

2024 USPA Polo Development Initiative

Program Guidelines

This document sets forth the 2024 USPA Polo Development Initiative (“PDI”) Grant Program guidelines, including:

1. Funding Criteria

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- b.** Funding Areas and Priorities
- c.** Eligibility
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2. Application Guidelines

- a.** Deadlines
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1. Funding Criteria

- a.** Intent and Purpose
 - The intent of the PDI Grant Program, which is a reimbursable grant-based program, is to support thoughtfully presented applications for PDI funding that address specific, club-based, sustainability needs. Grant awards will be made in support of a specific purpose that addresses those needs, including by, but not limited to:
 - Advancing the sustainability and growth of club membership, taking into consideration club capacity and the available polo facilities.
 - Improving the quality of the polo playing experience; and
 - Promoting the development of the sport of polo
 - The PDI Grant Program is intended to reimburse select applicants for costs the applicant has incurred in connection with the stated program or initiative. No funding will be provided to cover up-front costs of an applicant or to pay any vendor directly on behalf of the applicant.
 - All grant requests for funding from the PDI Grant Program must outline how the applicant’s receipt of PDI Grant Program funding would relate to and further the intent and purpose of the PDI Grant Program.
- b.** Funding Areas
 - **Funding Priority – Projects that promote long-term investment in the sport of polo, including, expenditures for capital improvements, fixed assets, and club infrastructure, will be prioritized for recommended funding by the PDI Committee:**

- All requests for funding to offset expenditures relating to capital improvements, fixed assets, or club infrastructure must demonstrate that at least 50% of such expenditures will be satisfied by the applicant club or via private support or corporate sponsorship.
 - New Club Development Initiatives - Other projects supported by the PDI Grant Program must be newly established club development initiatives (defined below) at the club(s) that are strategic in nature. Applicants must completely demonstrate the planning and implementation process for these types of initiatives and demonstrate sustainability of the sport at the club-level.
 - Newly Established Club Development Initiatives - A shift in strategy from the current/recent operations of the club with respect to player development, professional management, professional polo instruction, and club-specific marketing campaigns
 - The PDI program shall support these programs from their launch through their development phase (up to 3-4 years)
- c. Eligibility (i.e., who can apply for funding from the PDI Grant Program)
 - A USPA Active or Affiliate Member Club.
 - An established polo school (e.g., one that is past the start-up phase) associated with an Active or Affiliated Member Club.
 - A Regional Cooperative Polo entity, such as a regional association or cooperative league that hosts one or more tournament series amongst USPA Member Clubs, and that is comprised solely of USPA Active or Affiliated Member Clubs.
- d. Application and Project Evaluation
 - Application and Project Evaluation will be conducted within specific request categories to allow for similarly situated applicants and requests, as determined by the USPA, to be evaluated against each other
 - Applicants can elect to apply for a multi-year grant with the goal of a multi-year commitment to enable long-term planning for usage of PDI Grant Program funds
 - A multi-year award would be structured as a good-faith award for the first year and a pledge to continue the award for the remainder of the years, subject to certain terms and conditions to be agreed upon between the USPA and the applicant, including, but not limited to:
 - The applicant is in good standing with the USPA (including Account Receivables for all USPA Subsidiaries);
 - After the first year, subsequent years of the award and the associated funding is subject to the USPA Board of Governors approval of the PDI program line-item & within a reasonable dollar amount of the previous year's budget.
 - Applicants awarded a multi-year award are subject to periodic reviews of the Club's progress with respect to fulfilling: the

mission of the USPA, the stated goals within the application/award MOU agreement, and the efforts for sustainable development of the sport at the Club; and

- Applicants must provide a written outline of a reasonable plan to achieve self-sustainability at the end of the multi-year award if the grant is supporting an on-going program. The applicant must show progress toward that goal as part of each request for continued funding.
- **The USPA reserves the right to request additional information with respect to any application.**

2. Application Guidelines

a. Deadlines

- i. The USPA 2024 PDI Application Guidelines and Application Form/Outline will be available online at the USpolo.org website
- ii. **All applications are to be submitted online only**
- iii. **The deadline for completed primary applications is January 31st, 2024**
- iv. The targeted announcement date for grant award notifications is April 15th, 2022, but is subject to the discretion of the USPA

b. Early Decision Awards

- i. The PDI Committee may accept early application submittals starting October 1st, 2023, for the 2024 award cycle
- ii. Applicants that submit their completed applications (meeting all criteria outlined in these guidelines) by November 1st, 2023, will be evaluated on a rolling basis, as submitted, and eligible for an early decision award by December 31st, 2023
- iii. Awarded clubs are ineligible to apply for additional funding support for the remainder of the 2024 funding cycle
- iv. Non-awarded clubs are eligible to amend their application and resubmit by January 31st, 2024 for consideration under the timeline outlined in these application guidelines (*subsection (a.) – Deadlines*)
- v. The Early Decision option is designed to give clubs facing a critical timeline an option to apply early. Award criteria will be based on the timeline of the project. Should the review process be inundated with excess applications, the PDI Committee reserves the right to push the review process to the timeline outlined in Application guidelines (2.a)

c. Unforeseen Club Infrastructure Requests

- i. The PDI Committee may reserve a small percentage of funds not to exceed 10% of the annual PDI budget and accept applications outside the Primary and Early Decision application timelines for clubs presented with unforeseen/untimely circumstances pertaining to critical club infrastructure (fields, irrigation, arena walls, lights, etc.)
- ii. Should the PDI recommend an award all of aspects of the award and grant process shall be followed with respect to these guidelines. Including but not

limited to the 50% match, reimbursement only, and project completed within the calendar year of the award

- iii. If by November 1st there remains a balance from the reserved amount, the committee may elect to award those funds to projects which were underfunded (compared to their requests) during the Primary and/or Early Decision Application Process

d. Application Requirements

PDI Grant Program applications must address/include the following segments, documentation, and/or information:

- i. **Timeline.** All project and initiatives for which funding is requested must have a clear beginning and end.
- ii. **Stated Intent, Goals, and Objectives.** All applications must include appropriate, well-defined, clear goals and objectives tied directly to the Intent/Purpose of these Guidelines, and address how the programs or initiatives that are proposed for support relate to the following:
 - A. Membership capacity with respect to critical infrastructure
 - B. Club Financial Sustainability
 - C. Organizational Structure
 - D. Dues Structure
- iii. **Financials:**
 - A. **Budget-** A detailed budget of the project/initiative, including a breakdown of the utilization of PDI funds within the overall budget of the project/initiative
 - 1. ***There is no maximum award threshold. Evaluation of grant applications will be made on a case-by-case basis and take into consideration the USPA's return on investment and the cost of unique opportunities available to applicants within specific timeframes. All funding decisions are made in the discretion of the USPA.***
 - B. **Financial transparency of the applicant is required**
 - 1. In order to properly evaluate the effectiveness of a PDI grant and the sustainability of the applicant, the PDI Committee will need a clear financial snapshot of the applicant's operations which includes:
 - a. Revenues vs. expenses
 - b. Disclosure of dues structure and other outside sources of revenue
 - c. P & L review to better determine effect and justification PDI money will have on the applicant
 - d. A description of how the applicant would fund the costs of the program/initiative prior to receiving reimbursement from the PDI Grant Program
- iv. **Ownership/Operational Management Type:**
 - A. For-profit club
 - B. Group owned club/association

- C. Professional management
 - D. Board of Directors managed
 - E. Other (please describe)
- v. Snapshot of the polo eco-system of the applicant:
 - A. Type of Polo Club or other applicant: Polo School/Training, Tournaments, Practice, Youth, Etc.
 - B. Horse ownership of or at the applicant
 - C. Operational structure of the applicant, including pricing, schedule, metrics, capacity, etc.
- vi. Business Plan for capitalization/Development of PDI support project on a 1, 3, and 5-year timeframe
 - A. By way of example, a grant request for arena improvements will allow for the following developmental opportunities as the club:
 1. Year One: Extend Lesson program into the Fall months to continue to develop new players, extend the arena season, and increase revenue through the polo school and boarding
 2. Year Three: Develop a Youth program and a “Twilight” Arena program to increase player development and revenue from events, respectively
 3. Year Five: Generate a Club Profit from Arena Polo Activities aiding the overall club’s bottom line
- vii. Clubs submitting applications requesting support for newly established club development initiatives, defined in these guidelines, such as hiring professional instructors/polo managers, must submit a resume, CV, and/or references along with their application and associated documents. Additionally, the club must submit a sustainability plan to maintain the initiative beyond the development phase (3-4 years), independent of PDI support
- e. Application Guidance and Support
 - i. Applicants may reach out to USPA Staff and volunteers serving on the PDI Committee for guidance and support, relating to the following:
 - A. Questions about the guidelines, application process, timeline, etc.
 - B. Summarized information about past awarded/non-awarded PDI Grants such as type of projects, project timelines, stated intent, etc.
 1. Applicants are encouraged to independently connect with other USPA Member Clubs who have completed similar projects for more detail information, feedback, etc.
 - ii. USPA Staff will promote and host periodic web conferences for clubs to join, share ideas and feedback on their past, current, and future PDI-related projects, this knowledge sharing is integral to the PDI Program
 - iii. Applicants are encouraged to reach out to their respective Circuit Governor leading up to the application deadline for feedback on their projects (Note: The PDI Committee will seek the input of the Circuit Governor during their review process)
- f. **Approval Process**
 - i. The USPA PDI Committee will be tasked with the review, evaluation, and due diligence of all PDI applications. The PDI Committee is ultimately responsible

for the initial review and recommendation of select PDI Grant Program applications and communicating with the applicants. If a project is recommended for funding by the PDI Committee, the relevant application will be forwarded to the USPA COO for review and final determination. **All funding decisions are made in the discretion of the USPA.**

- A. Individuals associated with a PDI Grant Program application must be available to answer any PDI Committee questions concerning the request
- B. Note: Circuit Governors serving on the PDI Committee must recuse themselves from voting on applications within their circuit
- ii. Quantitative metrics utilized to evaluate an applicant's development as a USPA Member Club include but are not limited to:
 - 1. Membership:
 - a. Total USPA members registered at the club
 - b. Members who have joined in the last three years
 - c. Member participation in USPA Tournaments
 - 2. Tournaments
 - a. Hosting USPA tournaments and participating in USPA Tournament programs such as TSP, I/I, and NYTS
 - b. Registered members participating in USPA Tournaments at other member clubs
- iii. The PDI Committee will be stringent on not recommending PDI grant awards to applicants that are not growing polo in their region and performing the attributes of a successful sustainable polo enterprise. Through their evaluation process the PDI Committee will take into consideration several factors, including, but not limited to, the following:
 - A. Amount of PDI Grant Program funding available for awarding
 - B. Matching investment/cost-sharing by clubs and club members for projects/ initiatives
 - C. Capitalization of positive return on investment opportunities to benefit the sport of polo and the USPA
 - D. Needs-based support to sustain polo

3. Award Conditions

- a. The USPA is required to issue IRS Form 1099 at the end of each calendar year according to rules set by the Internal Revenue Service. Issuance of a Form 1099 does not necessarily mean the PDI funding amount is income that is taxable to the recipient. Recipients must make an independent determination regarding tax consequences of receiving funding and are encouraged to obtain advice from a tax professional. The USPA does not provide such advice. Form W9 will be required for submission along with the request for reimbursement.
- b. Prior to receiving any funding from the PDI Grant Program, recipients must agree to certain terms and conditions set forth in a separate agreement with the USPA, to be provided by the USPA
- c. All PDI Grant Program awards must be used to cover expenses submitted by the PDI applicant within the year the PDI Grant funds are awarded unless otherwise specified in the approved PDI grant award

- d. PDI funding is strictly a reimbursement of expenses. The USPA will issue funding based on receipt of approved PDI expenses submitted for reimbursement. **No PDI funds will be issued “up front”.**
 - For capital Improvements/Infrastructure: as set forth above, recipients must secure and expend at least 50% of the required funds and then apply for reimbursement of those expenditures
- e. Project funding may be discontinued if the project does not reach its goals, milestones or objectives or if it has an adverse effect on the sport of polo.
- f. Should a grant be awarded of significant size or multiple years the USPA reserves the right to place additional conditions on the award to protect the USPA’s investment and guarantee their support is fulfilling the mission of the USPA on a long-term basis. These conditions include, but are not limited to:
 - Claw back provisions on fixed asset investment
 - Applicant’s organizational/governance restructuring
 - Periodic audits of the applicant’s finances for a period of time after the award to be agreed upon during the award process