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

Website Guidelines

Getting Started

Form a Committee

Form a website committee and create a plan that includes the site's goals, target audiences and an overview of what you want the site to achieve. Also include who will:

- Design/implement the site
- Manage the site
- Oversee content and design
- Be responsible for changes and updates

If no one in your club has website experience, hire a local web company or contact the technology, digital media, communications, and/or web development department at a nearby college to design a site your club can easily maintain. But know that building a professional website doesn't have to take a lot of effort, time or money. Several website-building sites make it easy for even first-timers to build a website. The best website builder for you depends on your particular needs.

Find a Website Building Tool

This list was recommended by various clubs and regions. SIA does not endorse any particular tool.

- SquareSpace
- GoDaddy
- ClubExpress
- Snap Pages
- Weebly
- Wix
- WordPress

Pick a Website Host

The best hosting provider for your nonprofit will be the one that fits your specific needs and budget. Here's a list of tips and resources to guide your decision-making process:

Tips

- **Assess Your Needs:** Before you start looking for a host, determine what you need. This includes understanding the anticipated traffic, required storage, need for email hosting, scalability, and the type of content you'll be hosting (e.g., video, large image files, databases).

- **Seek Nonprofit Discounts:** Some web hosting companies offer discounts or even free hosting to nonprofit organizations. Make sure to ask potential hosting providers if they have any such offers.

- **Prioritize Uptime:** Downtime can be a hassle for any website, but for a nonprofit, it might mean missed donations, lost engagement, or a hit to the organization's reputation. Look for hosts that guarantee high uptime.

- **Check For Security Features:** Ensure that the hosting provider offers robust security measures, such as SSL certificates, malware scanning and regular backups.

- **Consider Technical Support:** As a nonprofit, you may not have an in-house tech team. Prioritize hosts that offer excellent customer support with quick response times.

- **Think About Scalability:** As your organization grows, your website's traffic might increase. Choose a host that will allow you to easily upgrade your plan without much hassle.

- **Testimonials & Reviews:** Check online reviews and seek testimonials from other nonprofits about the hosting providers you're considering.

Resources
SIA does not endorse any resource.

- **Bluehost:** Offers affordable hosting with a good reputation for uptime and support. They are often recommended for WordPress websites.

- **DreamHost:** Known for good uptime and a straightforward pricing model. They offer a free shared hosting plan to U.S.-based charities.

- **SiteGround:** Offers excellent customer support and high-performance hosting, with a focus on WordPress.

- **InMotion Hosting:** Provides good uptime and support, and they have discounts available for nonprofits.

- **TechSoup:** This is a resource specifically for nonprofits. They offer software, hardware, and services (including web hosting) at discounted rates for eligible nonprofit organizations.

- **Wix & Weebly:** For organizations that want a simple drag-and-drop website builder combined with hosting. They may not be as flexible as other platforms but are user-friendly.

- **Google for Nonprofits:** While not a web hosting service, Google for Nonprofits offers a range of free tools, including G Suite, which might be beneficial for the operational side of your organization.

- **Web Hosting Talk Forums:** This is a forum where you can get feedback from real users about various web hosts.

Choose and Register a Domain Name
- Should be concise, brandable and memorable.
- Should end in *.org*, which is available for charitable organizations.
- Should be relevant to your club or region (i.e. "atlantasoroptimist.org" or "soroptimistnortheasternregion").
- Should **not** contain spaces.
- Register name with a name registration site found online. Shop around for the best price.

Build Site

Your website content and design should align with the SIA brand, as well as adhere to SIA's bylaws and procedures, which address such issues as logo use, cross–solicitation, position statements, etc. Be sure to review SIA's visual design guide and style/writing guide before building your website.

Homepage
The homepage is the point of entry and gives a first impression of your club.
- Clearly state SIA's mission: *A global volunteer organization that provides women and girls with access to the education and training they need to achieve economic empowerment.*
- Prominently display the Soroptimist "S" logo at the top of the page.
- Include a navigation menu that lists the sections found throughout the site.
- Cleary define your club and what it does.

Navigation
- Organize pages so visitors can easily browse through the different sections of your site.
- Navigation menu should appear and remain the same on all pages of the site.
- Provide a home button on all pages so visitors can easily return to the homepage.

Content
Writing for the web should be concise but engaging.
- Use language that aligns with SIA's mission and highlights our impact. You can always use text from Soroptimist.org for descriptions of our organization and programs.
- Avoid acronyms or "internal" language that only members understand (ex. SIA, LYDA, DIBI, federation). Keep content up-to-date and relevant to your audience. Consult SIA's Style Guide for more information about writing for internal and external audiences.
- Include a "Contact Us" section that provides a way for people to reach out to you.
- Put information that would only interest current members in a separate members-only section.

Design
The website design is just as important as its content. The overall look speaks volumes about the professionalism of your club. Most design principles used for printed materials do not apply to web pages because the eye views computer screens and paper differently.
- Use consistent branding and design elements that align with SIA. The SIA logo should be visible on every page.
- Make your website responsive so that your website displays and functions correctly across various devices and screen sizes such as phones, tablets and computers.

- Develop for multiple browsers (i.e. Google Chrome, Internet Explorer, Mozilla Firefox). Browsers do not render web pages in the same way. Before going live, be sure to check your website in multiple browsers to make sure everything appears correctly.
- Avoid a black background or a light background with a pattern, which make reading text and printing pages difficult. Opt for a white background or a solid, light-colored background.
- Use a sans serif font such as Calibri, Tahoma or Verdana (specifically created for the web) because they are easier to read on screen and already come on most computers.
- Organize text in small paragraphs or as bullets. Studies show that people read 25 percent slower on the web than they do print.
- Only use special effects that enhance communication on the site.

Photos and Videos
- Use high-quality photos and videos to illustrate your mission and impact
- Optimize your images and videos for website speed.
- Save photos and graphics as JPEG or PNG files, which enable visitors to view high-quality images at minimal download time. A graphic or photo only needs to be 72 dpi to display well on the web.

Security and Privacy
Leave off certain information to protect the members, club, region and organization as a whole.
- Personal information—such as home and business phone numbers, social security numbers and birth dates—should never go on a site for security reasons. Recent changes in the laws of the European Union (known as GDPR), in many Canadian provinces and the state California, among others, require that anyone handling personally identifiable information related to residents of these areas must follow strict rules in how that data handled. While Soroptimist may not fit the legal definition in some specific laws as data handlers, it is best to avoid having or relaying this information via your website.
- While it may seem appropriate to list members' professions, places of business and email addresses to illustrate Soroptimist's diverse make-up of women, get each member's permission before adding this type of information. Please remember members, and members leaving your club, can withdraw this permission at any time, and your club is required to comply with that request immediately.
- Listing information in a secure password-protected members area also has risks. Your club is responsible for ensuring that password-secured members areas have the highest level of security and reside behind areas that are protected by firewalls. Just because information is in a password-protected section does not mean it cannot be compromised. Passwords should be unique for each user and club should not have access to that password. Never use a single password to allow all members access to a secure area
- Obtain written permission from non-members, such as *Live Your Dream Awards*® recipients, before adding their name, town, place of business or photograph. Also obtain written permission from the parents/guardians of a *Dream It, Be It*® participants. Media consent forms are available in the [Program Resources](#) section of Soroptimist's website. Please remember that non-members who have granted permission in the past can withdraw that permission at any time, and your club is required to comply with that request immediately.
- Information on the site needs copyright protection. It is not necessary to actually register a copyright. It suffices to note the creation date next to the © symbol or the word "copyright" somewhere on the homepage. Use the following statement for additional protection:

All materials posted on this site are subject to copyrights owned by Soroptimist International of _____ and/or other individuals or entities. Any reproduction or retransmission of all or part of any document found on this site is expressly prohibited, unless Soroptimist International of _____ or the copyright owner of the material has granted its prior written consent. Copyright 20XX—Soroptimist International of _____.

Links

At a minimum, clubs should link to the following websites:

- Soroptimist.org
- Region website
- Club's social media sites

Clubs may choose to link with the websites of community partners. However, when providing links, use caution. Links give the perception that Soroptimist or the club endorses the other entity's site. To protect from possible liabilities in associating with other sites, include the following disclaimer:

This website includes links providing direct access to other internet sites. However, Soroptimist takes no responsibility for the content or information contained on other sites, nor does it imply endorsement or approval of products or information offered.

Although it may be tempting to form a business relationship with corporations whereby they "advertise" on your club website and provide a percentage of revenue for all purchases made through that link, refrain from entering into such relationships. SIA and its U.S. clubs and regions are 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organizations and as such, may be subject to unrelated business income tax (UBIT) for these types of arrangements.

It is important to contact SIA headquarters before entering into any business arrangements to make certain that the reporting and expense ramifications of accepting such revenue is understood. At a minimum, such portals might appear to be an endorsement by Soroptimist of the product or service, which may not be desirable.

Prepare for Launch

Ask several people to review the site to make sure everything is ready for launch.

- Open in various internet browsers (i.e. Google Chrome, Internet Explorer, Mozilla Firefox) to see if it appears properly.
- View on tablets and mobile devices to ensure website is responsive.
- Ensure content is clear and contains no grammatical mistakes.
- Ensure images and videos load quickly and display correctly.

Go Live

Publicize

Always include a link to your website in your publicity materials, as well as in the "About Us" sections on your social media pages.