



Community Projects



Competition Information 2026-2027



Project Proposal due December 4, 2026

Project Report due March 1, 2027

Entry fee \$60 Individuals, \$80 Teams

What Are Community Projects?

In Community Projects, students identify real problems and implement real solutions in a community – local, state, national, or even global. The projects are student-driven and produce young leaders ready to solve problems they may encounter throughout their lives. Community Projects promotes cultural agility by solving real life, contemporary challenges, stimulates critical and creative thinking skills, fosters collaboration and teamwork, and encourages students to develop a vision for community improvement.

Community projects can be pursued as an extracurricular activity or as part of the regular school curriculum. Projects can take one or more years. Students apply the problem solving process to real and current problems in their communities, and they become engaged in the real world using independent thought and action.

“The genius of the future will be the creative mind adapting itself to the shape of things to come.”

E. Paul Torrance
Creativity (1991)



Community Projects in Wisconsin

DUE BY DECEMBER 4, 2026

- **Project Proposal and Entry Fee** – The Proposal is a planning/guiding document that captures the original analysis of the Area of Concern and the students' anticipated actions. The Proposal should comprehensively depict the use of the problem solving process in the **inception** of the project. It establishes the project's vision, defines goals, specifies deadlines, and demonstrates the use of the problem solving process during project development. The proposal is not changed after it has been submitted. *[Max of 2000 words]*

DUE MARCH 1, 2027

- **Project Report** – The Project Report communicates the progress achieved during the **implementation** of the project -- the efforts that were actually undertaken, tasks accomplished, project modifications, and student reflections.. This section reflects the actual work accomplished by the students to date and the progress made to fulfill the goals established in the Underlying Problem. Emphasis should be placed on the explanation of the Action Plan – its role in community engagement, project accomplishments, hurdles encountered, lessons learned, etc. It reflects how the problem solving process was employed throughout the project's implementation. *[Max of 3500 words]*
- **Portfolio** – The Portfolio chronicles student efforts and verifies 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. *[Max of 20 double sided or 40 single sided pages/slides]*
- **Publication Releases**

REQUIRED AT STATE BOWL if going on to the International Conference

- **Display** – The Display describes the project to the audience (State Bowl and potentially IC participants). It should capture the audience's attention and communicate the project goals and accomplishments; it should not need student commentary to present the project. Include a hard copy of the portfolio.
- **Presentation** – Presentation showcasing the project. The presentation should involve all of the team members, and each speaker must use the microphone. *[Max of 8 minutes]*
- **Possible Practice Interview**

DUE TO FUTURE PROBLEM SOLVING INTERNATIONAL for submission if going on to the International Conference

- **Updated Project Report**
- **Original Project Proposal**
- **Portfolio**
- **Promotional Video**



BROUGHT TO and EVALUATED AT THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE, JUNE 2027

- **Updated Portfolio** – Add 1-2 pages at the beginning with updates to the Project Report submitted earlier.
- **Updated Display** – The display must be set up using the standard tabletop display board that is provided on site.
- **Promotional Video** – The Promotional Video is designed to promote the project, highlighting accomplishments, documenting actions, and exhibiting engagement and excitement about the project. It may serve as a call to action, recruit participants, or educate interested parties. *[Max of 3 minutes]*
- **Interview** – The interview provides evaluators with an increased understanding of the project while allowing the student(s) to share the passion for the project and to describe actions taken after the Project Proposal and Report were submitted. This interview offers students the opportunity to explain the project and to offer additional information on recent accomplishments and/or project changes. Evaluators will ask questions to learn more about the project and the process used. *[Max of 15 minutes for individuals, 30 minutes for teams]*

Wisconsin Community Projects Entry Information 2026-27

Contact lynn.wisfps@gmail.com to request a workshop on applying the problem solving process and thinking tools to CmPS!

Community Projects are for Teams or Individuals

Projects	Entry Fee
Individual	\$60
Team	\$80

Submission Items

When	What	Submit by Email or Mail
Submit by December 4, 2026	Proposal entry sheet Project Proposal PO or check for entry fee	lynn.wisfps@gmail.com Lynn Buckmaster 3318 Conservancy Lane Middleton, WI 53562
Submit by March 1, 2027	Report entry sheet Project Report Portfolio Publication releases	
Submit to FPSPI May or June 2027	(If going on to the Int'l Conference) Original Project Proposal, Updated Project Report, Portfolio, Promotional Video	

Notes

- All first and second place projects are invited to the State Bowl. Other projects may also be invited.
- Teams/individuals may continue to work on the project between the March submission and State Bowl.
- At State Bowl, teams/individuals will set up a display table and give an oral presentation at the Opening Ceremony on Thursday evening. Students may participate in a practice Community Projects interview.
- First place projects are not automatically qualified for International competition. The Community Projects evaluator makes a separate determination as to whether a project is of high enough quality to go on to International.
- High quality second place projects may also be submitted for consideration for an international invitation.
- Additional submission information will be provided to those qualifying for the International Conference.
- A maximum of 15 team members may participate in the interview at the International Conference.
- Contact Lynn at the email address above for more information for projects that are planned for more than one year, or that build on a prior project.

Community Projects Essential Publication

Creative & Critical Thinking Tools for Community Problem Solving

Infusing Problem Solving Skills into Community Projects



Developed by Wisconsin FPS staff, this publication provides guidance on applying the creative problem solving process to Community Projects and a large variety of creative and critical thinking tools that can be used at various stages of developing a Community Project.

Purchase on the SALES page at www.wisfps.org/sales!

Problem Solving Step	Thinking Tool	Type
Overall	Brainstorming	G
Develop an Area of Concern	Futures Wheel	G
	From WIBAI to WIBNI	G
	Desired Future, Current Reality	G, F
	Plus Minus Interesting	F
	Sources of Data	F
	5 Ws and an H	G
1 Identify Challenges	Attribute Listing 1	G
	Focusing on Challenges	F
	Cross Impact Matrix	F, G
2 Select an Underlying Problem	Hits and Hot Spots	F
	Improvement Goals	G
	Dancing with Words	G
3 Produce Solution Ideas	Attribute Listing 2	G
	Checklisting for Possibilities	G
	Forced Relationships	G
	Morphological Matrix	G
4-5 Evaluate Solution Ideas	Developing Criteria	G
	Paired Comparison Analysis	F
	ALoU with Criteria	F
	Evaluation Matrix	F
6 Develop an Action Plan	Assisters and Resisters	F
	Sequencing S-M-L	F

Purchase on the SALES page at www.wisfps.org/sales!

\$40 per publication, PDF download

Each adult using the materials must have a purchased copy

Selecting a Project

Student Choice

Students decide what the focus of their project will be. A coach assists, guides, and facilitates, but does not determine the project. This gives students agency in creating lasting change within their communities.

- Inspiration
- Long-term interest
- Student-initiated

Community Focus

Students determine the community that will be the focus of their efforts. It can vary considerably in size; it is up to the students to determine the “community” for their project.

- School
- Local community
- Region
- Nation
- World

Authentic. Concern

Identification of an issue should be born out of students’ genuine interests that emerge because of their own experiences. A personal connection from the student(s), not the teacher, improves engagement and commitment.

- Student passion
- Opportunity to have an impact
- Community buy-in

Plan to Act

Projects should focus on student designed and implemented actions.

- Establish goals
- Brainstorm actions
- Identify allies & obstacles



PROJECT PROPOSAL



Area of Concern

Clearly and thoroughly explains the problem situation to be addressed.

Action Plan

Explains what the project intends to accomplish and the proposed chronology of actions.

Challenges Identified

Identifies a variety of the community's challenges related to the Area of Concern.

Determination of Plan

Identifies the most promising solution idea(s) to be the basis of the Action Plan.

Underlying Problem

States an important part of the Area of Concern to address.

Solution Ideas

Identifies varied and unique solution ideas addressing the Underlying Problem.

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DUE FRIDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2026 **Maximum of 2000 words, 12-point font**

- The Project Proposal may be submitted as soon as it is complete, any time through December 4, 2026. The Proposal should be completed and submitted before the implementation of the project is underway. The earlier, the better!
- The Project Proposal establishes the original goals and framework for the project. It is the ***intended plan***, a planning/guiding document that captures the original analysis of the Area of Concern and the students' anticipated actions. The Project Proposal should comprehensively depict the use of the problem solving process in the ***inception*** of the project. It establishes the project vision, defines goals, specifies deadlines, and demonstrates the use of the problem solving process during project development.
- After the Proposal is submitted and the project is being implemented, it is natural that the project itself will develop and evolve, and thus the sequence of steps outlined in the Proposal may vary or be repeated as the project is implemented and additional problem solving is employed. These changes will be described in the Project Report.
- The Proposal will not be re-written or modified once it is submitted.
- The Proposal will be evaluated; the evaluation will be returned.

Area of Concern

The choice of the Area of Concern MUST be made by the students, not the coach. This section 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
- Tells why it is important to the participants and the community.
- Delineates the existing problems of the community
- Incorporates factual data demonstrating a research-based analysis of the current community situation

Scoring Criteria for Area of Concern

Significance
Completeness
Investigation

Challenges Identified

This section clearly describes the challenges generated from analysis of the Area of Concern. Challenges are issues, concerns, or problems that need attention or consideration. 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 are NOT those experienced by students, but are only those that are generated from an examination of the Area of Concern

Challenges may be presented in paragraph or linear form (bulleted), and no specific number of Challenges is required. Concerns causing the situation, as well as those resulting from the situation, should be presented.

Remember to:

- Demonstrate what the Challenge is
- Explain why it is a Challenge
- Present how it connects with the Area of Concern

Scoring Criteria for Challenges Identified

Flexibility
Insight

Underlying Problem

The Underlying Problem (UP) is an action phrase that states an important part of the Area of Concern to address. It should show a relevant, direct connection to the Area of Concern and consider a major issue derived from the challenges. The UP identifies an action goal based on analysis of the Area of Concern. An excellent UP narrows the Area of Concern to an achievable size and addresses a significant aspect. The UP is an outgrowth of identified Challenges and clearly communicates the desired outcome of and need for the project.

Remember to:

- Precisely define your goal
- Select something of interest
- Select something of importance

Structure Underlying Problems as follows:

- Condition Phrase – Concise rationale for pursuing the selected goal
- Key Verb Phrase – Well-defined action goal addressing an aspect of the Area of Concern
- Purpose – Justification for accomplishing the goal – the desired result that should flow from accomplishing the KVP

Scoring Criteria for Underlying Problem

Focus
Adequacy
Structure

Solution Ideas

Solution ideas should represent varied and unique ways in which the Area of Concern can be improved by responding to the goals established in the Underlying Problem. Solution Ideas should be clearly explained and directly related to the UP. They should reflect the research completed and demonstrate flexible and insightful thinking.

Solutions may be written in paragraph or linear (bulleted) form. Generated solution ideas do not need to be fully developed. They can be expanded, combined, refined, excluded, or refined later in the project implementation process.

Remember to:

- Address the Key Verb Phrase
- Support the Purpose

Scoring Criteria for Solution Ideas

Relevance to Underlying Problem
Flexibility

Determination of Action Plan

Here students employ a method, technique, or “thinking tool” to analyze solution ideas. Determining the most promising solution ideas that will be developed into the Action Plan should be a reasoned and deliberate decision so that it effectively responds to the Underlying Problem and provides the project with the greatest likelihood of success.

Appropriate thinking tools might include, but are not limited to, use of an evaluation matrix, a pro/con list, ALoU, criteria, or other documented decision-making strategies.

Remember to:

- Provide evidence of the effective application of the selected method(s)/tool(s)
- Explain the thought processes that were used in decision-making

Scoring Criteria for Determination of Action Plan

Application
Analysis

Action Plan

The Action Plan is a blueprint for how to address the Underlying Problem. It should thoroughly communicate the *intended* course of action and show a complete plan and strategies for implementation. The Action Plan should be written in the future tense. The Action Plan communicates the efforts students *intend* to implement, and considers aspects of the project such as:

- What the project expects to accomplish
- The impact the Action Plan will have on the Area of Concern
- Strategies for implementation
- Description of tasks
- Details on how the intended solution will operate
- Addresses how the Action Plan responds to the UP
- Deadlines, activities, presentations, anticipated achievements, etc.

Remember to:

- Respond to the Underlying Problem
- Consider how to involve and impact the community

Scoring Criteria for Action Plan

Elaboration
Proposed Activities

Scoring Criteria for Overall Project Proposal

Clarity
Ownership
Creativity

PROJECT REPORT



**Presents actions
undertaken**

**Demonstrates
impact of project**

**Recounts obstacles
encountered**

Relevance

Resources

Community
Involvement

Adaptation
of Plan

Reflection/
Assessment

Organization

Community
Impact

Effectiveness
of Action
Plan

Sustainability
of Project
Impact

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DUE WEDNESDAY, March 1, 2027
Maximum of 3500 words, 12-point font

- The Project Report reflects the actual work accomplished by the students to date and the progress made to fulfill the goals established in the Underlying Problem. It communicates the progress achieved during the **implementation** of the project. The report should demonstrate the breadth of the project and the range of activities pursued.
- Emphasis should be placed on the implementation of the Action Plan – project accomplishments, community engagement, hurdles encountered, etc. The report should reflect how problem solving was employed throughout the project's implementation as the need arose to adapt/expand/modify the project goals/actions/efforts.
- Students should incorporate information that reflects the impact of the project, the community support and involvement in the undertakings.
- The report is evaluated on the nine themes above. However, the structure and format of the Report is at the discretion of the students. They should address the noted themes in the manner they believe is most effective. An effective Report may combine prose, lists, diagrams, or other descriptive elements to effectively communicate the implementation of the project. Multiple themes might be addressed by a single action.
- After submission to Wisconsin FPS, students may continue implementation of the project. For those going on to the International Conference, the Project Report may be updated to reflect additional actions prior to submission for IC.

Relevance



Considers how well the project achievements 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, includes the change and its justification. Activities planned for completion after the submission deadline should also be described.

Organization



Clearly delineates tasks and responsibilities that are effectively organized and implemented. Demonstrates effective management and coordination among stakeholders.

Resources



Identifies the use of resources in the implementation of the Action Plan. Resources may include media, agencies, organizations, experts, community leaders, references, etc.

Community Impact



Considers the positive effects and improvement the Action Plan has on the situation and the stakeholders of the identified community.

Community Involvement



Demonstrates relationships/partnerships that were cultivated with the identified community to fulfill the objectives of the project and meet the needs of the community.

Effectiveness of Action Plan



Measures the effectiveness of the activities undertaken to accomplish the objectives explored in the Area of Concern and the objectives of the Underlying Problem. Analyzes how well the project achievements impacted the Area of Concern and overcame the challenge area identified in the Underlying Problem.

Adaptation of Plan



Demonstrates effective utilization of problem solving skills to adapt the proposed Action Plan to unforeseen circumstances so that the project may proceed toward fulfilling its objectives. While goals and procedures were clearly established, they remain flexible and fluid to adapt to the project as needed. Changing/reworking the project as more knowledge and experience is acquired is considered part of the problem solving process.

Sustainability of Project Impact



Addresses the potential for continuation of a project's impact even after students' direct involvement has concluded.

Reflection/Assessment



Includes a thoughtful and thorough analysis of the outcomes of the project. Objectively assesses and reflects on the accomplishments, indicating an understanding of achievements and areas of growth, victories, and difficulties. Includes details on effectiveness in addressing the Area of Concern and the goals of their Underlying Problem.

Problem Solving is Flexible!

As students implement their Community Project, they may flexibly use elements of the problem solving process to rethink, modify, and adjust their original plans. Here are some examples.



Action Plan Challenges Solutions	Students are working on implementation of their action plan, but they run into a roadblock. They spend some time examining the challenges that are facing them and generate solutions to combat the roadblock.
Action Plan Challenges Underlying Problem Solution Ideas	Students complete their Action Plan quickly but don't feel they have made a large impact. They go back to examine their challenges and rework their underlying problem to cover more ground. Then they generate more solution ideas.
Action Plan Area of Concern Solution Ideas	As students begin to implement a plan to improve recycling, they realize they don't know enough about where the needs are. They gather further information to develop the Area of Concern and then modify their solution ideas.
Solution Ideas Underlying Problem Solution Ideas	A team plans to support veterans in their community. As they begin to implement their solution ideas, they discover that some of the ideas are already being implemented and some will affect only a small number of veterans. They refocus their underlying problem and determine alternate ideas to their original solutions.
Solution Ideas Determination of Solutions Action Plan	As students discuss the implementation of their solution ideas, they begin to disagree about what they want to accomplish. They decide to write some criteria that they can agree on and to examine their solution ideas again to try to reach consensus on the ones to include. They update their Action Plan with the ideas they have agreed on.
Solution Ideas Underlying Problem Determination of Solutions	Students become overwhelmed with the number of solution ideas they are attempting to implement. They examine their underlying problem to see if it needs to address a smaller part of the Area of Concern. Then they decide on some tools to further evaluate their solution ideas to focus on the best ones.

SUPPORTING MATERIALS

The Supporting Materials provide the opportunity to present evidence of project actions beyond the description included in the Proposal and Report. The Portfolio, Display, Promotional Video, and Interview offer additional avenues through which to depict 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 duplicating information already presented.
- **Note:** Students whose projects are invited to the Wisconsin State Bowl will also prepare a presentation for the Opening Ceremony with a max of 8 minutes.

Portfolio

Max of 20 double-sided or 40 single-sided pages/slides

May be submitted electronically but must be accessible offline

- The Portfolio chronicles student efforts and verifies the claims made in the Report.
 - Materials included in the Portfolio provide visual evidence of the actions and accomplishments described in the Report and 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.
 - Information should be presented in a logical manner.
- The Portfolio may include a variety of elements depicting student efforts
 - Planning documents
 - Event programs/brochures
 - Meeting agendas
 - Interview forms
 - Community feedback
 - Media coverage
 - Surveys
 - Photos of events
 - Examples of “thinking tools” used
 - Correspondence with stakeholders
- The portfolio may be submitted electronically with the report in February. At Wisconsin State Bowl, a printed copy of the updated pages or slides of the portfolio should be included in the display.
- **Note:** For presentation at the International Conference, students are encouraged to include one double-sided page (or 2 slides) at the beginning of their Portfolio that recounts “updates” since the Proposal and Report were submitted.

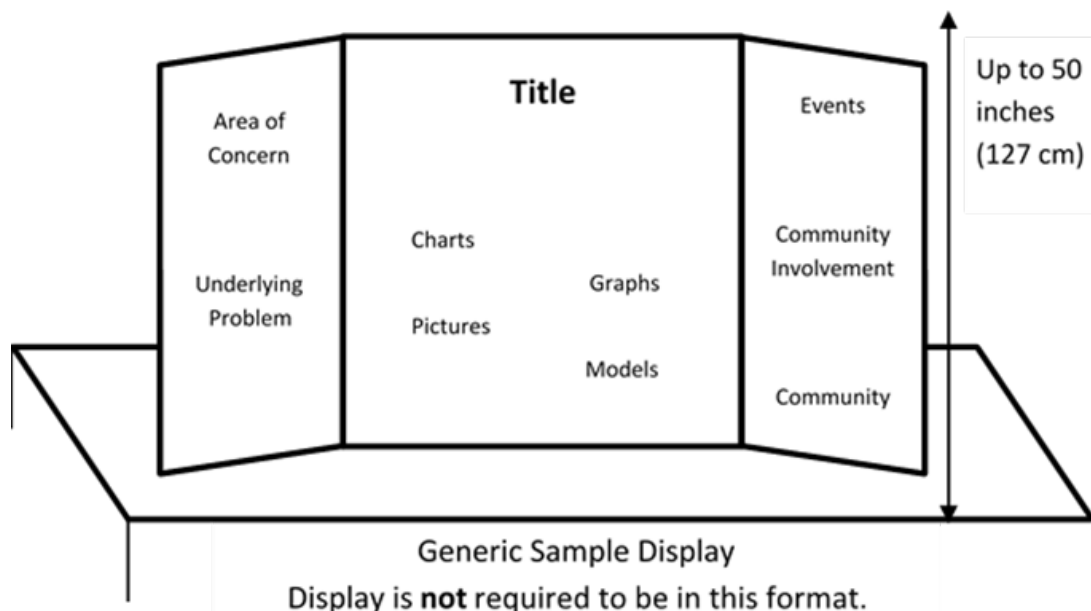


Display

Standard tri-fold display board on a tabletop

At IC, the display boards are provided and must be used

- The Display describes the project to the audience (State Bowl and IC participants and IC evaluators). The display should present the project without the need for student commentary. Creatively enhancing, adapting, and modifying the board is encouraged.
- Valuable, fragile, or otherwise unnecessary props should not be included. Key elements may escape attention if too many extraneous items are included.
- Displays are evaluated at IC, but not at the Wisconsin State Bowl. At the International Conference, displays may be reviewed without students present during preliminary review.
- The display should...
 - Present the project's objectives
 - Display the project's accomplishments
 - Capture the audience's attention
 - Communicate the project's goals and outcomes



Interview

Practice Interviews at State Bowl may take up to 30 minutes
Interviews at IC are 15 minutes for individuals, 30 minutes for teams

- The interview provides evaluators with an increased understanding of the project while allowing the student(s) to share the passion for the project and to describe actions taken after the Project Proposal and Report were submitted.
- The interview offers students the opportunity to explain the project and to offer additional information on recent accomplishments and/or project changes. Evaluators will ask questions to learn more about the project and the process used. The interview is a conversation between students and evaluators, not a prepared presentation.
- 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, choice of solution ideas
 - Obstacles encountered and how they were addressed
 - Unexpected occurrences
 - Interactions with the community
 - Lessons learned
 - Roles and responsibilities
 - Most rewarding/disappointing moment
- *Note:* Interviews may ask about the step in the problem solving process that was most important to the project.



Promotional Video

Max of 3 minutes in length

- The Promotional Video is designed to promote the project, highlighting accomplishments, documenting actions, and exhibiting engagement and excitement about the project.
- Promotional Videos may:
 - Promote project's goals
 - Serve as a call to action
 - Highlight accomplishments
 - Recruit participants
 - Educate interested parties
- Students are encouraged to develop creative presentations that promote their project and its goals. Video styles to consider include...
 - Demonstrations
 - Educational Event
 - Explainers
 - Public Service Announcement
 - Interviews
 - Testimonials
 - Vlogs
- *Note:* Authenticity and content should take priority over production quality.



Community Project Evaluation Information

Affiliate Evaluation	At the Affiliate level in Wisconsin, scoring is based on three items: ▪ Project Proposal ▪ Project Report ▪ Portfolio Most projects are invited to participate in an interview and to give an oral presentation at the Wisconsin FPS State Bowl in April. The evaluator determines if projects are of high enough quality for the International Conference. If qualified, an oral presentation and a table-top display at State Bowl are required for advancement.
International Evaluation	There are two parts to the evaluation process at the International level. <u>Preliminary scoring</u> is done prior to the International Conference. ▪ Project Proposal ▪ Updated Project Report <u>On-site scoring</u> is done at the conference. ▪ Portfolio with Report Updates ▪ Promotional Video ▪ Display ▪ Interview ▪ Overall 
Beyonder Award	Dr. E. Paul Torrance coined the word “Beyonder” to describe projects that “outdistance the others so far that they are not even on the same scale.” At the International Conference, one Beyonder Award across all divisions <i>may</i> be given. These characteristics are considered: ▪ Pursued the project with intensity ▪ Extended beyond the scope of ordinary attempts ▪ Displayed intense love for their work on the project ▪ Demonstrated remarkable creativity ▪ Displayed exceptional motivation to overcome obstacles ▪ Demonstrated great depth in the project

Links for Coaches

Use these links to learn about the Community Projects program. These links are from fspi.org and resources.futureproblemsolving.org. Share these links with students, parents, and supporters as needed.

Learn about the program

[Quick Start Guide: Community Projects](#)

[Community Projects program page](#)

[How are Community Project topics picked?](#) - Includes summaries from champion projects

[What do the Community Projects registration fees cover?](#)

[How is the 6-step process applied in Community Projects?](#)

[How are Community Projects evaluated?](#)

Learn about project requirements and opportunities

[What should be included in a project proposal?](#)

[What should be included in a project report?](#)

[What supporting materials are required for projects?](#)

[8 Community Projects display tips dos and don'ts](#)

[Example: Community Projects interview questions](#)

[9 Community Projects interview tips based on evaluator feedback](#)

Free Guide: [Project Management](#)

[What is the Excellence in Project Management award?](#)

[What is the Beyond Award?](#)

See examples of student work

[Project – Who's on the Other Side \(Senior\)](#)

[Project – Girls in STEM \(Senior\)](#)

[Project – Volunteering in Food Services \(Middle\)](#)

[All 2026 Affiliate Champions \(Junior\)](#)

[All 2026 Regional Affiliate Champions \(Middle\)](#)

[All 2026 Regional Affiliate Champions \(Senior\)](#)

Buy resources for Community Projects & problem-solving support

[Community Projects Proposal: Power Up Your Area of Concern](#)

[Champions 2024: Community Projects Examples with Evaluations](#)

[Creative & Critical Thinking Tools for Community Projects](#)

Teach problem solvers with free tools

[Free Tool: Categories List for Generating and Focusing Ideas](#)

[Free Tool: Writing the Underlying Problem](#)

[Free Tool: Writing Solutions Checklist](#)

[Free Tool: Futures Wheel Graphic Organizer](#)

[Free Tool: Research Tool \(KWL\)](#)

[Free Tool: Advantages/Limitations Chart \(ALoU\)](#)

[Free Tool: Self Assessment](#)

[Free Tool: S.M.A.R.T. Goal Setting](#)