



A global volunteer organization that improves the lives of women and girls through programs leading to social and economic empowerment.

SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL OF THE AMERICAS, INC.®

BEFORE YOU CHARTER Guide

When you start the process of chartering a new club, there are many things to consider before you begin the work on the ground! To make things easier for you and the charter team, start here to make a few key decisions that will guide your efforts. This guide is meant to lay out your strategy for a new club charter in your region!

During this planning stage of the charter process, you will:

1. Identify your charter team
2. Choose a club model
3. Determine your geographical focus
4. Set a timeline & budget

1: IDENTIFY YOUR CHARTER TEAM

Many hands make light work! The first and most important step is to develop a committed team that will see the charter through. Your charter team will definitely include the following key players from the region leadership, who will oversee the club charter: Region Membership Chair (RMC), Region Governor, Region Governor-Elect, and District Director (if applicable). Your charter team should also include a few members of Soroptimist clubs throughout the region, particularly who can visit the community where the new club will be located.

As you form your charter team, be sure to include members who have excellent presentation skills, a firm understanding of Soroptimist and our signature programs, and are enthusiastic and passionate about our mission.

To find contact information for leadership and members, log in to the [membership directory](#) on SIA's website.

2: CHOOSE A CLUB MODEL

Next, you should determine whether the new charter club will be a traditional club, or use an online club model. Keep in mind that traditional clubs can certainly conduct some of their business online, and an online club can certainly do some in-person activities. To help define your club, refer to the following:

- A traditional Soroptimist club is one whose members reside in the same community and hold regular, face-to-face meetings.
- An online Soroptimist club is one that meets and conducts SIA mission-focused business primarily through technology (telephone, video conferencing, email, and/or social media).

3: DETERMINE A GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS

Whether the new club charter is a traditional club or an online one, the charter team needs to define the geographical scope for the project. This may be one community, or cover a large geographical area. Online clubs should focus on a geographical area within one SIA Region.

The online model is an opportunity to connect members over a larger geographical area, or can be focused within one community to allow greater participation by club members who are committed to our mission but have less free time to gather in person for club meetings.

As you determine the geographical scope of your charter efforts, look at a map and note where existing Soroptimist clubs are already located. Consider the following:

- Is there a community that isn't being served by a Soroptimist club?
- Is there a local community college with career counselors, teachers, and administrators who would be interested in the Soroptimist mission? These are great prospective members as they are connected with women who could benefit from the Live Your Dream Awards or our other programs.
- In the communities that do have a Soroptimist presence, could an additional club bring any of these benefits—
 - Help women and girls that the current club hasn't reached with their programs?
 - Offer membership for those who are unable to join the current club because of meeting times?
 - Offer membership for those who wish to participate in different volunteer projects than the current club's focus?
- Is there an area where a Soroptimist club used to exist, where former members may be interested in re-joining and the Soroptimist name is already recognizable by the community?

4: SET A TIMELINE & BUDGET

With your charter team, set a timeline for the charter process as well as a budget so that you can effectively manage the charter project. Usually, the steps to charter can be completed within a few months to a year. The budget for the charter project should consider any expenses for travel by the charter team to the community where you are recruiting. It should also include funds for a meeting space and/or light food and beverages to provide during the recruitment process.

5: CONTACT SIA

If you have not done so already, before you go any further, contact SIA Headquarters at membership@soroptimist.org. SIA Staff is available to support your charter team and the region throughout this project, and we would love to hear about your plans! At this point, you are ready to submit [Form A: Declaration of Intent to Charter](#).

Next, use the [Club Charter Guide](#) or [Club Charter Guide for Online Clubs](#) to guide you through the charter process!