

# Live Your Dream Awards

## Virtual Judging Resources

### Review applications

As you receive applications, review each one, checking to make sure it is complete and that the applicant is eligible. **Anyone who has submitted an application that does not meet each of the eligibility requirements should not be included in the judging.**

If you receive an incomplete application, contact the applicant about receiving the remaining information. Check the following:

- Each question is answered.
- The application is signed.
- The applicant is a woman with **primary** financial responsibility for herself and her dependents.
- The applicant demonstrates financial need.
- The applicant has been accepted or is enrolled and will still be attending high school equivalency, vocational, technical, or undergraduate degree program.
- The applicant does not hold a graduate degree.

*Please note:* The *Live Your Dream Awards* provide resources so women with dependents can increase their standard of living and achieve economic empowerment. While working towards their goals, women may receive government support, child support or live in subsidized housing or in someone else's home. These things do not negate a woman's primary financial responsibility for her dependents or disqualify a woman from being eligible for the program.

**NOTE:** More than one club member must be involved in the selection of the club award recipient.

### Select judges

Judges should be selected from outside the Soroptimist membership. This will provide an opportunity for judges to become community advocates for the program. Contact the women's groups, charitable organizations, and educational institutions that helped you to recruit applicants to ask their staff to serve as judges. Customize and use the sample judges' letter to help recruit judges. Appoint three to five judges to evaluate all qualifying applications.

## Collect Confidentiality Agreements

The privacy of *Live Your Dream Awards* applicants is of critical importance. Since judges will come in contact with confidential information, each judge must complete a [Judges Confidentiality Agreement](#) and return it to you. A signed Confidentiality Agreement is required to participate as a judge. You should also collect a Confidentiality Agreement from any other Soroptimist club members who are helping administer the judging process. Clubs should store signed Confidentiality Agreements in a secure location for two years.

**NOTE:** To help ensure the confidentiality of the applicants, after in person judging is complete, collect all paper copies of applications, and ask online judges to delete any digital or paper copies of applications they may have.

## Conduct the judging

**Online:** Hosting judging online is a great way to involve community members in your club's work safely and without any scheduling difficulties. Simply divide the applications among the judges, email the judges copies of the applications and [judging sheet](#), and ask that they return the completed judging sheets to you by a specified deadline. Compare the judges' scores and notes to select your club award recipient.

You can conduct the online judging entirely via email as suggested above, or you may wish to hold a video call with the judges to discuss the applications. This can be helpful especially if the judges' scores are close and can be a great way to share more with the judges about your club's impact through the Live Your Dream Award in your community.

The following tips may be helpful in hosting online judging:

- Review the [Zoom tips](#) that SIA has created to help you with hosting calls.
- Collect the judges' scores for the applicants and determine the average score for each applicant before the call.
- At the beginning of the call, be sure to thank the judges and remind them of their commitment to confidentiality, and that they should delete/destroy any copies of the applications that they may have in their possession.
- Remind the judges that all of the applicants have been deemed eligible, have immense potential, and that there are no wrong choices.
- Share with the judges the average scores for the applicants. Use this as a way to start a discussion about determining the club's recipient or top recipients (if the club can distribute more than one cash award).
- Consider having some questions in mind to stimulate discussion and encourage the judges to select a top recipient. For example:
  - Which applicant has the highest financial need?
  - Which applicant has the clearest educational and career goals?
  - How do the applicants' references speak of her?

- Thank the judges for their time at the end of the video call.
- Tip: If you collect media consent and do any profiles on the award recipients your judges selected, make sure to send them a copy to thank them again for being part of the process.

### Checking recipients' references

Before notifying your recipient that she has been selected for an award, be sure to call her references to verify her eligibility. You may choose to contact references by phone or e-mail. If one method of communication does not work, please try the other.

### Contacting a Reference by E-Mail

Before notifying your recipient that she has been selected for an award, be sure to call her references to verify her eligibility. You may choose to contact references by phone or e-mail. If one method of communication does not work, please try the other.

Refer to the reference's e-mail address at the bottom of the reference form. Send an e-mail to the reference based on this sample e-mail:

Subject: Live Your Dream Awards Reference Check

Body: Dear (first name),

I am from SI/Anytown, part of a global volunteer women's organization seeking to empower women in our community to reach their full potential. We are giving out a Live Your Dream: Education and Training Award for Women in our community. We received an application from (applicant's name), for whom you completed a reference, so I'm contacting you with a couple questions.

Would you please confirm that you did provide a reference on behalf of (applicant's name) for a Live Your Dream Award?

The Soroptimist Live Your Dream Awards are intended to increase access to education for hard-working, motivated women who provide the primary source of financial support for their families. Recipients have overcome significant obstacles and are now committed to improving their education, skills, and employment prospects in order to live their dreams. Do you support (applicant's name) being considered for this award?

Thank you for your assistance. I look forward to hearing from you soon!

Sincerely,

(Your name)

## Contacting a Reference by Phone

Refer to the reference's phone number at the bottom of the reference form. Call the reference using this sample phone script:

Hello! My name is (your name) and I am from SI/Anytown, part of a global volunteer women's organization seeking to empower women to reach their full potential. We are giving out a Live Your Dream: Education and Training Award for Women in our community. I'm calling because we received an application from (applicant's name), who you completed a reference for, so I'd like to ask you a couple questions.

Would you please confirm that you did provide a reference on behalf of (applicant's name) for a Live Your Dream Award?

The Soroptimist Live Your Dream Awards are intended to increase access to education for hard-working, motivated women who provide the primary source of financial support for their families. Recipients have overcome significant obstacles and are now committed to improving their education, skills, and employment prospects in order to live their dreams. Do you support (applicant's name) being considered for this award?

Thank you. We will be in touch with (applicant's name) soon to let her know the status of her application.

## Contact ALL Applicants

Once you have selected a recipient, it is important to alert not only her, but **all other applicants as well**. It is important to applicants to be notified of the outcome of the judging. Furthermore, it is important to the reputation of the club and the organization that all applicants are contacted. Check out the sample recipient letter and the sample non-recipient letter for assistance! You may also wish to call your recipient – hearing the excitement in her voice is an extremely gratifying experience for club members!

## Archive applications

Each club is responsible for maintaining a copy of the applications they receive. All applications should be kept in a locked cabinet or other secure location. Applications of women who *did not receive an award* should be kept for one year, then destroyed by shredding. Applications of your *club recipients* should be kept for your club archives and maintained in a secure environment.