence by email or letter
- excerpts of presentations
- screenshots of social media posts
- and more!

Guidelines for submission: The Portfolio must be accessible offline, be entirely of the student(s)'s creation, and must not exceed 20 double-sided or 40 single-sided pages/slides of standard size paper (Letter or A4).

For the International Conference, invited projects are encouraged to include one page (front and back) at the beginning of their Portfolio that recounts "Updates" since the Proposal and Report were submitted. This page does not count against the page limit.

Guiding Questions for the Portfolio
- Do the pages of the portfolio effectively chronicle our project from start to present?
- Have we used our Portfolio to prove we did what is written in the Report?
- Are our images easy to understand or do they need a caption?

A well-constructed Portfolio
- provides an in-depth look at the work of the project;
- substantiates project efforts and activities;
- enhances understanding of the project;
- combines documents, pictures, correspondence, and more to verify project claims; and
- fully presents the breadth and depth of the project work.

Portfolio– International Conference (30 pts)				
	Developing	Proficient	Outstanding	Exemplary
Documentation considers the extent to which students document the development and implementation of the project	Minimal or ineffective documentation of efforts provided	Some evidence of project activities provided	Project efforts and activities substantiated	Efforts effectively chronicled from inception of project to present; evidence provided to support claims
Elaboration measures the extent to which a complete presentation of the project is made	Ideas are presented as basic concepts; not fully developed/explained	Some elements of the Portfolio are developed; the full project has not been presented	Aspects of project are well- developed; included information enhances understanding of project	Entire breadth and depth of project explored; fully developed presentation of project effectively conveys progression of project

Promotional Video

Students will create a promotional video to submit for competition. The video will be submitted as one unlisted video link (likely hosted on YouTube), that lasts no longer than 3 minutes.

Students are encouraged to develop creative presentations that promote their project and its goals. It might serve as a call to action, highlight the accomplishments achieved, recruit participants, educate interested parties, etc. Authenticity and content should take priority over production quality. Examples from the projects at the 2023 International Conference can be accessed from our Resource Links page, https://www.fpspi.org/resource-links/

Guiding Questions for the Promotional Video
- Other than for competition, where can we use the promotional video to educate others about our project?
- Is our video easy to follow and understand?
- How do we get the most important parts of our project on screen?
- What tools and technology do we need to create the video?
- What style of video will we produce?
  - Styles to consider: demonstration, educational event, explainer, public service announcement, interviews, testimonial, vlog, etc.

A well-crafted Promotional Video:
- connects the video content to the goals of the project;
- educates audience on the project's importance to the community; and
- allows audience to understand the project's significance and why they should support the project or get involved.

Promotional Video– International Conference (30 pts)				
	Developing	Proficient	Outstanding	Exemplary
Relevance considers how well the video connects to the intent of the project; examines how effectively ideas presented promote the project	Relationship to the project is minimal or unclear	Connection to the project is present	Solid connection to the project; audience aware of project objectives	Strong connection of ideas to the project goals; audience gains understanding of the project's importance to the community
Engagement refers to the extent to which the video draws the audience to action/involvement with the project's goals	Minimal effort to engage the audience evident	Some effort to engage the audience present; vague or needs improvement	Clear effort to engage audience is present	Audience is effectively presented with the significance of the project and understands the importance of getting involved/supporting the project

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Display

At the International Conference, CmPS projects display their work at the CmPS Showcase. The Display is evaluated on-site as well. The student's job in preparing the Display is to present the project's objectives and accomplishments as effectively as possible to the audience (evaluators and IC attendees). Students should capture the audience's attention and communicate the project work and outcomes through the Display.

A great project may escape attention if key elements are not presented or are lost among extraneous items; valuable, fragile, or otherwise unnecessary props should not be included.

During IC evaluations, displays may be reviewed without students present, so the work on the Display should not need student commentary to present the project as a whole.

For IC, each project will be provided with a standard size backboard, typically 36"H X 48" W (1.2 m x 91.4 cm). The maximum height of the display from the tabletop is 50 inches (127cm). Detailed instructions for IC Display requirements are shared with competitors after Affiliate competition.
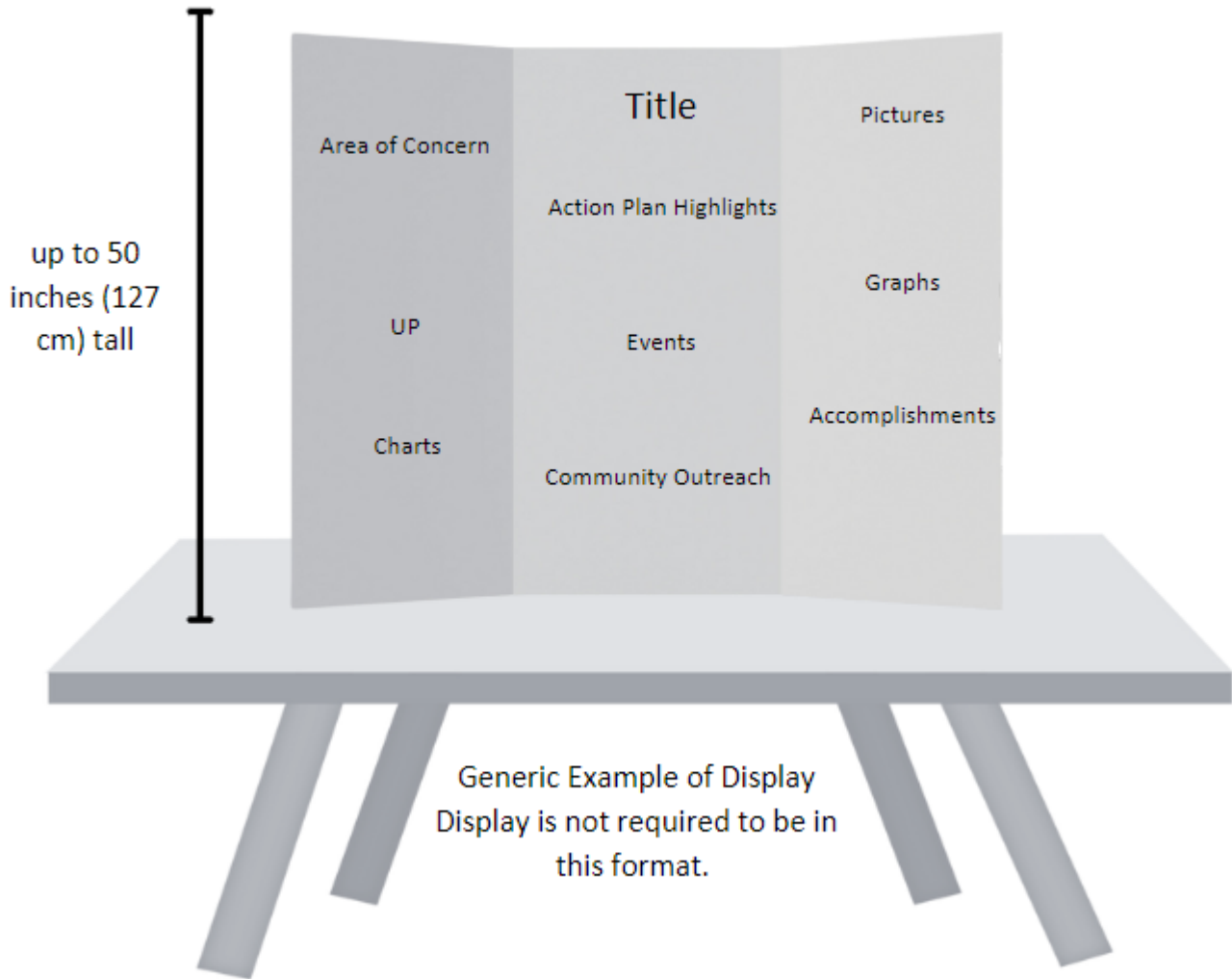
Creatively enhancing, adapting, and modifying the provided display board is encouraged. A few examples from IC 2023 can be accessed from our Resource Links page, https://www.fpspi.org/resource-links/

Guiding Questions for the Display

- What elements of our project are most important to display?
- Can an audience member understand the whole of our project from what is displayed?
- Are the images easy to connect to the work or captioned?

A well-crafted Display:

- gives a comprehensive view of project work;
- shows many aspects of the project;
- is appealing and eye-catching;
- needs no verbal explanation; and
- presents the project's goals and accomplishments.

up to 50 inches (127 cm) tall

Area of Concern

UP

Charts

Title

Action Plan Highlights

Events

Community Outreach

Pictures

Graphs

Accomplishments

Generic Example of Display
Display is not required to be in this format.

Display– International Conference (30 pts)				
	Developing	Proficient	Outstanding	Exemplary
Relevance considers how well the display depicts the project	Relationship of content to the project is minimal or unclear	Display demonstrates general connection to the project	Solid connection to the project; multiple aspects of the project presented	Effective presentation of the entire project to display events comprehensively; a wide range of aspects of the project and outcomes are represented
Visual Appeal explores the overall attractiveness of the display that invites interest and engages viewers	Limited eye appeal/organization; contains confusing visuals/descriptions	Display contains minimal information; presentation of materials is disjointed	Display is appealing; provides appropriate information about the project	Display is appealing and eye-catching; audience drawn to project and learns about the objectives and accomplishments without explanation

Interview

Students participate in an interview to explain the project and update evaluators on recent accomplishments and/or project changes. Evaluators ask questions about the project, such as how the students chose the focus of the project, the support received, problems encountered, the reaction of the community, accomplishments, long-range plans, etc. The Interview should be an extemporaneous interaction between the evaluators and the students. It does not include a prepared presentation from the students.

Interview length:

Team Projects – 30 minutes   Individual Projects – 15 minutes

The interview provides evaluators with an increased understanding of the project while allowing the student(s) to share their passion for the project.

While every interview is unique based on the nature of the project, themes that are frequently addressed include:

- reason/selection of the area of concern
- reasons for choice of solution ideas
- obstacles encountered and overcome
- unexpected occurrences
- interactions with the community
- lessons learned
- roles and responsibilities
- most rewarding/disappointing moment

All interviews will address the step in the problem-solving process that was most important to the project.

Guiding Questions for the Interview

- Do all team members feel comfortable discussing the project?
- Have we practiced being interviewed by our teachers, coach, parents, or other stakeholders?
- What has happened in our project that has not been captured in our writing?

A well-done Interview:

- contains high levels of student passion and commitment;
- shows student ownership of the project;
- includes well thought out responses from the team; and
- shares with evaluators how the team problem solved throughout the project.

Interview– International Conference (40 pts)				
	Developing	Proficient	Outstanding	Exemplary
Elaboration assesses the quality and thoroughness of student responses	Responses appear pre-planned and offer minimal insight	Some responses are elaborated, though additional project insight is minimal	Clear explanations of project activities, and their importance in shaping the project	Fully developed, well thought out responses expanding significantly beyond the ideas presented in the written documentation
Student Engagement considers the extent to which students demonstrate their ownership of the project	Minimal student interest/engagement shown, lack of evidence of student ownership of the project	Student interest demonstrated	Significant student interest/engagement demonstrated	High level of student passion, commitment, and project ownership of project evident

Overall Evaluation of Supporting Materials

Supporting Materials are also holistically evaluated based on the following rubric.

Supporting Materials Overall– International Conference (60 pts)				
	Developing	Proficient	Outstanding	Exemplary
Written Communication measures the ability of students to present their ideas and efforts, and the needs of the community, in a clear and logical manner through their written work presented On-Site	Hard to understand, intent unclear; Connections may be absent or incorrect	Conveys basic ideas; lacks detail; is vague or takes leaps in thinking	Clear explanation of ideas; some details provided	Effective communication of ideas; clear and thorough descriptions provided; logical cause-effect thinking demonstrated
Spoken Communication considers the students' ability to effectively communicate their project using spoken language	Hard to understand, intent unclear; Connections may be absent or unclear	Conveys basic ideas, lacks detail, is vague or disjointed	Project concept clearly presented; logical flow of discussion/conversation.	Students present the project objectives effectively, transition between ideas/questions well, and convey project importance to audience
Visual Clarity measures the ability of the students to present their project visually, in a clear and effective manner with text, graphics, and other visual elements	Hard to understand; intent unclear	Conveys basic ideas; lacks detail; is vague or disjointed	Project concept clearly presented; logical presentation of ideas/images	Project objectives effectively established; effective prose accompanies visuals; project accomplishments conveyed
Creativity measures the creative, innovative, and productive thinking evidenced throughout the Supporting Materials	Minimal evidence of creative thinking; ideas represent conventional or commonplace ideas	Some attempt at creative thinking evidenced	Innovative thinking, insightful ideas; some elements go beyond the ordinary	Strong display of inventive, ingenious ideas; unique presentations of the project, the community and/or AoC demonstrated throughout

Evaluation of the Overall Project

Throughout the Proposal, Report, and Supporting Materials, student work will be considered holistically with respect to effective communication, use of the problem-solving process, and student engagement. For the final Overall evaluation, problem solving process, teamwork, and leadership are evaluated. There is no need for students to address these themes individually, but the description of the project should demonstrate effective communication (written and verbal), student leadership, project ownership, collaboration with other students and the community. Evaluation Guidelines may be obtained from your Affiliate or can be accessed from our Resource Links page, https://www.fpspi.org/resource-links/

Overall Project – International Conference				
Overall (60 pts)				
	Developing	Proficient	Outstanding	Exemplary
Problem Solving Process considers the application of the problem-solving process throughout the entire project	Minimal evidence of problem-solving process present; efforts more appropriately classified as research or study, not problem solving	Evidence of problem solving inconsistent; actions not always connected to established goals	Problem solving strategies evident in multiple stages of the project	Effective use of problem-solving strategies employed throughout project
Teamwork considers the collaborative nature of the project	Limited evidence of cooperative efforts	Some evidence of a few people contributing ideas	Evidence of multiple people incorporating ideas in a collaborative effort	Considerable evidence of integration of many ideas in a cohesive manner across the entire project
Leadership considers active student leadership throughout the project	Students involved, but not in leadership roles	Student leadership is inconsistent; shared with adults or other stakeholders	Active student leadership maintained throughout most of the project	Student leadership is central to the conception, development, and execution of the project; evidenced throughout the project

Coaches, parents, and volunteers interested in learning more about CmPS evaluations at IC should sign up for this mailing list bit.ly/3HVmoGE. Contact your Affiliate Director for information about Affiliate Evaluation.

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Important Terms

Community Problem Solving (CmPS) – Community Problem Solving (CmPS) is the FPSPI component in which students initiate a project in order to identify real problems and implement real solutions in a community – school, local, state, regional, national, or even global. Teams or individuals apply their problem-solving skills to solve a real challenge in an identified community

Community – The community may be defined as within the school, local community, region, nation, or world

CmPS Team Project – A category of the CmPS competition that includes a group of two or more team members who work to complete the CmPS project

CmPS Individual Project – A category of the CmPS competition comprised of a single person who completes the CmPS project without the aid of other team members

Single-Year CmPS Project – A CmPS project that is initiated, implemented, and submitted for competition within one school year. Most CmPS projects fall into this category.

Multi-Year Project – A CmPS project that requires more than one year to implement the Action Plan. Coaches must submit a team roster indicating years of participation for each student. Submitted for competition only once, upon completion of the project.

Evolving Project – Evolving projects have been presented prior to the current year (2023-24) and evaluated at the Affiliate and/or International levels. Students may choose to expand or redirect efforts or act upon evaluator recommendations to complete these projects more successfully, "evolving" them into a new project for the next year. Teams interested in pursuing an Evolving project should contact their Affiliate Director.

Non-Competitive Project – Accepted by some Affiliates, particularly for younger students. Contact your Affiliate directly for more information.

Duplicate Project – A project that is nearly identical to a project previously submitted for evaluation or that shows only minor changes from a previous submission.

Project Proposal – The 1st of the 3 requirements for submission, a comprehensive depiction of the use of the problem-solving process in the inception of the CmPS project – identifies the goals and anticipated actions of the project - includes the Area of Concern, Challenges Identified, Underlying Problem, Solution Ideas, Determination of Action Plan, and the Action Plan

Project Report – The 2nd of 3 requirements for submission, a comprehensive Report to explain the progress achieved during the implementation of the CmPS project – presents the actions undertaken, community engagement, and the impact of the project in the community – describes what has taken place during the completion of the project, including plans for the project's sustainability

Supporting Materials – The 3rd of 3 requirements for submission, a collection of evidence presented beyond the description in the Project Proposal and Project Report – includes the Portfolio, Display, Promotional Video, and Interview

Stay in Touch

For CmPS News & Offerings from FPSPI, sign up at bit.ly/infocmps

Brand new webinars for coaches and students will be announced through the mailing list.

The CmPS Outreach Coordinator, Caitlin@fpspi.org, will send CmPS supports throughout the year!

For links to CmPS resources, head to our Resource Links page, https://www.fpspi.org/resource-links/

The FPSPI mart has other CmPS publications at https://www.fpspimart.org/product-category/community-problem-solving/

FPSAcademy has an asynchronous course for CmPS at https://www.fpspimart.org/courses/introduction-to-community-problem-solving-projects/

CmPS and Project Management

FPSPI received a grant from the Project Management Institute Education Foundation in 2023.

As part of this grant, FPSPI has created a "Guide to Project Management Implementation in CmPS"

The Guide includes tools to support CmPSers through project documentation and competition.

Projects can submit for a brand new award at IC 2024.

Click the guide to get your FREE copy or head to the Resource Links page on FPSPI.org.

GUIDE TO PROJECT MANAGEMENT IMPLEMENTATION IN COMMUNITY PROBLEM SOLVING

Blending Project Management Tools & Techniques with Problem-Solving Skills for Successful Community Problem Solving (CmPS) Projects

FUTURE PROBLEM SOLVING PROGRAM INTERNATIONAL 2023