



SOROPTIMIST
Best for Women

An international volunteer organization working to improve the lives of women and girls, in local communities and throughout the world.

SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL OF THE AMERICAS

Soroptimist Women's Opportunity Awards Eligibility Checklist

The Women's Opportunity Awards program was established in 1972 to assist women with primary financial responsibility for their families to obtain the skills-training and education necessary to improve their employment status and standard of living for themselves and their family. Each year, \$1.5 million in club, region and international funds are awarded to more than 1,500 women in Soroptimist's 19 member countries and territories. The women receiving these financial awards may use them for any costs associated with their educational efforts, including tuition, books, child care, and transportation. The chosen recipient of SI [club name]'s \$[award amount] (taxable) Women's Opportunity Awards will also be considered for additional awards at the regional and international levels.

If you are interested in applying for the Soroptimist Women's Opportunity Awards, we strongly encourage you to complete this brief checklist in order to determine whether you are eligible for the award.

Please check all that apply:

- I have a U.S. Social Security Number (this requirement applies to U.S. applicants only)
- I earn the most money in my household.
- I support at least one of the following: child spouse parent sibling other dependent
- I am enrolled in a vocational/skills training program or an undergraduate degree program
Name of educational institution _____
- I am willing to describe my educational and career goals (300 words max)
- I am willing to describe why I deserve to win the award (750 words max)
- I am in financial need and am prepared to list my family's annual living expenses
- I am prepared to list my annual educational expenses
- I am able to provide two written references

If you checked **ALL** of the above boxes, you are eligible to apply for the Soroptimist Women's Opportunity Award. In order to apply you must submit an official application and two completed reference forms by the **application deadline on [insert date here]**. To request an application form, please mail this checklist or send an email to the contact person listed at the top of this checklist.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions. To learn more about Soroptimist and the Soroptimist Women's Opportunity Awards online, please visit www.soroptimist.org.

To help us reach more eligible applicants, can you tell us where you heard about this award?

When you were a girl ...

did you imagine

a future

filled with hope

and promise?

But then

your life took

an unexpected turn,

and

you were forced to

put your dreams on hold?



Are you ready
to begin
your new life?

The Soroptimist Women's Opportunity Awards Program

The Soroptimist Women's Opportunity Awards give women the resources they need to improve their education, skills, and employment prospects. Eligible applicants must be women who provide the primary financial support for their families, and who are enrolled in or have been accepted to a vocational/skills training program or an undergraduate degree program.

Each year, Soroptimist clubs in 19 countries and territories assist women in overcoming personal difficulties and bettering their lives through education and skills training. The women may use the cash award to offset any costs associated with their efforts to attain higher education, including books, childcare and transportation. The program begins on the local club level, where award amounts vary. Club recipients become eligible to receive region-level awards, which are granted through Soroptimist's 28 geographic regions. Currently, each Soroptimist region grants one first-place award for \$5,000. (Note: most regions grant additional \$3,000 awards.) The 28 first-place recipients then become eligible to receive one of three \$10,000 finalist awards.

Pachara Y., a domestic abuse survivor, found herself alone in a foreign country with three young children to support. She has learned to speak the language of her adopted land and is pursuing a career in nursing.



A single mother of five, **Kathy M.** was barely surviving on public assistance. Today Kathy is a dental hygienist and small business owner.



Peggy M. transformed her life from a single mom earning minimum wage at a fast food restaurant to a college graduate who makes her living as a professional speaker and published author.



Guadalupe V. was a young wife trapped in a violent marriage, in a country that was not her own. A single mom to two children, Guadalupe eventually graduated from a Ph.D. program and has helped other women to leave abusive situations.



Marina G. was a struggling single mom who ran in marathons and used the cash prizes to support her family. She recently obtained a degree in physical education.



Application

Women's Opportunity Awards

A program of Soroptimist International of the Americas

INSTRUCTIONS

Deadline:

Applications are due each year by December 15 to the address listed in Step 4. Award recipients will be notified between January and June. Not all applicants to the program will be selected as recipients.

STEP 1: DETERMINE IF YOU ARE ELIGIBLE

Eligible applicants must be women who:

- Provide the primary financial support for their families (including children, spouse, siblings and/or parents).
- Have financial need.
- Are enrolled in or have been accepted to a vocational/skills training program or an undergraduate degree program.
- Reside in one of Soroptimist International of the Americas' member countries/territories (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guam, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Puerto Rico, Taiwan, United States of America, Venezuela).
- Have not previously been the recipient of a Soroptimist Women's Opportunity Award; are not a Soroptimist member, employee or immediate family of either.

STEP 2: COMPLETE THE APPLICATION

To fill out the form:

- Select the "Hand Tool," which appears as a small white hand.
- Move the "Hand Tool" and click on the area where you want to type.
- A cursor will appear and you can begin typing to complete the application. (Note: You will not be able to change the type size. Please limit your answers to the space allotted.)
- Once all parts of the form are completed, select "Save As" from the "File" menu and change the file name (for example, "WOAemailappLG.pdf," where "LG" are your initials.) Click "Save."

STEP 3: OBTAIN REFERENCES

You will need two different people to fill out the reference form, which you received along with this application. Please email this form to your references and request that they email the forms back to you when completed.

STEP 4: SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION

Attach your completed application and reference forms to an email and send them to the contact person listed below by DECEMBER 15.

Soroptimist Club Name

Region

Club Contact Person

Phone

Address

City/State/Postal Code

Email Address

IMPORTANT!

Applications submitted directly to Soroptimist headquarters in Philadelphia will NOT be considered. If you have any questions about eligibility or the application process, please contact <siahq@soroptimist.org>.



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Application

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PART I—PERSONAL DATA

Application Tips

Name *(last, first, middle initial)*

Address *(number and street address)*

City/Province

State

Postal Code

Country

Telephone *(area code first)*

E-mail Address

Date of Birth

Marital Status

Number of People Applicant Supports Financially

Relationship to Applicant *(children, spouse, parent, etc.)*

Ages *(if children)*

PART II—CAREER GOALS

Application Tips

A. Please list the school you are currently attending, or to which you have been accepted, and your proposed program of study (example: San Jose State University, four-year bachelor of science degree program in nursing).

B. When will you complete your program of study (month and year)?

C. Are you currently employed? *(click)* **YES NO**

If yes, how many hours per week do you work? _____

D. Please describe (in 300 words or less) your career goals and how your education and/or skills training support those goals in the space provided below.

PART III—PERSONAL STATEMENT

Application Tips

The Soroptimist Women’s Opportunity Awards aid women who have faced economic and personal hardships, and are seeking to gain additional skills, training and education. The program helps women who serve as the primary wage earners for their families to enter or return to the work force, or to improve their employment status.

In the space provided below, please tell us in 750 words or less how these statements apply to you, and why you would make a deserving Women’s Opportunity Award recipient.

PART IV—FINANCIAL NEED Application Tips

The Soroptimist Women’s Opportunity Awards are given based in part on financial need. Your total income will be compared to your total annual expenses. Please be as exact as you can.

A. Total annual household income from all sources (include your income from employment, savings, child support, alimony, Social Security benefits, government assistance, and school loans or scholarships. Also include all income received by any other household members).

B. Please list your annual educational expenses only—do not include those of your children or other family members.

Tuition/School Fees _____ Books _____

Other (please describe) _____

C. Please list your family’s annual living expenses in the chart below.

Housing \$ _____ per year	Utilities \$ _____ per year
Food \$ _____ per year	Medical \$ _____ per year
Childcare \$ _____ per year	Transportation \$ _____ per year
Other (please list additional expenses and assign a dollar value to each in the spaces below)	
Expense: _____	\$ _____ per year
Expense: _____	\$ _____ per year
Expense: _____	\$ _____ per year
Total expenses per year \$ _____	

PART V—REFERENCES Application Tips

Using the attached reference forms, please submit two references (from persons not related to you) with your completed application. Applications received without two references will not be considered.

PART VI—AGREEMENT Application Tips

- I certify that all information provided in this application is complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I will notify the designated club to which I have submitted this application if there are any changes.
- I understand that this award is not a scholarship and is therefore taxable for citizens of the United States. (For more information, consult IRS publication 520. Recipients in other countries should check their local tax laws.)
- I certify that this is the only application I have made this year for a Women’s Opportunity Award from this or any other Soroptimist club.
- I understand that my application becomes the property of Soroptimist International of the Americas. The application will be considered confidential, unless the applicant grants Soroptimist written permission to release personal information for the purpose of publicizing the Soroptimist Women’s Opportunity Awards program. By typing your name below you adhere to the above requirements.

Signature of Applicant

Date

Submitted to: _____

(Please provide the name of the sponsoring Soroptimist club listed on the application instructions page.)