

Sports Non-Profits

Spotlight

Sports would be nothing without the fans who support them, and many organizations are more than happy to give back. Sports non-profits arise from teams and athletes alike, all dedicated to making life better for their community and the world.

Personal Connection

Where else can you combine a passion for sports with the desire to help people? Non-profits all have one central goal: to improve lives. Sports foundations are no different, other than the fact that they often incorporate sports into fundraising efforts and community outreach. Working for a sports non-profit is all about the love of the game along with learning about the science behind fundraising and inspiring people:

- Do you love sports?
- Do you want to work in a career that will allow you to help people?
- Do you want to give back to your community?
- Is there a sports non-profit that you've always admired and want to work for someday?

Other Connections

Even if you don't end up working in a non-profit, there are many different career paths that are involved in and are a part of philanthropy or sports, including:

- Offering aid to those in the community who are most vulnerable, often children, as a social welfare non-profit worker
- Marketing sports teams, events, and players by building brand associations and creating effective advertisements as a sports marketing manager
- Communicating daily and discussing the progress of the event plan and receiving updates on suppliers while managing the event budget, drawing up supplier contracts, and payment of supplier invoices as a non-profit event planner
- Helping kids discover a passion for sports that just might turn into a career down the road as a youth coach
- Raising money through fundraising efforts by organizing events, developing donors, and grant writing to maximize donations as a fundraising manager

Fun Facts/ "Did You Know?..."

Some fun facts about philanthropy:

Iowa combines football and caring but takes it to another level: Philanthropy in sports comes in all forms. Did you know that one college football stadium waves to the neighboring children's hospital during home games? [Read more here.](#)

There's a song and a worldwide chain of gyms: You're probably familiar with the YMCA; it's the nation's largest sports charity by income. Read more about this great athletic organization [here.](#)

Many athletes make a lot of money, but some use it for much more than fancy cars and houses: Athletes are often the first to give back to their communities. Serena Williams is just one example of an athlete who has started her own foundation and became an ambassador for other non-profits. [Read more here.](#)



STEM Connection

Non-profits of every variety can benefit tremendously from advancements in technology. Here are just a few ways that new and emerging technologies are transforming non-profit work:

- It's all about the data: Non-profits need to know where the money's going, just like any other business whether it's for profit or not. They need to know how much of an impact certain projects have, and which fundraising efforts work. The best way to understand these critical elements of fundraising is to gather and analyze the data. [Read more.](#)
- Non-profits can use advances in medicine and medical engineering to help the community: Many sports non-profits are geared towards children and adults with disabilities. Adaptive technologies, which allow people with different disabilities to play sports, are often funded and donated by non-profits. [Read more.](#)
- Mobile app development gives non-profits a new way to connect: The old methods of reaching out to the public are slowly but surely dying off. These days, it's all about meeting your audience where they spend much of their free time: on their phones. [Read more.](#)
- Social media allows teams, athletes, and leagues to spread the message: Have you read a tweet from a star athlete promoting a non-profit? What about teams that partner with organizations to help their community? Social media is the number one tool to use these days to get the message out there through influential sources. [Read more.](#)

Articles, Videos, and Podcasts of Interest

What opportunities are available within the sports non-profits world? Take a look at some of them [here](#).

If you're considering pursuing a sports management degree, you can still get a job with a sports non-profit, as [this article](#) explores.

[This website](#) presents a list of non-profits that are creating a better world, one sport at a time.

Sports agent Leigh Steinberg talks about how he combined philanthropy and sports. [Learn more.](#)

Sports Non-Profits



Journeys to Working in Sports Non-Profits

There are many ways to work for a sports non-profit. You can be a fundraising manager, administrator, or marketer. The path to working in a sports non-profit may seem like a faraway dream, but did you know that you can get started on that path even in high school?

Read about one student's journey into starting his own non-profit:

Ben had known ever since he was in high school that he wanted to work in social justice and help kids. He was a talented soccer player and was able to go to college thanks to his skills. He eventually received a master's degree in educational leadership, which helped him tailor his future non-profit towards children and giving them access to not only sports, but better education. Ben decided that his future wasn't teaching in a classroom. It was making an impact out there in the world.

This is when he began his own non-profit, called Soccer Without Borders. The first event was a soccer camp for refugees in Oakland, California. It was so popular that Soccer Without Borders continued to grow and became first a community staple and, later, a global organization. Through soccer, Ben and his team are able to give kids a chance to learn not just a sport, but how to communicate with a team, to participate in something both fun and challenging, and to build a supportive community that's focused on giving kids the best chance at success.

Learn more about how Ben started Soccer Without Borders [here](#).



Read about how one woman transformed Special Olympics Texas:

Janet Holliday is responsible for the major growth of Special Olympics Texas, a branch of the Special Olympics organization that provides sports training, activities, and competitions for adults and children with physical and intellectual disabilities. She originally got her start in the non-profit world when one of her teachers encouraged all students to get involved in the community. She volunteered at a Special Olympics race where she was responsible for providing encouragement and congratulations at the finish line and has been passionate about public service ever since.

Because of her passion for non-profit work and community service, she focused her academics on psychology, sociology, and social work. After graduation, she worked at Special Olympics and was responsible for helping grow the organization from a small and local non-profit to a prominent international organization that has programs and competitions around the world. Nowadays, Special Olympics is the world's largest sports organization for people with disabilities.

Janet recommends that others interested in working with people who have disabilities make sure they are coming from the right place and are treating people with "respect and dignity and building those relationships."

Read more about Janet's career path and what she has learned in her role [here](#).