Below are the primary pillars of a proposed Grants and Partnership policies and support systems for the 2026 season.

NATIONAL LEVEL (USATF-NATIONAL)

1. Event Partnership & The USATF Tour (New for 2026)

One of our biggest shifts this year is the full implementation of the **USATF Tour**. This is a coordinated national effort that directly impacts our Tennessee-based meet organizers.

- **Operational Support:** For events that meet "Tour" criteria, USATF provides significant resources, including drug testing, technical delegates, and branding assets—support valued between **$15,000 and $50,000** per event.
- **Unified Calendar:** Local meets can apply to join this national circuit, which helps resolve scheduling conflicts and increases visibility for Tennessee athletes through shared marketing and media coordination.

2. Club & Organization Support

Clubs are the lifeblood of our association. We offer specific support structures for both competitive teams and non-profit organizations:

- **Sanctioning Discounts:** Registered non-competitive organizations and member clubs are eligible for discounted event sanction fees.
- **Insurance Coverage:** Approved clubs receive **General Liability Insurance**, which is a critical safety net for practice and local competitions.
- **Grant Opportunities:** Member clubs have access to national and local grant pools, such as the **Mark Springer Youth Travel Grant**, which helps Tennessee youth teams travel to regional and national championships.

3. Athlete & Official Grants

We prioritize the financial sustainability of our members through several targeted programs:

- **Elite Athlete Development:** The USATF Foundation provides grants specifically for post-collegiate athletes training for the upcoming Olympic cycle. Priority is often given to those ranked in the Top 10 nationally.
- **Officials' Professional Development:** In 2026, we are continuing the **$500 Officials Grants**. These are designed to offset travel and lodging expenses for Tennessee-certified officials who are selected to work at national championship events.

- **Masters Support:** There is a specific partnership with the USATF Foundation to provide travel grants for Masters athletes (ages 25+) competing in World Masters Athletics (WMA) championships.

4. Corporate & Industry Collaboration

Tennessee is a hub for sports culture, and we leverage that through strategic industry partnerships:

- **U.S. Trail Running Conference:** In November 2026, Nashville will host the U.S. Trail Running Conference. This serves as a primary platform for our local race directors to partner with brands, media, and sustainability experts.
- **Member Benefits:** Through national partnerships, our Tennessee members receive exclusive discounts (typically 10%–20%) with partners like **KT Tape**, **Hyperice**, and **Choice Hotels**, which are particularly useful for those traveling to meets across the state.

Compliance & Logistics

To maintain these partnerships, all clubs and personnel must remain **SafeSport Compliant**. This includes up-to-date background checks and training, which is mandatory for any organization receiving USATF support or insurance.

STATE LEVEL (USATF-TENNESSEE ASSOCIATION)

As we move through the 2026 season, the USATF Tennessee Association is aligning its local qualification policies with the National governing body's updated standards to ensure our athletes are prepared for regional and national competition.

When drafting or reviewing individual qualification policies for the state level, we typically focus on three distinct tiers: **Youth (Junior Olympics)**, **Open/Elite**, and **Masters**.

1. Youth (Junior Olympic) Qualification

For our younger athletes, the path to the National Junior Olympic Championships is a tiered "advancement" model.

- **Association Championship (State Level):** This is the "gateway" meet. To qualify for the Region 6 Championships (which includes Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana), athletes must typically finish in the **Top 15** in their event at our Tennessee Association meet.

- **Regional Advancement:** From the Region 6 meet, the **Top 5** finishers in each individual event and the **Top 5** relay teams advance to the National Junior Olympics.
- **Age Verification:** A critical policy for 2026 is that **all youth athletes must have their birth date verified** through the USATF Connect system at least five business days before the meet entry deadline.

2. Open & Elite Qualification

For our collegiate and post-collegiate athletes, qualification is based on **Performance Standards** rather than just place-of-finish.

- **Automatic Standards:** Athletes who meet the "Automatic" mark in a USATF-sanctioned meet are guaranteed entry into the State or National championships regardless of field size.
- **The "Descending Order" Policy:** If the target field size (e.g., 12 athletes for throws or 24 for sprints) is not filled by automatic qualifiers, we fill the remaining spots using a **descending order list** of verified marks achieved within the qualifying window (typically starting from early 2025 through mid-2026).
- **Technical Requirements:** For a mark to be valid for qualification:
    - It must be achieved at a **USATF-sanctioned meet**.
    - Sprints and jumps must have a legal wind reading (maximum **+2.0 m/s**).
    - Running events must use **Fully Automatic Timing (FAT)**.

3. Masters Qualification (Ages 25+)

Our policy for Masters athletes is generally more inclusive to encourage "fitness for life."

- **Open Entry:** For most Association-level Masters events, there are **no minimum qualifying standards**. Any current USATF member age 25 or older may enter.
- **National Exception:** While local meets are often open, the National Masters Indoor and Outdoor Championships may implement "suggested" standards for seeding purposes, though they rarely bar entry unless field sizes are dangerously large.

4. Administrative Requirements

Regardless of the athlete's performance, our policies mandate several administrative "must-haves":

- **2026 Membership:** All athletes must hold a current, "Good Standing" membership.

- **Residency Rule:** To compete for a "State Champion" title in Tennessee, the athlete must be a resident of the state or a member of a Tennessee-registered club (per USATF Rule 10).
- **SafeSport:** Any athlete age 18 or older who competes in a division that includes minors (common in some "Open" events) must complete SafeSport training.

Club Support & Grant Program (ASSOCIATION LEVEL)

Developing a robust Club Support & Grant Program is one of the most effective ways for the USATF Tennessee Association to drive membership growth and elevate the caliber of our local programs.

By structuring this as a **performance and compliance-based grant system**, we ensure that association funds are being used as an investment in sustainable clubs rather than just a one-time subsidy.

Below are the drafted guidelines and suggested criteria for our 2026 Club Support Program.

I. Proposed Funding Tiers & Amounts

We recommend a three-tiered approach to funding, allowing us to support both emerging grassroots programs and high-performance elite clubs.

Tier	Category	Annual Support Cap	Intended Use
Tier 1	**Grassroots / New Club**	**$500 – $1,500**	Equipment (blocks, batons), local meet entry fees, recruitment flyers.
Tier 2	**Competitive / Developmental**	**$2,000 – $4,500**	Travel to Regional/National JOs, branded uniforms, coaching education.
Tier 3	**Elite / High-Performance**	**$5,000+**	National Championship travel, elite coaching stipends, advanced tech (timing/video).

II. Qualification Criteria (The "Mandatories")

To be eligible for any financial or equipment support, a club must meet the following "Good Standing" requirements:

1. **Administrative Compliance:**
    - Active **USATF Club Membership** for the current 2026 season.
    - **100% SafeSport Compliance** for all listed coaches, volunteers, and administrators.
    - Club must have a minimum of **10 active USATF-registered members** (athletes).
2. **Longevity & Stability:**
    - **Tier 1:** No minimum years (open to startups).
    - **Tier 2/3:** Minimum of **2 consecutive years** of active USATF membership and participation in the Tennessee Association Championship.
3. **Financial Transparency:**
    - Clubs must provide a brief annual budget or a "Use of Funds" statement explaining how the grant will directly impact athlete growth or performance.
    - Must have a dedicated club bank account (personal accounts should be avoided for Tier 2/3).

III. Suggested Scoring Metrics for Award Allocation

If the number of applicants exceeds our budget, we should use a weighted scoring system to decide who receives the highest dollar amounts:

- **Membership Growth (30%):** Does the club show a year-over-year increase in USATF-registered athletes? Special consideration for clubs in "underserved" Tennessee counties.
- **Championship Participation (30%):** Number of athletes sent to the Tennessee Association Championships and subsequent Regional/National meets.
- **Volunteer Contribution (20%):** Does the club provide volunteers or certified officials to help run our State Championships? (We want to reward clubs that give back to the association).
- **Community Impact (20%):** Programs that offer scholarships to low-income athletes or host "All-Comer" community track meets.

IV. Allowable Expenses & Equipment Support

To ensure the funds are spent responsibly, we suggest the following "Approved Purchase" list:

- **Travel:** Gas cards, van rentals, or hotel blocks for National/Junior Olympic events.
- **Entry Fees:** Direct reimbursement for USATF-sanctioned championship entry fees.
- **Merchandise/Uniforms:** Costs for team singlets (must include the USATF member club logo).
- **Equipment:** Starting blocks, relay batons, medicine balls, hurdles, or high jump pits (for Tier 3).
    - *Note: Large equipment (like pits) may be "leased" by the association to the club to ensure the asset stays within the USATF ecosystem if the club dissolves.*

V. Post-Grant Accountability

To remain eligible for the following year, clubs should be required to:

1. **Submit Receipts:** All expenditures must be backed by digital receipts.
2. **The "Impact Report":** A simple one-page summary or social media post tagging @USATFTennessee showing the athletes using the new equipment or competing at the funded meet.

2026 USATF Tennessee Club Support & Grant Application

Purpose: To provide financial and equipment resources to member clubs that demonstrate a commitment to athlete development, membership growth, and the mission of USATF within the state of Tennessee.

Section 1: Club Information

- **Official Club Name:** _____
- **USATF Club Number:** _____ (Must be active for 2026)
- **Primary Contact Person:** _____ **Title:** _____
- **Email Address:** _____ **Phone:** _____
- **Club Website/Social Media:** _____
- **Is the Club a Registered 501(c)(3)?** [ ] Yes [ ] No (If yes, provide EIN: _____)

Section 2: Club Composition & Compliance

- **Current Number of Active USATF Athletes:** _____
- **Number of Certified Coaches:** _____
- **SafeSport Status:** I certify that 100% of our coaches/volunteers are SafeSport compliant. [ ] **Yes**
- **Primary Disciplines:** (Check all that apply) [ ] Youth (JO) [ ] Open/Elite [ ] Masters [ ] Race Walking [ ] Cross Country/Trail

Section 3: Funding Request

Tier Requested:

- **[ ] Tier 1 (Grassroots):** Up to $1,500
- **[ ] Tier 2 (Competitive):** Up to $4,500
- **[ ] Tier 3 (High-Performance):** $5,000+

Total Amount Requested: $_____

Category of Need: (Check all that apply)

- [ ] **Travel:** (Hotel, rental vans, gas for Regional/National championships)
- [ ] **Entry Fees:** (Registration costs for USATF-sanctioned meets)
- [ ] **Equipment:** (Starting blocks, batons, hurdles, timing systems, etc.)
- [ ] **Merchandise:** (Branded team singlets or warm-ups)
- [ ] **Education:** (Coaching Level 1/2 certification fees)

Section 4: Narrative & Impact

1. **Project Description:** Please describe exactly how these funds or equipment will be used.

   _____

   _____

2. **Growth Strategy:** How will this support help you increase your USATF membership in Tennessee over the next 12 months?

   _____

   _____

3. **Performance History:** List your club's top 3 achievements from the past 2 years (e.g., number of All-Americans, state titles, or community events hosted).

   _____

Section 5: Agreement & Signature

By signing below, the club agrees to use all awarded funds solely for the purposes stated above and to provide a follow-up "Impact Report" (including receipts) within 30 days of the project completion.

Signature of Club Director: _____ **Date:** _____

Leadership Pro-Tip:

To make the rollout successful, I recommend setting an **application deadline** (e.g., April 15th for the outdoor season) and forming a small **Review Committee** of 3 board members to score the applications based on the metrics we discussed.

Tennessee Club Grant Scoring Rubric

To ensure a fair and transparent allocation of the Association's funds, this **2026 USATF Tennessee Club Grant Scoring Rubric** provides a standardized way for the Review Committee to evaluate every application.

Each application can earn a maximum of **100 points**. Using this system protects the leadership team from claims of favoritism and ensures we are investing in clubs that drive the most value for our state membership.

2026 Club Grant Evaluation Rubric

Category	Points	1 - 4 Points (Low)	5 - 7 Points (Mid)	8 - 10 Points (High)
Membership Growth	*30*	Stagnant or declining USATF membership numbers.	Consistent membership; slight growth in the last 12 months.	Significant growth or serves an underserved TN county.
Competitive Impact	*30*	No participation in State/Regional championships.	Participating in State meets; a few regional qualifiers.	Multiple National qualifiers/All-Americans; high team scores.
Organizational Health	*20*	Incomplete paperwork; unclear budget; no 501(c)3 status.	Clear goals; active board; basic financial transparency.	Detailed budget provided; 2+ years of stable USATF history.

Category	Points	1 - 4 Points (Low)	5 - 7 Points (Mid)	8 - 10 Points (High)
Association Service	*20*	No history of volunteering or providing officials.	Club members occasionally volunteer at Association meets.	Club provides certified officials or hosts sanctioned meets.

Scoring Breakdown & Funding Recommendations

Once the committee averages the scores, use the following brackets to determine the funding percentage of their "Total Amount Requested."

- **90 – 100 Points (Elite Standing):** Fund **100%** of request (up to Tier cap).
- **75 – 89 Points (Strong Standing):** Fund **75%** of request.
- **60 – 74 Points (Developing Standing):** Fund **50%** of request.
- **Below 60 Points:** Application denied; provide feedback on how to improve for the next cycle.

Internal Reviewer Worksheet (Example)

Club Name: _____ **Reviewer:** _____

1. **Membership Growth Score (x3):** _____ / 10 _____
2. **Competitive Impact Score (x3):** _____ / 10 _____
3. **Organizational Health Score (x2):** _____ / 10 _____
4. **Association Service Score (x2):** _____ / 10 _____

TOTAL COMPOSITE SCORE: _____ / 100

Reviewer Comments:

"This club has seen 20% growth in Memphis but needs to ensure all their assistant coaches complete SafeSport before funds are released."

Implementation Steps for the Leadership Team:

1. **The "Blind" Review:** Have two board members score each application independently, then average their scores to remove bias.
2. **The "Cure" Period:** If a club scores high but is missing one compliance document (like a single SafeSport certificate), give them 7 days to "cure" the deficiency before finalizing the score.
3. **The Equipment Clause:** For Tier 3 equipment requests (like a $5,000+ pole vault pit), ensure the club signs a **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)** stating the equipment must remain in Tennessee for USATF use for at least 5 years.

Equipment MOU -to protect the Association's investment in high-cost gear

This **Equipment Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)** is designed to act as a legal and operational safety net. It ensures that if the Association invests a significant portion of its budget into high-cost items—like a $10,000 pole vault pit or an $8,000 Fully Automatic Timing (FAT) system—those assets remain dedicated to the USATF Tennessee mission, even if a club's leadership changes or the club dissolves.

EQUIPMENT PROCUREMENT & STEWARDSHIP MOU

USATF Tennessee Association & [Insert Club Name]

EFFECTIVE DATE: _____, 2026

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is to formalize the agreement between the **USATF Tennessee Association** (the "Association") and **[Insert Member Club Name]** (the "Club") regarding the purchase, maintenance, and long-term stewardship of high-value athletic equipment funded by the Association Grant Program.

2. IDENTIFICATION OF EQUIPMENT

The following equipment (the "Asset") is covered under this agreement:

- **Item(s):** _____
- **Manufacturer/Model:** _____
- **Total Funding Amount:** $_____
- **Purchase Date:** _____

3. OWNERSHIP & VESTING PERIOD

- **Joint Stewardship:** For a period of **five (5) years** from the date of purchase (the "Vesting Period"), the Asset is considered property held in trust by the Club for the benefit of USATF Tennessee members.
- **Full Ownership Transfer:** Upon completion of the 5-year Vesting Period, provided the Club has remained in "Good Standing" with the Association, full ownership and title of the Asset shall transfer to the Club.

4. CLUB OBLIGATIONS & USAGE

To maintain possession of the Asset during the Vesting Period, the Club agrees to:

- **Maintain USATF Sanctioning:** The Club must remain an active, sanctioned USATF member club in the Tennessee Association.
- **Association Accessibility:** The Club agrees to make the Asset available for use at the **USATF Tennessee State Championships** (Indoor/Outdoor/XC) if requested by the Association, at no rental cost to the Association.
- **Maintenance & Storage:** The Club is responsible for the proper storage, weather protection, and routine maintenance of the Asset to ensure its longevity.
- **Non-Transferability:** The Club may not sell, lease, or transfer the Asset to any third party without written consent from the USATF Tennessee Board of Directors.

5. RECAPTURE & DISSOLUTION CLAUSE

In the event that the Club:

1. Dissolves or ceases operations;
2. Loses its USATF Tennessee "Good Standing" status (e.g., SafeSport non-compliance);
3. Attempts to move the Asset outside the state of Tennessee without prior approval; **The Association reserves the right to physically recapture the Asset** to be redistributed to another Tennessee member club or stored for Association use.

6. LIABILITY & INSURANCE

The Club assumes all liability for the use of the Asset. The Association is not responsible for any injuries or damages resulting from the operation or failure of the equipment. The Club is encouraged to list the Asset on its own equipment insurance policy.

SIGNATURES

For USATF Tennessee Association: _____ Date: _____ *(Name/Title)*

For the Member Club: _____ Date: _____ *(Club Director Name)*

Next Steps for the Board:

- **The Asset Log:** I recommend keeping a digital spreadsheet of all MOUs so the Board can track when equipment "vests" and becomes the club's permanent property.
- **The Inspection:** For very high-cost items, a board member should perform a brief "well-being check" on the equipment once a year during the state championship.

Below is a revised Treasurer's Report reflects our actual liquidity as of March 2026, accounting for the clarification that the Stripe funds are "retained revenue" from the 2025 State Association Meet.

We are currently operating on **Confirmed Cash**, with Membership and Sanction fee distributions from the National Office treated as "Anticipated but Unconfirmed" income.

USATF Tennessee: 2026 Treasurer's Report & Financial Outlook

Prepared for: USATF Tennessee Board of Directors

Reporting Period: Q1 2026 (Status as of March 2026)

I. Liquidity Summary

Asset Description	Amount	Status
Current Bank Balance	**$21,111.00**	Liquid
Stripe Receivable (2025 State Meet)	**$8,600.00**	Pending Transfer
Total Confirmed Cash Position	**$29,711.00**	

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Note: Membership and Sanction fee rebates from the National Office are expected but excluded from this "Confirmed" total until official notification of amount and date is received.

II. Liabilities & Immediate Commitments

We have **$13,214.17** in immediate "Accounts Payable" or approved partnership obligations:

Category	Item	Amount
Inventory / Merch	T-shirts, Banners, String Bags, Water Bottles	($8,714.17)

Category	Item	Amount
Event Support (Indoor)	FYA - HS Indoor Championships	($2,000.00)
Professional Dev.	Officials & Coaching Clinic Estimates	($2,500.00)
SUBTOTAL		**($13,214.17)**

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III. 2026 Partnership Pipeline (Approved/Forthcoming)

These are targeted community investments for the remainder of the 2026 season:

- **Great 8:** ($750)
- **Music City Carnival:** ($750)
- **Toad Fest:** ($500)
- **USATF 8K National Championships:** ($1,500)
- **Ed Murphy Classic:** ($1,000)
- **PIPELINE TOTAL: ($4,500.00)**

IV. Championship Season Outlook (Summer/Fall 2026)

This year is high-stakes as we host the **Region 6 Championships**. While these events require significant capital up-front, they are designed to be revenue-positive.

- **Projected Outlay (State/Region 6/XC):** ~($22,500)
- **Projected Revenue (Entry Fees/Gate):** ~$28,500
- **Estimated Net Surplus: +$6,000**

V. Funding Availability for Club Support Program

After accounting for all debts and partnership commitments, our **Adjusted Working Capital is $11,996.83** (before championship revenue).

Leadership Recommendation: I recommend a "Safety-First" allocation for the new **Club Support & Grant Program**.

- **Initial Allotment: $6,000.00**
- **Contingent Allotment:** An additional **$3,000.00** to be unlocked in July 2026 *if* the Region 6 Championships meet their projected revenue targets.

Financial Health Narrative

The Association is currently in a stable position, but we are "asset-heavy" (merchandise/equipment) and "cash-waiting" regarding National Office rebates. By limiting our

initial Club Grant rollout to $6,000, we maintain a $5,000 emergency reserve to cover championship venue deposits if the Stripe transfer or National rebates are delayed.