

Maricopa County 4-H

HORSE PROJECT

MEMBER GUIDE

2026-2027



WELCOME!

Thank you for your interest in the Maricopa County Horse Project! Within this booklet, you will find information on:

- * How the Horse Project is run, Contacts, Website
- * The 4-H Rule Book
- * Horse Registration
- * Calendar of Events

Appendix:

- * Personal Items for Show Day
- * Show Items to Have for Horse Grooming
- * Trailing Tips
- * Preparing Your Horse to Show
- * Braiding and Banding for Shows

As with anything to do with horses, safety must come first! Before you begin to follow any of the tips or advice in this booklet, if it is brand new to you, please ask someone more experienced in your club to come alongside you and help instructor teach you. Stay alert, expect the unexpected, and stay safe!

Also, this booklet is not intended to be the authoritative word on the Maricopa County Horse Project. The official 2021-2024 Maricopa County 4-H Horse Project Rule Book found here [2024-2027 Maricopa County 4-H Horse Rulebook](#) supersedes any discrepancy you might find between the information contained within and any rules stated elsewhere. Please seek the advice of your club leaders for any questions you may have.

Maricopa County 4-H Horse Project

The Horse Project is overseen by the County Extension Office Assistant in Extension, Caroline Werkhoven, and run by the Horse Advisory Committee (HAC). The HAC meets on the third Monday of the month by Zoom at 6:00 pm, and all are welcome. Email cwerkhoven@arizona.edu to obtain a link to the meeting.

Below is the current list of Officers and Committee Members on HAC. It takes dedicated volunteers to run this Project! You might also notice that there are open positions. All positions become open annually and are voted on in April. You must be a certified volunteer to hold an office. Youth members must be a senior (14 years old) to run for a HAC Youth Board position.

HAC Board Contact List

President: Amber Fenn, Lehi Ranch 4-H
amber.martin12@gmail.com (623) 986-3677

Vice President: Kelley Ahern, Buena Vista Mavericks 4-H
hifromkelley@comcast.net (559) 960-5497

Secretary: Brenda Kilhoffer, Waddell Hoofprints 4-H
brenda@equinelearninglab.com (623) 734-0431

Treasurer: Lisa Fedor, Queen Creek 4-H
lfedor@siteworksllc.net (623) 693-9726

Current open positions:

Youth Board Members

HAC Membership

Committee membership consists of one youth and one adult from each club that offers the horse project.

Youth age eligibility:

Riders must be between the ages of 8 and 19 during the State 4-H year (Oct 1 of the current year to Sept 30 of the following year).

a. Junior members are those who have reached their 8th birthday but not reached their 14th birthday before January 1 of the 4-H year.

b. Senior members are those who have reached their 14th birthday, but not their 19th, before January 1 of the 4-H year.

Younger youth (age 5-7) can be members of the Cloverbud project.

Clubs Offering Horse Projects (phone numbers/email)

Buena Vista Mavericks 4-H

CoYoTe 4-H

Desert Hills Wranglers 4-H

Grace 4-H

Lehi Ranch 4-H

Queen Creek 4-H

Rough Wranglers 4-H

Waddell Hoofprints 4-H

Website

Become familiar with this website. This is where you'll find various forms for show entries, contact information, directions to arenas, the events calendar, the Rule Book, and other information! [Click here to visit the Maricopa County 4-H Horse Project Website](#)

Rule Book

The Rulebook is available online in the Project Materials section. Although it is 30 pages long, don't let that deter you from reading it. Make sure you understand the rules regarding Horse Registration and showing. [Click here for the most up-to-date rule book.](#)

Show Disciplines

Maricopa County offers:

- English
- Western
- Gymkhana
- Team Sorting
- Ranch Riding
- Roping

Horse ID and Eligibility

A member must upload a Horse ID Google Form on a horse they own or have leased BEFORE entering their first 4-H show.

[Click here to register your horse.](#)

See page 2, Maricopa County 4-H Horse Rulebook (2024-2027)

ALL MEMBERS MUST BE ENROLLED IN THE 4-H ENROLLMENT SYSTEMS (ZSUITES)

Leasing a Horse

If you are leasing a horse, a 4-H lease agreement must be on file with the Horse ID Google Form

See page 2, Maricopa County 4-H Horse Rulebook (2024-2027)

2026 –2027 Calendar of Events

2025/2026 State Finals - October 15th - 18th

Team Sorting @ Rockin' A Ranch 10/15/2026

Western @ Buckeye Equestrian Events Center 10/16/2026

Gymkhana & Ranch @ Buckeye Equestrian Events Center 10/17/2026

English @ Buckeye Equestrian Events Center 10/18/2026

Team Sorting

Friday 11/13/2026 – Rockin 'A Ranch

- Clinic for State Sorting Show qualifiers

Friday 12/18/2026 – Rockin 'A Ranch

- Beginner Clinic held prior to Sorting

Friday 2/12/2072 – 5:00 PM – Rockin 'A Ranch

Friday 3/5/2026 – Rockin 'A Ranch

English

Saturday 10/24/2026 – Buena Vista Ranchos Neighborhood

Saturday 1/9/2027 – Buena Vista Ranchos Neighborhood

Gymkhana

Saturday 10/31/2026 – KK or JVA?

- Goats, Barrels, Washington Poles, Bow Tie, MTN Cowhorse

Saturday 01/23/2027 – KK Ranch (Lehi) – Hosted by Lehi Ranch

- Goats, Barrels, Washington Poles, Bow Tie, MTN Cowhorse

Saturday 02/27/2026 – KK Ranch (Lehi) – Hosted by TBA

- Goats, Barrels, Washington Poles, Bow Tie, MTN Cowhorse

Saturday 03/2/2027 – 5 PM – Horseshoe Park (Queen Creek) – Host TBA

- Goats, Barrels, Washington Poles, Bow Tie, MTN Cowhorse

Roping

Saturday 12/12/2026 - KK Ranch (Lehi)

Saturday 2/20/2026 - KK Ranch (Lehi)

Ranch & Western

Saturday 11/7/2026 - P&M Arena

Saturday 1/16/2027 - P&M Arena

Saturday 2/13/2027 - P&M Arena

Maricopa County Horse Finals - Must have competed in 2 regular shows to qualify for finals (see Page 2, Maricopa County 4-H Horse Rulebook (2024-2027))

Friday 04/17/2026 – Sorting @ Rockin 'A Ranch

Friday 04/24/2026 – Sunday 04/26/2026

- Gymkhana @ Welcome Home Ranch (WHR)/John Volken
- English & Western @ Welcome Home Ranch (WHR)/John Volken
- Ranch Riding @ Welcome Home Ranch (WHR)/John Volken
- Roping @ Welcome Home Ranch (WHR)/John Volken

4-H State Finals Qualifications (see Page 2, Maricopa County 4-H Horse Rulebook (2024-2027))

Please familiarize yourself with the [2025 - 2028 State Horse Show Rule Book](#)

A member may qualify to participate in the Arizona State 4-H Horse Show if they:

1. Are a member in good standing in Maricopa County 4-H.
2. Are an advanced junior or senior rider in the classes designated with an asterisk (*) preceding them.
3. Member is one of the top riders per the County eligibility requirements defined in the State Horse Show Rule Book
4. Member horse(s) identified, registered as a Maricopa County 4-H project horse at least 90 days prior to the State 4-H Horse Show. Members may petition the Horse Committee and seek approval to show at the State Horse Show on another identified project horse if a qualified project horse is lame or lost. Members must provide proof of lameness or loss; acceptance is on a case-by-case basis and is not guaranteed.

Rider Classification - Age and Competition Skill

Level Determinations (see pages 4-5, Maricopa County 4-H Horse Rulebook (2023-2027))

A rider may finish the year in the classification in which he/she started competing in October 1st through September 30th, or may move up at his/her parents 'or leaders 'discretion, but may not go back down except by petitioning such a request to the Horse Committee.

For safety purposes and in rare instances, the Horse Committee may request that a member be moved up or down based upon that member's safety and the safety of their horse and/or other 4-H members and horses. However, if there is an objection to doing so by the member's leader, parent(s), or by the member themselves, a written appeal may be submitted by one of the above to the Horse Committee for their review and vote and recommendation to the 4-H Agent/staff responsible for the Horse Program for the final decision.

Special Needs: The rider's leader should notify and communicate with the Horse Advisory Committee.

Appendix & Resources:

[Maricopa County Horse Resources](#)

[Tips for Desert Riding](#)

[Helmet Safety](#)

[Grooming Your Horse](#)

[Tying a Quick Release Knot](#)

Acknowledgment: *We have heavily relied on the excellent Pima County 4-H Horse Project New Member Guide in preparing this guide for Maricopa County.*

Appendix: from the Maricopa County Horse Web Page