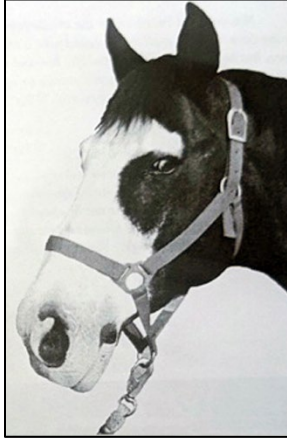


COUNTRY YUCCA EVENTING TRAVEL GRANTS

FOR U25 ATHLETES



The Country Yucca U25 Event Rider Travel Grant is designed to assist young event riders, 25 years or younger, in furthering their competitive experience outside their home region, either across North America or overseas. The grant aims to ease the financial burden of travel and promote the development of young talent on the international stage. *These grants are named after Country Yucca, a pony with a huge heart and personality ridden by Nick Holmes-Smith who represented Canada at Seoul 1988 and Barcelona 1992 Olympics as a member of the Canadian Eventing Team.*

Overall Grant Objective: To provide and support U25 athletes with experience and exposure to national and international events through travel assistance.

Grant Value

- \$5,000 CAD within North America or \$10,000 CAD for Overseas Travel
- Awarded once per calendar year
- Up to four awardees per year, at the discretion of the high-performance advisory group (HPAG)

Grant Usage

The grant must be used toward:

- Travel expenses (flights, fuel, horse transport)
- Entry fees and stabling
- Accommodation during the event
- Veterinary and health certificates for travel
- Other approved competition-related costs

Eligibility: To be considered for the grant, applicants must:

1. Be aged **16–25** as of January 1 of the competition year.
2. Be actively competing at the **Training level or above**.
3. Be a **citizen or permanent resident** of Canada
4. Demonstrate **financial need and clear competitive goals**.
5. Have a plan to compete **outside of their home region**, either across North America or internationally.
6. Be in **good standing** with Equestrian Canada



Selection Criteria: The HPAG will take into account the competition performance record of the athlete/horse combination, giving specific consideration to athlete/horse combinations who have achieved a Target Performance Result as outlined in the chart below: based on either final score or HPR at a minimum of one of the eligible FEI competitions. **Preference given to Athlete/Horse combinations having completed a CCI2*-L or higher.**

The rubric below will be used to score and evaluate all applications.

Eligible FEI Competition	Target Performance Result (Score)	Target Performance Result (HPR)
CCI 4*-L	MER	MER
CCI 4*-S	60 or better	65 or better
CCI 3*-L	55 or better	65 or better
CCI 3*-S	50 or better	70 or better
CCI 2*-L	40 or better	80 or better

Athlete/horse combinations that have not achieved the target performance results may be considered for the Country Yucca Travel Grants, provided the following characteristics have been demonstrated:

- Potential and intention to represent Canada on Senior Teams
- Commitment to international competitiveness
- Demonstrated horsemanship and social licenseⁱ

Timeline

- **Applications Open:** September 15, 2026
- **Deadline to Apply:** October 12, 2026
- **Recipients Notified:** October 31, 2026



How to Apply

Applicants must submit the following information to the Eventing HPAG at eventinghpag@gmail.com. Please review the rubric to ensure your application aligns with the priorities of these grants.

1. A **personal statement** (max. 750 words) including:
 - a. Your competition goals
 - b. Why this grant is important to your development
 - c. How you plan to use the funds
2. An outline of **travel plans**
3. A detailed **budget breakdown** of estimated travel expenses
4. One **reference letter** from a coach, mentor, or federation official
5. A **competition resume** from the last 2 years

The Inspiration

Country Yucca represents the resilience of a true cross-country athlete. Yucca loved cross country and was well-known with his signature bald face and four white socks – he was hard to miss. At first, some might have thought Yucca was too small to jump the more advanced fences, but he quickly proved otherwise. Nick and Yucca were kindred spirits, small and carefree, enjoying galloping over the countryside in the southern Okanagan, British Columbia and all-over North America. Nick has influenced many Canadian eventers over the years, including several riders who have gone on to wear the maple leaf. Bruce Mandeville, Rebecca Howard and Michael Winter have all been fortunate to have worked with Nick on their road to representing Team Canada.





2026 Country Yucca Rubric

Category	Weight	Score Range
Competition Performance & Results	35%	0–35
Athlete Potential & Long-Term Development (<i>attitude, trainability, drive, perseverance</i>)	25%	0–25
Travel & Competition Plan (<i>suitable and achievable</i>)	15%	0–15
Financial Need & Budget Quality (<i>easy to follow and understand</i>)	15%	0–15
Quality of Written Application & Reference	10%	0–10
Total	100%	0–100

Added the italics before looking at the detail below but maybe its helpful?

Detailed Rubric

1. Competition Performance & Results (0–35)

Assesses the athlete/horse combination's recent competitive record and alignment with target performance criteria. Preference should be given to combinations with a CCI2*-L completion or higher.

Scoring Guide

Score	Description
27–35	Multiple FEI results meeting or exceeding target scores/HPR; consistent upper-level performance; strong trajectory toward senior international competition
22–26	Meets at least one target performance result; competitive and consistent FEI record
16–21	Competitive national or FEI results but inconsistent or below target thresholds
10–15	Developing athlete with limited FEI exposure but clear upward progression
0–9	Limited competitive evidence or insufficient readiness for intended travel goals

Considerations

- FEI level achieved
- MER completion
- Consistency of results
- Quality and competitiveness of events attended
- Athlete/horse partnership record
- Evidence of progression over the last 2 years



2. Athlete Potential & Long-Term Development (0–25)

Evaluates future potential and commitment to representing Canada internationally.

Scoring Guide

Score	Description
18–25	Exceptional long-term potential; clear pathway toward senior teams; highly ambitious but realistic development plan
14–17	Strong international aspirations with demonstrated commitment and preparation
10–13	Good development goals but pathway or strategy lacks detail
5–9	Goals are vague or unsupported by current trajectory
0–4	Minimal evidence of long-term development planning

3. Travel & Competition Plan (0–15)

Assesses how well the athlete has planned the proposed competition campaign.

Scoring Guide

Score	Description
13–15	Detailed, realistic, and strategically valuable travel plan with strong developmental impact
10–12	Well-organized plan with clear goals and logistical preparation
7–9	Adequate plan but lacking detail or strategic rationale
4–6	Limited planning or unclear competition objectives
0–3	Unrealistic or poorly explained travel proposal

4. Financial Need & Budget Quality (0–15)

Measures demonstrated financial need and quality of budget planning.

Scoring Guide

Score	Description
13–15	Clear financial need; highly detailed and realistic budget; grant would significantly impact opportunity
10–12	Good budget detail and reasonable justification
7–9	Moderate financial need or incomplete budget detail
4–6	Weak justification or unrealistic estimates
0–3	Minimal evidence of need or inadequate financial information



5. Quality of Written Application & Reference (0–10)

Evaluates the completeness and professionalism of submitted materials.

Scoring Guide

Score	Description
9–10	Exceptional application; compelling, concise, and highly professional
7–8	Strong application with clear goals and solid reference support
5–6	Adequate but lacks clarity or depth
2–4	Weakly organized or incomplete
0–1	Missing major components or poorly prepared

ⁱ **Social License:** In the context of equestrian sport, social license refers to the level of public acceptance, approval and trust that equestrian activities hold with the broader community. It encompasses the sport's ethical, environmental, and welfare considerations and reflects how these activities align with societal expectations, values and standards.