

Athletes for Hope Toolkit

Celebrating 50 Years of Title IX



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Introduction

Over 50 years ago, there was no guarantee of equity in sports for women. Female athletes completed and played in environments that were lesser than male teams, and were often pushed to the side to prioritize men's teams. They received little, if any, scholarship funding to their sport. They were subjected to sexual harassment and discrimination with minimal legal protection to defend them.

They were isolated and at a disadvantage. But they didn't keep silent.

These pioneers fought, advocated, and were activists for equity in sports and legal protection for themselves, and future generations. They spoke out to their universities, teams, coaches, and communities to demand equity. They pushed back against the idea that their abilities were less than, or trivial.

50 years later, we honor these trailblazing athletes by understanding how important the law that supported them was. As Title IX celebrates its 50th anniversary, we look back at how far we've come - and look forward at where we can go next.

True or False? When we talk about "equality" and "equity," we mean the exact same thing.

False! Equality refers to all groups or individuals having the same resources or opportunities, but equity refers to allowing individuals who are disadvantaged to have additional resources so that everyone can have the same outcome.

“What’s Title IX?”

Title IX is an amendment to the Civil Rights Act, which passed in 1972. It says:

“No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.”

True or False? Title IX means that women and men’s sports are given the exact same amount of funding.

False! Title IX does not require exact equal financial aid between women and men’s sports - it requires that funding is proportionate to participation. This means that the equality standard is “one of [equal opportunity](#).”

[This means](#) that anything receiving federal funding cannot discriminate in opportunities, treatment, or other benefits in any educational programs or activities.

Institutions, like schools, have to meet the legal requirements set by three components of [Title IX](#), which are:

- 1.** Effective accommodation of student interests and abilities (this means their participation!)
- 2.** Financial assistance, like scholarships relating to athletic participation.
- 3.** Equity in other aspects of daily life, like benefits and treatment.

“What does Title IX do?”

Title IX put into law that any institution or organization that receives federal funding has to comply with creating and maintaining just treatment for all students, regardless of sex or gender.

Think about everything that receives federal funding: public and private schools, public and private universities, their programming, their activities, their staffing, their fiscal opportunities. This means that discrimination that occurs in any of these environments is subject to investigation or penalties.



Title IX created [protection](#) for things like:

- Ensuring that women’s sport athletes have equitable scholarship opportunities
- Requiring that environments, like locker rooms or housing, are equal in quality and safety
- Protecting programs from being cut or eliminated based on the gender of their participants
- Giving legal protection to people who experience sexual discrimination or harassment in settings which receive any federal funding

“Why does this matter in sports?”

The protection of Title IX completely changed the [sports environment in America](#). For the first time, girls and women knew that their concerns would be listened to, and their abilities would be honored.



Within the first five years of Title IX's implementation...

- The amount of high school girls who participated in sports multiplied by six times what it was before. Girls who felt discouraged to participate now were able to do so with less pushback.
- More women were able to engage in sports because of the new requirements surrounding women's collegiate athlete scholarships.
- Women's teams received more attention - and more funding - which ultimately allowed more and more girls and women to compete.

Title IX doesn't just support women's rights in sports - it also protects male sports that are not high-revenue producing. While some collegiate sports might produce less revenues than a higher-revenue sport (ex: football), Title IX ensures equitable distribution of funds.

True or False? Men's athletic departments have lost money because of Title IX.

False! According to economic reports, men's revenue-producing sports [would not experience any financial stress](#) if their budgets were decreased with all schools and teams also lowering expenditures.

“How does Title IX impact me?”

One of the most important things to know is the [rights for collegiate athletes](#) that Title IX can provide. Today, Title IX allows any sport that benefits federal funding to uphold equitable standards.

This impacts everything from:

- Ensuring that players have the same quality of protective equipment
- Maintaining a safe environment without sexual harassment
- Enforcing safety and protection measures across all sports

Any organization that doesn't upload these standards can lose their federal funding. Here's some ways that Title IX can protect student athletes:

Women's Athletics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Greater opportunities/likelihood for female athletes to receive scholarships related to sports performance. ✓ Protection of funding to non-high revenue-producing women's sports. ✓ Ability to formally report a hostile environment which is detrimental to the physical or mental health of an athlete.
Men's Athletics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Protection of funding to non-high revenue-producing men's sports. ✓ Ability to formally report a hostile environment which is detrimental to the physical or mental health of an athlete.
BIPOC Athletes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Ability to formally report verbal, physical, or sexual harassment that creates a hostile environment for BIPOC athletes. ✓ Ability to report discriminatory practices or preferences based on race.
LGBTQ+ Athletes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Inclusion of gender identity discrimination under gender discrimination. ✓ Ability to formally report any verbal, physical, or sexual harassment due to gender or sexual identity.

Athletes for Hope is so thankful for athletes like you who are taking the time to learn about important topics like Title IX. As we reflect on the progress of the last 50 years, let's look towards the future while recognizing there's still work to be done and progress to be made.

Still want to learn more about the facts and figures behind Title IX?

Click [here](#) to check out **WSF's Title IX Fast Facts**

This guide is helpful to understand Title IX's impact by the numbers.

WSF Women's Sports Foundation





Get Involved. Be Inspired.

Athletes for Hope reaches millions of people through its network of athletes, charities, foundations, leagues, teams, and many others. Join the movement.

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