

2026



ZONTA YOUNG WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP AWARD

DESCRIPTION

Recognizing young women for their commitment to volunteerism, volunteer leadership achievements and dedication to empowering women worldwide



The program operates at the Zonta club, district and international levels. Zonta International offers 37 international awards of US\$5,000. Each district may submit one applicant for consideration for an international award. The five largest districts may submit a second applicant for a total of two applicants.

Timetable

Each Zonta club determines their own timeline for receipt of applications

Club recipient selected and application is received by governor.....1 April 2026
or deadline determined by the district

District recipient selected and application received by Zonta International Headquarters.....1 May 2026

Official announcement of international recipients.....1 July 2026

General Information

The goal of the Zonta Young Women in Leadership Award is to encourage young women to participate in leadership positions by recognizing the candidate's commitment to the volunteer sector, evidence of volunteer leadership achievements and a dedication to building a better world for women and girls through service and advocacy.

In order for more women to be represented in key decision-making positions worldwide, we must encourage young women to pursue careers or seek leadership positions in public policy making, government and volunteer organizations and further their education with these aims in view.

Who is Eligible?

Women, aged 16-19 on 1st April each year, living in a Zonta district or who are citizens of a Zonta country, who demonstrate evidence of the following, are eligible to apply.

- ❑ Active commitment to volunteerism.
- ❑ Experience in local government, student government, or workplace leadership (paid or unpaid).
- ❑ Volunteer leadership achievements.
- ❑ Knowledge of Zonta International and its programs.
- ❑ Support for Zonta International's mission of building a better world for women and girls.

Note that applicants from geographic areas within a Zonta district where no clubs are located may apply via a Zonta e-Club or directly to the district to be eligible for the international awards.

Club members and individuals with direct membership with Zonta International and employees of Zonta International and Zonta Foundation for Women are not eligible to apply for the Awards. Committee or jury members or any member involved in the selection process should follow the [Zonta International Conflict of Interest Policy](#) in the selection of awardees. Z club and Golden Z club members are eligible to apply. Previous district and international recipients are not eligible to apply to renew the Award for a second year.

NOTE: Applicants for the 2026 Zonta Young Women in Leadership Award may not also apply for the 2026 Zonta Club of Dallas Ruth Maddox Young Women in STEM Award or the 2026 Zonta Club of Dallas Denise Kirkman Young Women in Business Leadership Award.

How Do I Apply?

Applicants must locate a Zonta club near them by using the Club Locator at zonta.org/locateaclub to receive the deadline and an address to submit application to, or for assistance, email your name and contact information to Zonta International Headquarters at programs@zonta.org. Note that applications may be submitted to a Zonta club or district in the language(s) accepted by the club or district by the deadline printed on the application. Only typed applications will be accepted and considered.

Application Requirements

- ❑ Completion of the official application (may be downloaded from the Zonta International website, www.zonta.org).
- ❑ Verification of current enrollment by school/institute official (if applicable), **or**
- ❑ Letter from employer stating employment (if applicable).
- ❑ Two recommendations from adults, not related to the applicant, such as teachers, school officials, employee supervisors or community leaders, which must be sent directly to the Zonta club **or** district and not through the applicant.

Supporting documentation not requested will not be considered. All applications and supporting information become the property of Zonta International. Zonta International has final authority over any aspect of the Awards.

Application Process

The application process must start with a Zonta club. All application materials must be received at a Zonta club by the deadline given by the individual club. If you downloaded the application from the Zonta International website, you must contact a Zonta club for deadline information. Zonta International Headquarters does not have a list of the individual clubs' deadlines.

Zonta clubs each select one application to send to the Zonta governor representative. A district evaluating committee reviews the applications and selects one applicant per district to submit to Zonta International Headquarters. The five largest districts in terms of Zonta membership may submit a second applicant to Zonta International Headquarters. The Zonta International Headquarters team confirms the eligibility of the

applicants put forth by the districts and submits a recommendation to the Zonta International Board (or the Executive Committee acting on its behalf) for final approval. If approved by the Zonta International Board, the Zonta Foundation for Women provides awards and certificates to the international recipients.

How May I Use the Award Funds?

1. There are no restrictions on the use of funds.
2. Please note: If the applicant is studying at a secondary school, university or college, Zonta International is offering a "scholarship" type of payment to be used for tuition and/or living expenses. Please see below under Tax Considerations.
3. Recipients are not permitted to defer the Zonta Young Women in Leadership Award.
4. Recipients may accept additional grants and awards from other sources.

Tax considerations

The following considerations will help define which type of payment will fit the applicant's purposes best.

- ❑ "Award": with no restrictions for use. As an award, it is taxable income under U.S. tax regulations. To comply with the law, all awardees will receive tax forms. Also, according to U.S. tax regulations, 30% of the award must be withheld from awards made to non-U.S. residents. If Zonta International is notified that there is a U.S. tax treaty with the resident's country, the withholding will be appropriately adjusted.
- ❑ "Scholarship": to be used for tuition, fees and materials (books, supplies and equipment) required for courses at a secondary school, college or university only. As a scholarship to be used for tuition, fees and materials, the income is tax free.
- ❑ "Scholarship": to be used for living expenses while attending a secondary school, college or university. Although tuition and related expenses are tax free, income used for living expenses is considered taxable income. Tax forms will be provided to all awardees, as required. Withholdings range from \$ 0 (tax treaty), 14% (appropriate student VISA) to 30% for non-U.S. residents.
- ❑ Supplemental awards and scholarships that are paid directly paid by a club or district will follow the tax regulations of their taxing authority.

2026



ZONTA
INTERNATIONAL

ZONTA YOUNG WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP AWARD

APPLICATION FORM

SEND APPLICATION AND DIRECT ANY QUESTIONS TO:

Application Deadline:

Zonta Club/e-Club of:

District/Area:

To find a club click:

[Club Locator](#)

Attention:

Address:

City/State:

Province/Country:

Telephone:

Email address:

Name:

Last (Family)

First (Given)

Middle

Current Mailing Address:

City:

State:

Postal Code:

Country:

Telephone:

Email Address:

Permanent mailing address:

City:

State:

Postal Code:

Country:

Birthdate:

date/month/year

Birthplace:

(city/country)

Country of Citizenship:

Name of School/Institute currently attending (if applicable):

Address of School/Institute currently attending (if applicable):

Current year of study (if applicable):

Name of Employer (if applicable):

Address of Employer (if applicable):

Select at least one type of payment that you are applying for (See How May I Use These Award Funds and Tax Implications)

☐ Award with no restrictions ☐ Scholarship for tuition ☐ Scholarship for living expenses

PERSONAL GOALS

Please describe in short your anticipated course of study and current career interests, including whether and how you plan to be active in volunteer or community organizations. (150 words) Please provide the word count at the end of your answer.

Please answer all questions below, noting the word limit for each. In evaluating applications, all questions are rated in equal value.

Question

1. Activities related to your school/workplace. Please include (a) your leadership experience, and (b) what you find most rewarding or valuable about your participation in these activities (no more than 200 words). Please provide the word count at the end of your answer.

2. Activities not related to your school/workplace. Describe the activities in which you participate as a volunteer that benefit other causes and any leadership roles you have had in those activities.

Please include with these activities a description of any experience in local government, international, or other projects (no more than 200 words). Please provide the word count at the end of your answer.

3. International Awareness

Describe the activities you participate in which increase your experience, knowledge and understanding of other countries and their different customs (no more than 150 words). Please provide the word count at the end of your answer.

4. Status of Women in your Country

Describe your experience in building a better world for women and girls through service and/or advocacy. Are there any issues which hinder women's and girls' empowerment in your country? Describe your ideas for resolving them (no more than 300 words). Please provide the word count at the end of your answer.

Recommendations

Please list below those referees who will submit recommendations:

Name	Position /Title	Email
1.		
2.		

Declaration by Applicant

I certify that all the information contained in my application form is accurate to the best of my knowledge and that I did not receive assistance in completing the essay portions of this application other than for translation into English if required for advancing to the district and international levels. I understand that, at the option of the Zonta club sponsoring the competition, I may be interviewed as a candidate for the Zonta Young Women in Leadership Award. I consent to the electronic or hard copy publication of material in my application by Zonta International.

- ☐ I confirm that I have not applied to more than one Zonta district.
- ☐ I confirm that I am not a club member or individual with direct membership with Zonta International or employee of Zonta International and Zonta Foundation for Women.

Signature (Insert image of your signature or print, sign and scan this page)

Date

Data Protection

Zonta International and Zonta Foundation for Women take the security of your data seriously. We will never sell, trade or rent your personal information provided in this application to third parties. By submitting this application, you agree to the use of your data in accordance with the *Privacy Policy and Publicity Authorization Form* contained in the application documents (see page 8 of the application).

Checklist must be completed by applicant:

- ☐ Verification of current enrollment by school/institute official (if applicable), **or**
- ☐ Letter from employer stating employment (if applicable)
- ☐ Completed application in English (required)
- ☐ Two confidential recommendation letters with signatures (required)
- ☐ Typed application (required)
- ☐ Applicant's signature (required)



Recommendation for Zonta Young Women in Leadership Award

Please return this form by:

To Zonta Club or e-Club of:

c/o:

Address:

City/State/Postal code/Country:

Email:

Applicant's Signature is required (Insert image of your signature or print, sign and scan this page.)

Date

Applicant:

Last (Family) Name

First

Middle

Recommendation from:

Name (please print)

Position/Title

Recommendation for Applicant for Zonta Young Women in Leadership Award

The applicant above has applied for a Zonta Young Women in Leadership Award. Please discuss the applicant's accomplishments, motivation, potential for public service and awareness of women's and community issues. You may write your recommendation letter on letterhead of your choice; however, you must sign and submit this form with your letter of recommendation to the address above.

Signature of referee (Insert image of your signature or print, sign and scan this page.)

Date



Recommendation for Zonta Young Women in Leadership Award

Please return this form by:

To Zonta Club or e-Club of:

c/o:

Address:

City/State/Postal code/Country:

Email:

Applicant's Signature is required (Insert image of your signature or print, sign and scan this page.)

Date

Applicant:

Last (Family) Name

First

Middle

Recommendation from:

Name (please print)

Position/Title

Recommendation for Applicant for Zonta Young Women in Leadership Award

The applicant above has applied for a Zonta Young Women in Leadership Award. Please discuss the applicant's accomplishments, motivation, potential for public service and awareness of women's and community issues. You may write your recommendation letter on letterhead of your choice; however, you must sign and submit this form with your letter of recommendation to the address above.

Signature of referee (Insert image of your signature or print, sign and scan this page.)

Date



Verification of Current Enrollment for Zonta Young Women in Leadership Award

Please return this form by:

To Zonta Club or e-Club of:

c/o:

Address:

City/State/Postal code/Country:

Email:

School/Institute: _____

I certify that _____ is currently enrolled in
(name)

_____ at _____
(grade level) (name of school/institute currently attending)

(address of school/institute currently attending)

Signature of School/Institute Official

Date

(Official School/Institute Stamp)



Zonta Young Women in Leadership Award

Privacy Policy and Publicity Authorization

Zonta International and the Zonta Foundation for Women are committed to honoring the privacy and wishes of all of our Zonta Young Women in Leadership Award recipients at all times. In order to do this, please read the following information carefully and indicate your agreement as appropriate.

1. Most data collected by Zonta International and the Zonta Foundation for Women is used only to help Zonta better serve its award recipients. It is our general policy to collect and store only personal information that our recipients knowingly provide. Zonta does not sell, trade, or rent your personal identifying information to third parties. Except as described in paragraph two, we take reasonable measures not to disclose personally identifying information about you.

☐ I have read the above paragraph and agree to the Terms and Conditions therein.

2. From time to time, Zonta International/Zonta Foundation for Women conducts various marketing activities to promote the Zonta Young Women in Leadership Award Program. In addition, to ensure Zonta's ability to fund the Awards, the Zonta Foundation for Women may from time to time provide information to donors to the Zonta Young Women in Leadership Award Fund about recipients of their donations. Zonta retains the right to use your name, photograph and biographical information to promote the Zonta Young Women in Leadership Awards in various promotional materials, including the Zonta International website.

☐ I have read the above paragraph and agree to the Terms and Conditions therein.

Please print your name

Signature (Insert image of your signature or print, sign and scan this page)

Date