

# Pony Club

Where it all begins



The United States Pony Clubs, Inc. (USPC), is a 501(c)3 non-profit educational organization which builds the foundations of teamwork and sportsmanship through riding, mounted sports, care of horses and ponies, while developing and enhancing leadership, confidence, responsibility, and a sense of community in its youth and adult members.

When USPC was founded in 1954, it was as an educational organization with the goal of teaching young boys and girls the basics of horsemanship, riding, safety, teamwork, and leadership through working with horses and other children interested in similar activities. The goal was to develop and encourage a “happy child on a happy horse,” with the emphasis being on common sense, safety, and competency.

Over the next decades, the organization grew both in numbers and in its geography, with clubs reaching from coast-to-coast. Clubs even emerged in Hawaii, Alaska, and the Virgin Islands. USPC continued to strengthen and expand programming to meet the needs of equestrian enthusiast of all ages. This included providing the Pony Club program through established riding centers and expanding the scope of certifications to include the disciplines of Dressage, Show Jumping, Eventing, and Horse Management.

With increases in many activities and programs, the complexity of the organization also increased, as did silos, processes, rules, volunteer and member needs, and challenges with dissemination of information to clubs, centers, members, families, and volunteers.

In 2019, a study was conducted on the USPC to identify and better understand issues and trends within the organization. Working groups were then appointed and requested to closely examine the key issues identified in the study and to provide the Board of Governors with specific recommendations to address those issues. Approving the recommendations of the working groups, the Board sent them forward to the Strategic Planning Committee for inclusion in the new 2022-2030 Strategic Plan.

The Strategic Planning Committee has identified five strategic areas that reflect the approved recommendations, are essential to mission support, and key to the future state of USPC:

- People
- Education
- Innovation and Brand Development
- Organizational Model
- Sustainability

The goals for each of these five areas include current areas of organizational strength, areas requiring additional development, and areas of opportunities for USPC.

### USPC Strategic Plan

***Our Mission:*** *The United States Pony Clubs, Inc. is an educational organization which builds the foundations of teamwork and sportsmanship through riding, mounted sports, care of horses and ponies, while developing and enhancing leadership, confidence, responsibility, and a sense of community in its youth and adult members.*

**People:** USPC's future, like its history, will build on the quality of the experience for its members and volunteers. The Board of Governors and staff will create consistency in its programs including, but not limited to, instruction, testing, horse management and competition. By simplifying requirements, USPC volunteers will have achievable, clear expectations, and receive strong support and training. The Board of Governors and staff will take into consideration the experience of the member and volunteer when creating and implementing processes around the Pony Club program.

**Education:** The foundation of USPC is education. USPC will improve its ability to consistently deliver excellence in education, programs and instruction, that align with the Standards of Proficiency and its mission. USPC will provide support and opportunities for all volunteers and staff to deliver a consistent, practical approach to the Pony Club program – focusing on excellence, not perfection, and prioritizing member experiences above all else. Its member-focused approach will improve learning outcomes at the local, regional, and national levels of USPC.

**Innovation and Brand Development:** USPC will plan for future needs of members and volunteers by building on existing strengths and services and being flexible as an organization. The Board of Governors and staff shall ensure that innovative developments align with USPC's brand identity and organizational values to create a publicly known face of USPC that celebrates its unique identity in the equine industry.

**Organizational Model:** The needs and expectations of its members and volunteers has changed significantly in the last two decades. The Board of Governors and USPC staff will streamline operations in order to eliminate complexities that create little or no current value to USPC and its members and/or volunteers. Accountabilities and processes throughout the organization will be clarified to ensure the organization is staff driven, member centered, and volunteer supported.

**Sustainability:** USPC will strengthen its ability to fulfill and effectively deliver its mission now, and in the future. The Board of Governors and staff will explore ways to rebalance its funding model by reducing the percentage of its budget generated by membership revenue. In order to achieve this, USPC will develop other sources of revenue.