



non-governmental service organizations

Alaska is home to many non-governmental organizations that provide services with a physical activity component. However, not all organizations involved with physical activities will be listed in this document, as the purpose of this inventory is to identify sustained efforts to increase physical activity and fitness levels of Alaskans. Therefore, all of the groups listed in this inventory are: 1) service organizations, 2) heavily involved in physical activities, and 3) have the ability to provide sustained physical activity services.

The following non-government service organizations were selected from a listing of United Way Alaska member agencies and a search of AKinfo, a web-based directory of human services providers in Alaska. Information was collected through key informant interviews with executive directors or physical activity related staff within each agency.

At a statewide level, the three national organizations associated with chronic disease, the American Heart Association, the American Diabetes Association, and American Cancer Society, are each tasked with providing their services to all Alaskan communities. These groups also advocate for statewide policies that facilitate increased physical activity, recommend physical activity as a way to combat chronic disease, and use physically active events to raise funds.

Other Alaska-based service organizations that provide physical activity opportunities across the state are groups like the Boys and Girls Club and Special Olympics Alaska. Boys and Girls club, with over 30 locations statewide, list physical activity and health as one of its five core values. They provide children in their programs a chance to engage in physical activity at least once a day at their after school programs, and their team sports program had over 3,200 participants last year.

Special Olympics Alaska provides year-round sports training and competition in a variety of Olympic style events to people with mental retardation in seventeen Alaskan cities. Its program is still growing, and even with over 1,000 active athletes, it continues to conduct outreach efforts in attempts to help the estimated 5,000 other disabled Alaskans become more active.

Regional groups like Challenge Alaska and Southeast Agency for Independent Living (SAIL) provide physical activity opportunities for people with disabilities in their area.

Challenge Alaska provides sport and therapeutic recreation opportunities to disabled individuals in the Anchorage area through adventure-based programming as well as leisure education. Its programs include outdoor physical activities such as snowshoeing, hiking, camping, snow machining, fishing, gardening, golfing, rafting, water skiing, jet skiing, etc.

SAIL has created a similar program in Southeast Alaska called ORCA (Outdoor Recreation and Community Access) that provides recreation opportunities to disabled persons in the region through its offices in Juneau and Ketchikan.



Other non-government service organizations, like the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA), provides physical activity opportunities at the local level. YMCA programs aim to “put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind, and body for all.” Its Anchorage facility houses a wide variety of health and activity programs for members of all ages.