



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.®

Soroptimist Club Grants: Tips for Applying

Application Process Information

Applications are due via online submission at the [link](#) to SIA headquarters by March 1st each year. PDF or mailed submissions will not be accepted.

Only Soroptimist clubs may apply for these grants. Clubs are only eligible for one grant per year. A club member should complete the proposal. The contact person named should be the club member most involved with and knowledgeable about the project. The contact person should be prepared to follow through with the project during the period grant funds will be used. The club president must also sign the proposal and, with the club treasurer, be responsible for overseeing the project budget for the duration of the grant period.

Partnerships with other Soroptimist clubs, non-profit agencies, service clubs, and government agencies are encouraged. However, Soroptimist club members should be primarily responsible for planning, managing, and delivering the project.

Projects that have received previous Soroptimist Club Grants are eligible for one additional grant (two grants in total). To be considered for additional funding, the club will need to demonstrate an increasing level of commitment by the club and the community. Projects will also be considered for one additional grant if they have added something new to the existing project.

Region program chairs score each proposal and recommend grant amounts. Proposals are scored on the extent to which they meet the program requirements. Funding is limited and competitive. The SIA president approves all funding recommendations. All decisions are final.

Clubs will be notified by June 30th if their project has been chosen for funding.

General Tips

Make sure that your project is eligible!

Soroptimist Club Grants for Education and Economic Empowerment only fund projects that will contribute to our 2021-2031 Big Goal: *investing in the dreams of half a million women and girls through access to education, leading to economic empowerment.*

Only projects related to the Dream Programs (*Live Your Dream Award* or *Dream It, Be It*) and projects that are Big Goal Accelerator Projects can be funded through Soroptimist Club Grants.

Grant Eligibility Requirements:

The funds should be used to support a project during the club year after fund disbursal.

Grant funds may be used for the following:

- Operational costs
- Equipment and supplies
- Educational materials

Funds may not be used for the following:

- Donation to another organization or individual (including scholarships)
- Fundraising projects
- Consulting services
- Deficit financing
- Speaker fees
- Stipends or expenses for Soroptimist or other volunteers

Funding requests for the Dream Programs should follow these guidelines:

- **Live Your Dream Awards** – grants cannot be used to fund the financial award. Proposals will be considered for club efforts to expand the award's impact on award recipients. This could include efforts to support additional education or training, mentoring, job assistance, etc. This could also include efforts to recruit applicants and expand partnerships to reach more women. *Live Your Dream Award* projects must report their award efforts using the [Club Reporting Form](#).
- **Dream It, Be It: Career Support for Girls** – funds can be used to begin a *Dream It, Be It* project or to add a new dimension to an existing project, including recruitment efforts and partnership expansion to reach more girls. *Dream It, Be It* projects must use the *Dream It, Be It* curriculum as well as the *Dream It, Be It* [Evaluation Form](#) and submit evaluation results to SIA.

Projects would be eligible if they:

EITHER		
Support the Dream Programs (<i>Live Your Dream Award</i> or <i>Dream It, Be It</i>)	or	Support Big Goal Accelerator Projects (support access to education with the goal of economic empowerment and focus on our target population of women and girls who face obstacles such as poverty, violence, or teen pregnancy)
AND		
Is a fully-managed Soroptimist project (partnerships are permitted, but must be delivered primarily as a Soroptimist project)		

Application Tips

ALL projects must focus on INCREASING the number of women or girls who have access to education. Below are the acceptable project objectives.

Project Objectives:

- Increase the number of women who receive a *Live Your Dream Award*
- Increase the number of girls who participate in *Dream It, Be It*
- Increase the number of women/girls served through access to education with a Big Goal Accelerator Project by removing obstacles/barriers (providing necessary items for education, paying fees for exams)
- Increase the number of women/girls served through access to education with a Big Goal Accelerator Project by providing classes (job or skills training, financial aid application training, career mentorship)
- Increase the number of women/girls served through access to education with a Big Goal Accelerator Project by providing scholarships/awards (for college, technical/vocational programs, or unrestricted funding)

Finally, members should be actively engaged for a project to be successful. Clubs should not apply for funding for projects that will not primarily be managed by a Soroptimist club. All outside partnerships must be clearly explained. If multiple clubs are working together, a lead club must be designated to complete and submit the application and grant report.

Describe the project in an effective way.

Ensure the proposal is written clearly, includes all requested information, and is detailed enough for reviewers to understand the full project, as a project that is not clear and fully described to the application reviewers will not receive funding. A well written and thorough proposal is as important as the project itself.

Make sure that the role of club members in the project is clear! Additionally, be prepared to estimate the number of women and girls that your project will reach (do not include club members in this figure—only the intended beneficiaries of women and girls facing obstacles to their success).

You will need include a plan about how you intend to achieve your objective of increasing the number of women and girls with access to education. Additionally, you will need to clearly explain what members will be doing. For example, a job skills training class for women living at a shelter should describe:

- How women will be selected for the project
- How often Soroptimists and trainees will meet
- What Soroptimists and trainees will do in the classes
- What the classes will cover and how it will increase their access to education leading to economic empowerment

Document the problem your project aims to address, and explain how you determined your community had a need for this project.

Explain the problem your project aims to address—access to education for women and girls facing obstacles. Use statistics (local, national, or international – local statistics are most compelling), stories, information from experts, or anecdotal evidence to make a connection between your project and how it will address the specific need in your community. A combination of these methods is recommended for a stronger needs assessment.

Many grant proposals discuss only a general social problem that the project will address. This is a good starting point for a needs assessment, but it is not complete. A complete needs assessment also addresses a local need that will be addressed by the project. For example:

- If a proposed project is to offer past Live Your Dream Award Recipients with bus passes for a year so that they can attend school, it is not sufficient to write a needs assessment that only details the problem of expensive transportation; what also needs to be included is why transportation is an obstacle to access education in your community. Answer questions such as: Do past recipients report having to miss class because of lack of transportation?

Describe how Soroptimist members will be involved in the project.

SIA aims to fund hands-on projects that thoroughly engage Soroptimists. You should describe how members and community partners (if any) will participate in the project and the amount of time contributed to participation. A strong proposal will also directly connect the hands-on activity of the club to the requested funding. Explain how club members will be involved in the activities that require funds.

A proposed project that has limited Soroptimist involvement, such as funding the salary of a staff person who would be responsible for everything or a piece of equipment that will be completely facilitated by an outside vendor, will not be funded.

Be as specific as possible with your budget items.

The budget sheet should list all of the expenditures that will be covered by the requested funding. All dollar amounts should be listed in US Dollars. List all items separately and be specific about what the items are. If the project is to provide a computer library to a local domestic violence shelter for women who are attending school online, the budget line items should include the cost and number of each item. For example:

- Laptops (4 at \$500 each)
- Printers (1 at \$250 each)
- Paper (20 packs at \$15 each)
- Ink cartridges (10 at \$30 each)

Do not simply list ‘supplies’ and a total cost. You may understand what ‘supplies’ includes, but the reviewers of your proposal will not, and they need to understand how all the funding will specifically be spent.

Enlist the help of someone not involved in the project to read your proposal.

It is helpful to have someone else read over your proposal to see if anything is unclear. A strong proposal will not leave the reviewer with any unanswered questions. It should thoroughly describe what the club is planning to accomplish with the funding, what the funds will be used for, and how the objectives will be met and measured. One of the best ways to ensure that your proposal is clear and complete is to have someone not involved in the project read it and identify information gaps. If your reader has questions or misperceives something, it is likely that the reviewer of your proposal will, too!

Ask for help!

Your region’s Program Chair is available to help you think through your project and develop your proposal. You may also contact SIA Headquarters to request assistance at program@soroptimist.org. Program staff will not review proposals before the deadline, but are happy to discuss any questions you might have about the application.

Big Goal Accelerator Projects Only

Evaluation

The Dream Programs have a robust evaluation program, and therefore clubs applying for grant funding for Dream Program projects do not have to complete questions about evaluation.

Some questions could only be asked at the end of a project—for example, after your club has paid the licensing fees for the women in the program, you could ask the following to measure your second and third objectives:

Did you successfully obtain your cosmetology license?

Yes

No

Other:

If you successfully obtained your cosmetology license, were you able to find related employment in your field?

Yes

No

Other:

Did it help you achieve your employment goals to have your licensing fees paid?

Yes

No

Other:

If you can't measure an objective or don't plan to measure it, don't include it. An evaluation plan that only asks project participants what they liked/didn't like about the project is not a sufficient evaluation plan. Feedback from these types of questions can be helpful for clubs' future planning, but it does not allow the club or SIA to understand the impact of your project on participants.

A strong evaluation plan will allow a club to measure and succinctly report their impact in the following ways:

- 90% of women enrolled in the program reported a decrease in stress about finishing their education
- 95% of women enrolled in the program were able to obtain their cosmetology license.
- 80% of women who obtained their cosmetology license found employment in their field.

These numbers show the impact of your project. A project will not be funded without a clear and strong evaluation plan.