

# Check It Out:

---

**Is the Playing Field Level  
for Women and Girls  
at Your School?**

**An Athletics Equity Checklist For Students, Athletes,  
Coaches, Parents, Administrators, and Advocates**

# THE NATIONAL WOMEN'S LAW CENTER

---

The National Women's Law Center (NWLC) is a non-profit organization that has been working since 1972 to expand the possibilities for women and girls at work, in school, and in their communities. The Center focuses on major concerns of women and girls, including education, family economic security, employment, and health, with special attention given to the concerns of low-income women and girls.

*Check It Out: Is the Playing Field Level for Women and Girls at Your School* guides readers through a series of easy-to-answer questions that can help answer the larger question of whether the athletic programs at their schools treat both male and female students fairly. *Check It Out* is designed for students, athletes, coaches, parents, administrators, and anyone who is concerned about whether or not their school's program provides all students with equal opportunities in sports.

*Check It Out* is intended to provide general information on legal rights for women and girls in athletics. This booklet is not intended to provide legal services or legal assistance for individual cases. Readers interested in getting help with a particular legal problem can call or write to the National Women's Law Center (contact information listed in the "Additional Resources" section at the end).

NWLC would like to thank the MARGARET Fund for its generous support of our work on athletics and education, without which this publication would not be possible.

## Authors

**Linda Bunker** is the William Parrish Professor of Education at the University of Virginia and a professor of kinesiology. She has written fifteen books and over 100 scholarly articles related to kinesiology.

**Neena Chaudhry** is Counsel at NWLC. She received her J.D. from Yale in 1996 and her B.A. from the University of Maryland at College Park in 1993.

**Peggy Kellers** has a Ph.D. in sports psychology counseling from the University of Virginia. The former executive director of the National Association for Girls and Women in Sports, Dr. Kellers spent 25 years as a coach and teacher.

**Deborah Slaner Larkin** is chair of the Title IX Coalition and the Westchester Fund for Women and Girls. A member of the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, she also coaches youth sports.

**Verna Williams** is Vice President and Director of Educational Opportunities at NWLC. She received her J.D. from Harvard in 1988 and her B.S. from Georgetown in 1982.

# Check It Out:

---

**Is the Playing Field Level  
for Women and Girls  
at Your School?**

**An Athletics Equity Checklist For Students, Athletes,  
Coaches, Parents, Administrators, and Advocates**

Linda Bunker, Neena Chaudhry, Peggy Kellers, Deborah Slaner Larkin, Verna Williams



# INTRODUCTION

*What’s fair when it comes to athletics programming for male and female students?*

*What should schools do to make sure that all students have equal opportunities to benefit from sports?*

*Check It Out* can help answer these questions.

*Check It Out* is a tool to help students, athletes, coaches, parents, administrators and advocates assess whether the athletic programs at their schools treat women and girls fairly. *Check It Out* is not designed to determine whether a particular school is complying with Title IX, the federal law that prohibits sex discrimination in federally funded education programs. Instead, it is a guide to understanding the rules that courts and the Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights (the federal agency with the main job of enforcing Title IX) use to determine whether schools are treating male and female students equally.

*Check It Out* can help identify the good things that are going on at your school, as well as the areas where improvements are needed.

## How to Use Check It Out

First, review “The Fundamentals” in the next section.

Second, read through the entire checklist and figure out what information you will need. Since you may not know all the answers, forming a “team” of people who share an interest in providing athletic opportunities fairly may help you answer the questions. This team might include students, athletes, coaches, the athletic director, parents, student or faculty organizations, and others at your school or in your community.

Finally – Check It Out! Answer the questions, review them, and identify the areas to cheer about and those that need improvement. Work with your school to make the necessary changes and seek outside help if needed.

“Women at my college are interested in playing varsity soccer. The college has no women’s varsity soccer team, but they do have a men’s varsity soccer team. Can the school do that?”

“I’ve noticed that our school doesn’t provide the same type and quality of facilities and equipment — like fields, locker rooms, uniforms, team equipment — for women’s teams as they do for men’s teams. That doesn’t seem fair.”

“My college gives much more athletic scholarship money to male athletes than to female athletes. Is that OK?”

“My school’s booster club donates lots of money to the boys’ baseball team, which means a beautiful field and an electronic scoreboard for them, but nothing for the girls’ softball team. Is that ok?”

## THE FUNDAMENTALS

---

### What is Title IX and What Does It Mean in Athletics?

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is the federal law that prohibits sex discrimination in schools and other educational programs that receive federal funds. It applies to all aspects of educational opportunities, but is especially well known for its success in opening the door to athletics for women and girls. Because almost all public elementary and secondary schools and most colleges and universities receive some sort of federal funding, their athletics programs are covered by Title IX.

**Title IX requires schools to:**

- *offer male and female students equal opportunities to play sports;*
- *treat male and female athletes fairly; and*
- *give male and female athletes their fair shares of athletic scholarship money.*

### What Does “Equal Opportunities to Play Sports” Mean?

**To demonstrate that it offers equal opportunities for both males and females to play sports, a school must show:**

- *that the percentages of male and female athletes are about the same as the percentages of male and female students enrolled at the school;*  
~ or ~
- *that the school has a history and a continuing practice of expanding athletic opportunities for female students, since they usually have been the ones given fewer chances to play;*  
~ or ~
- *that the school is fully meeting female athletes’ interests and abilities.*

## What Does “Treat Male and Female Athletes Fairly” Mean?

Fair treatment means making sure that male and female athletes receive equal benefits and services from their school, including:

- equal quality and quantity of equipment and supplies;
- fairness in scheduling games and practices;
- equal financial support for travel and expenses;
- fairness in assigning and paying quality coaches; and
- equal facilities (locker rooms, fields, and arenas, for example).

---

**REMEMBER:** Schools do not have to provide identical benefits and services to their male and female athletes, as long as schools treat them equally overall.

---

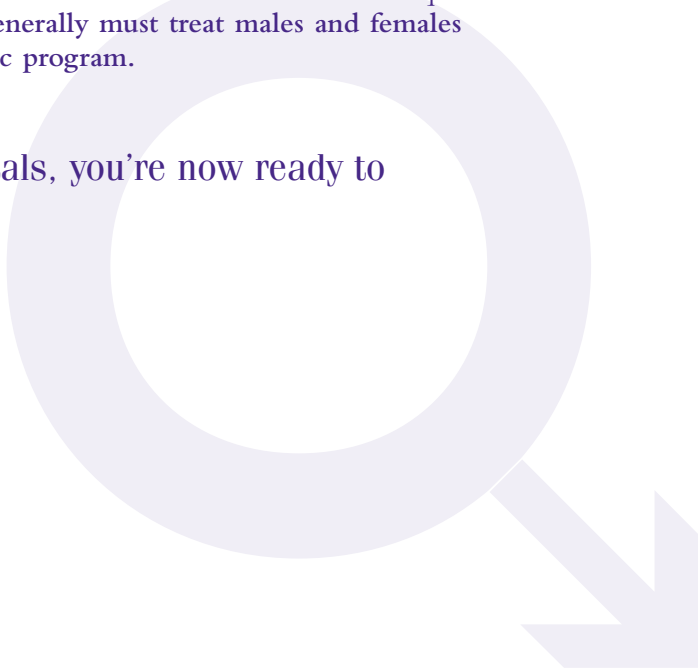
## What Does “Fair Shares of Scholarship Money” Mean?

The percentages of athletic scholarship money awarded to male and female athletes should be within **one percent** of their respective participation rates, unless the school can show why a bigger gap is not discriminatory.

### So, what’s the bottom line?

Schools must give male and female students alike a fair chance to play sports, and they must provide male and female athletes with equal support. **That means they generally must treat males and females equally overall in the athletic program.**

**With these fundamentals, you’re now ready to Check It Out!**



## I. ARE THERE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES TO PLAY SPORTS?

There are three ways to find the answer to this question. A “yes” to any of the following means that your school is providing female students with equal opportunities to play sports:

1. Are the percentages of male and female athletes about the same as the percentages of male and female students enrolled at the school?

Yes  No

**Unsure?** Check with your school and follow the formula:

- What is the TOTAL number of students in the school? \_\_\_\_\_
- How many are female? \_\_\_\_\_ How many are male? \_\_\_\_\_
- What are the percentages of female and male students?  
\_\_\_\_\_ % female \_\_\_\_\_ % male
- What is the TOTAL number of athletes in the school? \_\_\_\_\_
- How many are female? \_\_\_\_\_ How many are male? \_\_\_\_\_
- What are the percentages of female and male athletes?  
\_\_\_\_\_ % female \_\_\_\_\_ % male

*NOTE: When you're counting the total number of athletes, you should only include those athletes who: receive school support in the form of coaching, equipment, etc. on a regular basis during a sport's season, regularly participate in organized practice sessions and team meetings, and are listed on a team's squad list. Most often this will mean that you count only varsity and possibly junior varsity athletes, and do not count club or intramural athletes.*

**CHECK IT OUT:** Compare the percentages of male and female athletes to the percentages of male and female students enrolled. Check “Yes” in the box above if they are about equal and go to Part II. If not, check “No” and go to Section 2 on the next page.



2. Does the school have a history and a continuing practice of expanding athletic opportunities for female students?

Yes  No

**Unsure?** Schools must make good faith efforts to increase athletic participation opportunities for students who previously have been denied opportunities, usually females, either through the addition of teams or the addition of athletes to existing teams. These opportunities must be added in response to female students’ developing interests and abilities. If a school can only show that it increased opportunities during the early years of its women’s/girl’s program, but has stopped doing so, then the answer is “no.” Also, if your school just keeps making promises to increase opportunities for female students in the future, but fails to follow through, the answer is “no.” Finally, cutting or capping male teams does not count as increasing opportunities for females.

The following can help you answer this question:

Yes No

- Over the last few years, has the school added female teams?
- Has the school cut any female teams?
- If “yes,” did the school cut each team because there truly weren’t enough female students who were interested or had the ability to play? (If “no,” go to Section 3).
- Have females asked for any sports to be added?
- If “yes,” did the school grant their request(s)?
- If the school did not grant their request(s), why not?

---

- Do the reasons the school gave seem fair?
- Does the school have plans to add new sports for females?
- Does the school have any policies or procedures for deciding whether to add new sports?
- If “yes,” do the same policies and procedures apply to males and females alike?
- Does the school have any policies or procedures for finding out what sports females want to play?

**CHECK IT OUT:** If your school has added new teams over the years as female students’ interests and abilities to play have developed, then check “Yes.” If, on the other hand, your school has dropped female teams, hasn’t responded to female students’ requests to add more sports, has no plans to add sports female students want to play, or isn’t fair when it comes to deciding whether sports should be added, check “No” and go to Section 3.

3. Does your school provide interested female students with the opportunity to compete? Yes  No

**Unsure?** Your school should provide female students with opportunities that match their interests and abilities. Here are some questions to help you figure out the answer:

- |   |  |     |    |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
|---|--|-----|----|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does your school conduct a survey every few years to determine the interest levels in all sports for females and males?</li> <li>• If “no,” does your school use other methods to determine the interest levels in sports?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If “yes,” does your school use the same methods for males and females?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Have female students asked the school to add any particular sport(s)?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If yes, did the school grant their request(s)?</li> <li>• If “no,” why not? _____</li> <li>• Do the reasons seem fair?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Is there other evidence of female students’ interests and abilities in a particular sport or sports (e.g., are they playing certain sports in clubs inside or outside of school or at the intramural level)?</li> </ul> | <table border="0"> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;">Yes</td> <td style="text-align: right;">No</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table> | Yes | No | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Yes   | No   |     |    |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/>  | <input type="checkbox"/>   |     |    |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/>  | <input type="checkbox"/>   |     |    |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/>  | <input type="checkbox"/>   |     |    |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/>  | <input type="checkbox"/>   |     |    |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/>  | <input type="checkbox"/>   |     |    |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/>  | <input type="checkbox"/>   |     |    |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/>  | <input type="checkbox"/>   |     |    |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |

**CHECK IT OUT:** If female students have asked their school to add any sport(s), or there is evidence that female students have the interest and ability to play any sport(s) currently not offered, and the school has added the sport(s), then check “Yes” in the box above. If, on the other hand, the school has refused requests to add any sport(s), even though females have the interest and ability to play them, or the school has not found out what female students are interested in playing, then check “No.”

## II. ARE MALE AND FEMALE ATHLETES GIVEN EQUAL BENEFITS AND SERVICES?

Across the board, schools must provide male and female athletes with equal benefits and services. Schools don't have to spend the same amount of money on their male and female athletes, however, nor do their opportunities have to be identical. The key question in this area is, overall, are male and female athletes treated equally?

*FOR EXAMPLE: The fact that a school spends more on men's uniforms than on women's uniforms may not be unfair if the men's uniforms just cost more than the women's. But if the school spends more on men's uniforms because they are top-of-the-line, and the women's uniforms are bargain-basement, then the school is not treating male and female athletes equally. Or if the school provides half of the male athletes with top-of-the-line uniforms, but only one-fourth of the female athletes with similar quality uniforms, then the school is not treating women fairly.*

To find out whether your school really is being fair requires looking at a variety of areas, such as the following:

### Overall Support

- |  | Yes                      | No                       |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| • Are overall budgets for the male and female programs (including income from booster clubs, concession stand profits, and fundraisers) equitable? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Are school-sponsored athletic banquets and social events for male and female athletes equal?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

### Equipment and Supplies

- |   |                          |                          |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| • Does your school provide athletic paraphernalia (gym bags, towels, jackets, travel bags, sweaters, rings, etc.) of similar quality and quantity for female and male athletes? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Does your school provide practice and competitive uniforms of similar quality and quantity for male and female athletes?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Are uniforms and equipment paid for in the same way for both male and female athletes?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Are the replacement schedules for equipment and uniforms the same for male and female athletes?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

## Scheduling of Games and Practice Times

- |   | Yes                      | No                       |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| • Do male and female athletes have equal amounts of practice time (hours of practice, days per week)?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Are the numbers of competitive events for male and female teams equal?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Are practice and competition times equally desirable for both male and female athletes (e.g., scheduling boys' games for Friday nights and girls' games for Tuesday mornings would not be equally desirable)? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Do male and female athletes lose similar amounts of academic time due to practices and games?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Do the competitive schedules for male and female teams provide equal quality competition (e.g., do male and female athletes have opportunities to compete at the same division levels)?                       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Are post-season, league championship, etc. opportunities equal for male and female teams?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Are the seasons (time of year) of competition the same for male and female teams (e.g., do both boys and girls play basketball in the traditional, winter season)?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**NOTE:** This question probably will apply only to athletic programs at the elementary/secondary school level.

## Travel and Related Expenses

- |  |                          |                          |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| • When male and female athletes travel to games, do they get meals at similar places (e.g., if boys eat at nice restaurants, while girls eat at fast food spots, check "No")?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Are pre-game meals, snacks, etc., provided equally to male and female athletes?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Do male and female athletes have similar modes of transportation to away games (e.g., if coaches or athletes drive female athletes in cars or vans, while professionals drive male athletes in buses, check "No")? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • When extensive travel is required, are provisions for overnight stays equal for male and female athletes (quality of motels, number per room, etc.)?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Does your school provide equal amounts of money for food to male and female athletes when they travel?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

## Availability of Coaches and Their Compensation

- |  | Yes                      | No                       |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| • Are the numbers of athletes seen by coaches of male and female teams equivalent?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Does your school provide the same quality coaches for male and female athletes?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Do coaches of male and female teams receive equal salaries for equal work?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Do coaches of male and female teams have equal “other duties” (e.g., teaching versus full-time coaching)?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Do coaches of male and female teams have equal support staff and office resources to handle paperwork, hire officials, line fields, set up the gym, etc? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Are quality officials (referees, umpires, linespeople, etc.) provided equally to male and female teams?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Are assistant coaches equally available to male and female teams?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

## Locker Rooms, Practice and Competitive Facilities

- |  |                          |                          |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| • Are practice and competitive facilities equally available to male and female teams at desirable times? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Are practice and competitive facilities maintained equally for male and female teams?                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Do male and female athletes have locker rooms of equivalent quality and size?                          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Are spectator seating and scoreboards provided equally to male and female teams?                       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Are the conditions of playing fields, courts, and pools for male and female teams equal?               | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

## Medical and Training Services

- |  |                          |                          |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| • Are weight training and conditioning facilities equally available and of equal quality for male and female athletes?                   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Are medical personnel provided equally for male and female athletes’ physicals and at games?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Are qualified athletic trainers or auxiliary coaches (strength, sports psychology, etc.) provided equally to male and female athletes? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Is health, accident or injury insurance equally available?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

## Publicity

- |  | Yes                      | No                       |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| • Is coverage in the school's paper and media of female and male athletes equal?             | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Is the school's sports publicity personnel equally available to male and female teams?     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Are cheerleaders, pep bands, drill teams, etc. equally provided for female and male teams? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Are athletic awards and recognition equal for male and female athletes?                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Are the quantity and quality of press guides, press releases, game programs, etc., equal?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

## ***Questions Primarily for College Programs (some may apply to high school programs):***

### Recruitment

- |  |                          |                          |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| • Are the policies regarding recruitment and the methods used equal for male and female athletes?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Are the numbers of recruitment personnel and the numbers of recruitment trips made by personnel equal for male and female athletes?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Are the amounts of time coaches spend recruiting equal for male and female athletes?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Are male and female athletes treated equally with respect to recruitment budgets (the percentages of the total budget used to recruit male and female athletes should be roughly equal to their respective participation rates). | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Are other recruitment resources equally provided (e.g., availability of cars, access to WATS lines, recruitment brochures, etc.)?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Are the numbers of prospective student athletes who visit the campus and the quality of their visits (meals, transportation, entertainment, etc.) equal for male and female teams?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

## Availability of Tutors and Their Compensation

- |  | Yes                      | No                       |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| • Are tutors equally available to male and female athletes? For equal amounts of time?                 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Are the numbers of students helped by tutors in an academic term equal for male and female athletes? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Does your school provide the same quality tutors for male and female athletes?                       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Do tutors for male and female athletes receive equal salaries for equal work?                        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

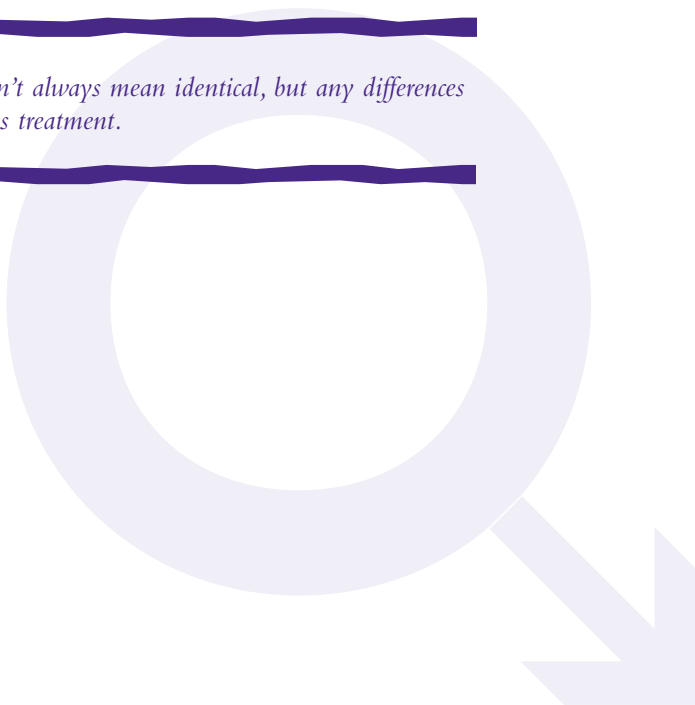
## Housing and Dining Facilities and Services

- |  |                          |                          |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| • Is the quality of housing provided to male and female athletes equal (location, furnishings, shower and restroom facilities, special features, etc.)?                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Are male and female athletes treated equally with respect to their meal plans or cafeteria services (type of plan, number of meals per week, and adequacy of food provided)?             | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Does your school provide equal housing and dining arrangements for male and female athletes when they are on campus during breaks or when the dorms are closed?                          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Are pre-game meals, drinks and supplements provided equally to male and female athletes before home games?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Are the policies for providing special housing and/or dining arrangements and the quantity and quality of special housing and/or dining arrangements equal for male and female athletes? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

---

**REMEMBER:** *Equal doesn't always mean identical, but any differences must not result in second-class treatment.*

---



### III. ARE MALE AND FEMALE ATHLETES GIVEN THEIR FAIR SHARES OF ATHLETIC SCHOLARSHIP MONEY?

*NOTE: While it is rare for elementary or secondary schools to give any scholarships to student-athletes, these schools should provide similar help to their male and female athletes in securing athletic scholarships for college. It is also important for students going to college to know what colleges and universities must do to treat their athletes fairly in this area.*

Treating male and female athletes fairly with respect to athletic scholarships means that the percentages of total athletic financial aid awarded to male and female athletes must be within one percent of their participation rates, unless a school can show why a bigger gap is not discriminatory. (Athletic financial aid includes any money given to athletes because they are athletes, such as grants-in-aid, loans and work-related grants.) Schools do not have to give the same number of scholarships to their male and female athletes, and the individual scholarships do not have to be of equal value.

*FOR EXAMPLE: If 40 percent of a school's athletes are women, then female athletes should get between 39 and 41 percent of the total athletic scholarship money awarded by the school.*

Are male and female athletes receiving their fair shares of scholarship money?

Yes  No

**Unsure?** Follow these steps:

- A. What percentage of your school's athletes is male? \_\_\_\_\_ female? \_\_\_\_\_

*NOTE: You already did this calculation on page 4.*

- B. What percentage of your school's total athletic financial aid is awarded to male athletes? \_\_\_\_\_ female athletes? \_\_\_\_\_
- Is the percentage of total athletic aid awarded to female athletes in (B) within one percent of the percentage of female athletes in (A)?
- If yes, then check "Yes" in the box above.



---

**REMEMBER:** Schools might be able to justify scholarship gaps of more than one percent if they have reasons that are not discriminatory.

**FOR EXAMPLE:** If a school can show that it gives more out-of-state scholarships to men, it may be able to justify giving men more than their fair share of athletic scholarship money because out-of-state scholarships typically cost more than in-state scholarships. But the school would have to show that it does not discriminate when recruiting out-of-state athletes. It would not be fair, for example, if the school devotes more resources to recruiting out-of-state male athletes than it does to out-of-state female athletes.

---

While there may be fair reasons for a scholarship gap of more than one percent, in general a school will have some explaining to do to justify such a gap.



## IV. SO, WHAT'S NEXT?

---

Now that you've been able to Check It Out, take a look at the answers to your questions and formulate an action plan. Identify the areas where your school did well and those in need of improvement.

Here are some suggested next steps:

- **If you haven't been able to complete the checklist or you need additional information**, find out who can help you complete the job – there may be other interested students or people in your school or community willing to work with you.
- **Let school officials know the areas in which the school did well and those in need of improvement.** Strategize with them about how to make sure that males and females are being treated fairly in the athletic program.
- **Discuss these issues with your school's Title IX officer** (the law requires federally funded schools to have one). Get that person's help in leveling the playing field.
- **Find out if your school has a grievance procedure** (the law also requires federally funded schools to have a procedure for handling sex discrimination complaints). If appropriate, consider using that procedure to address your concerns.
- **Develop a plan of action** to address the problem areas. This plan should include both short-term and long-term goals and actions, as well as specific suggestions to help reach those goals. Include a timetable for making the changes and determine who should receive it. If school officials such as coaches, the athletic director, principal, dean of students, or school board members have not been involved, you may want to begin talking to them now.
- **Contact a resource organization** for other suggestions about how to make athletics fair at your school. The next section lists some groups that can help.

Good luck and keep Checking It Out!

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

---

If you have questions or concerns about your school's athletic program, contact:

### **National Women's Law Center**

11 Dupont Circle, NW  
Suite 800  
Washington, DC 20036  
Phone: (202)588-5180  
Fax: (202)588-5185  
Email: [info@nwlc.org](mailto:info@nwlc.org)  
Website: [www.nwlc.org](http://www.nwlc.org)

Other groups that can help are:

### **American Association of University Women**

1111 16th Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20036  
Phone: 1-800-326-AAUW  
Fax: (202) 872-1425  
Email: [info@aauw.org](mailto:info@aauw.org)  
Website: [www.aauw.org](http://www.aauw.org)

### **GREAT: Girls Really Expect A Team**

209 Sedwick Ct.  
Noblesville, IN 46060  
Phone: (317) 877-6054  
Fax: 317-877-7046  
Email: [Great@Iquest.net](mailto:Great@Iquest.net)

### **National Association for Girls and Women in Sport (NAGWS)**

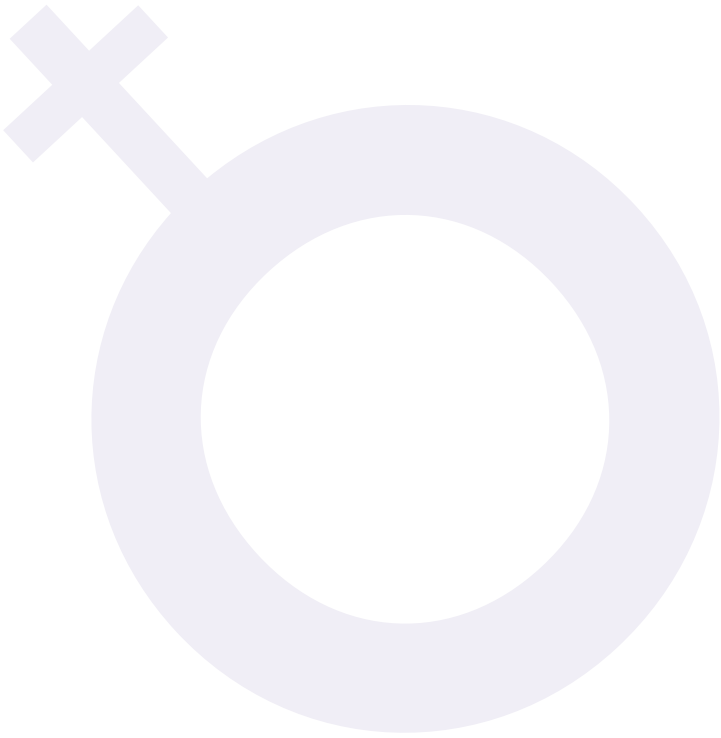
1900 Association Drive  
Reston, VA 20191-1599  
Phone: (703) 476-3450  
Fax: (703) 476-4566  
Website: [www.aahperd.org/nagws/nagws-main.html](http://www.aahperd.org/nagws/nagws-main.html)

### **Office for Civil Rights (OCR) (main federal agency that enforces Title IX)**

U.S. Department of Education  
Mary E. Switzer Building  
330 C Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20202  
Phone: 1-800-421-3481  
TTY: 877-521-2172  
Fax: 202-205-9862  
Email: [OCR@ED.GOV](mailto:OCR@ED.GOV)  
Website: [www.ed.gov/offices/OCR](http://www.ed.gov/offices/OCR)  
(ask for the number of the regional office in your area)

### **Women's Sports Foundation**

Eisenhower Park  
East Meadow, N.Y.  
Phone: 1-800-227-3988/  
516-542-4700  
Fax: 516-542-4716  
Email: [Wosport@aol.com](mailto:Wosport@aol.com)  
Website: [www.womenssportsfoundation.org](http://www.womenssportsfoundation.org)





Women and girls continue to make tremendous contributions to sports, and they in turn reap great academic, economic, social and health benefits. Yet more than twenty-five years after Title IX was enacted, too many schools still are not providing their female students with equal athletic opportunities.

*Check It Out: Is the Playing Field Level for Women and Girls at Your School?* is an important tool for women and girls at all levels of education, as well as others interested in making sure that athletic opportunities are distributed fairly. It explains Title IX's requirements as applied to athletics and allows readers to examine their own schools' athletics programs to see whether males and females are treated equally.

To order copies of this booklet, please fill out and mail the form below to:

National Women's Law Center  
 Attention: *Check It Out*  
 11 Dupont Circle, NW  
 Suite 800  
 Washington, DC 20036  
 Telephone: (202) 588-5180  
 Fax: (202) 588-5185  
 Email: [info@nwlc.org](mailto:info@nwlc.org)  
 Website: [www.nwlc.org](http://www.nwlc.org)

**ORDER FORM**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

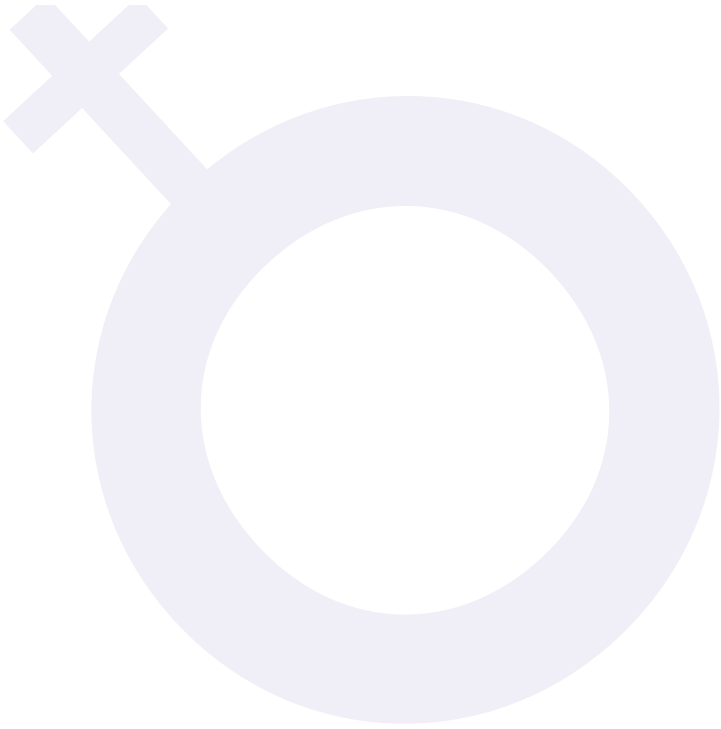
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Item	Quantity	Amount
<i>Check It Out</i>	1	\$0.00
For 2 or more copies, add \$2.00 per copy	_____ (x \$2.00)	
(DC residents add 5.75% sales tax)		
Total (Orders must be pre-paid; we cannot bill.)		

\*Call for information about bulk orders.







11 Dupont Circle, NW  
Suite 800  
Washington, D.C. 20036  
Tel.: 202/588-5180  
Fax: 202/588-5185  
Web: [www.nwlc.org](http://www.nwlc.org)

