

Kent County 4-H PEP Fund RFP
Bill and Lynn Schumacher Therapeutic Horseback Riding Grant
to develop a Michigan 4-H Proud Equestrian Program in Kent County, Michigan

Purpose:

Kent County 4-H Youth Development is accepting proposals to develop a Kent County 4-H Proud Equestrian Program (PEP). This grant is named in honor of Bill and Lynn Schumacher who supported the original Kent County 4-H Special Riding Program for many years by sharing their farm, horses, and leadership with the program. This grant will provide low-cost therapeutic horseback riding, driving, and horsemanship to individuals with disabilities, as KSRP did in years past.

History of Funds:

In June of 1976, a therapeutic horseback riding program pilot was launched and by 1977, the Kent Special Riding Program was developed through 4-H by Bill and Lynn Schumacher. Over 42 years, this program was developed in Kent County, Michigan and utilized by over 9,000 riders. After the program closed in 2018, the KSRP established a fund to further the original goal of the program to deliver low-cost therapeutic riding to people with disabilities in Kent County, Michigan.

Organization Description:

The **Kent County 4-H Youth Development program** is part of Michigan State University Extension. Each year, thousands of young people, ages 5-19, explore what interests and excites them as they grow with Michigan 4-H. In program areas ranging from science and technology to leadership and workforce development, and much more, 4-H provides fun educational opportunities that empower young people with skills to lead for a lifetime and become the foundation for future success.

The **Michigan 4-H Proud Equestrians Program (PEP)** is an educational recreation program designed to extend the therapeutic benefits of horseback riding to persons with disabilities. Participants of 4-H PEP programs are called 4-H members. 4-H'ers with disabilities may participate in programs regardless of their upper age with special permission from their county 4-H staff. The 4-H staff person, supported by Children and Youth Institute Leadership, determines developmental appropriateness. Michigan law stipulates that a student with a disability is entitled to continue in a special education service program until the end of the school year when they reach age 26.

PEP focuses on teaching participants riding, driving, and horsemanship skills while encouraging physical, social, and emotional development to enable them to participate in equine-related activities. PEP does not include hippotherapy, which is a medical treatment prescribed by a physician and administered by a physical or occupational therapist using the horse as a treatment modality.

While all counties with a PEP program are designed to meet the needs of their local community, the following goals encompass all programs:

- Provide a six- to eight-week horseback riding and/or driving program adapted to the abilities of the participants, held in a safe environment, taught by a [PATH Intl. Certified Therapeutic Riding Instructor \(CTRI\)](#), designed to improve the riders' balance, posture, coordination, confidence, self-esteem, and social growth.

- Expand the general knowledge, awareness, and interest in animal care by teaching participants horse and stable management.
- Help volunteers and participants become aware of each other as individuals with similar needs, capabilities, and interests.
- Develop the leadership skills of MSU Extension teen and adult volunteers by helping them effectively organize and conduct adapted riding programs specifically for youth with disabilities in local communities.
- Promote inclusive opportunities for participation in local 4-H programs that include PEP activities and programming where participants feel comfortable engaging.

Funding:

Up to \$10,000 start-up funds for the first year, with a gradual release of funds each year as grantees reports back to staff. A small fund will remain to continue investment, which can be awarded over time if applicants continue to meet grant requirements.

Timeline:

Finalists will be asked to present their proposals to the review team and answer questions in a face-to-face or virtual format. The selected proposal will be announced by late 2024. The grant committee will reopen the proposal period if there are no selected proposals.

Before the release of funding, all awarded parties must:

- Have successfully completed MSU Extension’s Volunteer Selection Process at the Gold level
- Secure a committed board of directors with a minimum of five people with at least 20% being youth
- Completed all Employee Identification Number (EIN) and 4-H charter paperwork
- Review and act according to the Michigan 4-H Financial Guidelines, specifically rules pertaining to bank accounts, handling finances, and year-end reporting
- Submit a calendar of events to MSU Extension- Kent County 4-H staff
- Begin lessons with participants no later than May 1, 2026.

The ideal proposal meets all evaluation criteria, serves a diverse audience at a low cost, has established programs with an existing pool of PATH instructors, PEP Gold volunteers, and 4-H youth volunteers or requires minimal assistance to connect existing programs to PEP requirements and goals. The proposal clearly outlines plans to continue building on grant funding as outlined in the programmatic timelines and has a plan for the recruitment and retention of community partners.

A selection committee comprised of experts from Michigan State University Extension, stakeholders in Kent County, including 4-H staff in Kent County and the Michigan 4-H Proud Equestrian Programs will review all proposals. Proposals will be evaluated based on the above evaluation criteria.

Progress Reports: Bi-annual reports are required during the grant term and turned into MSU Extension- Kent County 4-H staff. Standard annual 4-H club reporting is also required.

Reporting guidelines for funded projects will be clearly articulated at award notification and upon account establishment. Strict adherence to reporting guidelines throughout and after project termination is required to promote communication of project goals and impacts to stakeholders and promote the long-term sustainability of program funding.

Proposal Guidelines:

Page Limit: Sections 3 - 12 cannot exceed 12 pages

Font size: 12 points

PDF

Electronic submission by e-mail to msue.kent@county.msu.edu

Subject Line: Kent County 4-H PEP Grant Submission

Contact For Questions:

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1. **Cover Page-(separate sheet)** provide information about the applying agency or lead individual:
 - a. Name of agency or individual
 - b. Lead contact person's name and title
 - c. Phone number
 - d. Full address
 - e. Email address
 - f. Individual's name responsible for finances including title, phone number, address, and email address
 - g. Individual/agency's experience related to equine, youth development, 4-H, persons with disabilities, etc.

2. **Program Description Summary** – Describe how you will plan for an implement a 4-H Proud Equestrians Program in Kent County. Indicate who will be doing what, where, and when. Relate these to the long-term goals. Specify your resources and your experience in delivering services. Include any evaluation results you have, current sources of funding (if any), agency purpose (if applicable), and significant program objectives and goals. Discuss how your program will be connected to and support [Michigan 4-H Youth Development](#).

The importance of the planning phase of the program must be emphasized. It is the construction of the program's framework. Both the goals set forth and the objectives to be met in accomplishing them must be

clearly stated, realistic, and attainable in a 4-H Proud Equestrians Program. The evaluation process at the program's close will begin with assessing whether those goals were completed successfully. Remember that **goals are general statements of what is to be accomplished.**

An example is to “provide therapeutic riding instruction for persons with disabilities in the community through the 4-H program.” **Objectives are statements of specific ways of accomplishing goals.** An example is to “establish a 4-H Proud Equestrians Program to serve (number) riders with disabilities.” (Local conditions would determine the number.)

Program description (Items 4 – 14) Describe the program you will provide to accomplish the stated objectives. Indicate who will be doing what, where, and when. Relate these to the long-term program goals.

3. Personnel Resources:

- A. **Planning Committee:** Describe your planning committee's makeup and qualifications to help your program reach its objectives.

Developing a program that incorporates these criteria and meets the local community's needs requires careful planning. The best way to begin is to organize a planning committee composed of people interested in and committed to establishing the program in the county. The planning committee should comprise people with diverse interests, skills, and expertise interested in developing a 4-H Proud Equestrians Program. Consideration of all the factors that influence the program's success is an integral part of the responsibility of this committee. The planning committee will oversee the organization of the proposed program in cooperation with the Kent County 4-H staff.

- B. **Instructor:** Discuss where your PEP instructor(s) will come from, their qualifications, and future training.

All PEP Instructors must be Certified Therapeutic Riding Instructors (CTRI) in good standing through PATH International and successfully complete and maintain MSU Extension Volunteer Selection Process Gold status. In addition, a PEP Instructor must attend the Michigan 4-H PEP Instructor Update in mid-October at least every two years, held at various locations in Michigan. The grant may not be used to obtain PATH training or certification. MSU Extension staff can help find PATH-certified instructors in and around Kent County to make connections.

- C. **Physical or occupational therapist:** It would be viewed favorably if a program had a certified therapist who will be a consultant to the program and evaluate riders for appropriate instruction. Ideally, this person would also serve as a planning committee member.

- D. **Volunteers:** Describe how you will recruit, train, and manage PEP volunteers.

Adult volunteers must have active Gold MSU Extension volunteer status, be enrolled in 4-H Online, and have completed the required MSU Extension online courses for volunteers, including Child Abuse Reporting Protocol training. Potential activities include preparing horses for sessions, assisting PEP 4-H'er in grooming and tacking up a horse, mounting/dismounting a

horse to and from riding sessions, leading a horse, and sidewalking. Volunteers will take direction from the 4-H Program Coordinator and PEP instructor . A Kent 4-H Program Coordinator will work with the lead PEP volunteer to recruit and train volunteers. All volunteer screening will be completed by MSU Extension. Two or three volunteers will be needed for each child in the program during the riding session. Volunteers will also be required to teach the non-riding educational and skill-building sessions.

- E. **PEP Participants:** Describe the community where this program is housed. Explain how you will recruit youth to participate in PEP, as well as recruit volunteers. Describe the size and scope of an ideal program for the community.

4. Budget Form-

Instructions: Please provide a summary of anticipated program expenses, including existing resources and expected program income. Existing resources may include xyz. When considering supplies, including those related to animal care, participant recruitment, office supplies, etc.

We will not be able to pay for the purchase of horses, or PATH or PEP certification. Grant covers direct costs of PEP program facilitation and start-up only. **Funds raised using the Michigan 4-H Foundation after grant funding expires may be within this purview.**

Budget Categories	Phase One: Start-Up	Phase Two: On-Going Operating Expenses	Existing Resources	Program Income
Materials/Supplies				
Facility/Equipment				
Programmatic Fees				
Other				

- 5. **Budget Justification** – Indicate anticipated costs that will be incurred for the program. Include costs covered on the grant, in-kind contributions, and expenses covered by other sources. Please utilize the form above.

The detailed budget justification should include start-up and operating expenses for at least one year and up to 5 years, with a report provided the following year to the Kent County Extension 4-H Program Coordinator, their supervisor, and the District 7 Director.

6. Physical Resources

A. Horses and Ponies: Describe the horses/ponies you will use for PEP. Include:

- i. Number of horses needed
- ii. Whether the horses identified and secured
- iii. Who owns them
- iv. Where they are housed and if they will be trailered to the program
- v. Is there an agreement needed with the owner for their use in PEP
- vi. Who will evaluate the horses to determine that they are safe to work with people with disabilities? What criteria are utilized to evaluate and how often will these evaluations be conducted?

B.

The ideal horse for this program is medium-sized, calm, and experienced. The grant may not be used for the purchase of horses. The program's vision is to use suitable horses from the camp or riding stable. Some PEP programs have also used 4-H project horses from a local 4-H horse club. A certified PEP instructor will screen all horses and ponies before allowing their use in the program.

C. Riding/Driving Equipment: Describe the equipment needs that will be used for your PEP program. Discuss what you have, what you will need to purchase, and what can be borrowed or leased.

Tack: English or Australian stock-style saddles without a horn are preferred. Snaffle bridles are preferred; however, some horses may be led in halters. If therapeutic driving is part of the program, please describe your equipment resources and needs. Ideally, the stable or camp will own the proper equipment. Other strategies can be employed if the facility hosting the 4-H PEP program needs the appropriate equipment. The equipment could be borrowed or leased from area horse enthusiasts and program supporters.

D. Safety equipment: Describe the safety equipment needs for your program. Discuss what you have (including any expiration dates) and what you will need to purchase.

A properly fitted, American Society for Testing and Materials/Safety Equipment Institute (ASTM/SEI) approved riding helmet is needed for each rider. Safety stirrups and a handhold are required for each saddle. A fleece saddle cover, bareback pad, or other adaptive equipment may be required for specific disabilities.

Mounting block and/or ramp:

- A required piece of equipment to assist riders in mounting as needed. The grant dictates that this should be a ramp or mounting block. Best practices on the construction and design of ramps by [PATH International](#) suggest that a ramp should have the following characteristics:
- A gradual incline, to increase the levels at which a rider can mount.
- Be of an adequate height for all horses that will be utilizing it.
- Should be constructed so that the instructor or side walker can walk down the ramp as the horse departs.
- Offside barriers are encouraged.
- The ramp should be located outside the arena and situated so that it provides a straight line from the chute into the arena. A straight line is important for those first strides as the rider is settling in. Ramps located in the arena can hinder full use of the arena.

The mounting block or ramp will be required to have a plaque that is installed on or near the ramp acknowledging the funding from “The Bill and Lynn Schumacher Therapeutic Horseback Riding Grant,” including a brief description of the history of the Kent County Special Riding Program.

E. Facilities: Describe the location of the facility you plan to host your PEP sessions. Include how this location will be accessible to the community you intend to reach. Include:

- i. Indoor or outdoor arena
- ii. Are restrooms accessible or will portable restrooms be secured
- iii. Describe the area where lessons will take place including fencing, ground cover, ability to secure spectators safely, etc.
- iv. How will equipment be secured at the site or transported to the site

The grant cannot be used for property or facility purchases. We envision the Kent 4-H PEP program being held at an existing youth camp or stable that meets these requirements. A covered arena would be optimum so that the program could be held in inclement weather, but it is not required.

9. Insurance - Describe what type of insurance you will purchase for your PEP program.

Following are the standard insurance requirements for facilities/volunteers that are holding PEP programs:

Commercial General Liability insurance with a minimum limit of \$1,000,000 for each occurrence/\$2,000,000 general aggregate with an endorsement naming Michigan State University and its Board of Trustees as “Additional Insureds.”

The facility/volunteer must provide evidence of general liability insurance.

10. Financial Resources - Describe how your program will be funded beyond the initial grant. Include potential funding sources like grants, community sponsors, fundraisers, and program fees.

11. Partnerships- Describe outreach plans to involve targeted participants, recruit volunteers, and foster community engagement.

Strong partnerships are essential for a successful PEP program. Partners can support fundraising efforts through donations, events, and providing publicity. In addition, partners can support programs through in-kind contributions such as providing equipment, discounted services, facilities, and supplies. Partners may also offer volunteers or facilitate the recruitment of youth participants for the program.

12. Evaluation – Discuss how you plan to evaluate your program’s success. How will you measure the successful completion of your objectives?

For example, you could measure the number of participants and volunteers that were recruited each year, measure changes in participants’ horsemanship abilities, conduct satisfaction surveys with volunteers and parents of participants . Did the program create any noticeable differences in the need that was identified? Ongoing evaluation is essential in delivery systems to account for unanticipated problems and changes.

13. Timeline of Milestones- Outline the program’s timeline for critical milestones in completing your objectives for this proposal and who is responsible for carrying out the activities. Examples of milestones include organizing a board of directors, recruitment and training of volunteers, and host riding sessions. This program must be actively hosting lessons by May 1st, 2026. In your proposal, estimates are needed for timelines.

16. Letter(s) of Commitment from community groups, proposed partners, etc. that have committed to supporting specific initiatives through services, financial support, programmatically, or through volunteer work.

17. Appendices – Include supporting documentation such as program brochures and publicity pieces, legal certifications, references and evaluation reports, charts, tables, and graphs.

18. Rubric

Scoring Factors (0-20)

(15-20) Meets all requirements, serves a diverse audience in an urban setting, has established programs, existing pool of PATH and PEP volunteers and youth, needs minimal assistance to connect programs to PEP requirements and goals. Program is located in Kent County, Michigan, or intends to be based out of Kent County. Has plans to continue building on grant funds beyond initial funding, with budget included. Application includes financial and/or programmatic timelines. Application has a plan of recruitment and retention of community partners. The program can be provided at a low cost.

(10-15) Meets all requirements of grant, serves an established audience, and has a detailed, multi-year plan for funding and programming. Program is located in West Michigan near Kent County, in Kent County, or in region. Program may intend to be based in Kent County or relocate to that area. Program includes PEP Certified and PATH Certified Instructors. Project is sustainable financially beyond grant fund awarded. Application includes financial and programmatic timelines. Application has a plan of recruitment and retention of community partners. The program can be provided at a low cost.

(5-10) Meets minimum requirements of grant, has two primary signatories. But, lacking in specific implementation. Has an idea of partners or potential community input. Includes PEP and PATH-certified signatories. May lack or have insufficient sustainable funding elements/goals. Program intends on being based in Kent County, West Michigan, or nearby geographic area.

(0-5) Application lacks sufficient details to successfully implement based on grant requirements and/or incomplete application. Does not include PATH certified instructors but may have previous PEP experience. No plans or insufficient plans to continue sustainably building funds. Program intends on being based in Kent County, West Michigan, or nearby geographic area.

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