

How To Form a New York State Horse Council Chapter

The New York State Horse Council Definition of a Chapter: A Chapter is a local association which actively seeks, throughout a one or two county area, the participation of individuals and groups from all breeds and all types of horse activities, amateur or professional. Its primary purpose is to further the common interests of horse people and promote the entire equine industry. A major emphasis is to establish an effective government relations program with both the state and local agencies such as zoning boards, parks commissions, the local offices of the DEC, and others that impact upon the keeping and enjoyment of horses. It serves as a means of communication for horse groups within the County(s), monitors local legislative and regulatory programs, and seeks to promote interest in horse related activities.

1. Assess need. Has a Horse Council Chapter ever been formed in the area? If inactive, can it be revitalized? Does another group exist that can be augmented or enlarged to serve the function of a Chapter.
2. Assess purpose. A Chapter can be formed in answer to a specific problem in your county(s), and then expand to other interests. It might also be needed to counter persistent anti-horse attitudes resulting in unfair taxes or fees, loss of trails and recreational opportunities, prohibitive zoning or other restrictive legislation.
3. State Horse Council Chapters fund their activities mainly from membership dues, but other sources can include grants from other organizations, or fund raising events.
4. Hold an organizational Meeting of Potential Members. This will create core groups (we recommend a sustaining membership of no less than 25 continuing members) to originate:
 - A. Statement of Purpose or mission statement.
 - B. Bylaws
 - C. Articles of Incorporation (normally done at a later date when the organization has developed an initial history of success)
 - D. Filing for tax-exempt status (state and Federal) (Done normally with C. above)
 - E. Initial Board of Directors and Officers
 - F. Bank accounts for initial funds. Suggest a checking account for day-to-day bills and a savings account for other funds. Safeguard both accounts with required multiple signatures and audits (when growth creates a need).
 - G. Membership brochure and plan for membership drive.
5. Other affiliations: establish relations with local horse clubs (breed, discipline, etc.) with the local 4H equine groups, horse racing, county extension, farm bureau, local veterinarian and other groups in your state concerned with horses, livestock and related education.

6. Work with the member of the Executive Committee in charge of Chapter Relations, normally the Executive Vice President, and execute all applicable documents and forms.
7. Attend a quarterly meeting with as many members of the proposed chapter board of directors and be formally accepted into the Horse Council as a chapter.