



USTA Fair Assistance Program

Overview Page for County Fair Tracks/Horsemen's Organizations

Overview

The USTA's Fair Assistance Program, started in 2006 as the Matching Funds Grant Program, provides resources for individual county fairs, horsemen's associations and colt circuits to promote the harness racing at their fairs. Over the years, the USTA fairs department has developed additional programs and now there is \$30,000 in total funding each year:

1. **Matching Funds Grant** - up to \$1,000 to each selected group to support a marketing/advertising campaign that promotes harness racing at the county fair level. Selected applicants will receive one half of the awarded funding approximately one month after applications are due. The second half of the funding will be mailed once a satisfactory final report is received.
2. **Promotional Item Reimbursement** - up to \$1,000 to each group, available on a first come/first served basis until the budget is spent, for items purchased as grandstand give-a-ways (mugs, bags, hats, etc.) that have a harness horse on it. These would be items purchased by the applying entity and then half of the cost, up to \$1,000 will be reimbursed.
3. **Bulk Purchasing Program** - the USTA will order certain items in bulk that groups can order for give-a-ways at their fair. These items are for sale from the USTA at 50% of the cost. Items will vary year-to-year.

Each program listed above has their own application or purchasing process.

Matching Funds Grant

All five items listed below must be included for your Matching Funds Grant Application to be considered complete. Incomplete applications will not be evaluated. *Application examples are available at fairs.ustrotting.com/funds.cfm.*

- 1) The Matching Funds Grant Application Cover Sheet
- 2) A typed marketing plan, between 250-1,000 words, should include your entire marketing plan for harness racing at the fair and touch on your target market, your advertising/promotional plan, and how you plan on measuring success.
- 3) A typed budget should include your **total** applicable expenses for the Matching Funds Grant *and how much you are requesting from the USTA.*
- 4) Copies of quotes from companies you are working with for ad buys/printing.
- 5) Proposed copy of radio/tv script or draft of billboard, bus or newspaper advertisement, etc.

Matching Funds Grant Application Advertising Guidelines

In order for advertisements to be considered as a marketing expense, *75% of the ad must reflect harness racing.* Some applicable expenses include: billboards, radio, tv, newspaper, bus, social media advertising, door hang tags, posters, banners, road signs, etc. With your application, you *must* include draft verbiage or a print mock-up of the ad or printed material.

Matching Funds Grant Application Ineligible Expenses

The following are examples of ineligible expenses for this application. Inclusion of these may result in your application being voided:

- Grandstand give-a-ways, either ordered from the USTA or another company (*see Promotional Item Reimbursement & Bulk Purchasing Program*)
- Racing expenses, such as purses, licenses, insurance, racing officials, blankets or other trophies given to race winners, programs, etc.
- Track maintenance and capital improvements to barns and other buildings on the grounds
- Personnel costs, including reimbursement for time, travel, lodging and meal expenses

Matching Funds Grant Application Deadline

Applications must be postmarked, emailed or faxed by midnight on May 1, 2026. Late submissions will not be considered.

USTA Matching Funds Grant
6130 S. Sunbury Rd
Westerville, OH 43081

Once the application is received, an email confirmation will be sent to the MFG Contact Person listed on the Application Cover Sheet. If you have not received an email confirmation, we have not received the submission and you must re-submit before the deadline.

Matching Funds Grant Application Final Report

A final report is due back to the USTA within 30 days of the last day of racing at your fair, at which time the second half of your funds will be distributed. The report must be sent in along with supporting materials such as written copy given to radio station, a link or DVD of the tv ad that was run, newspaper/magazine clipping, photo of billboard, bus ad, lawn sign, etc., *and a full marketing plan evaluation.*

If the report is postmarked after December 1, 2026, your organization may not be eligible to receive the second half of funding that was originally awarded to you and may result in the applicant's disqualification from the Matching Funds Grant program in subsequent years.



U.S. Trotting Association
6130 S. Sunbury Rd., Westerville, OH 43081-9309
www.ustrotting.com

Phone (toll free U.S. & Canada): 877.800.USTA (8782)
Phone: 614.224.2291 • jessica.schroeder@ustrotting.com
Fax (toll free U.S. & Canada): 844.229.1338

MFG APP 2026



Fair Assistance Program

Matching Funds Grant Application Cover Sheet

A. ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

Name of Organization/Fair: _____

Races to be held at (city, state): _____

Date(s) of races: _____

Speed Superintendent: _____

Phone/Email: _____

Publicity Contact: _____

Phone/Email: _____

B. MFG CONTACT PERSON *(where checks will be sent)*

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Check Payable to (organization or person): _____

C. AMOUNT REQUESTED

Total Promotional/Advertising Budget for Harness Racing : _____

Amount Requested from USTA (50% of budget, up to \$1,000 max): _____

D. REQUIRED SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS - ALL DUE BY MAY 1, 2026

Below is a list of the *required* supporting documents that *must be included* with this cover sheet in order for the application to be considered complete:

- 1) typed marketing plan (250-1,000 words)
- 2) typed budget breakdown
- 3) copies of advertising quotes
- 4) proposed advertising copy

E. SIGNATURE

I have read the Matching Funds Grant overview page and have submitted all the necessary documents to the best of my knowledge. I hereby certify that this marketing plan and the associated expenses are to promote harness racing at the county fair level. I acknowledge that I am responsible for ensuring that the checks sent to me are presented to the correct Treasury and that I will submit the Final Report within 30 days of the last day of racing at the fair.

MFG Contact Person Signature

Date



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