



2019 PROGRAM GRANTS REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

U.S. SOCCER FOUNDATION

The U.S. Soccer Foundation's programs are the national model for sports-based youth development in underserved communities. Since its founding in 1994, the Foundation has established high-impact programs proven to help children embrace an active and healthy lifestyle, using soccer to cultivate critical life skills that pave the path to a better future. We partner with local communities to create cost-effective, long-term initiatives that offer safe environments where kids and communities thrive. Our programs serve as a vehicle to engage community-based organizations, community leaders, and the public and private sectors to promote systemic changes needed for sustainable, healthy, and equitable communities and ensure that soccer is everyone's game. The Foundation has set a goal to build 1,000 play spaces and improve the health and social outcomes of 1 million children annually by 2026. For more information, please visit www.ussoccerfoundation.org.

OPPORTUNITY

Through this grant opportunity, the U.S. Soccer Foundation will emphasize impactful strategies to increase female participation in soccer. Competitive proposals will include a dynamic program focused on improving recruitment and retention, creating an inclusive environment, and building on the benefits of soccer programming, such as increased confidence, leadership skills, and self-esteem. The Foundation is particularly interested in projects that are developed with strong community engagement and ownership, prioritize equity, and demonstrate a readiness to implement a well-developed and measurable program. To be considered, proposals must address the expansion of opportunities for girls in historically excluded communities. Additionally, proposals must address existing programming (proposals outlining future program initiatives will not be considered).

BACKGROUND

Since Title IX was enacted in 1972, female participation in sports has become more culturally accepted and celebrated. Despite this progress, however, attrition rates continue to rank higher than those of males in sports. The drop-off rate among girls is attributed to reductions in physical education programs

in public schools, higher participation costs, lack of mentorship opportunities, and sports becoming less enjoyable as they become more competitive.¹ For these reasons, more than 38% of girls don't participate in sport in the United States, compared to 25% of boys.²

Girls benefit significantly from participation in sports. Girls who play sports have higher levels of self-esteem and confidence, have a more positive body image, are more likely to get better grades in school, are less likely to be involved in an unintended pregnancy, and are more likely to graduate.³

Mia Hamm, former U.S. Women's National Team player, has been a role model for young girls since she established herself as one of the greatest female athletes of all time. Hamm highlights the role sport can play in empowering young girls:

*"You just look at women in high-powered positions in top 500 companies and a lot of them will attribute their time in organized sports as something that really made a difference and had an impact in their lives. And I see the confidence it has built in my daughters when they work really hard at something... and to see that confidence grow in a young girl is so important because I think boys are naturally encouraged to do those things."*⁴

According to a recent EY and espnW report, there are five winning traits developed through sport that provide an entrepreneurial advantage. Confidence, single-mindedness, passion, leadership, and resilience are attributes that women develop as athletes and which can help them start, lead, and grow their careers. When given the opportunity, the long-lasting impact of women in sports is endless.⁵

BARRIERS TO ACCESS IN SOCCER

Economic Barriers:

Soccer is an expensive sport to play in the United States. Depending on the level, the membership dues for club teams range from \$2,500 to \$5,000 per year.⁶ In order to play competitive soccer in the U.S., you must meet the financial demands that go along with it, which is an existing barrier for many families. "Today you see a lot of predominately white young women, because their parents, when they were younger, were the ones who could afford it," said Briana Scurry, former national team goalkeeper.⁷ Scurry also believes that the rise in African American athletes stems from the continuing rise of the black middle class moving to the suburbs rather than an increase in access to underserved communities.

Historic Exclusion of Minority Communities:

The disparities in opportunity increase when examined through the lens of opportunities for girls of color. The National Women's Law Center released a report highlighting the disparities, noting that at predominantly white high schools, for every 100 spots available for youth in sports, 51 are available to

¹ <https://www.aspeninstitute.org/blog-posts/re-visiting-title-ix-46-years-later/>

² <https://www.womenssportsfoundation.org/research/article-and-report/recent-research/teen-sport-in-america/>

³ <http://time.com/3319338/mia-hamm-soccer-fifa-sports-girls/>

⁴ <http://time.com/3319338/mia-hamm-soccer-fifa-sports-girls/>

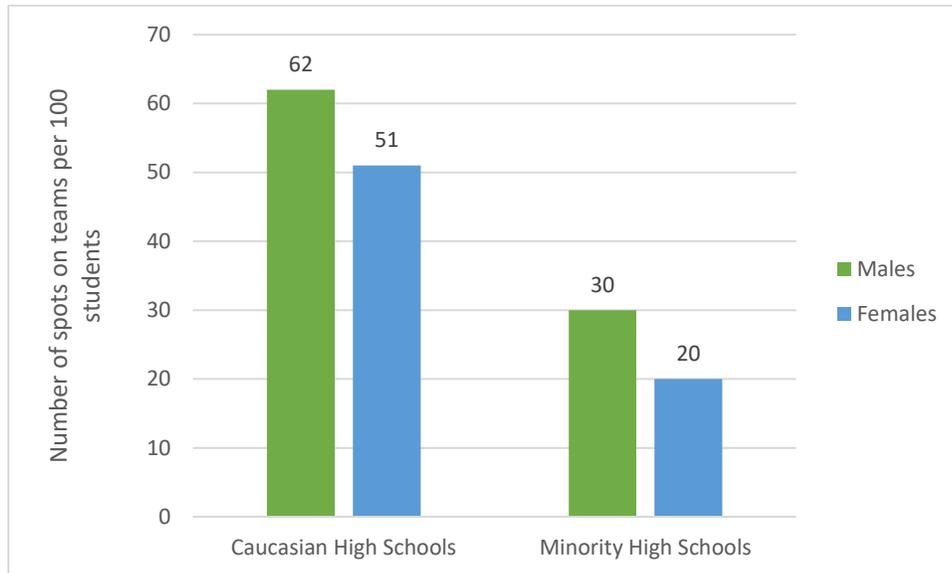
⁵ <https://www.ey.com/gl/en/newsroom/news-releases/news-ey-female-athletes-make-winning-entrepreneurs-ey-espn2-report>

⁶ <https://usatodayhss.com/2017/paying-to-play-how-much-do-club-sports-cost>

⁷ <https://theundefeated.com/features/more-black-women-are-playing-soccer-but-there-is-still-a-long-way-to-go/>

girls. They found that at predominately minority high schools, the number of spots available for girls is at just 20.⁸

Table 2. Gender Disparities in Athletic Opportunities Based on Ethnicity



Lack of Inclusive Environments:

Despite significant progress, persisting gender ideologies continue to reaffirm that the sport industry is male-dominated, male-identified, and male-controlled.⁹ While economic barriers affect both girls and boys, the lack of program design specifically for girls in soccer can lead to the drop-off in participation for young women. When programs are not tailored to young women, there is a visible decrease in mentorship opportunities, peer support, awareness programs, and a decline in the presence of women playing sports in media.¹⁰ It is important to note that a truly gender inclusive environment is a space where all youth, no matter their gender identity, are welcome and included, and have access to the same benefits of sport.

⁸ https://prrac.org/pdf/GirlsFinishingLast_Report.pdf

⁹ Coakley, J. (2009). *Sports in Society: Issues and controversies* (10th ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

¹⁰ <https://www.womenssportsfoundation.org/research/article-and-report/recent-research/teen-sport-in-america/>

GRANT PARAMETERS

What are the key dates?

- [Application opens](#) - March 1, 2019
 - Application closes - April 2, 2019 at 5 p.m. EST
 - Grantees announced - June 2019
 - Grant year begins - June 2019
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What does a typical grant award look like?

The total grant amount typically ranges from \$30,000 to \$90,000, which represents a 3-year grant with approximately \$10,000 to \$30,000 granted per year. Renewal is contingent upon successful execution of programming and reporting within each grant year.

Competitive Proposals will address the following core criteria:

- **Intentional Soccer Program Design:** How does your programming increase recruitment and retention of girls in soccer? How does it integrate the development of life skills?
 - **Equity:** How does your program expand opportunities for girls to participate and prosper in soccer, particularly in communities that have historically been excluded from such opportunities?
 - **Evaluation Plan:** How do you measure progress towards programmatic outcomes? How do you ensure credible reporting?
 - **Sustainable Efforts:** What innovative tactics do you employ to offer sustainable opportunities for girls? What is your plan to guarantee sustainable programming once this grant is over?
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Reporting Requirements:

All grantees will be required to:

- Submit interim and final impact reports. This will include reporting aggregate data about the program and participants. The program will include evaluation methods that demonstrate change in participants' knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors.
- Report back on training/technical assistance provided to staff.
- Engage in collaboration opportunities, including cohort calls and the annual Urban Soccer Symposium.
- Contribute learnings and promising practices, resulting in a shareable document to be distributed to the sports-based youth development field.