
DIVERSITY EQUITY AND INCLUSION **ACTION PLAN**

*10 Strategies to Advance
DEI in Equestrian Sport*



LETTER FROM THE CEO

Dear Members, Fans, and Colleagues,

US Equestrian is committed to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in our sport. As the National Governing Body, we take our role in this movement very seriously. DEI are essential to our vision of bringing the joy of horse sports to as many people as possible, and it must be woven into the fabric of the equestrian community and culture.

Our community possesses many strengths, including a willingness to learn and improve, and a passion for sharing the incredible joy that horses can bring to a person's life, that show me that we can create a more welcoming sport for all participants and fans.

The US Equestrian Board of Directors has approved the development and implementation of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan, which outlines 10 strategies for US Equestrian to harness our strengths and address our challenges in an impactful, sustainable way. We also included information about our membership demographics, the process to develop this plan, and how we focused on the key areas of people, policies, and practices.

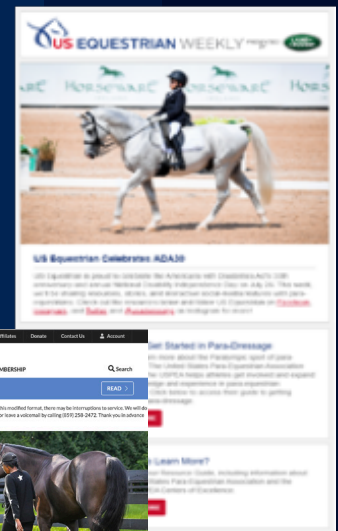
All of us at US Equestrian are eager to make a difference. We believe that creating a welcoming community for our current and future members from traditionally under-represented and under-served groups should be intentional and strategic. These 10 strategies seek to bring more people into our sport and ensure the sustainability of our sport for the future. There will be a phased rollout of the strategies, and they will be implemented in the next three to five years.

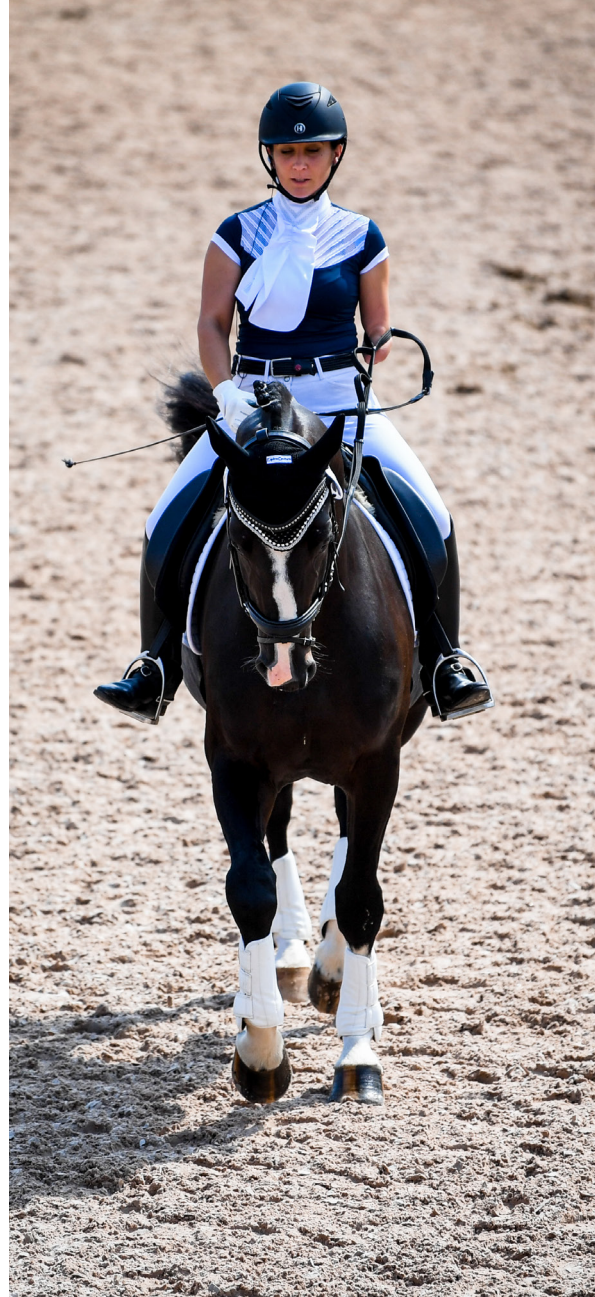
I look forward to sharing more details and progress as we implement the strategies. Equestrian is often an individual sport, but every one of us knows that we could not make our goals in this sport a reality without the support of our equestrian family. I invite you to read on and join our family of staff, board members, officials, and other USEF representatives to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion in equestrian sport.

Sincerely,



Bill Moroney
US Equestrian CEO





A SHARED LANGUAGE: DEFINING DEI

Creating a shared language is an important first step in this work. For US Equestrian's purposes, we are operating under the following definitions:

DIVERSITY

is the wide range of national, ethnic, racial, and other backgrounds of U.S. residents and immigrants as social groupings, co-existing in American culture. The term is often used to include aspects of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, class, and much more.

EQUITY

is about each of us getting what we need to survive or succeed—access to opportunity, networks, resources, and supports—based on where we are and where we want to go.

INCLUSION

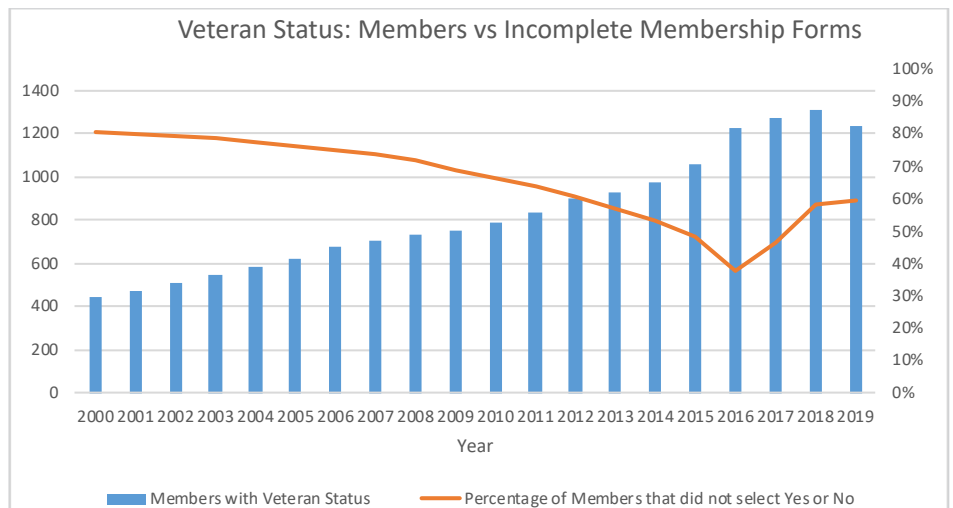
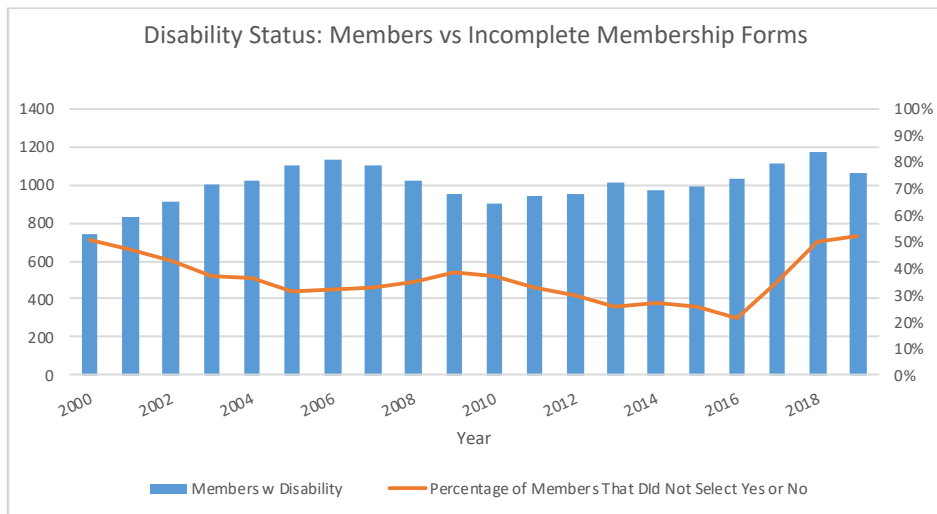
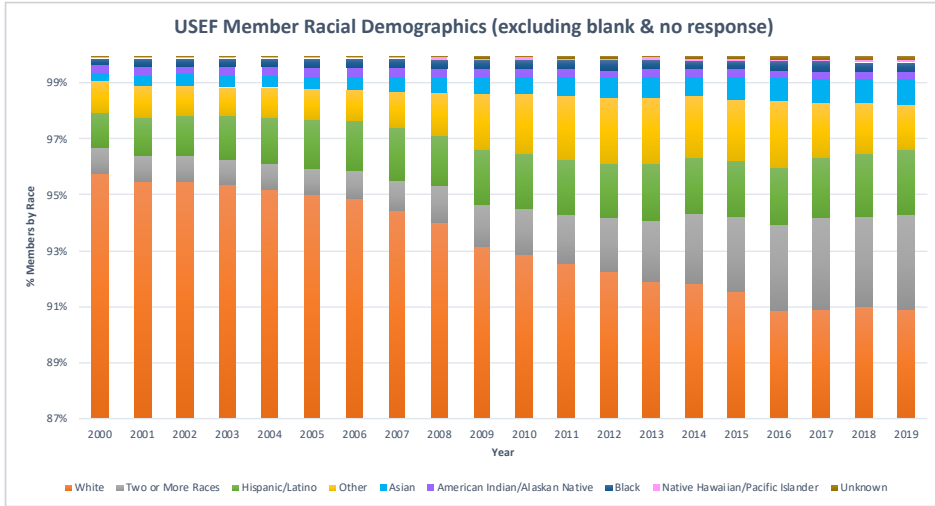
authentically brings traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups into processes, activities, and decision/policy making.

UNDER-REPRESENTED AND UNDER-SERVED GROUPS IN ALL SPORTS

- BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color)
- Veterans and active military
- Persons with disabilities
- LGBTQ+ community
- Gender identity diversity
- Socioeconomic diversity
- Physical characteristics (e.g. body type)
- Religious diversity
- Age diversity
- Mental health awareness

MEMBERSHIP DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS (2000-2019)

A GROWTH OPPORTUNITY



DEI ACTION PLAN DEVELOPMENT

STRATEGIC. INTENTIONAL. SUSTAINABLE.

Following the Board of Directors' approval of a commitment statement and the development of a DEI Action Plan at the Mid-Year Board Meeting in June 2020, staff representatives from every department within US Equestrian set out to create a strategic, intentional plan with input from external leaders representing diverse backgrounds, life experiences, and positions in the equestrian industry.

Three distinct working groups were formed for an overarching "roundtable" of thought leaders. These groups worked in partnership to create the DEI Action Plan and advance its respective initiatives at US Equestrian. Work completed included a survey, a series of one-on-one interviews, and four "Thought Leader Workshops" to assess the external perceptions and climate around DEI in equestrian sport and develop ideas for how US Equestrian can help move diversity, equity, and inclusion forward in the equestrian sport. The Review Committee, comprised of a select number of US Equestrian senior staff, board members, and athletes, offered additional thoughts and feedback for consideration before moving forward with this framework.

INTERNAL THOUGHT LEADERS

Executive: Amelia Prevost

Marketing: Ashley Swift

FEI Sport: Steven Morrissey

Breeds/Non-FEI Sport: Emily McSweeney

Licensed Officials: Amber Braun

Customer Care: Lexie Stovel

Finance: Sarah Trovillion

Athlete & Horse Services: Ken Ball

Competition Licensing: Katlynn Sacco

Compliance: McKenzie Ragan

Drugs and Medications: Sarah Kauffman

Information Technology: Andi Davis

EXTERNAL THOUGHT LEADERS

Sponsors: Alexandra Cherubini (EquiFit), William Clements (MARS), Emily Joyce (SmartPak)

Competition Environment: José Colón, Ali Nilforushan, Jerome Parker

Community Influencers: Erin Brown (Philadelphia Urban Riding Academy), Abriana Johnson/Caitlin Gooch (Young Black Equestrians podcast), Jimmy Welch (Operation Wild Horse)

USEF Members: Dr. Anastasia Curwood, Camille Schenk, Wren Blae Zimmerman

Equestrian Community Leaders - Coaches/Trainers/Administrators: Rob Burk, Roxane Durant, Bruce Griffin

REVIEW COMMITTEE

Senior Staff: Bill Moroney

Senior Staff: Vicki Lowell

Senior Staff: Sonja Keating

Senior Staff: Kelly Bolton

Board of Directors: Tom O'Mara

Board of Directors: Diane Pitts

Board of Directors: Judy Sloan

Board of Directors: Ling Fu Wylie

USEF Advisor: Sally Ike

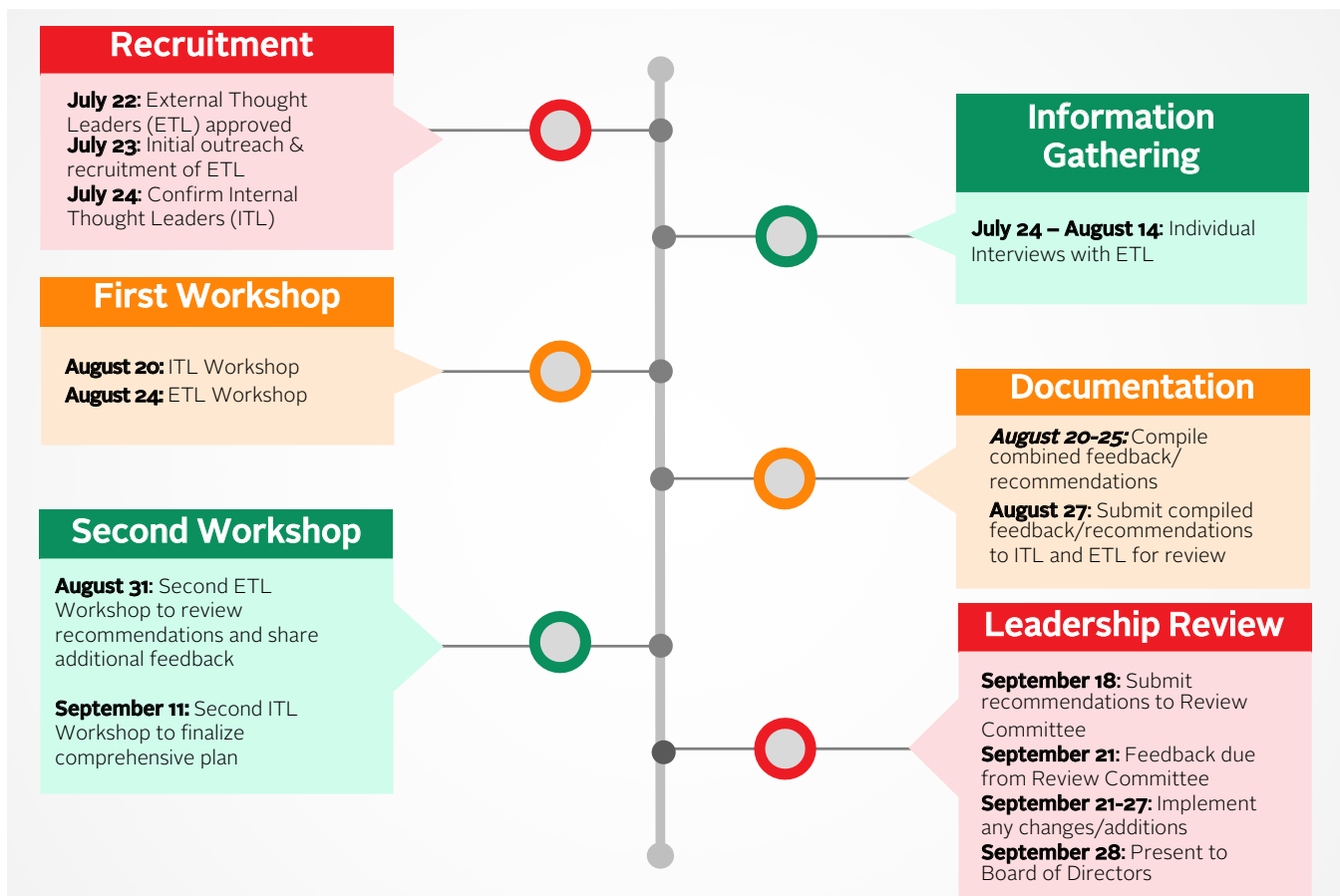
Athlete: Bobby Costello

Athlete: Will Simpson

DEI ACTION PLAN DEVELOPMENT: STRATEGIC. INTENTIONAL. SUSTAINABLE.

This process also included engaging a consultant, Ashland Johnson, President and Founder of The Inclusion Playbook, to help guide the work. An attorney, equity and inclusion strategist, and former Division I athlete, Johnson has over a decade of civil rights experience working with social justice communities, advising sports leaders, and serving in leadership roles in advocacy organizations. Johnson has extensive experience working with major sports leagues and associations, including the NBA, NCAA, NFL, USOPC, and various national governing bodies to strengthen their social responsibility programming, policies, and platforms at the intersection of inclusion, race, gender, and the law. [Learn more about The Inclusion Playbook.](#)

This **Strategic Planning Phase** was an intensive period of information gathering and sharing of ideas, recommendations, and best practices to create sustainable yet impactful DEI strategies, specifically tailored to equestrian sport and its participants and fans.



DEI STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES FOR EQUESTRIAN

The Inclusion Playbook reported that the majority of the Internal and External Thought Leaders believed that equestrian as a sport lacked diversity, especially racial diversity and economic diversity. They also believed that the equestrian space was not particularly inclusive for racial minorities or differently-abled bodies.

STRENGTHS & OPPORTUNITIES

Internal and External Thought Leaders believed that US Equestrian had several strengths they could and should leverage in diversity and inclusion efforts, including:

- Access to economic resources
- Broad network of affiliates and sponsors
- Passionate and motivated staff
- Social momentum to address disparities in diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Cost-friendly options for participation through education partner organizations

POTENTIAL CHALLENGES

Internal and External Thought Leaders also identified several challenges that US Equestrian will likely face when working to create more equitable, diverse, and inclusive spaces in equestrian, including:

- Systemic economic disparities outside of US Equestrian's control
- The high cost of participating in equestrian sport
- A general lack of knowledge of equestrian in the U.S., especially in underserved communities
- Stakeholders who might be resistant to change, especially DEI efforts



10 STRATEGIES TO ADVANCE DEI IN EQUESTRIAN OVER 3-5 YEARS

PEOPLE

Community Riding Center Grants Program and Opportunity Fund

US Equestrian will create a Community Riding Center Grants Program to expand the impact and diversity of equestrian sport by providing resources to a network of established USEF Community Outreach Organizations. A USEF Community Outreach Organization will be a riding center that provides equestrian-based learning opportunities for under-represented and under-served communities. An Opportunity Fund, raised through corporate sponsorships, product purchases, member donations, and other fundraising initiatives, will support the program.

All USEF Community Outreach Organizations will be provided with free US Equestrian Fan Memberships and connected with local professionals, member mentors, and USEF education partners, licensed officials, and show organizers to engage, assist, and support with training, volunteer work, fundraising, and access at the local level. Community Outreach Organization status will be reviewed annually. US Equestrian will provide a competitive grants process to community riding center partners for advancing DEI initiatives.

Inclusion Commitment Campaign

The Inclusion Commitment Campaign will entail an “inclusion pledge” and a DEI training component, as well as a menu of DEI efforts and recommended actions for various positions in the equestrian community (e.g. event organizers, individual members, licensed officials, barns and riding centers, fans, etc.). The goal is to incentivize the equestrian community to show their commitment to inclusion by joining the campaign and contributing to reshaping the culture and perception of equestrian sport through recommended actions. People would show their commitment to inclusion by wearing a special pin or displaying a sticker.

The Inclusion Commitment Campaign is a multifaceted DEI campaign designed by US Equestrian to create new opportunities for the equestrian community to engage in diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts and demonstrate the community's commitment to creating a welcoming and safe environment.

Free DEI Training for Members (voluntary)

US Equestrian will provide a digital DEI educational training for members who want to support the movement. This training will be free and is not required for any tier of membership.

10 STRATEGIES TO ADVANCE DEI IN EQUESTRIAN OVER 3-5 YEARS

POLICIES

Require DEI Training for USEF Representatives

US Equestrian will require DEI training for any person that represents USEF, including staff, licensed officials, board members, and other USEF-appointed volunteers. The DEI space evolves quickly and can feel overwhelming. USEF will ensure the training content is current, educational, and supportive to help our representatives understand DEI issues and effectively navigate relationships and conversations. USEF will review the content and update the training annually. This training will also be offered to members to complete on a voluntary basis.

Rules and Regulations Equity Audit

US Equestrian will conduct a “rules, regulations, and contract” audit to ensure that they protect and promote USEF’s DEI values, including a review of the nondiscrimination clause and how to report a violation of that clause, as well as language in USEF national championship host agreements and competition licensing agreements. These audits will be conducted every three to five years.

New Membership Category for Industry Specialists

The equestrian community is more diverse than our current membership. To encourage more diversity and the inclusion of more people in the equestrian community, US Equestrian will create a new membership category that targets non-rider professions (e.g. grooms, farriers, etc.). Further, USEF will market this membership to under-represented communities and incentivize membership with new resources that are frequently requested by under-served communities (e.g. immigration resources, healthcare resources, advocacy resources).



WE ARE US EQUESTRIANS

In Our Own Words

The equestrian world's diversity isn't only a cause for celebration. It also offers a chance to share different perspectives, experiences, and to realize the possibilities for growth, both in individual horsemanship and in community. We need our perspectives from across horsemanship and disciplines to better understand the challenges, and to help bring us all closer together. We need to know about these as individuals. These voices aren't just highly personal stories, but they're also important. They're also important to the equestrian community as a whole. We're also proud to share our stories collectively. They're beginning with the love of horse and sport.

10 STRATEGIES TO ADVANCE DEI IN EQUESTRIAN OVER 3-5 YEARS

PRACTICES

Comprehensive Marketing Plan Harnessing the Power of Images and Storytelling

A marketing plan to increase the visibility of under-represented and under-served groups in equestrian sport on our platforms, across all breeds and disciplines. US Equestrian will achieve this through a focused effort on telling stories that challenge perceptions about what an equestrian is and can be. US Equestrian will focus on making digital content more accessible, including incorporating closed captioning on videos and photo descriptions. US Equestrian will work closely with sponsors and other partners on representation in advertising and promotion. This will help reshape our culture and create a more welcoming, inclusive organization and community for all people.

Expanding USEF's Paid Internship Program

US Equestrian's existing Paid Internship Program will be expanded to target paid internship opportunities to members of under-served and under-represented communities. A goal will be to make these opportunities more visible to diverse applicant groups, such as students at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). Interns would receive placements either at USEF or partner organizations. The goal of this program is to help create a more diverse pipeline to the equestrian industry by creating new professional opportunities for under-represented and under-served communities.

Best Practices Guide for Show Organizers

US Equestrian will create a "Best Practices" guide for show organizers on ways they can ensure their events are diverse and inclusive. The guide will lay out the business case for DEI and give clear examples of practices they can implement to create a friendly, accessible environment for all competitors, vendors, spectators, and more.

Spanish Translated Forms and Website Content

US Equestrian will conduct an audit of our website, marketing materials, and essential forms to determine which content should be translated into Spanish to better serve our Spanish-speaking community.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION ARE FUNDAMENTAL TO US EQUESTRIAN'S VISION:

To bring the joy of horse sports to as many people as possible.

We recognize the need to achieve increased diversity and that our growth and success depends on the inclusion of all people.

We are committed to providing access and opportunity for people of color, the LGBTQ+ community, veterans and active military personnel, people with disabilities, and those of all ages, religions, ancestries, genders and gender identities, and economic status to harness the synergy of diverse talents.

Visit usef.org/about-us/diversity-inclusion to view the statement online and find more resources and information.