

NRHA AFFILIATE CATALYST GRANT PROGRAM

Board Policy — Governance Level

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I. Purpose

The National Reining Horse Association ("NRHA") establishes the Affiliate Catalyst Grant Program (ACGP) to provide time-limited, competitive seed funding to NRHA chartered affiliates for initiatives that measurably advance NRHA's strategic objectives related to membership growth, participation, and event entries.

This policy is expressly designed to stimulate sustainable affiliate-led growth and shall not create ongoing financial dependency between NRHA and its affiliates.

II. Policy Intent

NRHA funding under this program shall:

- Launch initiatives, not subsidize operations
- Sunset automatically
- Require demonstrable affiliate financial commitment
- Be tied to objective, pre-approved performance metrics
- Preserve affiliate independence and fiscal accountability

III. Eligibility

Applicants must be:

- NRHA affiliates in good standing
- Current on all reporting, dues, and compliance obligations
- Demonstrably capable of managing restricted grant funds

IV. Permitted Uses

Grant funds may be used solely for new or expanded initiatives, including but not limited to:

- Youth development pipelines
- New-entrant or entry-level competitor programs
- Professional education and development
- Event expansion or pilot competitions
- Marketing and outreach initiatives tied to measurable conversion

Grant funds shall not be used for general operating expenses, salaries, debt service, routine prize money, or ongoing subsidies and cannot exceed \$30,000 per request.

V. Grant Structure

Duration

- Maximum three (3) years
- Automatic sunset with no renewal eligibility for the same program

Declining NRHA Contribution

YEAR	NRHA SHARE	AFFILIATE SHARE
Year 1	Up to 50%	Minimum 50%
Year 2	Up to 30%	Minimum 70%
Year 3	Up to 15%	Minimum 85%

Matching Requirement

- Cash match required
- In-kind contributions may supplement but not replace cash

VI. Performance Accountability

Each grant agreement shall include pre-approved benchmarks, which may include:

- Net new NRHA members attributable to the program
- Increased entries at affiliate events
- Retention of first-time participants
- Revenue replacement ratios by Year 3

Failure to meet benchmarks may result in reduced funding, early termination, or ineligibility for future participation.

VII. Oversight & Authority

- Applications reviewed by staff
- Awards approved by the Executive Committee or Board
- Annual reporting required
- NRHA retains audit rights limited to grant funds

VIII. Funding Cap

Annual program funding shall be capped by Board-approved budget allocation and administered competitively.

PART 2 — GRANT APPLICATION & SCORING RUBRIC

A. Application Sections

1. Affiliate Information & Compliance Certification
2. Program Description — problem statement, target participants, implementation plan
3. Strategic Alignment — specific NRHA Strategic Plan goals addressed
4. Budget & Matching Funds — sources of cash match and sustainability plan by Year 3
5. Performance Metrics — baseline data and Year 1–3 benchmarks
6. Risk & Mitigation
7. Knowledge-Sharing Commitment

B. Scoring Rubric — 100 Points

CATEGORY	POINTS
Strategic Alignment	20
Measurable Growth Impact	25
Financial Sustainability	20
Affiliate Capacity	15
Matching Funds Strength	10
Replicability & Knowledge Value	10
TOTAL	100

Minimum funding threshold: 70 points

PART 3 — ONE-PAGE EXPLAINER

NRHA Affiliate Catalyst Grant Program

Seeding Growth. Not Subsidizing Operations.

The NRHA Affiliate Catalyst Grant Program provides short-term seed funding to help affiliates launch programs that grow membership, participation, and event entries — without creating long-term dependency on NRHA funding.

What This Program IS

- Competitive
- Time-limited (max 3 years)
- Matched with local cash investment
- Tied to measurable outcomes

What This Program Is NOT

- Operating support
- Guaranteed funding
- Replacement for fundraising or sponsorships

How It Works

- NRHA funding declines each year
- Affiliates assume increasing financial responsibility
- Programs must stand on their own by Year 3

THE BOTTOM LINE

NRHA provides the spark.
Affiliates build the engine.

Sustainable growth is the goal.

PART 4 — EXAMPLE GRANT PROPOSAL PROJECTS

1. "FIRST SLIDE" NEW REINER PIPELINE PROGRAM

Objective: Convert first-time participants into NRHA members and exhibitors.

A structured, low-barrier entry program designed to introduce new riders to reining through a bundled experience:

- Intro clinic + schooling show + first NRHA class
- Discounted first-year NRHA membership included
- Mentorship pairing with an experienced affiliate member

Key Actions

- Host 3–5 "First Slide" weekends annually
- Partner with local trainers and barns
- Provide simplified class structure (Green Reiner / Rookie divisions)

Target Outcomes

- 40–75 new NRHA members (small/medium affiliate)
- 60% conversion from clinic participant to competitor
- +8–12% increase in entry-level classes

Why It Works: Reduces intimidation and complexity — the largest barrier to entry into reining.

2. "WEEKEND REINER SERIES" ENTRY GROWTH INITIATIVE

Objective: Increase entries per event and retain casual competitors. A short-format, high-frequency show series designed for accessibility:

- 1–2 day shows vs. full weekend commitments
- Lower entry costs and simplified scheduling
- Points-based series culminating in a finals event

Key Actions

- Launch 4–6 event series
- Offer class bundling (e.g., one fee for multiple eligible classes)
- Add targeted payouts for youth and non-pro divisions

Target Outcomes

- +10% entries per event (small/medium affiliates)
- Increased repeat participation (2+ shows per rider)
- Improved retention of first-time competitors

Why It Works: Addresses time and cost barriers while creating repeat engagement.

3. "REINING IN THE COMMUNITY" OUTREACH & CONVERSION PROGRAM

Objective: Expand the NRHA pipeline beyond traditional audiences. A targeted outreach initiative connecting reining to:

- IEA, ISHA, 4-H and FFA programs
- Ranch horse and versatility riders
- Local equestrian communities not currently engaged in NRHA

Key Actions

- Host demonstration events and "try reining" days
- Offer crossover classes at affiliate shows
- Provide incentives for first NRHA competition entry

Target Outcomes

- 25–50 new members from non-traditional segments
- +5–8% increase in affiliate entries
- Increased youth participation

Why It Works: Expands the funnel instead of competing for the same participants.