



# STANDARD BRED TRANSITION ALLIANCE

## Placement Liaison Program

**The Issue:** Often participants try to do the right thing and rehome standardbreds that are not able to compete athletically at the highest level. At that point participants may not know where to turn to pursue their next steps forward in retirement and transition.

The system for retiring horses off the track is incomplete, there is a void in timely connecting horses in transition to aftercare. Without advocating for improved methods of retirement and providing owners and trainers more options, the future of many horses in transition and the future of the sport's reputation remains at risk.

**Background:** The first year off the track is a period of great vulnerability for a retiring racehorse. Poorly transitioned horses can find themselves in a downward trajectory through no fault of their own. To ensure a horse's exit from racing is carried out efficiently and humanely, we must address any gaps that exist in the placement process. The current system used to move a horse into an adoption program relies on outside adoption charities shouldering the burden associated with owner education, horse evaluation and intake. This forms a bottleneck, as programs work beyond their capacity and resources. Often, the horses are waitlisted for so long that the racing connections give up.

One of the goals of the STA's Placement Liaison Program is to shift misplaced responsibilities off of the adoption programs and back to the Track level where they can be accomplished in a more thorough and professional manner. This allows adoption programs to work more efficiently by focusing their time and resources on; 1. Screening Adopters. 2. Retraining Horses. 3. Matching Retrained Horses to Approved Adopters. 4. Providing Follow-up and Safety Net Services.

The needs of the retiring horse that fall outside these focus areas are better addressed **immediately** when the decision is made to shift horses to a new calling and BEFORE a horse enters an aftercare program.

The recognition for participants is that a horse in need should not have to wait for admittance into an adoption program to start receiving transition services.

**The Placement Liaison Plan:** Each harness racetrack and horseman's association should have a plan in place to help ready horses for adoption program intake. Harness racetracks and horseman's associations rarely have the time or financial resources to be an active part of that plan. The Standardbred Transition Alliance is well-situated to coordinate triage efforts, give administrative oversight and distribute funding to keep this system operational. The STA can step more fully into an outreach role at the horseman's association and track level, producing educational materials and organizing events to solidify its liaison work.

The STA has developed a placement liaison system as outlined below to objectively evaluate the potential placement for transition into an STA accredited aftercare organization. The obligations are as follows:

The Owner/Trainer donating horse will:

1. Complete STA Intake Agreement
2. Complete STA Horse Info Form
3. Complete STA Vet Form
4. Gather valid Coggins, health papers and veterinary records (if available)
5. Be responsible for completing any additional adoption program forms
6. Make shipping arrangements to deliver horse directly to STA accredited aftercare facility.

### The Standardbred Transition Alliance will:

1. Provide a centralized conduit to the forms necessary and bridge the gap between the relinquishing owner and the adoption organizations by way of a referral.
2. Collect and review Applications (Intake/Vet Form)
3. After approval, serve as a **first point of contact** between an available STA Accredited Aftercare and the Owner/Trainer. Once the referral is passed off, the STA is no longer in the equation.
4. Ensure the United States Trotting Association has received the documents necessary to process USTA Transfer of Ownership, conversion to Pleasure Horse Registry, and Full Circle enrollment.
5. Provide one-time funding to the STA Accredited Aftercare for the horse's care and retraining services, at a reasonable level when necessary.
6. Provide one-time funding to an STA Veterinarian for horse's evaluation at a reasonable level when necessary.
7. Regularly monitor STA Accredited Aftercare facilities for stall openings available for incoming horses.
8. Record PLP horse intake records with a goal of aiding accreditation efforts by helping to verify placement and accuracy of organizational recordkeeping and reporting.

### After passing off the referral to an STA accredited facility with stall openings, the STA Accredited Aftercare will:

1. Work with Owner/Trainer to receive a signed donor form, negotiate any donations and make shipping arrangements.
2. Provide placement services in keeping with all STA accreditation requirements.
3. Upon request, provide photos of horses and links for use on STA website and social media.

### Racetracks, Horseman's Associations, and Participants will:

1. Agree that the primary purpose of this program is to assist horses in their first transition from racing—a horse must have a race line within a reasonable period to be eligible.
2. Develop advocates at the track level that will work with the STA Liaison as they anticipate a horse's transition from racing.
3. Help prioritize veterinary services if needed, using a preference system of their choosing.
4. Help with fundraising and fundraising initiatives to continue free services.

### **The Benefits:**

- The STA provides a link to transition on a timely basis directly upon conclusion of a racing career. Putting a horse in the proper channel with an accredited facility lessens the potential for that horse to end up at auction and in a kill pen. Horses are being more quickly and properly prepared for their exit from racing. Owners have assurance that they are following correct best practice protocols established by STA, USTA and Accredited Partners.
- The racetrack veterinarian takes a central role in the beginning of the placement process. Important veterinary diagnostics and decisions can be made early on. Certain veterinary service vouchers can be offered, like castrations, contingent on Pleasure Horse Registration.
- Adoption programs are receiving horses READY for placement, with detailed records already gathered and a pledge or donation (and/or transition funding from the STA if approved). Owner/trainer education has already taken place.
- Important metrics are being collected that Donors, Grantmaking Foundations and the Public need for continued support.
- Records create USTA Standardbred Incentive Program award opportunities for STA "Graduates".
- The STA Placement Liaison Program shows the public the commitment the Harness Community has for its equine athletes.

### **For more information:**

Jennifer Daniels

Administrator- Standardbred Transition Alliance

(email) [administrator@standardbredtransition.org](mailto:administrator@standardbredtransition.org)

(cell) 614-499-2198

Direct PLP webpage URL: <https://www.standardbredtransition.org/placement-liaison-program>