



USDF

Council and Committee
Handbook

23rd Edition

USDF Council and Committee Handbook

MAY 2024 – 23rd EDITION

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USDF Council and Committee Handbook

I. USDF MISSION STATEMENT

Dedicated to education, the recognition of achievement and promotion of dressage.

II. INTRODUCTION

The USDF volunteer members of the councils and committees share ideas and create programs to educate, recognize achievement and promote the sport of dressage. Their work is guided by the organic documents of USDF: the USDF Bylaws and USDF Policies and Procedures. The Bylaws, together with the Articles of Incorporation, form the “constitution” of the organization. The Policies and Procedures serve as the guidelines for implementing the Bylaws. The latest version of these documents can be found on the USDF website (www.usdf.org).

The councils and committees operate under the authority of the USDF Executive Board (EB) and Board of Governors (BOG), and their work is carried out with the assistance of the USDF office staff; in particular, the USDF staff liaison that is assigned to each council or committee. The policies state that it is the duty of the EB to establish committees and oversee on an ongoing basis both councils and committees that support the mission of USDF. The EB must eliminate committees that have served their purpose and are no longer needed.

According to the USDF Bylaws, the purpose of USDF is to promote and encourage a high standard of accomplishment in dressage throughout the United States primarily through educational programs. The objectives of USDF are:

- a. To improve the general understanding of dressage through educational clinics, forums, and seminars, and to promote these and other activities to affect this goal.
- b. To assist and cooperate with local and regional dressage organizations in matters of common concern.
- c. To cooperate with the United States Equestrian Federation, Inc., the United States Eventing Association, the United States Pony Club, Inc., and other national and international organizations having an interest in training horses, riders, instructors, and judges through the principles of classical dressage.
- d. To guarantee fair representation to members from all geographical areas of the United States in forming policies and in the management of USDF.

III. CATEGORIES

The council and committee structure is the backbone of USDF. Councils and committees represent, involve, and serve members, as well as provide an important training ground for future leaders. The expertise of its many volunteer leaders is invaluable to the success of the organization.

AT-LARGE DIRECTORS (ALDs)

1. The ALD will serve on the EB as a full voting member for a three-year term.
2. The requirements and duties of an ALD are as follows:
 - a. Serve as the chair for his/her respective council, preside over council meetings, approve official council communications and meeting minutes, and coordinate with other council chairs, as needed.
 - b. Represent the interests of his/her council and act as a liaison between the EB and council.
 - c. Be generally informed about projects and issues being discussed by the committees and be prepared to facilitate coordination between committees within their council, as needed.
 - d. Attend the spring and fall EB meetings and conference calls and participate in other EB business conducted via e-mail throughout the year.

- e. Engage in the duties and responsibilities of an EB member as outlined in the USDF Bylaws and Policies and Procedures.
 - f. Be a Participating Member (PM) during his/her term.
3. ALDs will be reimbursed for EB related meeting expenses as outlined in the Policies and Procedures (Article VII, Section E, 2).
 4. ALDs, as chairs of their respective council, are expected to chair, at a minimum, a spring and fall council conference call and at least one meeting at the annual convention.
 5. Because council members are also the chairs of their respective committees, the ALD does not make council member appointments.

COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE STRUCTURE (*Policies and Procedures, Article VIII, Section D*)

1. ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL: Members consist of the chairs, including any co-chairs of the **four** committees, and one ALD.
 - a. Group Member Organizations Committee (geographic and GMO size diversity recommended)
 - b. Historical Recognition Committee
 - c. Bylaws Committee (two EB appointments)
 - d. Nominating Committee (Regional representation through consultation with Regional Directors (RDs) is required. Does not exclude additional appointments by chair with approval of the EB.)
2. TECHNICAL COUNCIL: Members consist of the chairs, including any co-chairs of the **five** committees, and one ALD.
 - a. Competition Management Committee (geographic diversity, competitor and para-equestrian representation recommended)
 - b. Technical Delegate Committee (geographic diversity recommended)
 - c. Instructor/Trainer Development Program Committee
 - d. L Program Committee
 - e. Judges Committee (freestyle, para-equestrian and competitor representation recommended)
 - 1) Within the Judges Committee, two working groups exist; Freestyle and Test Writing. Members of the Freestyle and Test Writing Working Groups are selected from the committee membership and appointed by the chair of the Judges Committee. Non-voting expert advisors may also be appointed as needed by the chairs of the working groups.
 - a) Freestyle Working Group: Provides freestyle expertise input to Judges Committee and Test Writing Working Group activities.
 - b) Test Writing Working Group:
 - Oversees revisions of all national level tests and score sheets, including freestyle, sport horse, and dressage seat equitation patterns. Timelines are established for review, approval, and the timely release of revised tests and score sheets in accordance with the established test cycle.
 - Submits all national level tests and score sheets, including freestyle, sport horse, and dressage seat equitation test patterns for final approval.
 - Provides revisions for all national level tests.
 - Working and final drafts of all tests and score sheets are housed by the USDF office.
3. ACTIVITIES COUNCIL: Members consist of the chairs, including any co-chairs of the six committees, and one ALD.
 - a. Adult Programs Committee (geographic diversity and para-equestrian representation recommended)
 - b. National Youth Programs Committee (geographic diversity recommended)
 - c. FEI Youth Committee (Regional representation through consultation with RDs is required. Does not exclude additional appointments by chair with approval of the EB.)

- d. Regional Championships Committee (Regional representation through consultation with RDs is required. Does not exclude additional appointments by chair with approval of the EB.)
- e. Sport Horse Committee
- f. Awards Committee

4. INDEPENDENT COMMITTEES:

- a. Audit Committee
 - See the USDF Bylaws (Article XI) for the duties and specific criteria one must meet to serve on the Audit Committee.
- b. Steering Committee for Committee Complaints (Chair is the USDF Vice President and members are Chairs of the Administrative Council, Technical Council, and Activities Council)
 - The Executive Director serves as the staff liaison to the Steering Committee for Committee Complaints.
 - See the USDF Committee Grievance Process for the duties, functions, and procedures specific to the Steering Committee for Committee Complaints.
- c. By nature of their function, the Audit Committee and Steering Committee for Committee Complaints should retain an independent and arm's length status within the committee structure. In general, the membership, duties and functions of these independent committees are defined by specific provisions found either in the USDF Bylaws (for the Audit Committee) and the USDF Committee Grievance Process (for the Steering Committee for Committee Complaints), as well as provisions in USDF Policies and Procedures specific to these committees. To the extent any of the above-referenced provisions specific to these committees' conflict with other more general provisions regarding USDF Committees, the specific provisions will control. Questions as to whether a general provision on committees applies to one of these independent committees shall be resolved by the EB.
- d. Steering Committee for Executive Board Complaints
 - The purpose of this committee is to evaluate official complaints lodged against a USDF Board member through actions in their capacity as a Board member or actions that compromise their effectiveness as a Board member or reflect poorly on USDF and/or the USDF EB. It is also within the committee's jurisdiction to initiate sanctions based on findings and in accordance with USDF bylaws and policies.
 - Structure: Chair is the USDF Vice President and members are the USDF Treasurer, Secretary, Regional Director serving on the EB Management Committee, and Chairs of the Bylaws Committee and Audit Committee. If any of these individuals have a conflict related to the complaint lodged against the Board member(s), they will be recused, and the President will appoint a non-conflicted alternate. If the President has a conflict related to the complaint lodged against the Board member(s), the Vice President will appoint an alternate.
 - The Executive Director serves as the staff liaison to the Steering Committee for Executive Complaints. The Executive Director will also serve as liaison to legal Counsel as needed.

5. STANDING WORKING GROUPS:

- a. Rules Advisory Working Group: appointed by the President and approved by the EB to a two-year term. Appointments are effective June 1.
 - 1. To work in support with USDF staff and make recommendations to the EB regarding USEF rule change proposals originating within USDF or sent to USDF by USEF or the Dressage Sport Committee for review.
 - 2. Gather input from all relevant USDF Committees on new and revised rule change proposals.
 - 3. Structure representation: technical delegates, judges, and competition management.
- b. Licensed Official Education Working Group: appointed by the President and approved by the EB to a two-year term. Appointments are effective January 1.
 - 1. To advise USDF staff, as needed, on licensed official education activities and protocols.
 - 2. Structure representation: technical delegates, judges, sport horse and freestyle officials. Smaller working groups may be assigned as needed.

- c. Investment Working Group: members consist of the USDF Treasurer, President, Vice President, the Regional Director elected to serve on the Management Committee, the USDF Executive Director, and the Senior Director of Operations. Staff are non-voting members.
 1. To provide guidance to the USDF investments account manager in the management of USDF investments.
 2. To approve the transfer of funds.
- d. Regional Championship Site Selection Working Group: members consist of three appointees from the EB and three appointees from the Regional Championships Committee, appointed annually.
 1. To review Host Site Application forms and provide a recommendation to the USDF EB for the location and date of each region's regional championship competition for the next year.
 2. Structure representation: chair is the chair of the Regional Championships Committee. Members will have a national awareness of regional championship venues.
 3. In the event a member has a financial interest or other clear conflict related to one of the host site applications submitted, that member will recuse themselves from their duties on the working group for that specific region.

The EB must establish committees and oversee on an ongoing basis both councils and committees that support the mission of USDF. The EB must eliminate committees that have served their purpose and are no longer needed. The President shall establish all standing, temporary, ad hoc, implementation or other committees, including subcommittees, commissions, task forces and working groups, and appoint a chairperson for each committee, subject to the approval of the EB, except as described in the Policies and Procedures under Section VIII B. GENERAL COUNCIL/COMMITTEE POLICIES.

The President must describe, upon appointment, the responsibilities for ad hoc, task forces, working groups, and commissions.

Standing Committee: A permanent committee's classification composed of a chair and designated committee members, who are appointed by the chair. The EB recommends that standing committees have no more than ten members plus the chair, for a total maximum of eleven. More than ten appointments by the chair must have EB approval, except as provided by the Policies and Procedures, Article VIII, Section D. Committee size may vary and can be smaller as appropriate.

Standing committees make policy recommendations and undertake short-term and long-term assignments to carry out the work of USDF.

Only committee members who have agreed to serve and commit to work on the committee should be appointed. The chair bears the responsibility for contacting potential committee members. RDs may have suggestions for interested persons. In principle, makeup of the committee should remain unchanged for the entire year.

Ad hoc Committees, Working Groups, Commissions, or Task Forces: A special committee established and appointed by the President, and approved by the EB, for a designated purpose, normally unmet by other committees or to supplement the work of other committees. Ad hoc committees, working groups, commissions, and task forces do not have permanent status. An expiration date may be stated at the time of appointment if other than an annual appointment. Such committees report to the President and the EB.

Working groups may be established from time to time by the EB for a specific purpose. Such a working group must be appointed to investigate and recommend procedures for implementing new USDF programs. These working groups may be considered temporary or they may be expected to supervise and review the procedures for their programs on an ongoing basis.

Working groups may also be appointed by council or committee chairs, as needed, or may be appointed by the President and approved by the EB. Working groups are accountable to the entity that made the appointment.

When a council or committee creates a working group, the chair of the council or committee will appoint the working group chair. (The EB reserves the right to approve any subcommittee or working group chair.)

Contact: The USDF EB may designate an official “contact” for the organization in a specific area that does not require the direct involvement of a committee. The contact is responsible for providing information to USDF on a particular subject.

Board: USDF has two Boards, the EB and the BOG. The EB is made up of nine RDs, three ALDs, and four Officers. The Officers and the ALDs are elected by the BOG, and the RDs are elected by the delegates in their respective regions. The BOG consists of elected PM delegates and Group Member (GM) delegates.

IV. GENERAL COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE POLICIES

1. The President shall establish all USDF committees subject to the approval of the EB.
2. Three councils are established by the USDF Bylaws and each are composed of those committee chairs described in the Policies and Procedures, under Section VIII, D. If a committee consists of co-chairs, only one should sit on their respective council.
3. A committee is composed of a chairman and designated committee members. Committee chairs are appointed for two-year terms. Committee members are appointed on an annual basis, from January 1 to December 31. There are no committee chair or committee member term limits.
4. If a committee chooses to appoint a vice chairman to their committee, the committee’s recommendation must receive approval by the EB.
5. If appointed, a co-chair is considered equal to the appointed chair and shares the respective duties and responsibilities with exceptions related to voting within the respective USDF Council (see VIII, Council and Committees, Section C.11 in the Policies and Procedures) In the event a vice chair is appointed, the vice chair plays a supporting role to the chair and fulfills the chairs role and duties in their absence. Vice chair appointees are expected to learn alongside their respective chair for this purpose, as well as to establish a possible succession pipeline for the chair position.
6. Committee members must be either GMs or PMs in good standing with USDF, except for Audit Committee members, who must be PMs (see USDF Bylaws, Article XI, Section 1). Council or committee chairs must be PMs in good standing. Ex-officio, honorary or advisory members are not required to be USDF members.
7. Chairs and members of the following committees are required to complete the Safe Sport Training that is provided by the US Center for Safe Sport: National Youth Programs, FEI Youth, Instructor/Trainer Development Program, L Program, and Sport Horse (this includes Youth Ambassadors). Once the initial Safe Sport Training is completed, a refresher course must be completed annually. If a committee chair or member requiring Safe Sport certification is non-compliant, they will be notified by USDF staff. If they remain non-compliant, they will then receive a call from the committee chair (if a member), followed by a call, if necessary, from the USDF President (if a chair or member). If the chair or member still fails to comply, they must leave the committee. For the complete Safe Sport policy, please see the USDF Policies and Procedures, II. General Policies and Procedures, G. Safe Sport.
8. Councils and committees are assisted by staff liaisons, assigned by the Executive Director. Staff liaisons are responsible for recording meeting proceedings and producing minutes for approval by the chair and council or committee members, in a timely fashion. The staff liaison also works with the chair in preparing and monitoring the council or committee budget and maintains communications in support of the council’s or committee’s needs. The liaison furthers the business of the council or committee within approved guidelines and policies and serves as the link between the council or committee and the Executive Director, *in addition to fellow staff liaisons or departments as needed*. The liaison should be copied on e-mails and other forms of written communication (faxes or letters).

9. According to USDF policy, committee members can be removed by the chair with or without cause.
10. A regional representative must live or work in the region that he/she represents at least 50 percent of the year.
11. USDF membership is not required for committee or council advisors (such as USEF staff). It is recommended that no more than two advisors be appointed for a committee. The USDF Executive Director has the authority to appoint staff liaisons and staff advisors to councils and committees as he/she sees fit. Staff liaisons and advisors serve in a non-voting capacity.
12. With prior approval of the President and/or Executive Director, a chair may invite special consultants to serve the technical needs of the council or committee in a non-voting capacity. Prior approval must be obtained even if no expense or financial relationship is involved.
13. Committee chairs are responsible for appointing committee members and issuing the invitation to serve. Chairs of the Regional Championships, Nominating, and FEI Youth Committees must consult with RDs in making committee appointments to achieve regional representation. Appointments for committee positions should be made with care and must be made as soon as possible after the convention, and no later than the first week of January. Staff liaisons should be notified by the first week of January of committee appointments.
14. Committees **MUST** have a wide, equitable, geographic distribution of members.
15. Individuals who are appointed to councils and committees must have experience in and/or a special interest in the work of the council or committee and be willing to serve USDF. Regardless of their membership in other organizations, their service is intended to enhance the best interests of USDF.
16. After appointed committee members have accepted the invitation to serve, a letter will go out from the USDF office confirming the appointments. The letter will include the committee agenda and BOG report from the last convention.
17. Resignations from a USDF committee prior to the end of the year should be submitted to the chair (for members of a committee) with a copy to the staff liaison. Vacancies during the year should be filled by the person or entity that made the original appointment. However, vacancies received on or after September 1 may remain unfilled for the remainder of the year at the discretion of the person or entity who made the original appointment.
18. Chairs, committee members and appointees are required to comply with the USDF Code of Ethics and Conflict of Interest Policy in all USDF work. At the beginning of a meeting, or as soon thereafter as a conflict is discovered, they must disclose any actual or perceived conflict of interest as it relates to any item on the meeting agenda, and shall not vote on such committee matters. However, only the Audit Committee is required to annually sign and submit the USDF Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement and Disclosure and Affirmation Statement in compliance with the Code of Ethics and Conflict of Interest Policy. In addition, chairs and committee members must agree not to use information obtained in council or committee meetings and correspondence outside their council or committee without specific permission of the chair and council or committee liaison.
19. Chairs and committee members are also required to act in good faith and in accordance with what they believe to be in the best interest of USDF. They should discharge their responsibilities in a timely fashion without delegating such responsibilities to other volunteers or staff.
20. Attendance and active participation by committee chairs and members in meetings, teleconferences, and communications throughout the year is expected. Additionally, committee chairs and members are expected to attend the USDF Annual Convention. If a committee chair is unable to attend the USDF Annual Convention or a scheduled meeting, the chair is responsible for notifying the USDF President and their ALD, and for securing a committee member to serve as their proxy. In the event no committee member is available for a convention forum, the committee chair is responsible for notifying their ALD and requesting the ALD serve as their proxy. Committee staff liaisons cannot proxy for committee chairs at any meeting.

21. Convention registration is complimentary for USDF committee chairs and co-chairs.
22. Each committee reports to and addresses issues to the BOG for approval at the annual convention. Issues arising between meetings of the BOG must be addressed to the EB for discussion and approval.
23. The official spokesperson for a council or committee is its chair. With the chair's permission, another council or committee member can speak on the council or committee's behalf in meetings and to the BOG and/or EB. Issues also may be addressed to the EB through the council or committee liaison. Statements made on behalf of a council or committee may not be made without prior communication with the chair.
24. Communication from the chair or council or committee member to USDF staff should normally be through the staff liaison unless a previously established understanding is in place with the permission of the Executive Director.
25. Internal communications regarding council or committee business are not to be copied to organizations or individuals outside of USDF or to corporate sponsors without the approval of the President or Executive Director except as provided in the Policies and Procedures, Article II, Section E.
26. If a committee or council wishes to submit any material for publication, it must receive prior approval of the Executive Director. Websites or other publications (i.e., online forums, publications, listserves, newsletters) representing a committee or council must be done through or with prior approval by the USDF Executive Director or the EB except as provided in the Policies and Procedures, Article II, Section E.
27. When a staff member creates editorial material for placement in *USDF Connection* that reflects content material under the jurisdiction of a council or committee, that editorial must be approved by the council or committee chair before it is submitted to the editorial staff.
28. When a council or committee chair, or a staff member, acting on behalf of a council or committee, creates editorial material for placement in publications or websites outside of USDF that reflect content material under the umbrella of a USDF official communication, that material must first be approved by the Executive Director except as provided in the Policies and Procedures, Article II, Section E.
29. Material created by an individual(s) in their USDF volunteer capacity, specifically for use by USDF, including its committees and programs, becomes the property of USDF and shall be maintained in the USDF office, unless a written agreement is executed between USDF and the individual(s) involved stating that the rights to the property and/or the stewardship of materials are to be retained by one or more of the individuals named in the agreement.
30. Written communication on council or committee business should clearly indicate who has originated the communication.
31. When a program, project or publication is budgeted for a particular council or committee, the council or committee must include support for the activity in their planned activities for the year.
32. With the exception of the Audit Committee and Steering Committee for Committee Complaints, whose mission, goals, and objectives are defined by either the USDF Bylaws (for the Audit Committee) or the USDF Committee Grievance Process (for the Steering Committee for Committee Complaints), each committee is required to have a mission statement, goals and annual objectives that fall within the parameters of the overall USDF mission. Any proposed changes to the mission and goals of the committee **MUST** be approved in advance by the USDF EB and BOG (if such changes are requested at the convention). Annual objectives must be designed to include what the committee can accomplish during the year, within the parameters of the approved budget for the committee. The staff liaison cannot be expected to complete unfinished work that was not completed on schedule by the committee.

33. If a council or committee wishes to formulate a resolution concerning policy, it is directed to the EB or BOG for consideration and possible action. No policy resolution may be presented to the BOG without review of the EB and other affected councils or committees.
34. The committee chair is responsible for submitting a written report on the committee's activities, concerns, problems, or development to the USDF office for both the spring and fall EB meetings by the deadline established by the EB. Program/project proposals or requests for changes must be submitted with these reports. These reports should not contain information about individuals that should be kept confidential under the USDF Committee Grievance Process, although information about final action may be reported on a "need to know" basis only.
35. The EB directs all committee chairs to (1) prioritize funding requests, and (2) assure that the necessary support is available to accomplish the goals for the planned projects in the coming year.
36. It is the policy of the USDF that openness and transparency in the decision-making process is to be followed by all its entities subject to the guidelines contained herein:
 - a) The chair of each committee shall cause to be published on the USDF website those materials listed in (b) below so that the membership may fully understand the actions of the committee except:
 - i. Confidential personnel information;
 - ii. Confidential financial information;
 - iii. Privileged attorney work product or attorney client communications; or
 - iv. Material the chair specifies not be published provided a majority of the members of the standing committee must ratify this decision no later than 30 days of the *chair's* specification or the information shall be published.
 - b) The following committee materials shall be published on the USDF website no later than seven days before the meetings as specified below:
 - i. Committee reports prepared for the spring EB meeting; and
 - ii. Committee reports prepared for the fall EB meeting;
 - c) The following committee materials shall be published on the USDF website no later than 45 days after the meetings as specified below:
 - i. Committee reports prepared for the annual BOG meeting.
 - d) In order to fulfill the transparency policy stated in Article II, Section 3 of the USDF Bylaws, all members of the EB, councils, task forces, and committees may use their discretion to discuss items brought before such groups with the membership with guidance from the president or committee chair as applicable.

V. GENERAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

1. Unless another procedure is in place for a particular program, all waivers for any USDF rule or requirement must be approved by the President.
2. No person or organization shall be permitted to use the USDF logo, word mark, title, or signage without written permission from the USDF Marketing and Communications Director or the Executive Director.
3. Fees or changes in fees, for organizing or attending USDF programs or events require approval of the EB.
4. Any program or project proposal which comes before the EB or the BOG should have a business plan with revenues and expenses clearly included for implementation during the current budget process.
5. People who hold USDF positions such as council and committee chairs, delegates, L faculty members, instructor workshop faculty, members and examiners who are certified instructors and L graduates must be members in good standing, with no outstanding debt to USDF or they will no longer have the privileges of those USDF positions.

6. Requests for food or beverages to be provided during meetings at the USDF convention first must be approved by the USDF Executive Director. Meals or items of clothing are not eligible as budgetary items for councils and committees.
7. Material created by an individual(s) in their USDF volunteer capacity, specifically for use by USDF, including its committees and programs, becomes the property of USDF and shall be maintained in the USDF office, unless a written agreement is executed between USDF and the individual(s) involved stating that the rights to the property and/or the stewardship of materials are to be retained by one or more of the individuals named in the agreement.
8. The USDF website is the official website for all USDF programs, councils, and committees. No council, committee or other entity may establish another website for official communications regarding USDF council or committee or program information, except that USDF Regions may have their own websites.
9. Members of the USDF EB may not chair a council or committee with the exception of the Steering Committee for Committee Complaints and Steering Committee for Executive Board Complaints, which shall be chaired by the Vice President, and the councils, each of which shall be chaired by the respective ALD. EB members may also chair ad hoc, special or implementation committees, working groups, commissions, and task forces. EB members may serve as members of any committee.

VI. MAJOR COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE FUNCTIONS

1. Advise the EB and/or BOG on the relevant matters.
2. Present resolutions for action on policy and/or implementation of policy to the relevant council or committee, EB and/or BOG.
3. Recommend programs and projects to the EB and BOG within established policies and budget.
4. Assist the staff liaison in preparing an annual budget for the committee, including identifying revenue sources, and estimating expenses (including administrative expenses) for programs and projects planned for the next fiscal year.
5. In accordance with the USDF Bylaws and Policies, review proposed changes to programs and projects under the jurisdiction of the committee, make recommendations for changes, and perform such other duties as may be specified by the committee goals and objectives, or as may be directed by the EB.
6. Unless specifically stated in the USDF Bylaws and/or Policies, councils or committees may take no action to commit USDF to any business or contractual relationship, nor make policy. Councils or committees act in an advisory capacity to the EB and BOG.

VII. MEETINGS

1. Meetings will be held as necessary and at least once each year at the USDF Annual Convention. A quorum must be assured to conduct business and vote. Meeting notices will be sent by e-mail. The EB and Executive Director must be notified of all meetings.
2. One-half of the voting members of a committee or council constitute a quorum for voting purposes.
3. At least ten days notice is required for a meeting unless a majority of members agree to a time for the meeting that is within ten days of the meeting scheduling request.
4. It is most important that the chair, with the assistance of the liaison, develops a preliminary agenda that is circulated to all members as soon as possible before the meeting. Meetings that are not properly noticed to all members may be invalid and become a source of controversy or confusion.

5. All meetings will be conducted according to Robert’s Rules of Order.
6. Except with EB permission, councils and committees can hold *no more than one* closed meeting at the USDF Annual Convention. At least one open *council forum will* be held at the convention.
7. Emergency meetings may be held if all members are notified prior to the meeting, provided with an agenda, and given a chance to participate.
8. Meetings may be recorded, at the request of the chair, for assistance in preparation of the meeting minutes. The minutes of any teleconference must reflect that the meeting was held electronically.
9. Minutes will be prepared as an executive summary. Major points should be covered as well as dissenting views. Confidential or sensitive items may be recorded separately and circulated separately only with the approval of the Executive Director. Members and guests present will be listed first, along with those members absent. “Excused” may be used for a member whose absence is unavoidable. When actions and votes are taken, the minutes must be clear as to the action and the actual vote. For example: It was moved by ____ and seconded by ____ that Motion carried (unanimously, 8-2) or Motion defeated (2-8), etc. The number of abstaining votes should also be listed. At the member’s request, the names of any abstaining or opposing member should be listed.
10. Written meeting minutes shall be circulated to all members of the council or committee (See 17. USDF Meeting Minutes Guideline).
11. Council and committee members are entitled to vote. If a committee has co-chairs, both may attend council meetings, but only one pre-declared chair should sit on the council as a voting member, with one vote being carried by each committee that comprises a council. Staff members, including the liaison, and staff advisors, may not vote. The chair need not vote except to break or cause ties.
12. Voting members with a vested interest, or a conflict of interest, in an agenda item are expected to declare that interest, offer to abstain, and absent themselves from the vote.
13. Persons invited in a consultant or advisory capacity may not vote. Invited guests may speak only at the request of the chair, or council, or committee member.
14. Alternates or proxy votes are not permitted in council or committee votes.
15. Travel and member expenses attributable to service to USDF are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law. Council or committee members should consult their personal tax advisors.
16. A member of the EB may attend any closed council or committee meeting, except that EB members may not attend meetings conducted pursuant to the USDF Committee Grievance Process unless specifically required or allowed to under USDF policy.

17. USDF Meeting Minutes Guideline

A. Guideline:

All USDF meetings and associated minutes will be conducted, in principle, according to Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised Edition (RONR). In addition to the requirements prescribed by Roberts Rules, USDF meeting minutes will incorporate an executive summary format, which includes a brief discussion summary of the major points made, as well as dissenting views. This should be reflected for each agenda item including discussion topics and those leading to actions, motions, and votes. USDF minutes must be clear as to the action and the actual vote, and will serve as a written, historical record of what decisions were made during the meeting. For website postings the transparency policy as outlined in USDF Policies and Procedures, Chapter II.

E. will be followed. Additional EB specific communication policies are found in Policies and Procedures, Chapter VII. D.

B. Format Outline:

Staff liaisons will record committee meeting proceedings and produce minutes. The committee chairs will review and provide edits as needed. The Board Secretary will prepare Board minutes with the assistance of staff as requested by the Secretary. The committee or Board members are responsible for approving the minutes. (The word “committee” in this document applies to USDF standing and sub committees, councils, task forces, working groups, and commissions, and “Board” refers to the USDF EB or BOG.)

C. Meeting Agenda and Electronic Recording of Meeting:

1. The meeting agenda should serve as the basic outline for preparing the minutes and be distributed prior to the meeting.
2. The agenda should include, as applicable:
 - Opening remarks and call to order
 - Roll call and verify quorum
 - Approval, or recognition of the minutes from the last meeting(s)
 - Approval of the agenda, or the addition, removal, and correction of agenda items
 - Reports of Officers, Boards, standing committees, and standing sub-committees
 - Reports of special committees; task forces, working groups, as applicable
 - Unfinished business (carry over from previous meeting)
 - Discussion topics
 - New business (new discussion items identified during the meeting)
3. Meetings may be electronically recorded, at the request of the committee chair or Board Secretary. Electronic recordings of meetings can be used as a reference in preparing the meeting minutes.

D. Format for Meeting Minutes:

1. Include a list of the attendees (both their first and last names) in the following order: members, guests, staff, and absentees
2. The meeting heading or first paragraph of the minutes should contain the following:
 - The kind of meeting: regular (a meeting that is scheduled to cover necessary business); special (a meeting that is called in addition to a regular scheduled meeting to address an important topic); adjourned regular (a continuation of a regular meeting with unfinished agenda items); or adjourned special (a special called meeting that requires further discussion and completion)
 - The name of the organization
 - The date and time of the meeting
 - Note that the chair and liaison are present; if not, who substituted for them
 - Confirm whether a quorum exists
 - The approval of minutes from previous meeting(s), and/or recognition of minutes approved electronically since the last meeting
3. The body of the minutes should contain a separate paragraph for each discussion topic:
 - Major points should be covered, as well as dissenting views. Include motions that are made, and actions agreed upon. If an action is to be taken, note who is to take the action and the associated timeline. When actions and votes are taken, minutes must be clear as to the action and the actual vote.
4. The last paragraph should contain the following:
 - If a follow up meeting is suggested or scheduled. Make a note of it.
 - The hour of adjournment
 - Secretary’s or chair’s signature (acceptance of draft)

VIII. JOB DESCRIPTION FOR COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Early each year, the chair of each committee will receive a letter from the USDF President regarding the responsibilities associated with his/her committee. Included in the letter will be (1) a generic job description for committee chairs, and (2) a list of specific projects approved by the committee for work during the year. Contact information for the committee liaison is also provided, as well as a copy of the committee report to the BOG during the last annual convention.

Following is a list of duties expected of committee chairs:

1. Guide the business of the committee. Convene meetings as necessary; direct the process of committee meetings and monitor activities of subcommittees.
2. Serve as committee spokesperson to the EB and BOG, attend BOG meetings, and work with the staff liaison to ensure the committee accomplishes its mission, goals, and objectives.
3. Chairs of standing committees are responsible for contacting prospective committee members and issuing the invitation to serve. While it may be advisable to request assistance from the staff liaison to determine if the prospective member is a member in good standing of USDF, it is not normally the responsibility of staff members to issue an invitation to serve. For special or ad hoc committees, or a task force, the invitation to serve may be issued by the President.
4. Communicate with your regional representatives (if applicable) or committee members quarterly. Communications should include progress on the committee's work during the year. Send a copy of all written communications to the USDF office liaison for transmission to the EB. Most communications can be informal in nature, and most committees communicate often through e-mail. However, the liaison should be copied on e-mails and other forms of written communication (faxes or letters), and members who do not have e-mail should receive all important correspondence. If necessary, the liaison can arrange teleconference meetings during the year to discuss committee business. If teleconferences are desired, the meetings must be properly noticed and arranged at a time most convenient to the majority of members. The committee may be asked to vote on important issues via e-mail, as well as during teleconference meetings.
5. Communicate (at least) monthly with your liaison in the USDF office. Seek input on all the committee's work from the liaison, and keep the liaison informed of all committee work.
6. Send a written report on the committee's activities, concerns, problems, or development to the USDF office for both the spring and fall EB meetings (see timeline below). Your liaison can help with the reports and a template for the report is sent to the chair (normally by e-mail) prior to the deadline for submission. The template for the spring and fall EB reports normally includes: name of committee, name of chair, name of liaison, current committee members, mission, goals, current year's objectives, progress to date (for the spring meeting), current year's accomplishments (for the *fall meeting*), **and objectives for the next year (for the fall meeting)**. Program/project proposals or requests for changes **MUST** be attached to reports.
7. The chair is responsible for providing an agenda for all meetings, including the convention and teleconferences, and conducting the meetings. The liaison should be present in all meetings to take the official minutes.
8. The chair is responsible for preparing a description of the committee's planned activities and projects for the next fiscal year (April 1 – March 31) to assist the liaison in preparing budget requests for the budget that will be approved at the annual convention. Any items that are proposed must have received a vote of approval by a quorum of the committee in a properly noticed meeting. Any changes to prior budget requests must be approved by the EB and BOG.
9. Chairs are responsible for preparing a short, standardized, written report of their committee activities, including actions taken at the annual convention, for the BOG meeting. A short oral report may be required for the BOG.

10. Chairs should contact their staff liaisons after both the spring and fall EB meetings to discuss any issues that may affect the committee, or questions regarding submitted reports.
11. Chairs or designated committee members may be called upon to contribute committee relevant articles in USDF publications regarding information on program requirements, successful programs organized by GMOs, etc., as appropriate to help the committee promote its goals to the USDF members and increase program participation. The liaison will assist in developing ideas for articles and keep the chair informed as to assigned publication dates and submission deadlines.
12. Where applicable, committee chairs should communicate with RDs regarding regional representative appointments. Committee chairs may request recommendations from RDs or Officers regarding appointments.
13. Chairs will not communicate USDF committee business to organizations outside of USDF (such as USEF and The Dressage Foundation), without prior approval of the President. Chairs will not communicate USDF committee business to corporate sponsors without prior approval from the Executive Director.

The committee chair letter sent early each year will also contain specific information on committee expenses and budgets. Budget and reimbursement policies include:

1. Reasonable expenses for telephone calls and postage related to work for council or committee may be reimbursed by USDF after submission of a written request, accompanied by receipts and documentation of expenses. Such requests must be approved, in advance, by the Executive Director. If you are uncertain as to what is reasonable, please contact the USDF office before incurring the expense.
2. Program or project budgets may not include reimbursement for travel or printing/copying expenses or fees for members of the committee. Other than expenses for telephone calls or postage, as mentioned above, other reasonable expenses may only be reimbursed if approved, in advance, by the Executive Director or EB.

IX. ANNUAL TIMELINE FOR COMMITTEE CHAIRS

1. **Monthly:** Communicate monthly with your liaison in the USDF office. Seek input on all your committee work from your liaison, and keep the liaison informed of all committee work.
2. **Quarterly:** Communicate with your regional representatives (if applicable) or committee members. Communications should include progress on the committee work during the year. Send a copy of all appropriate written communications to the USDF office liaison for transmission to the EB.
3. **Due no later than the first week of January:** Chairs finalize committee roster recommendations. Notify liaisons of the proposed roster. (Rosters are subject to EB review)
4. **Due March 1:** Staff will start the annual budget process with committee chairs, thirteen months prior to its implementation date of April 1, of the following calendar year.
5. **Due Mid-Late March:** Send a written report on your committee activities, concerns, problems, or developments since the last annual convention to your liaison at the USDF office for the USDF spring EB meeting. (Due date subject to change based on date of spring EB meeting.)
6. **Due August:** Consult with liaison regarding meeting room needs for the annual convention if the committee plans on a closed meeting. (Date subject to change. Liaison will send notification.)

7. **Due Early – Mid September (in the last year of term):** Send to your liaison a declaration of your wish to continue or discontinue as committee chair. These are forwarded to the President to be utilized in making appointments for the following year.
8. **Due September 15:** Inform USDF of any equipment needed for the annual convention – e.g., projector, video equipment, etc. (Date subject to change. Liaison will send notification.)
9. **Due September 15:** Work with your liaison to complete a budget for the next fiscal year (April 1- March 31). All foreseeable committee budget requests for the next fiscal year must be received by the USDF office by September 15.
10. **Due Mid-October:** Send a written pre-convention report on your committee activities, concerns, problems, or development to the USDF office for inclusion in the fall Executive Board books. You will receive a standardized template from the office for this purpose. (Liaison will send notification of exact due date.)
11. **Early/Mid-October – Early November:** Hold a pre-convention teleconference meeting with your committee to prepare your committee’s BOG report. *The first part of the meeting will be closed for committee members only, followed by an open portion that any USDF member may attend.* Your liaison will work with you on the BOG report, which will include your committee’s activities, any actions taken at your committee’s pre-convention teleconference meeting, and objectives for the coming year. A report template will be provided.
12. **Due Early-Mid November:** Finalize and approve your committee’s BOG report with your liaison. BOG reports will be posted online and distributed to delegates prior to the convention. They will also be available at the BOG meeting.

December at the USDF Annual Convention:

13. Conduct your closed committee meeting (if one is being held).
14. Attend and represent your committee on the panel for your respective council’s open forum.
15. Attend the BOG meeting. Committee reports to the BOG with no proposals are approved collectively. If your committee has items that need BOG approval, an oral report to the BOG is required.

X. PROCESS FOR PROPOSALS THAT REQUIRE BOG APPROVAL

First, items are voted upon in committee meetings. They must have approval of the majority (i.e., a quorum) of voting *committee* members to go forward. All new programs, proposals, and budget items (any program likely to involve expense, even if the exact monies have been determined in your meetings) *then* must be presented to the EB. (*Note: Some projects and proposals must have joint approval by other committees prior to EB or BOG approval.*)

*Refer to the USDF EB Policy on Committee Proposals (Policies and Procedures, Section VII) for detailed requirements for program/project proposals, noting that such proposals **MUST** be presented in writing to both the EB and council chair and committee members prior to BOG approval.

When addressing the BOG, the entire written report should not be read, as printed copies will be available for all in attendance. However, any new program items or changes to existing programs should be explained in sufficient detail for the delegates to understand what they are voting on. The chair or his/her designee should be prepared to draw delegates’ attention to the written report and answer any questions. Each proposal or significant change to an existing program should be approved one at a time. After explanation and any discussion, the person giving the report should request a motion for approval, a second and then a vote (all in favor/any opposed). Finally, the entire report requires BOG approval. Conclude with a request for a motion for approval of the report (and again call for a second, vote: all in favor/any opposed).

Chairs are cautioned NOT to include any items not approved during their committee meetings in either the written or verbal reports.

The template for BOG reports is as follows:

Name of committee

Chair:

Liaison:

Committee members:

Approximate number in attendance at closed meetings:

Current year's accomplishments:

Report from the closed meeting:

Next year's objectives:

New budget requirements:

Motions to come before the BOG: Program/project proposals or requests for changes **MUST** be attached to the report. (See detailed description in Policies and Procedures, *Section IX.*)

XI. FORMAT AND CRITERIA FOR PLANNING GOALS AND WRITING REPORTS

Mission, Goals and Annual Objectives:

Each committee is required to have a mission statement, goals and annual objectives that fall within the parameters of the overall USDF mission statement and the specific mission of the committee. The mission and goals of a committee are established and approved when the committee is initially approved by USDF. The mission and goals should not change from year to year. However, the addition of new programs or functions could necessitate a change both to the mission and goals. Changes recommended to the EB or BOG must have the approval of a quorum of the committee. Any proposed changes to the mission and goals of a committee **MUST** be approved in advance by the USDF EB and then the BOG (if such changes are requested at the convention).

Annual objectives must be designed to include what the committee can reasonably expect to accomplish during the year, within the parameters of the approved budget for the committee. Objectives may change from year to year. However, if programs or projects are ongoing and require annual committee involvement, objectives for those programs/projects may stay the same. Annual objectives **MUST** be listed for all work that is planned during the year, including ongoing programs and projects.

It is recommended that both goals and objectives be limited to reasonable and achievable numbers. Normally a committee should have from three to six goals, and no more than six annual objectives, unless the committee is very active and includes subcommittees who can take on more work. Each goal should be clearly written, easily understood and must directly relate to the mission of the committee. Each annual objective should not only relate specifically to work planned during the year, but also to a specific goal of the committee. Annual objectives should be recommended by the chair and approved by the committee.

Three reports are required from each committee during the year and must be prepared or approved by the chair. A reminder and a template for each report will be provided to you by your committee liaison. Following is a list of the required reports, as well as the format and content for each:

Spring Executive Board Report

Name of committee

Chair:

Liaison:

Committee members

Mission:

Goals:

Current year's committee objectives:

Progress to date: *List what your committee has accomplished during the first part of the year. Also list any questions you have of the EB. Share concerns and plans for the rest of the year.*

Items to come before the Executive Board:

*Proposals for new projects or programs must be attached if review or approval is requested. *If immediate approval is requested, a complete business plan should be attached.*

Fall Annual Convention Report

Name of committee:

Chair:

Liaison:

Committee members:

Mission:

Goals:

Current year committee objectives:

Current year accomplishments:

Next Year's Objectives: *Should include the work that is planned for the next year.*

Items to come before the Executive Board:

*Proposals for new projects or programs must be attached if review or approval is requested. *If immediate approval is requested, a complete business plan should be attached.*

Board of Governors (BOG) Report

Name of committee:

Chair:

Liaison:

Committee members:

Number in attendance at closed meeting:

Current year's objectives and accomplishments: *Same or condensed version of fall report.*

Items discussed at closed meeting: *Includes a summary of the discussion and any actions (votes) taken by the committee. This summary serves as the official minutes of the meeting.*

Next year's objectives: *Should include the work that is planned for the next year. This may be the same list as submitted with the fall report or may be amended with approval of the committee.*

New budget requirements: *Include requests that were NOT included on the treasurer's draft budget, prior to convention. However, new budget requests listed here MUST have been approved by the EB prior to the BOG.*

Motions to come before the BOG: *List separately each motion for program or project changes or new proposals that require EB approval. Each motion listed here MUST have had a vote of approval by a quorum of the committee.*

*Proposals for new projects or programs must be attached if review or approval is requested. *If immediate approval is requested, a complete business plan should be attached.*

XII. PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS

1. USDF Executive Board Policy on Program Proposals

- Committee programs or projects should be designed to meet the mission of USDF and the mission and goals of the respective committee.
- All committee proposals for new projects or programs, or revisions to current programs, must have the input and recommendation of the committee. Committee minutes must reflect approval by a quorum of the committee, after review of the proposal and a draft budget.
- All committee proposals for new projects or programs, or revisions to current programs, must include a budget to identify revenue sources, estimated expenses (including administrative expenses involving USDF staff or outside personnel), and a suggested timeline for implementing the program or completing the project.
- Committee programs and projects should be designed to utilize GMOs, if appropriate, and volunteers to the fullest extent possible.
- All committee proposals for new programs and projects, or revisions to current programs must be submitted to the EB for approval through the respective chair or staff liaison for the committee that will be responsible for the program or project.

- Committee program and project proposals or revisions, where budgeted expenses may exceed revenue, should demonstrate that the benefits justify the cost, and must receive approval from the BOG.
- New and revised programs and projects that are approved either by the BOG or EB will be reviewed by a working group appointed by the President, and approved by the EB, to determine an appropriate implementation plan. The implementation process for a new program or project may take up to one year after the program was initially approved. The working group should have from five to seven members, including members of the EB, staff liaison for the program/ project, the committee chair responsible for the program/project, and the respective ALD.
- In cases where the working group determines that the program or project cannot be implemented in its original form, due to excessive costs or other factors, a revised format for the program or project must be recommended to and reviewed by the EB. Final approval of any changes to the originally approved format must be presented for approval to the Board (either EB or BOG) that originally approved the program.

2. Participation

- There may be a program registration fee for USDF programs held at a local level, which require USDF administrative assistance. Youth Regional Team Competitions are exempted. (See USDF Policies and Procedures, III. FINANCIAL, Section F)
- Any individual in arrears on fees or dues to USDF, its regions, or GMOs may not participate in USDF programs. USDF must be notified if an individual is in arrears to a region or GMO and will determine if the nature of the delinquency constitutes a violation of this policy. (See USDF Policies and Procedures, III. FINANCIAL, Section A)
- Any individual or USDF member once known by USDF to be suspended by the United States Equestrian Federation, or while under sanction by the US Center for Safe Sport, will be considered not in good standing with USDF during the period of suspension or sanction. Any individual or member not in good standing shall not be entitled to rights and privileges afforded to those in good standing and will be ineligible to attend or participate in USDF programs, events, or activities. (See Bylaws Art. V., Section 1, Member in Good Standing)
- Participating Membership (in good standing) of USDF is required for participation in several USDF programs, including:
 - Candidates and participants in certification testings and pre-certifications
 - Certification examiners
 - Certified instructors and associate instructors (non-renewal of membership will result in removal of instructor's name from all USDF lists for any period of lapsed membership.)
 - USDF Judge's Forum participants (excluding those forums specifically required to maintain USEF Judges license)
 - L Education Program – Part 2
 - Faculty for L Education Program
 - Dressage participants representing the US in the North American Youth Championships (NAYC)
 - USDF/USEF Young Rider Graduate Program
 - Trainers Conference
 - Jr/YR Clinic participants (Riders)
 - USDF Honorary Instructors
 - Dressage Seat Medal Semi-Finals

3. Requirements

- USDF Sanctioned Programs:
 - Permission to advertise a clinic, forum, competition, or other dressage program as USDF “sanctioned” must be applied for in writing directly to USDF.
 - The application should identify the sponsoring organization, principal organizer(s), and name, address, and telephone number of an authorized contact person. An outline of the proposed dressage program's purpose, schedule and budget should accompany the application, along with any other pertinent information.
 - A Group Member Organization (GMO), USDF Region, USDF council or committee or other USDF-approved organization must be designated as the sponsoring organization of a USDF sanctioned program.

- All USDF sanctioned programs should be structured to be financially self-supporting. All individuals or organizations other than the sponsoring organization that may benefit financially (or in any other material way) from the proceeds of the event must be identified in the application. A complete financial report is to be submitted to USDF within a designated time of the program's end, for programs receiving direct financial support from USDF. Specific financial reporting requirements will be listed in the application criteria for each program.
- A nominal fee may be charged for USDF Sanctioned Program Organizer Guidelines that are available free of charge on the USDF website.
- All USDF sanctioned programs and competitions are required to carry at least \$1 million insurance liability coverage, which sites USDF as an "additional insured." Proof of insurance must be provided to USDF at least two weeks prior to the program, or as mandated by program guidelines.
- Programs voted on and approved by the BOG will be reviewed by a working group of the EB to determine an appropriate implementation plan.
- USDF sanctioned programs which have been approved and accepted by the BOG and designed to be organized at the regional or local level, should be allowed to be undertaken in any region by USDF GMOs, or by members with the approval of the Regional Director and the appropriate regional representative or committee chair. This policy does not apply to USDF administered national programs.

4. List of USDF Programs

Committees should produce, and update as needed, guidelines for the conduct of the USDF programs listed below. For more information on USDF activities, projects, or programs, see the current guidelines which are posted on the USDF website.

List of USDF Programs as of April 7, 2023:

- 1) Competition Awards (Rider, Horse Performance, Year-End, All Breeds)
- 2) Recognition Awards (HOF, MOD, Volunteer, GMO)
- 3) Annual Convention
- 4) Regional Adult Amateur Equitation/Regional Final
- 5) Junior/Young Rider Clinic Series
- 6) Qualifying and Selection Criteria for NAYC
- 7) USDF nomination to the USEF Youth Sportsman's Award
- 8) Shining Star
- 9) Ravel Education Grant
- 10) Youth Dressage Recognition Pin
- 11) Youth Convention Scholarship
- 12) Youth Outreach Clinics
- 13) Young Rider Graduate
- 14) Youth/Young Adult Dressage Sport Horse Breeder Seminar
- 15) Youth/Young Adult Dressage Sport Horse Handler Seminar
- 16) Arts Contest
- 17) University Accredited Events*
- 18) GMO Education Initiative*
- 19) Certified Instructor Testings
- 20) Instructor/Trainer Workshops*
- 21) Instructor/Trainer Pre-Certification Clinics*
- 22) FEI Level Trainers Conference/s
- 23) Sport Horse Seminars
- 24) Sport Horse Prospect Development Forum
- 25) Sport Horse Handlers Clinic
- 26) Continuing Education in Dressage Judging*
- 27) L Education*
- 28) Licensed Officials Training
- 29) Licensed Officials Clinics (that meet USEF maintenance requirements)

- 30) Dressage Technical Delegate Apprentice
- 31) Dressage Seat Medal Semi-Finals
- 32) Regional Dressage Championships
- 33) US Dressage Finals
- 34) Breeders Championship Series
- 35) Adult/Youth Camps**
- 36) Adult and Youth Regional Team Competitions**
- 37) Dressage Spirit Award

*USDF sanctioned programs hosted by regions, GMOs, or other organizations for which USDF provides guidelines and support to varying degrees.

**USDF programs, not sanctioned by USDF, hosted by regions, GMOs, or other organizations for which USDF provides guidelines.

XIII. UNITED STATES DRESSAGE FEDERATION, INC. CODE OF ETHICS AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

ARTICLE I PURPOSE AND INTRODUCTION

Both the volunteers and the staff of the United States Dressage Federation (“USDF” or the “Corporation”) have an important responsibility to maintain a high standard of ethical behavior when conducting the affairs of the Corporation. A primary purpose of the conflict of interest policy is to protect the interest of the “Corporation” when it is contemplating entering into a transaction or arrangement that might benefit the private interest of a director, voting delegate, council or committee member, or employee of the Corporation.

Furthermore, because the appearance of impropriety can be just as damaging as actual impropriety, conduct, which appears to be improper, also is unacceptable. (See definitions below.) Accordingly, volunteers, and staff are required to comply with the following USDF Code of Ethics when representing or participating in USDF activities or events:

1. Conduct all dealings with honesty and fairness.
2. Respect the rights of all employees to fair treatment and equal opportunity, free from discrimination or harassment of any type.
3. In the furtherance of their official duties, all federation representatives, including staff, licensed officials, and volunteers, shall be treated with courtesy and respect and no person shall direct abusive or threatening conduct toward them.
4. Know, understand, and comply with the laws, regulations, and codes of conduct governing the conduct of USDF competitions and business.
5. Ensure that all transactions are handled honestly and recorded accurately.
6. Protect the confidentiality of information that belongs to the Corporation, our donors, sponsors, suppliers, fellow volunteers, and staff.
7. Respect the confidentiality appropriate to issues of a sensitive nature.
8. Avoid conflicts of interest, both real and perceived.
9. Never use Corporation assets or information for personal gain.
10. Recognize that even the appearance of misconduct or impropriety can be very damaging to the reputation of the Corporation and act accordingly.

This policy is intended to supplement but not replace any applicable state laws governing conflicts of interest applicable to nonprofit and charitable corporations.

ARTICLE II DEFINITIONS

1. INTERESTED PERSON

Any director, voting delegate, council or committee member, or staff member, who has a direct or indirect financial, material, or personal interest, as defined below, is an interested person.

2. FAMILY

USDF defines “family” for these purposes as follows: spouse, parent, child or spouse of a child, brother, sister, spouse of a brother or sister, a cohabiting companion, or any other individual with a significant familial or familial-like relationship.

3. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

USDF defines a conflict of interest as any personal or financial (both direct and indirect) relationship including relationships of family members (see definition above) that could influence or be perceived to influence an interested person’s objectivity when representing or conducting business for, or on behalf of, USDF. USDF defines a substantial appearance of a conflict of interest as whenever others may reasonably infer from the circumstances that a conflict exists.

4. FINANCIAL INTEREST

A person has a financial interest if the person has, directly or indirectly, through business, investment, or family:

- a. an ownership or investment interest in any entity with which the Corporation has a transaction or arrangement, or
- b. For staff: a compensation arrangement with any entity or individual with which the Corporation has a transaction or arrangement, or
- c. For volunteers: a compensation arrangement with the Corporation or with any entity or individual with which the Corporation has a transaction or arrangement, or
- d. A potential ownership or investment interest in, or compensation arrangement with, any entity or individual with which the Corporation is negotiating a transaction or arrangement.
- e. Compensation includes direct and indirect remuneration, as well as gifts or favors that are substantial in nature.

5. INAPPROPRIATE HOSPITALITY OR GIFT GIVING

USDF defines inappropriate hospitality as the offering or receiving of accommodations, event tickets, entertainment, meals, or other similar personal benefits except as specifically provided for by applicable policies. Inappropriate hospitality or gift giving between individuals can also create a conflict of interest. Similarly, USDF prohibits the receipt or giving of personal gifts except for items of nominal value such as hats, pins, etc. unless specifically provided for by applicable policies.

ARTICLE III PROCEDURES

1. DUTY TO DISCLOSE

In connection with any actual or possible conflict of interest, an interested person must disclose the existence and nature of his or her financial or other interest to the appropriate USDF entity considering the proposed transaction or arrangement. Because the appearance of impropriety can be just as damaging as actual impropriety, conduct that appears to be improper must be disclosed so that the appropriate USDF entity may determine whether such substantial appearance of a conflict is deemed to be a prohibited conflict of interest.

2. DETERMINING WHETHER A CONFLICT OF INTEREST EXISTS

After disclosure of a financial or material interest, the interested person shall leave any Board, council, committee, or staff meeting while the financial or material interest is discussed and voted upon. An interested party also must abstain from voting and from seeking to influence the vote on any matter related to the person or concern if the relationship is not approved. An individual must recuse himself/herself from participating in a USDF activity giving rise to a substantial appearance of a conflict of interest unless and until it is deemed by the appropriate USDF entity that no conflict exists. In the case of volunteers, the remaining Board, council or committee members, or where appropriate, the EB, shall decide if a conflict of interest exists. In the case of staff, the Executive Director shall determine if a conflict of interest exists.

This code serves as a framework for ethical conduct but does not cover every situation. If you are unclear about the requirements of this code, please consult the President or Executive Director of the Corporation.

3. PROCEDURES FOR ADDRESSING A FINANCIAL CONFLICT OF INTEREST

- a. After exercising due diligence, the Board, council or committee shall determine whether the Corporation can obtain a more advantageous transaction or arrangement with reasonable efforts from a person or entity that would not give rise to a conflict of interest.
- b. If a more advantageous transaction or arrangement is not reasonably attainable under circumstances that would not give rise to a conflict of interest, the Board, council or committee shall determine by a majority vote of the disinterested directors or members whether the transaction or arrangement is in the Corporation's best interest and for its own benefit and whether the transaction is fair and reasonable to the Corporation and shall make its decision as to whether to enter into the transaction or arrangement in conformity with such determination.

4. VIOLATIONS OF THE CODE OF ETHICS OR CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

- a. Any person who violates or condones the violation of the Code of Ethics is subject to disciplinary measures, which may include termination of membership, employment, and expulsion from the Board, council or committee.
- b. If the Board, council, committee, or staff director has reasonable cause to believe that a member or employee has failed to disclose an actual or possible conflict of interest, the appropriate entity shall inform the member or employee of the basis for such belief and afford the individual an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose.
- c. If, after hearing the response of the member or employee and making such further investigation as may be warranted in the circumstances, the Board, council, committee, or staff director determines that the member or employee has in fact failed to disclose an actual or possible conflict of interest, the appropriate entity shall take appropriate disciplinary and corrective action.

ARTICLE IV RECORDS OF PROCEEDINGS

The minutes of the Board and all councils or committees shall contain:

- a. the names of the persons who disclosed or otherwise were found to have a financial interest in connection with an actual or possible conflict of interest, the nature of the financial interest, any action taken to determine whether a conflict of interest was present, and the Board's, council's or committee's decision as to whether a conflict of interest in fact existed, including, if known, the final result of any appeal on such a decision taken pursuant to the USDF Committee Grievance Process, and

- b. the names of the persons who were present for discussions and votes relating to the transaction or arrangement, the content of the discussion, including any alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement, and a record of any votes taken in connection therewith.

ARTICLE V COMPENSATION COMMITTEES

A voting member of any council or committee whose jurisdiction includes compensation matters and who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the Corporation for services is precluded from voting on matters pertaining to member's compensation.

ARTICLE VI ANNUAL STATEMENTS

Each EB member, Audit Committee member, other Board-designated council or committee member, staff *member, L faculty, and certification examiners and faculty* shall annually sign *and submit* a Disclosure and Affirmation Statement and a Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement which affirms that such person:

- a. has received a copy of the Code of Ethics and Conflict of Interest policy,
- b. has read and understands the policy,
- c. has agreed to comply with the policy,
- d. understands that the Corporation is a charitable organization and that to maintain its federal tax exemption it must engage primarily in activities which accomplish one or more of its tax-exempt purposes, and
- e. has disclosed financial, business, or personal relationships, positions, or circumstances which may present an actual or perceived conflict of interest with the Corporation.

Other council or committee members and voting delegates of the Corporation are not required to complete a Disclosure and Affirmation Statement or a Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement, however, all such individuals are required to read and otherwise comply with this Code of Ethics and Conflict of Interest policy, and to abstain from voting and from seeking to influence a vote or decision on any matter related to an actual or perceived conflict.

After acceptance of any volunteer or staff position with the Corporation, compliance with this code of ethics and conflict of interest policy is expected regardless of the timely filing of required affirmation or disclosure statements.

ARTICLE VII PERIODIC REVIEWS

To ensure that the Corporation operates in a manner consistent with its charitable purposes and that it does not engage in activities that would jeopardize its status as an organization exempt from federal income tax, periodic reviews shall be conducted. The periodic reviews shall, at a minimum, include the following subjects:

- a. Whether compensation arrangements and benefits are reasonable and the result of arm's-length bargaining.
- b. Whether agreements with employees and third-party payers further the Corporation's charitable purposes and do not result in inurement or impermissible private benefit.

ARTICLE VIII USE OF OUTSIDE EXPERTS

In conducting the periodic reviews provided for in Article VII, the Corporation may, but need not, use outside advisors. If outside experts are used, their use shall not relieve the Board of its responsibility for ensuring that periodic reviews are conducted.

ARTICLE IX
STAFF EMPLOYMENT OR VOLUNTEER SERVICES OUTSIDE OF USDF

In addition to the stipulations listed above which are pertinent to staff, staff members have additional responsibilities to the Corporation when contemplating entering a paid or volunteer position associated with a USDF-recognized competition or activity, or USDF-related business. Employees must sign a USDF Employee Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement yearly and abide by the conflict of interest guidelines described in the USDF Employee Handbook.



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