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# DIVERSITY EQUITY AND INCLUSION **ACTION PLAN**

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*7 Strategies to Advance  
DEI in Equestrian Sport*

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# LETTER FROM THE CEO

Dear Equestrians, Members, and Fans,

Our vision is one that is straightforward: to bring the joy of horse sports to as many people as possible.

Our purpose is to make sure that everyone can experience the joy of horse sport and the love of horses that so many of us within the industry have already experienced. This work started years ago and continues to this very day. We have made great strides, but still have far to go.

In 2024, we reached over 500,000 members and fans of US Equestrian, marking the halfway point of our goal to have one million members and fans. This is a significant milestone in progressing toward our vision. As the National Governing Body for equestrian sport, we have been entrusted with ensuring that all are welcome and included in our community. If we want our beloved sports to remain not only viable, but growing, each one of us must have a consistent eye to inclusive practices.

In addition to our member growth, US Equestrian has also taken the following steps to become a more welcoming and inclusive environment for all:

- The US Equestrian Community Outreach Program
  - » In just three years, we have added 29 deserving programs from throughout the United States and Puerto Rico. These organizations help provide pathways for people who would otherwise not experience the power of horses to engage. Targeted groups include:
    - Veterans
    - Inner-City Youth
    - Individuals with Special Needs
    - Individuals with Financial Needs
- \$270,000 in grants to Community Outreach Organizations
- Created a Competition Manager Inclusion Guide
- Translated our Safe Sport documents into Spanish

These are just a few of the ways we have worked to grow our sport and ensure everyone can experience horses. We each have work to do to continue to grow. I challenge you to look for ways to be more inclusive, whether that is at a competition, at your barn, or in your home communities.

Because at the end of the day, the vision to include everyone in our sport is not one that falls just to a select few, but rather to our community at large.

Sincerely,



Bill Moroney  
US Equestrian CEO

A woman wearing a blue helmet, sunglasses, and a blue jacket with a USAE patch is smiling while sitting on a brown horse. The background is a blurred outdoor setting.

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**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](https://usef.org/about-us/diversity-inclusion) to view the statement online and find more resources and information.



# 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

The wide range of national, ethnic, racial, and other backgrounds of U.S. residents and immigrants as well 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

Making sure each person is offered access to opportunities, networks, resources, and support. This is based on where a people group is in comparison to other groups.

## INCLUSION

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

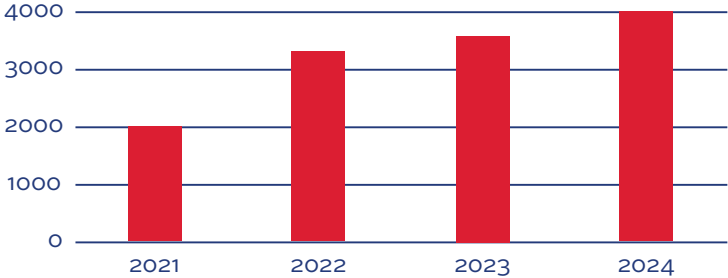
- Under-Represented and Under-Served Groups in All Sports
- BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color)
- Veterans and active military
- Persons with disabilities
- LGBTQ+ community
- Gender identity diversity (cis-gendered men are uniquely under-represented in U.S. equestrian sport)
- Socioeconomic diversity
- Physical characteristics (e.g. body type)
- Religious diversity
- Age diversity (older demographic is well represented in U.S. equestrian sport)
- Mental health awareness

The collage features several key elements: the top left shows the cover of 'US EQUESTRIAN' magazine with the headline 'THE BARN FAMILY' and a photo of people with a horse. Below it is a screenshot of the website's welcome page, which includes a 'JOIN NOW' button and a description of membership benefits. To the right is a banner for 'US EQUESTRIAN WEEKLY' presented by 'DEFENDER'. Below the banner are two article snippets: one titled 'Equine Anti-Doping' with a 'CONTINUE READING' button, and another titled 'US Equestrian Awards Equine Disaster Relief Grant to Assist Horses Affected by Hurricane Helene' with a 'LEARN MORE' button. At the bottom right is a 'PLATINUM MAGAZINE' cover. The bottom of the collage features a Rolex logo and a headline: 'JJ Torano and Favorite Edition Z Win the 2024 Dover Saddle/ISFF Hunter Seat Marial Final'.

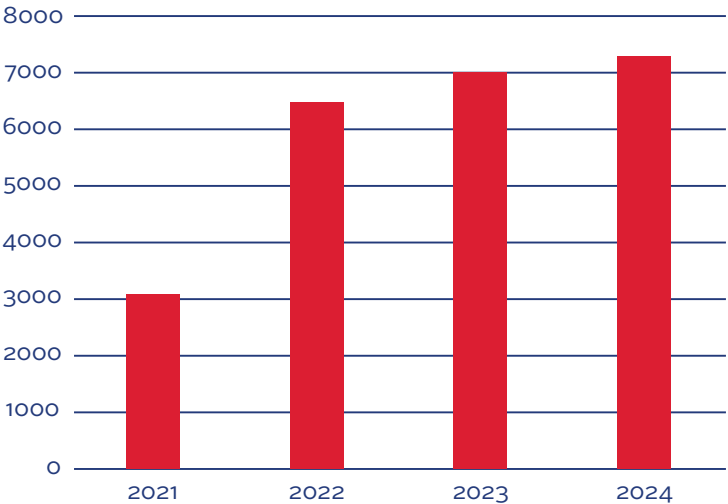
# MEMBERSHIP DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS (2024): A GROWTH OPPORTUNITY

Over the past 3-4 years, we have made huge strides in continuing our mission of bringing the joy of horses to as many as possible. The total membership numbers have reached over 500,000 free fans and competing members. With so much growth, we have also seen increase numbers in various membership demographics. Through increased accessibility and opportunities to experience horses, our growth and success will continue to change the face of equestrian sport.

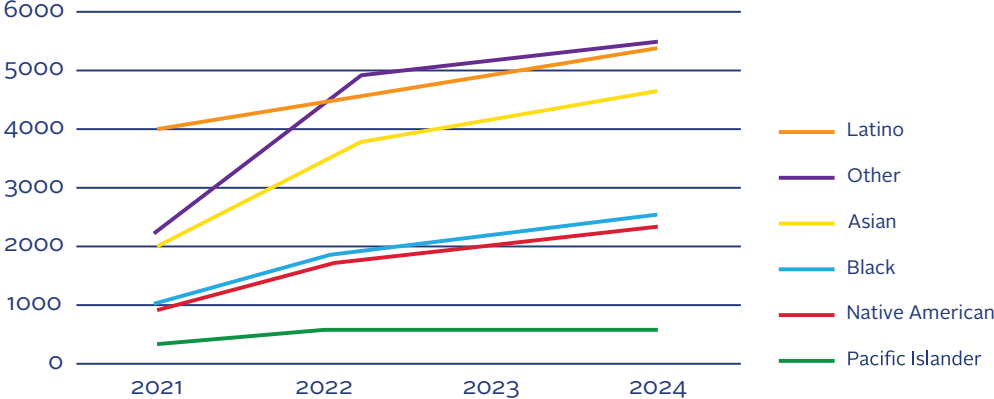
### VETERANS



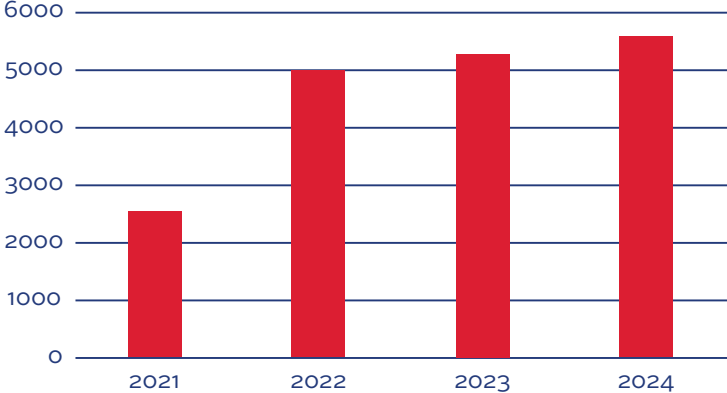
### HISPANIC



### MEMBERSHIP DEMOGRAPHICS



### DISABLED



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# DEI STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES FOR EQUESTRIAN

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

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# 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.

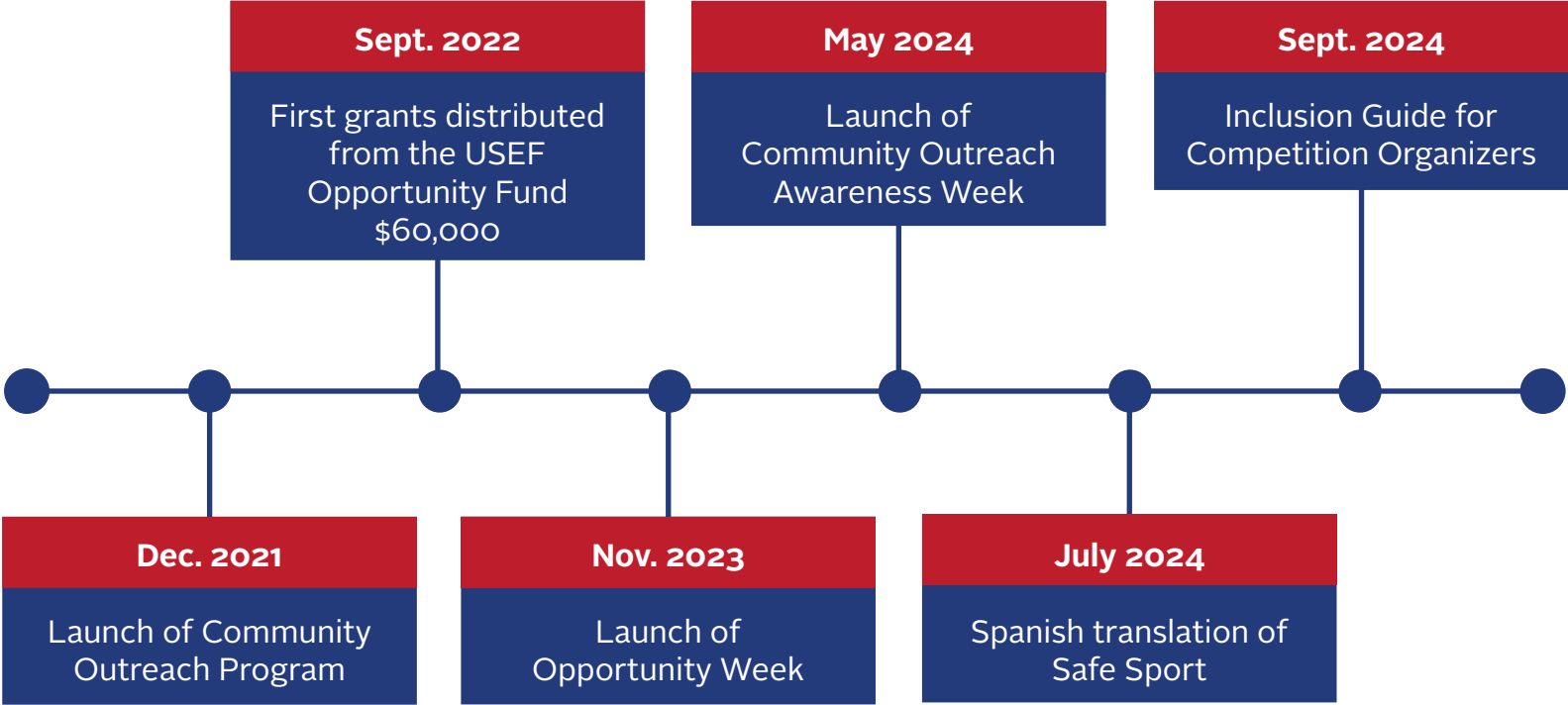




PHOTO: RACHEL GRIFFIN PHOTOGRAPHY



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# 7 STRATEGIES TO ADVANCE DEI IN EQUESTRIAN OVER 3-5 YEARS

*Having accomplished so much since 2018, we have developed a plan amplifying our work for the next 3-5 years.*

## Comprehensive Marketing Plan to Introduce New Audiences to Equestrian Sport

US Equestrian will develop a broad-based campaign that is designed to reshape the culture and perception of equestrian sport emphasizing the well-being of horses and humans who partner together in a sport where all are welcome. With the goal of growing participation, we will help demonstrate our sport is centered on the horse, exemplifying true passion with purpose. The strategic use of storytelling and imagery will allow for US Equestrian to engage with and welcome individuals across all backgrounds, all levels, and all ages to participate in the sport. Additionally, US Equestrian will work closely with sponsors and other partners on representation in advertising and promotion. Ensuring fairness, safety, and enjoyment for all members and their horses remains a top priority.

## USEF's Community Outreach Program & Opportunity Fund

USEF's Community Outreach Program will continue working with organizations nationwide that serve underserved and under-represented groups sharing the numerous benefits of becoming a fan of US Equestrian. Through increased networking opportunities, USEF will continue to bridge gaps and raise more awareness and exposure for the Community Outreach Organizations. A priority will be set on the program's sustainability through strategic fundraising efforts for the USEF Opportunity Fund.

As the USEF Community Outreach program continues to grow, honoring the horses that are making a huge impact is a natural fit. The goal is to continue shining a light on the numerous benefits horses bring outside of the sport alone through individualized imagery and storytelling.

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## Engagement Opportunities 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 new opportunities that target non-rider professions (e.g. grooms, farriers, etc.). Further, USEF will market 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).

## Inclusion Resources for Members and Equestrian Community

To support and expand our commitment to inclusion, US Equestrian will provide members and various stakeholders with free Inclusion resources, including hosting free digital DEI educational events (e.g. Community Conversations) and providing Inclusion Best Practices guides for various stakeholders in the equestrian community (e.g. event organizers, individual members, licensed officials, barns and riding centers, fans, etc.).

Additionally, US Equestrian will continue audits of our website, marketing materials, and essential forms to determine which content should be translated into Spanish to better serve our growing Spanish speaking community.

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## 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.

## Rules and Regulations Equity Audit

US Equestrian will conduct routine “rules, regulations, and contract” audits 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.

## USEF Paid Internship Recruitment Program

USEF’s existing Paid Internship Program outreach will be expanded to make these opportunities more visible to diverse applicant groups. In addition to Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), USEF will also expand its reach to students in non-equine industry majors such as Legal, Marketing, and Finance. Interns would receive placements either at USEF or partner organizations. This will create a more diverse pipeline to the equestrian industry by creating new professional opportunities for diverse populations.

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# 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.

The hard work and dedication from our USEF Staff, Members, Board of Directors, Sponsors, and Equestrian Community Leaders have kept us on a consistent path of intentional and strategic growth. We will continue to consult with outside resources, like The Inclusion Playbook, to remain up to date on best practices for an inclusive environment in equestrian sport.