

Page: Advancing Gender Equity in Youth Sports: Community of Practice Overview

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Background

As one of the largest providers of youth sports in the nation, reaching over 40 million youth annually, park and recreation professionals are catalysts for youth sports equity, offering affordable, fun, inclusive and multisport options that promote positive youth development.

Sports offer numerous benefits for youth, specifically girls. Girls who play sports experience a multitude of benefits from playing sports, including attaining higher levels of education, being mentally and physically healthier, and earning higher wages as adults compared to non-athlete peers. In particular, girls and women of color experience lifelong dividends from sports, yet too often have the least opportunity to play. Many factors contribute to this gender disparity, including access to facilities and leagues, cultural norms and attitudes, lack of representation in coaching and leadership positions, cost, and lack of programming options available. Park and recreation agencies play a pivotal role in addressing gender equity in sport by providing accessible, inclusive opportunities for girls and women to participate.

Program Overview

The goal of the Advancing Gender Equity in Youth Sports Community of Practice (CoP) is to test and pilot activities that increase access to sports for girls. Ultimately through its work with the CoP, NRPA will develop a supplement to NRPA's Youth Sports Equity Framework specific to advancing gender equity in the youth sports landscape. As noted, this can include representation of girls in sports programs and girls and women in the coaching pipeline.

Based on its work with previous youth sports cohorts, NRPA has identified a preliminary list of activities (<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/a83nbgvyabhe4cczoekj/Gender-Equity-Activities.png?rlkey=8gyuxy6pfltmqchgkx6vg32vc&st=a4k6kofv&dl=0>) with proven potential to increase access to youth sports. Agencies can propose to utilize project funding to implement one or more of the strategies included in this list, with a focus on the target populations mentioned above. Alternatively, agencies may also propose strategies not included in this list, so long as these strategies still prioritize girls and women. Applicants will be required to describe their project and its connection to advancing youth sports equity in depth in their application.

NRPA will select up to 10 agencies to participate in the year-long CoP program. Agencies will receive financial support (\$20,000) to 1) implement their gender equity strategy and 2) support their participation in the community of practice. CoP members will commit to:

1. implementing one or more of the gender equity strategies included in the NRPA YSEF and sharing progress and lessons learned,
2. participating in bi-monthly CoP sessions (x6 total) and peer discussions, and
3. participating in evaluation activities, including case study interviews/focus groups, to understand key facilitators of success, challenges/barriers, impacts, and opportunities for scaling strategies across the P&R field.

CoP Expectations

All participants are expected to attend bimonthly virtual meetings for peer discussion on a pre-selected topic. Selected topics will focus on centering equitable programs, practices, and policies youth sports and will incorporate topics requested by members of the CoP, with opportunity for members to co-lead meetings and troubleshoot common market challenges with the cohort. Meetings will be 60-90 minutes long and occur bimonthly from January – August 2025.

All applicants will be requested to complete a pre-and post-survey and may be invited to participate in a future focus group. The lead evaluator and programs team will provide tools and support to help answer these questions. In addition, following each of the CoP calls, participants will be asked to complete a brief two-minute survey to assess key takeaways and areas for improvement.

Goals

- Identify successful, replicable gender equity strategies in parks and recreation, which will be disseminated to the field at large through the Gender Equity Roadmap.
- Increase the knowledge and support of park and recreation professionals to remove systemic barriers to increase access to sports for girls and level the playing field.

Availability of Funds

- NRPA will select up to 10 park and recreation agencies to participate in the CoP.
- Selected agencies will receive \$20,000 to support their participation and engagement in the CoP, and to implement gender equity strategies.

Eligibility Guidelines

- The applicant must be a local government agency that plans, builds, and/or operates parks (e.g., municipal park and recreation department, tribal recreation department, park district, public works department that manages parks, etc.) OR an affiliated 501c(3) non-profit organization (e.g., youth sports nonprofit that partners with a local P&R agency).
- If the applicant is not a local government agency, the applicant is required to submit a letter of support from the park and recreation agency director or equivalent.

Review Process

NRPA will review and consider all applications in alignment with NRPA's Equitable Grantmaking Policy, which aims to ensure that funding opportunities sponsored by NRPA positively benefit communities, particularly communities that have historically experienced disinvestment by government and philanthropy, by investing in and championing the park and recreation profession as a catalyst of positive change for equity, climate readiness and overall well-being.

To ensure fairness and eliminate bias in the review process, NRPA's grantmaking team will create a diverse panel of qualified reviewers. NRPA will support reviewers by hosting a reviewer training that details grant goals and requirements, reviews the scoring rubric, and addresses implicit bias in the review process. NRPA will use the criteria outlined in the CoP Scoring Rubric (<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/trcpw8cn59w9gnp2xbdwm/Gender-Equity-CoP-Scoring-Rubric.pdf?rlkey=nh9i5yntucjkoh1t25morwfe1&st=709pzmwn&dl=0>) to judge applications.

Questions

If you have questions, please email youthsports@nrpa.org (mailto:youthsports@nrpa.org).

Key Dates

Date	Activity
Week of September 23, 2024	RFP release
October 22, 2024	Informational webinar
November 8, 2024	Proposals due to NRPA
December 20, 2024	NRPA to notify agencies of award status (NRPA will notify all applicants)
January 2025	CoP begins
January – August 2025	Awarded agencies to implement gender equity strategies
Ongoing	NRPA and awarded agencies to evaluate implemented strategies
August 2025	Final report due to NRPA

Page: Applicant Information**Collaborators Instructions**

To help you fill out this form, NRPA allows multiple people to work on a single application. If you would like to invite a colleague or multiple colleagues to assist you in completing your application, click the Manage Collaborators button at the top-right of this form. From there, you will be able to add collaborators - All you need is their name and valid e-mail address. Keep in mind that your application can only be submitted by the individual who started this application. You may also revoke a collaborator's access at any time using the same menu.

Multimedia Submissions

Applicants can submit parts of the application in written, video, or voice recording forms. These are clearly marked on each question. We encourage applicants to use the methods they feel most comfortable using but note that some questions require a written response. The video and voice recordings should clearly answer all components of each question. However, creativity is welcome. All methods of response will be equally scored during the review process without preference given to any one method. Examples of video or voice recordings could include interview style with stakeholders (municipal or community partners, community members, park and recreation professionals, etc.), a story-telling format with images, clips, or descriptions of project focus areas (like a podcast), or a multimedia presentation.

You can complete the entire application in writing or partially written and media. All written components must be submitted through this online application. If you are submitting a partial media application, you must provide written statements to those questions where indicated. For all media question responses, you must indicate the questions covered through media response – this could simply be a sentence "Answered in the video" or "Answered in the attached podcast." There will be space at the end of the application to upload all media files. Multimedia submissions should not exceed 20 total minutes combined. Partial media applications must cover all points of each question. All applications, written or partial media, will be judged equally without preference to one method.

Regardless of written, video or voice recorded submissions, a complete application must be submitted through NRPA's online grant application system. **Applications are due by November 8th at 11:59 PM PST.**

Eligibility

We are a local, municipal or regional government agency

Organization Name

City of Menifee

Organization Address

29995 Evans Rd

Grant Contact Name

Shanice Jackson

Grant Contact Email

sjackson@cityofmenifee.us

Page: Youth Sports Ecosystem**Current Youth Sports Opportunities**

The City of Menifee offers a wide range of co-ed youth sports programs designed to foster skill development, teamwork, and a love for physical activity. Our programs include a youth flag football league, youth basketball league, and youth sports camps that introduce athletes to the fundamentals of various sports each week. Additionally, we host an Adaptive Sports Fair, as well as fitness-based classes and aquatics programming, creating a broad scope of athletic opportunities for ages 3 and up.

While these programs are accessible to all, participation rates among girls are significantly lower than those of boys, with girls comprising only 15% of total sports registrations. This disparity underscores the need to actively encourage and engage female youth in sports. We see a strong opportunity to develop targeted marketing efforts aimed at young female athletes and to promote sports as an inclusive, empowering experience.

By fostering a safe, supportive environment for girls to explore new sports, we can create an atmosphere where female participants feel valued and motivated to advance their athletic skills. This approach not only promotes gender equity but also helps build confidence and resilience among young female athletes.

Community Served

The City of Menifee, located in southwestern Riverside County, spans approximately 50 square miles and is home to around 115,000 residents, making it one of California's fastest-growing cities and ranked 9th in the nation for growth. Menifee's community is a blend of vibrant neighborhoods with a rich history, strong cultural heritage, and diverse recreational opportunities, making it a desirable place to live, work, and play. The area was originally inhabited by the Luiseño and Pechanga tribes and later developed in the mid-1800s as farming and mining land. By the 1960s, Menifee began transforming into an active retirement community, and it has since expanded into a dynamic, inclusive city welcoming residents of all ages and backgrounds.

To increase access for historically underrepresented groups, especially girls, the City emphasizes Community Engagement and Social Infrastructure as a key strategic priority. This includes creating programs and resources to increase awareness, accessibility, and community connection. Through the Community Services Department, we actively work to engage and uplift all residents by delivering quality programs and facilities. By developing inclusive, gender-focused programming and proactively addressing barriers to participation, we aim to enhance quality of life and foster lasting, positive experiences for all youth, especially young girls.

Goals for Advancing Gender Equity in Sport

The City of Menifee is committed to advancing gender equity in sports, with a goal of increasing female participation and creating a supportive, inclusive environment for girls and women in our community. While we currently offer various co-ed sports programs, our department recognizes the need for targeted initiatives that prioritize and celebrate girls in sports. To achieve this, we aim to implement the 'Get HER in the Game' program, designed to foster a welcoming, safe environment where girls' participation is encouraged and valued.

The 'Get HER in the Game' curriculum will focus on increasing access to sports facilities, resources, and training for female athletes. By partnering with local organizations and sponsors, we hope to expand opportunities specifically for girls, allowing them to engage in sports on an equal footing. This initiative will also promote the representation of women as athletes, coaches, volunteers, and officials, providing positive role models and reinforcing that sports is a space for everyone.

Through partnerships with youth sports advocates, we seek to build pathways for lifelong engagement and mentorship, empowering young female athletes and helping to establish a more equitable, diverse, and supportive sports ecosystem.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The City of Menifee is deeply committed to fostering justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI) in all aspects of its programs and services. Through intentional integration of JEDI principles into our City's strategic plan, we aim to increase diverse representation in marketing, programming, and community engagement efforts. We provide staff training focused on cultural competency and inclusive practices to ensure that our team is well-equipped to serve all community members equitably and respectfully.

We actively partner with local organizations, community groups, businesses, and residents to create inclusive opportunities and promote accessibility. For instance, our Mighty Me program, which falls under the City's inclusive and special needs initiative, offers a supportive environment where people of all abilities can develop skills and enjoy fitness activities. Our annual Adaptive Sports Fair promotes inclusivity by encouraging participation in a variety of sports and connecting individuals with local resources.

Additionally, through our Cultural Arts program, we offer diverse events and activities that celebrate cultural awareness. From cultural dance classes that teach history and traditions to girls' confidence workshops, we seek to empower all participants. We hope to grow our JEDI commitment through the Community of Practice, gaining insights to further enhance inclusivity across all programs.

Page: Project Information

Proposed Project

"Get HER in the Game" is a dedicated all-girls sports initiative aimed at advancing gender equity by providing girls with meaningful opportunities to connect, engage, and thrive in sports. This six-week program will foster a supportive, empowering environment where female athletes can develop both athletic and life skills. Meeting 2-3 times a week, the program will focus on skill development in areas such as footwork, dribbling, passing, and shooting, tailored for beginner to intermediate levels.

In addition to on-court skills, each session will include a focus on life skills, including confidence-building, effective communication, and mental wellness. Athletes will participate in drills designed to enhance teamwork, resilience, and self-assurance—skills that extend beyond sports and into their everyday lives.

Each week, we will feature guest speakers, including female sports professionals, who will share their journeys and offer practical advice for success in sports and life. Participants will also have the chance to connect with female mentors—coaches, officials, and sports administrators—who will guide them in developing leadership, social, and emotional skills. This project aims to create a lasting impact by empowering young girls with the confidence, support, and community to continue their engagement in sports.

Youth Sports Equity Strategy

Menifee is committed to advancing all strategies within NRPA's Youth Sports Equity Framework by building a comprehensive approach to address programmatic gaps in justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion (JEDI). Our 'Get HER in the Game' initiative is designed to reduce barriers to sports participation for girls and increase gender equity across our programs.

We conduct ongoing assessments of our current operations and engage in targeted outreach to identify unique challenges and needs of female athletes in our community. This includes speaking directly with current female athletes, as well as potential new participants from other City programs, to understand their experiences and obstacles. Through these conversations, we can more effectively address systemic barriers and tailor our program to meet the needs of this generation of female athletes.

The project will also focus on strengthening relationships with advocates and community partners, dedicating resources to build a sustainable network of support. To ensure broad community awareness, we will use diverse marketing strategies, including social media, information booths at events, email campaigns, our seasonal Activity Guide, and presentations to schools and our Community Partners network. Through these efforts, we aim to create a lasting, impactful program that promotes equity and inclusion in youth sports.

Community Need

Our organization has chosen the 'Get HER in the Game' project to address the significant gender gap in our sports programs. Currently, only 15% of our sports registrations are female, despite the City of Menifee's population being evenly split between genders. This stark discrepancy highlights a critical need to create programs that actively encourage female participation in sports.

As a newer city, we proudly maintain 22 parks with excellent outdoor amenities but face limitations in indoor facilities—an obstacle for sports programming. This project will build long-term community relationships to help overcome these limitations. Partnering with local schools that have indoor gymnasiums will expand access to safe, inclusive, and affordable athletic opportunities for female students. Additionally, collaboration with youth sports advocates and skilled coaches will bring passion and expertise into the program, enhancing quality and engagement.

Finally, we envision partnerships with Community Partners interested in sponsoring or donating to a cause that promotes gender equity and community wellness. By involving schools, local advocates, and sponsors, we aim to create a sustainable, impactful program that fosters a supportive environment for girls in sports and addresses the gender gap in youth athletic participation.

Page: Project Management

Project Timeline

January 2025: Launch a marketing campaign to promote 'Get HER in the Game.' Outreach will include presentations at local schools, email notifications to current program participants, and flyer distribution at city events. We will network with local businesses and organizations to secure sponsorships or in-kind donations, aiming to create a robust community support system for the program.

February - March 2025: Open registration for the first two program sessions, with targeted outreach to encourage female athletes and their families to sign up. Our goal is to engage a broad demographic of girls, focusing on overcoming barriers to participation.

March - April 2025: Conduct Session 1 of 'Get HER in the Game,' which will run on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, with 1-hour sessions organized by age group. Each week will include skill development, life skills sessions, and guest speakers from the local sports community.

April - May 2025: Conduct Session 2 with a similar schedule, incorporating feedback from the first session to enhance participant experience.

June - July 2025: Evaluate program outcomes, gather participant feedback, and refine the curriculum for future sessions. Finalize a report on the program's impact and outcomes, ensuring timely completion by August 31, 2025.

Page: Project Budget

Budget

Download File (<https://nrpa-awards.secure-platform.com/file/22571/eyJ0eXAiOiJKV1QiLCJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJtZWVpYUlkIjoyMjU3MSwiYWxsYXN0b3R0aWduZWRVcmwiOiJGYWxzZSI6Imlnbn99> Youth%20Sports%20Equity%20Grant_Budget%20Template%20%28version%201%29.xlsx)

Budget Details

Facility Reservation: Securing an indoor gymnasium at Santa Rosa Academy at \$290 per hour, for three days a week at 3-5 hours per day, will provide a safe and consistent space for the program.

Program Refreshments: Funds will cover essentials like water, Gatorade, granola bars, and fruit, ensuring participants stay hydrated and energized during sessions.

Guest Speaker Incentives: Gift cards, stipends, and gas/mileage reimbursements will be offered to guest speakers as a token of appreciation for their contributions.

Sports Equipment: Essential training tools, including cones, blocking pads, defender simulators, balls, pennies, whistles, and court cleaning supplies, will support skill development activities.

Registration Incentives: Items like reusable water bottles, program-specific t-shirts, and towels will be given to registered participants, fostering team spirit and commitment.

Completion Incentives: Upon completing the program, participants will receive drawstring bags, basketballs, and personal training kits (including cones and resistance bands) to continue skill-building at home.

General Program Supplies: Notebooks, pens, and printing materials will support the creation of personalized journals/workbooks to enhance the curriculum's impact.

Additional Funding

To supplement the grant, we will use funds from our current bi-annual budget and contribute significant in-kind support through dedicated staff time. Our staff will handle program coordination, marketing, and on-site management, ensuring seamless operations throughout the initiative. This contribution of staff time represents a critical in-kind investment that maximizes our ability to deliver a high-quality program without additional financial strain.

Additionally, we plan to engage guest speakers through reciprocal support; in exchange for their time, we will offer staffing and assistance for their events, creating mutual benefits and reducing the need for monetary compensation. Our partnership with local schools will play a key role in obtaining essential sports equipment and, when available, indoor facilities, allowing us to meet program needs while maintaining budget efficiency.

Collaborations with local businesses are vital to our funding strategy, as they will help us secure incentives like gift cards and promotional items at little to no cost. Working closely with other city agencies, we aim to coordinate facility access, expand participant outreach, and acquire additional resources necessary for the program's success.

Leveraging these partnerships and in-kind contributions is essential to sustaining 'Get HER in the Game,' maximizing community resources, and enhancing program impact.

Page: Community of Practice

Community of Practice Participant

Community Services Coordinator, Shanice Jackson, who currently oversees Youth Sports, Healthy Menifee, Aquatics, and Skate Park operations, will join the community of practice. Shanice is a dedicated advocate for youth sports and passionate about advancing female participation in sports. With 24 years of competitive basketball experience and over a decade of coaching across recreation, high school, and collegiate levels, she brings both depth and breadth to this role.

Shanice is a certified youth basketball and flag football official and currently serves as an assistant coach at La Sierra University, as well as a head coach and girls program director for a non-profit travel basketball organization. Her experience extends beyond the court, as she leverages character development, life skills, and leadership techniques to support youth athletes and her professional growth. Her extensive background in youth sports and commitment to mentorship make her an invaluable asset to the community of practice.

Organization Strengths

Our team brings a wealth of experience and practical knowledge from managing diverse sports leagues and programming. Each season, our staff and volunteer coaches receive training on rules, techniques, and coaching strategies that apply across age groups, with a focus on effective communication with parents, partners, officials, and players. Our Sports leadership team excels in planning and executing events, practices, and games, prioritizing inclusive practices, youth sports development, and personal growth for all athletes.

Though our City and department are newer, our team has applied best practices and lessons learned from previous roles across both public and private sectors, including our work with the NRPA's SHAPR 3.0 grant. We leverage insights gained from these experiences to refine our programs, improve participant engagement, and address emerging challenges proactively. Our commitment to learning has allowed us to integrate strategies that boost engagement, inclusivity, and program impact, making our offerings stronger and more equitable.

With access to a broad network of supportive organizations, we bring a unique perspective to the community of practice. Our team's adaptability and dedication to gender equity enable us to implement effective solutions and share our insights, contributing meaningfully to collective learning and advancement.

Desired Learning

Through the peer network calls, we hope to build a strong network of advocates to support our mission of providing safe, welcoming, and inclusive sports programs for young female athletes. Youth sports offer critical opportunities for girls to build confidence, resilience, and teamwork skills, which are essential for their personal and social development. We aim to learn strategies for ensuring meaningful representation of female athletes, officials, and coaches across our community, fostering a culture where young girls feel inspired and empowered.

Additionally, we are eager to gain tools and techniques for teaching life skills, coaching, and mentoring female athletes to support their growth both on and off the field. By learning effective ways to nurture these qualities, we can better equip young athletes to continue their athletic journeys and become confident, contributing members of society.

We will share these insights by hosting community workshops, updating training materials, and collaborating with local partners to integrate these best practices throughout our programs, ensuring a lasting impact.

Page: Letter of Support

Letter of Support

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How Did You Hear About Us?

Email, NRPA Connect, NRPA Website or blog

Please Specify

Page: Audio Submissions (Optional)

For partial audio applicants, please upload your audio files here. Be sure to indicate which questions will be addressed through the submitted audio files in the written question response areas. Begin each audio submission by stating the question and answer all parts of the provided question.

Please review your application before final submission. Only the application owner, not collaborators, can submit the application. **Applications are due by November 8, 2024 at 11:59 PM PST.**

Multimedia 1: Link

Multimedia 1: Application Question

Multimedia 2: Link

Multimedia 2: Application Question

Multimedia 3: Link

Multimedia 3: Application Question

Multimedia 4: Link

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Multimedia 5: Link

Multimedia 5: Application Question

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Multimedia 6: Application Question