



Soroptimist is a global volunteer organization that provides women and girls with access to the education and training they need to achieve economic empowerment.

SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL OF THE AMERICAS, INC.®

Empowering More Women and Girls

Join in the amazing tradition and brilliant future of Soroptimists empowering women and girls around the world!

To kick off our next Big Goal, we're encouraging each club and region to increase the number of women and girls they reach through access to education!

You can do this by:

- Giving additional *Live Your Dream Awards*® to support more women in your community on their path to economic empowerment
- Expanding your *Dream It, Be It*® project to reach more girls with career exploration, role models, and confidence-building activities
- Reporting your club or region's Big Goal Accelerator Projects that increase access to education for women and girls

The goal of increasing the number of women and girls that your club serves through the Dream Programs can seem challenging, but we believe we can achieve it! This is an exciting opportunity to increase public awareness about your club and increasing your club's impact tells a wonderful story as we move into our brilliant future. Help kick off our second century and the 2021-2031 Big Goal of investing in the dreams of half a million women and girls through access to education! Headquarters is here to support you.

Tips to Expand Reach through the *Live Your Dream Awards*®

We know it may seem daunting to try to reach more women through the *Live Your Dream Awards*, but over 10 million women across the SIA federation could benefit from this award! Even if your program is well-established, women or organizations in your community may not be aware and could be great partners in recruiting additional applicants so you can distribute additional awards.

If your club wants to distribute additional awards but feels like you don't have enough time or funds to do so, we strongly encourage you to complete the [Working As One activity](#). It will prompt your club to see what you can start and stop doing in order to serve more women and girls!

Please be sure to consult the [Soroptimist Forward](#) resources for information about how to continue expanding your program reach while working differently.

Publicize availability of the award

Have applications and information available during club projects where appropriate, such as health screenings, computer centers or during mentoring activities.

Contact the following organizations about distributing applications, hanging posters, sharing link to online application on their social media pages, and assisting your club in reaching eligible women:

- vocational or training schools
- community colleges or universities
- places of worship
- community/recreation centers
- charitable organizations, especially those working with women and low-income persons
- homeless shelters and transitional housing programs
- domestic violence shelters
- food banks
- government public assistance offices
- women's health centers
- childcare or daycare facilities
- welfare-to-work programs
- clinics that provide free medical services to low-income persons
- employment agencies
- local job/career fairs
- addiction recovery and rehab centers

Work with Local Schools

Many community colleges, universities, and vocational/trade schools offer financial aid workshops that include information about local scholarships and awards. Contact the financial aid offices of nearby institutions to ask if the *Live Your Dream Awards* can be included. Also, many colleges and universities have women's centers to assist women throughout their education. Contact these centers for assistance in finding eligible women. Offer to email the application and ask that they forward it to eligible women.

Make a Personal Contact

Clubs have reported they have the most success receiving completed applications when they have a personal contact at the organizations where they are recruiting. Do not just email, mail or drop off applications and expect to receive a response. Talk to someone within the organizations and explain the benefits of the program. To assist with these efforts, please refer to the [sample recruiting letter](#) of introduction to a local community organization.

Assist Women with their Applications

The women targeted by this award are usually going to school, raising children and working. They may be very busy and need reminders about deadlines. Furthermore, they may find the application intimidating. This could be the first time they are applying for an award. We also hear that women do not feel they are worthy of the award. Helping applicants understand the award process can dispel this thinking.

Consider holding a workshop to discuss the application process and have club members available to offer one-on-one assistance. Conducting a Soroptimist *Live Your Dream Awards* application workshop is an excellent way for your club to identify eligible women in your community and provide them with the support they need to complete the application process. To assist clubs in conducting an application workshop, check out [Soroptimist Live Your Dream Awards: Achieving Success Through Application Workshops](#).

Expand the Search to Surrounding Areas

If you live in a particularly small area and are having difficulty finding applicants, expand your search to surrounding communities that do not have Soroptimist clubs. Contacting organizations, distributing applications and receiving completed applications can all be handled by email, mail or telephone.

Applications from SIA Headquarters (US and Canada only)

If your club has not received any eligible applications, contact SIA headquarters to ask for complete and eligible applications that can be forwarded to your club.

Working with Other, Local Soroptimist Clubs

Some Soroptimist clubs share their completed applications as a way to honor as many eligible women as possible. Each club gives an award to a different woman. Your region chair can help facilitate this.

Work with Previous Award Recipients

Many previous *Live Your Dream Award* recipients have expressed a desire to promote the award by speaking to other local organizations, at schools, community centers, and health centers. Additionally, they are interested in connecting with the media about their experience and holding workshops for applicants. Inviting previous recipients to enthusiastically promote the *Live Your Dream Awards* can bolster recruitment.

What Regions Can do

At the region-level, consider if you can take some of your region funding allocated for the awards and use it to fund more club-level awards. You can offer support for women who do not live near a club or provide funding to clubs who want to participate in the program but cannot fund the award themselves. This will increase the number of women in your region receiving this life-changing award, AND could help your region earn additional region award funding from SIA!

- Encourage new clubs in your region to apply for SIA new club funding to get \$1,000 to support their first *Live Your Dream Award*.
- Assist clubs with sharing their applications so that every club that wants to distribute an award has eligible applications to judge.
- Encourage clubs to examine their budget and consider if any of it can be re-distributed to support *Live Your Dream Awards*.
- Encourage clubs to apply for Soroptimist Club Grants to support their *Live Your Dream Awards* projects.

Tips to Expand Reach through *Dream It, Be It*®

Has your club not yet started a *Dream It, Be It* project, but you've been thinking about it? There is no time like the present! Reach out to your region *Dream It, Be It* chair or SIA headquarters for assistance—we have lots of planning resources on [our website](#) to help you get started!

If your club is already doing a *Dream It, Be It* project, it's time to think about how you can expand its reach. Are there other girls in your community who might benefit, or a possible community partner you haven't connected with? Now is the time! Celebrate the work your club has done while planning for our brilliant future.

Dream It, Be It can still be conducted if your club is working digitally—consult the [Soroptimist Forward](#) resources for additional tips.

Finding Girls to Participate in *Dream It, Be It*

Dream It, Be It aims to reach girls who do not have access to the resources or information to achieve career success. The program focuses on girls in secondary school—or the schooling before they receive a degree or diploma. In most cases, the girls will be between the ages of 14 and 18.

Girls of other ages might benefit from the program. However, Soroptimist research done identified this specific need for this specific population of girls.

Although all girls face barriers because of their gender, we are trying to reach girls that have additional obstacles, such as coming from low-income communities; unstable home lives; a minority, immigrant or refugee family; foster care; or a teen parent situation. Helping these girls identify their career goals and path to success will help them to overcome the barriers and obstacles they face. Specifically, these girls:

- Face obstacles to their success
- Are at risk for having their dreams derailed
- Lack access to professional role models

- Lack access to career education
- Do not know the steps necessary to accomplish their goals

In general, think broadly about the needs of your community in order to determine a target audience that would benefit most from involvement in this program. You can reach out to schools, community organizations, sports teams and religious centers. Consider contacting a school guidance counselor to reach girls who may be at risk of dropping out of school prior to graduation, or the staff of girls' organizations, girls' summer camps, teen programs, teen pregnancy shelters, or foster care organizations.

As you begin to identify girls, keep in mind the two options for delivering the project—a conference or small group mentoring series. The size of the group and the specific needs of girls may determine which method is a better fit.

Building Community Partnerships

Partnership with schools or other local organizations that share your goal of helping girls can increase the impact of your project. In addition, partnerships can:

- Enable you to reach a larger audience of girls and accomplish work you could not have done alone.
- Make better use of resources by dealing more effectively and thoroughly with a social issue.
- Increase the number of organizations that are aware of and working on issues affecting girls.
- Lend credibility to your project.

Identify local businesses, organizations or schools that can be helpful while benefiting from partnering with you. Reach out to them and start to build a relationship.

The two most essential qualities of a successful partnership are clearly defined expectations and ongoing communication. Work with your partners to define expectations and responsibilities. You may want to draft a written agreement to clearly outline the roles and expectations. Plan multiple opportunities for communications so all the partners stay informed. Also, be sure that all partners have agreed to the same indicators and definition of success.

What Regions Can do

- Consider if your region can offer assistance and encouragement for local *Dream It, Be It* projects through financial incentives or special recognition.
- Assist clubs who are interested in hosting a project but don't know where to start—consult SIA's *Dream It, Be It* planning documents and region instructions for guidance!
- Connect clubs with existing *Dream It, Be It* projects to share ideas and tips for what works in their communities.
- Encourage clubs to examine their budget and consider if any of it can be re-distributed to support *Dream It, Be It*.

- Encourage clubs to apply for Soroptimist Club Grants to support their *Dream It, Be It* projects.

Tips to Expand Reach of Big Goal Accelerator Projects

Be sure that your club's project is eligible!

What criteria must projects meet to be eligible?

To be eligible, club and region work must meet all four of the following criteria:

1. Work only with women and/or girls who are facing obstacles
2. Provide access to education
3. Ultimately lead to economic empowerment
4. Be reported to SIA through the official reporting link

What are some examples of projects that increase access to education for our target population of women and girls facing obstacles?

- Scholarships/awards (for college, technical/vocational school, advanced degrees)
- Removing obstacles (providing necessary items for education like computers, internet, transportation; paying fees for college-preparation exams, college applications, entrance exams, or professional licensure)
- Classes (focused on job training, skills training, applying for financial aid/college, computer training, career mentorship)

Increasing your Big Goal Accelerator Project Impact

- Examine your club's program offerings that fall outside of the Dream Programs. Determine if they are Big Goal Accelerator Project eligible, and if not, consider if they can be changed to fit the parameters. For example, if your club offers a scholarship for high school girls based on their GPA and community service, could you add financial need as a criteria for the award?
- If your club gives an education award, consider giving multiple smaller awards instead of one large award so you can reach more women and girls.
- Work with local schools, educational programs, and nonprofits to find eligible women and girls. Guidance counselors, college counselors, social workers, and advisors may be especially useful in getting your scholarship information in the right hands, or appropriate participants included in your class. Review the *Live Your Dream Awards* recruiting resources and re-purpose them to work for your Accelerator Project.
- If your project involves removing an obstacle to education for women and girls, be sure that it is one that is directly linked to education such as fees for exams or providing critical items like textbooks, transportation, or laptops. Consider what obstacle you can remove that can help the largest number of women and girls in your community. For example, if your club can provide

laptops to two women or pay exam fees for ten women, it would be best to choose the textbook project that will reach more women.

- Review the Soroptimist Forward resources—although they are written for the Dream Programs, many of the tips about how to continue to reach women and girls virtually can apply to Big Goal Accelerator Projects as well! Hosting job or skills training classes virtually may help more women attend and increase your project’s impact. Similarly, an application workshop for your club or region’s scholarship that is held virtually may allow more women and girls to attend and apply!
- Make sure you report your project to SIA by the June 30 deadline!

What Regions Can Do

- Make sure you’re reporting your own Big Goal Accelerator Projects!
- Consider if you have any regions projects that can be adjusted slightly to be eligible and count for the Big Goal.
- Encourage clubs in your region to report their eligible projects.