FOUNDER REGION

Soroptimist International of the Americas

LEADERSHIP HANDBOOK | 2026

Club · Officer · Committees · Member

"Empowering Through Education"

SOROPTIMIST®

Investing in Dreams

REVISED 2026 EDITION

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2026–2028 Founder Region Board

Governor — Jackie De Vries
Governor-elect — Kristal Koga
Secretary — Jan Schults
Treasurer — Holly Hayashi
District I Director — Jennifer Chiarelli
District II Director — Dana Holve
District III Director — Nancy Koski
District IV Director — Crystal Arbuthnot
District V Director — Lisa Ma

Introduction

This handbook provides foundational information about the history of our organization, who we are, what we do, how we do it, and key definitions for reference. Links to key Soroptimist websites are included for detailed documents and updates.
Whether you are a new member or a long-standing one, our goal is to give you the tools to feel comfortable sharing our wonderful organization with others. For those stepping into leadership, the guidance provided will help keep your club well-informed and on the path to success.
The focus in our clubs is to help women and girls take control of their lives and live their dreams—improving their socio-economic status through access to education. Our overarching goal is to increase our collective impact through quality social change.

1. About Soroptimist

History

In the early 1920s, women in North America had established themselves in the political arena through suffrage and in the professional world because of World War I. The time was right for women in professions and careers to unite for mutual support, friendship, and community service.
In the spring of 1921, Stuart Morrow, an organizer of men's service clubs, visited Oakland, California and met with women who officially launched the club toward its goal of 80 members. The club chartered on October 3, 1921, and Violet Richardson became the first president.

Who We Are

Soroptimist International of the Americas has over 1,000 clubs in countries across North America, Latin America and the Pacific Rim who work to economically empower women and girls. Soroptimist clubs receive assistance in their volunteer efforts by participating locally in programs developed and sponsored by the Soroptimist organization.

What We Do

- Provide scholarships and educational grants
- Implement SIA Dream Programs
  - Live Your Dream
  - Dream It, Be It

Mission & Core Values

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

- Gender Equality: Equal opportunities for all
- Empowerment: Help women reach their full potential
- Education: A key to success
- Diversity & Fellowship: Inclusive, supportive community

Our Vision

Women and girls have the resources and opportunities to reach their full potential and live their dreams.

2. Organizational Structure

International (SI)

Soroptimist International (SI) is the umbrella organization made up of five Federations, focused on global advocacy and communications. The International President serves two years; headquarters is in Cambridgeshire, England. Only federation presidents and presidents-elect vote at SI. An international convention is held every four years on a rotating federation basis.
www.soroptimistinternational.org

Federation (SIA)

Soroptimist International of the Americas (SIA) is one of the five federations. Founder Region is one of 28 regions within SIA.
www.soroptimist.org

Region (Founder Region)

Founder Region is led by an elected board: governor, governor-elect, secretary, treasurer, and one director per district. Club Presidents receive updates through Presidents' Round Tables (PRTs) held by their District Director in August, November, and February. Each club has three voting delegates at the annual Region Conference.
Founder Region covers most of Northern California, the state of Hawaii, the U.S. Territory of Guam, the U.S. Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the Republic of Palau — divided into five districts (Districts I–V) with 44 clubs.
www.si-founderregion.org

Clubs

Each district consists of individual clubs. Clubs should strive to maintain at least 12 regular members. Members elect a president, vice president/president-elect, secretary, treasurer, directors, and other officers per club bylaws. See pages 22–23 for charts showing how clubs connect to SI and the districts and clubs of Founder Region.

3. Membership Benefits

- Engagement in life-changing programs supporting women and girls worldwide
- Exclusive publications: Best for Women (e-newsletter) and Soroptimist Summary (monthly blog)
- Membership resources and networking via the SIA website and online directories
- Leadership development at club, district, region, convention, and other meetings
- Direct communication and feedback through social media, surveys, and other channels
- LiveYourDream.org participation in an empowering online community
- Exclusive discounts and offers through corporate sponsors

4. Programs & Projects

Soroptimist International (SI)

Vision: Women and girls will achieve their individual and collective potential, realize aspirations, and have an equal voice in creating strong, peaceful communities worldwide.
Mission: Soroptimists transform the lives and status of women and girls through education, empowerment, and enabling opportunities. The principles of Soroptimist are to strive for the advancement of the status of women; high ethical standards; human rights for all; equality, development and peace; and the advancement of international understanding and goodwill.

Soroptimist and the United Nations

SI advocates for human rights and gender equality through education and empowerment, operating across seven UN Centers (New York, Geneva, Vienna, Rome, Paris, Nairobi, and Bangkok) with 21 Representatives ensuring women's and girls' voices are included in international decision-making.

SI Foundation

The Soroptimist International Foundation replaced the International President's Appeal. The SI President leads the Foundation and raises awareness for its projects. The Foundation funds projects over five years under three objectives: education; poverty relief or prevention; and human rights, peace, equality and diversity. Soroptimists now have greater say in projects supported and funded. All funds intended for international projects must be processed by SIA to accommodate foreign currency exchange.

Soroptimist International of the Americas (SIA)

Live Your Dream Award (LYD)
SIA's signature program assists women with primary financial responsibility for their families to obtain the skills, training, and education needed to improve their employment status and standard of living. Over half of LYD recipients are survivors of domestic violence, trafficking, or sexual assault. Clubs should increase the number of awards given, provide support beyond cash (e.g., mentoring), and maintain long-term contact with award winners.

Dream It, Be It: Career Support for Girls
Launched in 2014, DI,BI targets girls in secondary school who face obstacles to their future success. Clubs work with girls in small groups or conference settings to provide resources on career opportunities, setting and achieving goals, overcoming obstacles, and moving forward after setbacks.

LiveYourDream.org
An online community empowering offline volunteer action. It encourages all women to live their

dreams while helping others do the same. Clubs are encouraged to invite members, friends, awardees, and potential members to participate.

Big Goal Accelerator Projects
Club and region projects that increase access to education for women and girls facing obstacles contribute to SIA's 2021–2031 Big Goal: Invest in the dreams of half a million women and girls through access to education. Report eligible projects to SIA so your club's work is counted.

Founder Region Programs

Founder Region Fellowship
A non-profit, incorporated entity within Founder Region. Fellowship is the Region's identifying project. Fellowships and grants-in-aid totaling not less than $20,000 are awarded annually to graduate women in the final phase of doctoral studies at a university within Founder Region's boundaries. Fellowship is funded by an annual mandatory fee of $7.00 per member, gifts in memoriam, and the Fellows program (individual/club donations of $1,000+).

Violet Richardson Award
Recognizes young women ages 14–18 engaged in volunteer action in their communities or schools. Given at the club level and submitted for district judging for additional recognition at the annual Region Conference.

"S" Club Outstanding Senior Award
An award specific to Founder Region honoring outstanding high school seniors who are members of an "S" Club of Founder Region. Nominations are submitted by clubs; selection is made by the "S" Club committee. The number and value of awards are determined by the Region Board. Awards are presented at the annual Region Conference.

Julia "Bess" Combs Membership Increase Award
This award is given to the club having the largest net growth in membership during the period from July 1 through March 31. This net growth is not to include that of a newly chartered Soroptimist club sponsored by a club or region. Net growth is understood to mean increase above and beyond current regular membership minus those who resign or whose membership is terminated for other reasons.
This award is presented annually at conference.

"Power of 8" Membership Retention Award
Established in 2014. Recognizes clubs that have retained at least 90% of their membership from the end of one fiscal year to the beginning of the next. Certificates are presented at the district meeting each fall.

Club-Level Programs

Well-rounded clubs typically participate across all levels:

International Level

- Support the Soroptimist International Foundation

Federation Level

- Participate in SIA initiatives and reporting
- Live Your Dream: Education and Training Awards for Women
- Dream It, Be It: Career Support for Girls
- Big Goal Accelerator Projects
- Founders' Pennies

- Club Giving Campaign
- Five Pillars: Education, Fundraising, Membership, Programs, and Public Awareness

Region Level

- Founder Region Fellowship
- Violet Richardson Award
- "S" Clubs — sponsor and support high school service clubs in your community
- Pillars of Success Posters displayed at the Region Conference

Club Level

- The Ruby Award: For Women Helping Women (optional) — recognizes a non-Soroptimist who has worked to improve the lives of women and girls
- Opportunities to highlight club successes at Region Conference
    - Pillars of Success Poster — prepare your club's poster for the Region Conference
- Big Goal Accelerator Projects that give women and girls access to education, such as scholarships, job training, and mentoring

5. Officer Responsibilities & Guidelines

Club Board of Directors

A club board typically consists of 5–10 members including a president, vice president/president-elect, secretary, treasurer, and optional directors. A parliamentarian may be included but is not an elected or voting member. Each officer's duties should be outlined in the club's bylaws.
The board oversees the club's affairs, funds, and property, ensuring financial accountability and policy adherence. Responsibilities include approving budgeted payments, handling membership matters, reviewing committee reports, making policy recommendations, and maintaining strong connections with members and the community.

- Focus on the Five Pillars: Education, Fundraising, Membership, Programs, and Public Awareness
- Be open, inclusive, and responsive to ideas and concerns
- Review committee recommendations and present them to the club
- Recommend policy changes but do not implement without member input

Collaboration & Strategic Planning

"Working As One" is a structured exercise that helps clubs assess projects for alignment with the Big Goal using a decision tree. Soroptimist Forward offers resources to support clubs in program delivery, fundraising, member engagement, and public recognition.

Club President

The president leads meetings, upholds club policies, engages members, and represents the Soroptimist mission in the community.

10 Principles for a Successful Club President

1. Lead with honor, generosity, and dedication
2. Represent the club at community events and meetings
3. Know Soroptimist laws and educational tools
4. Communicate promptly and effectively — use the official club email
5. Appoint committees wisely to maximize members' talents
6. Plan — a well-prepared calendar ensures success
7. Mentor future leaders
8. Encourage members to attend district, regional, and international events
9. Seek guidance from the region board and committees
10. Be fair, kind, and tactful in all interactions

3 Keys to Success

- Teamwork — use the 4 C's: Consideration, Collaboration, Concern, Communication
- Attitude — stay positive, patient, and inclusive; inspire through respect and enthusiasm
- Organization — plan early, set clear goals, and follow up consistently

Vice President / President-elect

Supports the President and steps in during the President's absence. In most clubs, responsible for organizing programs and speakers.

- Assist the President in leadership duties
- Stay informed on Soroptimist matters at all levels (Club, District, Region, SIA, SI)
- Attend relevant meetings and functions
- Oversee speaker and program planning
- Serve as a delegate to district and region meetings

Working with Speakers

- Initial contact: share information about Soroptimist and provide event details
- Gather biographical details, confirm name, title, and equipment needs
- On presentation day: greet the speaker and arrange handouts in advance
- Post-meeting: send a thank-you note and write a summary for the newsletter or media

Secretary

The club secretary prepares, maintains, and circulates all records, correspondence, and minutes of meetings in accordance with club bylaws and SIA's Club Secretary Guidelines.

Primary Duties

- Record and preserve meeting minutes
- Manage club correspondence
- Ensure timely distribution of mail and notices
- Maintain membership rosters and club documents
- Call meetings to order in the absence of leadership
- Bring essential documents to all meetings (minutes, bylaws, committee lists, budgets, agenda)

Writing Effective Minutes

- Include: meeting details, main motions, votes, reports, and significant discussions
- Avoid: opinions, withdrawn motions, and full reports unless necessary
- Send minutes promptly to the President and members after the meeting
- Highlight unfinished business for the next meeting

Treasurer

The club treasurer maintains and presents all financial records required for club operations in accordance with club bylaws and SIA's Club Treasurer Guidelines.

- Manage all financial transactions
- Maintain accurate financial records and reports
- Ensure compliance with tax and regulatory requirements
- Oversee fundraiser income and expenses
- Assist in budgeting and financial planning
- Collect and deposit funds; track income and expenses
- Reconcile bank statements monthly
- Provide monthly financial reports to members
- Process dues and maintain membership financial records

Director(s)

Acts as a liaison between members and the board.

- Provide leadership and insight, often as a past officer
- Support club administration and decision-making
- Help identify community needs and advocate for initiatives
- Help manage club operations — do not make decisions alone
- Engage members in discussions and planning
- Duties are specified in the Club bylaws

Club Delegates

Represent the club in voting and discussions at district meetings, the Region Conference, and the SIA Convention. Each club should have three delegates, each a regular member.

Before the Conference

- Ensure registration and credentials are in order
- Verify that the club's financial obligations are met
- Understand the club's positions on key issues before voting

During the Conference

- Attend all sessions and register on time
- Follow standing rules and represent the club professionally

After the Conference

- Provide a report on major discussions, decisions, and elections
- Share bylaws changes and recommendations with the club

Parliamentarian (Appointed)

Advises the president on parliamentary procedures when requested. Does not express opinions unless asked. Final rulings are made by the presiding officer. A Soroptimist serving as parliamentarian retains her voting rights as a member.

6. Meeting Management & Protocol

Order of Introductions

Introduce guests and officers in the following order at all club events and awards programs:

- City/Government Officials
- Visiting Soroptimists (other regions/federations)
- Past Fellowship Presidents
- Past Governors
- Current Fellowship Director
- Current Fellowship President
- Visiting District Directors
- District Director
- Region Treasurer
- Region Secretary
- Region Governor-elect
- Region Governor (last)

Soroptimist Pledge

Recited at the end of each club meeting:
I pledge allegiance to Soroptimist and to the ideals for which it stands. The Sincerity of Friendship, The Joy of Achievement, The Dignity of Service, The Integrity of Profession, The Love of Country. I will put forth my greatest effort to Promote, Uphold, and Defend these Ideals, for a Larger Fellowship in Home, in Society, in Business, for Country and for God.

Soroptimist Grace (Optional)

For the bread upon the board, make us truly thankful Lord. For each one meeting here, whom our hearts hold close and dear. For this day oh Lord above, now accept our grateful love.

Flag Protocol

- The U.S. flag always leads in a processional or recessional
- When the flag passes, stand at attention, face the flag, and place your right hand over your heart (fingers together); lower your hand once the flag has passed
- During the Pledge of Allegiance, follow the same protocol
- When displayed on a floor or platform, the U.S. flag is placed behind and to the right of the speaker (left from the audience's perspective)
- Any other flags should be positioned to the right of the U.S. flag as seen by the audience

7. Transition Checklist for Outgoing Presidents

1. Club Information form due to District Director and SIA by July 1. Include LYD and DI,BI chair information. **Select LYD and DI,BI chairs before July 1.**
2. Pay club dues to Region and SIA between July 1 and July 30.
3. Update bank account signature cards.
4. Update meeting location contract if needed; send changes to the Region Secretary.
5. Pass the Post Office Box key and any storage unit key to the incoming president.
6. Organize club email — file into folders, delete junk mail.
7. Designate a chair for the Club Installation with approval of the incoming President.
8. Provide hard copies or electronic sample copies of the following to the incoming President:
    - Board and Business Agendas
    - Budget, Bylaws and Procedures
    - Club Activity Reports, Brochure, History, Roster, Member Email List, Newsletters
    - Committee Sign-up Sheet and email templates
    - Facebook/social media and website sign-ins — share passwords in person or through a password manager, never on paper or by email, and change them after the transition
    - Fellows List, Founder Region Roster, Laurel Society Members List
    - New Member Form, List of Past Presidents, Prayer and Pledge
    - Presidents' Round Table Agendas/Minutes, Reimbursement Form
    - Year-End Treasurer Report
9. Provide one-on-one training to ensure a smooth transition.

8. Committees

Committees execute Soroptimist activities, promote programs, and manage club operations. The president facilitates committee formation within 30 days after election**; LYD and DI,BI chairs** must be appointed before July 1.

- Follow direction from members, club officers, and past recommendations
- Treat all members with respect and integrity
- Support committee decisions and be willing to fulfill assigned tasks

Fundraising (Ways & Means) Committee

Successful fundraising goals: generate financial support for programs, build member enthusiasm, strengthen the club's public image, and increase community support.

Types of Fundraising

- Passive: Partner with businesses for percentage-based sales donations
- Active: Club-organized events and projects
- Grants: Apply for funding from private foundations or corporations

Event Planning Tips

- Plan one major fundraiser and supplement with smaller events
- Research successful events in the community and align with club resources

Fundraising Ideas

- Community: Fairs, home tours, art shows, run/walk events
- Merchandise: Auctions, candy sales
- Food & Gala: Dinners, teas, and themed parties
- Entertainment: Plays, film festivals, concerts
- Holiday & Competition: Seasonal celebrations, cook-offs, athletic challenges

9. Membership Responsibilities

Guidelines for Effective Participation

- Attend meetings regularly and be on time
- Be attentive during meetings and speak only when you have the floor
- Address the presiding officer by title and name (e.g., "President Violet" or "Vice President Patti")
- Address fellow Soroptimists by their first names
- Avoid side conversations
- Conduct business professionally
- Pay your own way unless invited as a guest or speaker
- Welcome visiting Soroptimists warmly; disagree politely per parliamentary procedure
- Follow Code of Conduct

Nominations & Elections

- Form a Nominating Committee per club bylaws
- Eligibility Check: Secretary provides a list of voting-eligible members
- Nominating Committee presents nominations; president asks for additional nominations
- President appoints tellers to oversee the voting process
- Tellers verify each voter as they cast their ballot (when more than one person is running)
- Once all eligible members have voted, the president declares the polls closed. Tellers report vote totals to the president, who officially declares elected officers

10. Parliamentary Procedure

Parliamentary Procedure is a set of rules for conducting meetings efficiently, ensuring fairness, and allowing all voices to be heard. Most clubs use Robert's Rules of Order (as specified in club bylaws).

- Democratic Rule: Every member has a voice
- Flexibility: Can be tailored to organizational needs
- Protection of Rights: Ensures fairness and due process
- Orderly Meetings: Prevents confusion and inefficiency

Key Points

- Amending Motions: Amendments can involve inserting, adding, striking out, or substituting words
- Stopping Debate: Say "I move the previous question" — requires a second and a two-thirds vote
- Requesting Clarification: Say "I have a point of inquiry"
- Motion Maker's Rights: The maker of a motion can vote against it but cannot speak against it. She may withdraw the motion freely until the chair states it; after that, withdrawal needs the assembly's consent (no objection, or a majority vote)
- Committee or board recommendations do not require a second to open discussion
- A second only opens the motion for discussion; the person who seconded can later speak or vote against it
- If a motion is not seconded, it will not be considered
- A two-thirds vote is required for motions that limit or close debate, suspend the rules, or rescind without previous notice

11. Technology Tips

Club Email

Each club has an official email account provided by SIA. The president is responsible for checking club email or delegating to another officer per club bylaws. SIA sends important communications only to the official club email address.

Forwarding Club Email (Office 365)

1. Go to Mail → Forwarding (or search 'Forwarding' in Settings)
2. Toggle Enable forwarding on
3. Enter the forwarding email address
4. Optionally check Keep a copy of forwarded messages
5. Click Save

Writable PDFs

- Save the PDF to your computer before filling it out
- Fill out and save the PDF to retain your information before emailing

Posting a PDF Flyer on Facebook

- Take a screenshot of the flyer (Windows: Snipping Tool or Windows+Shift+S; Mac: Command+Shift+4; phone: screenshot), then upload the image to Facebook
- If you have paid Adobe Acrobat Pro: Export PDF > Image > JPEG, then upload the JPEG (the free Acrobat Reader cannot export images)

Cyber Safety

- Avoid suspicious emails; never click links in spam messages
- Use strong passwords and store them in a password manager
- Verify websites before clicking links
- Keep software updated to avoid malware and cyberattacks
- Back up data regularly to protect against loss

12. Netiquette & Club Communication Protocol

Email & Online Communication Guidelines

- Start emails with a greeting and close professionally
- Stay focused; keep emails concise with one subject per message
- Proofread emails before sending
- Respond to emails promptly (ideally within 48 hours)
- Do not use excessive punctuation (!!!! or ????)
- Do not send large email attachments — share links to files instead
- Do not engage in heated responses or conflicts online
- Pause before replying to negative emails; keep responses professional and polite

Founder Region Protocol

- Invite the District Director and other region officers to club installations, fundraisers, or awards programs
- Submit proposals for collaborative projects to your District Director for input
- Respond promptly to District Director requests for Activity Reports
- Ensure invited region officers are seated in a place of honor at all events
- Confirm in advance whether the District Director or Governor would like to speak at your event
- Attend Presidents' Round Table meetings, or send designee

13. Correct Terminology & Naming Conventions

Members	We are "Soroptimists," not "Sorops"; we are "members," not "sisters" or "girls"
Clubs	We are "clubs," not "chapters"
Federation	We are a "federation," not "national" or "federal"
Pledge	We have a "pledge," not a "creed" or "motto"
Events	We attend "meetings," "conferences," and "conventions," not "gatherings"
Officers	We elect "region officers," not "regional officers"
Belief	We believe in "Soroptimist," not "Soroptimism"

Organization Name Formats

- Club names: SI/[City] (e.g., SI/Los Angeles) or Soroptimist International of [City]
- Soroptimist International of the Americas (SIA)
- Soroptimist International of Europe (SIE)
- Soroptimist International of Great Britain & Ireland (SIGBI)
- Soroptimist International South East Asia Pacific (SISEAP)
- Soroptimist International Africa Federation (SIAF)
- Soroptimist International (SI)

14. 2026–2028 Club President Annual Timeline & Checklist

Date	Activity
June 30	Report DI,BI and Big Goal Accelerator projects prior to June 30
July 1	Club and Region Officers officially take office
July 1-July 30	Dues to Federation and Region due — confirm with Treasurer; Treasurer to input officers, Live Your Dream Chair and Dream It, Be It Chair
July 1	Club Information form to District Director
July	Sign new bank account signature cards
July	Download Live Your Dream Award poster from SIA and distribute in community and local colleges
July	Complete Committee sign-up; appoint committee chairs and members
July	Complete Club Activity Report for District Director (August region board meeting)
August	Ensure club's financial books are reviewed for the previous year (complete by August 31)
August	Confirm LYD chair has logged into system; contact District LYD Rep for assistance
August	Attend Presidents' Round Table (dates TBD)
September	Remind Treasurer to file Federal and State tax forms by November 15
September	Ways & Means begins plans for club fundraisers — check with District Director and other clubs to avoid date conflicts
September	Begin plans for member mixers and recruiting events
September	Publicize and promote Live Your Dream Award applications
Sept/Oct	Plan for and attend District Meeting (review Call to District Meeting with club members)
October 3	Founders Day, 1921 — celebrate with club and look for SIA virtual celebrations
October	Breast Cancer Awareness Month; Domestic Violence Awareness Month
October	Leadership Training — District V
October	Complete Club Activity Report for District Director (November region board meeting)

November	Attend Presidents' Round Table (dates TBD)
November 15	Live Your Dream Award club deadline for submission of applications
November 15	Violet Richardson Award applications due to clubs (suggested date)
November 15	Federal and State tax forms must be filed
November 15	Proposed changes to Founder Region and Founder Region Fellowship Bylaws due
November 25	International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women — "Orange the World" Campaign begins through December 10
December 1	Nominations due to Nominating Chair (even years-Nominating Committee, Odd years-FR Board)
December 10	UN Human Rights Day
Dec/Jan	Judge Live Your Dream Award applications; share unused applications with LYD District Rep
January	Appoint club's nominating committee
January	Complete Club Activity Report for District Director (February region board meeting)
January 11	National Day of Human Trafficking Awareness
February	"Fun for Fellowship" Month — plan Fellowship Fundraiser
February	Club's Nominating Committee prepares slate of officers
February	Plan award celebrations for LYD
February	Attend Presidents' Round Table (date TBD)
February 1	Live Your Dream Award application and transmittal due to District Representative
February 1	Violet Richardson Award club winner application and transmittal due to District Representative
February 15	Live Your Dream Award district winner applications due to Region Chair
March	Women's History Month
March 8	International Women's Day
March	Review Call to Conference with Club (posted on Region Website)
March 31	Deadline for new member transaction forms and Fellowship contributions for recognition at Founder Region Conference
March 31	Club Giving contributions deadline for acknowledgement at Founder Region Conference
March/April	Region Conference Registration deadlines; Memorial Form Deadline
April	Finance Committee to prepare and present the club proposed budget
April 1	Deadline for Soroptimist Club Grants for Women and Girls applications at SIA Headquarters
May	Founder Region Conference
May	Begin preparation of dues forms; prepare and distribute Dues Statements to club members
May	Review SI/SIA Call to Convention; plan and prepare registration
June	Budget proposed/approved at business meetings; annual committee reports due
June	Leadership Training — Districts I, II, III (location TBD)
June	Leadership Training — District IV (location Eureka)
June	Redwood Memorial Grove Service (Second Sunday in June)
June/July	Hold Installation events; invite region board members
June/July	Joint club board meeting for transition and transfer of materials
June 30	Club Giving contributions due to SIA (send before July 1)
June 30	Evaluate club activities, programs, and projects. Report DI,BI and Big Goal Accelerator (final deadline)

15. Quick Links

Digital & Branding Resources

Brand Visual Guide

Key Websites

Founder Region
Soroptimist International of the Americas (SIA)
Soroptimist International (SI)
Fellowship

16. Glossary of Terms

Attendance

As written in SIA Bylaws, Section 5.02: all members whose participation meets club bylaw requirements may hold office, speak, make motions, and vote. Clubs shall not require attendance at meetings as a condition of retaining membership.

Best for Women Newsletter

The organization's fully digital e-newsletter and primary communication vehicle for members. Includes communication from leadership, Dream Program information, and more. Sent in members' respective language.

Big Goal Accelerator Projects

Local projects working with women and girls facing obstacles that provide access to education leading to economic empowerment. Must be reported to SIA by June 30.

Club Email

Official email addresses provided by SIA for each club — important for internal and external communications while protecting individual member privacy.

Club Giving Campaign

A recognition program for clubs that contribute locally raised funds to support federation programs. Founder Region's goal is for all clubs to contribute 10% of funds raised. Contributions received by March 31 are acknowledged at Founder Region Conference; send all contributions to SIA before July 1.

Club Roadmap for Success
A guide to help clubs understand their role in achieving the goals of the SIA Strategic Plan.

Code of Conduct
The Soroptimist International of the Americas (SIA) Member and Leader Code of Conduct

was recently developed and launched — the process was spurred by feedback from lapsed member surveys showing that a lack of civility at the local level was causing members to leave the organization.

Committees
Committees plan and accomplish the activities of the organization at all levels — from the club to international. Serving on committees increases organizational knowledge and leadership skills.

Conference
The annual business meeting of a region. Founder Region Conference is held the first weekend in May.

Convention
The biennial meeting of SIA, usually held in July of even-numbered years. The quadrennial meeting of SI, usually held in July of an odd-numbered year.

Delegates
At district meetings, the Region Conference, and the SIA Convention, each club should have three regular member delegates. They represent their club in voting, speak to concerns, and report back on all Soroptimist matters.

District Meetings
Opportunity to educate members about International, Federation, and Region programs and activities. Inspiration and direction given by the district director and region board.

Dream It, Be It (DI,BI)
Launched in 2014. Targets girls in secondary school who face obstacles to their future success. Provides access to professional role models, career education, and resources. Report by June 30.

Federation
One of the five federations that make up Soroptimist International: the Americas (SIA), Europe (SIE), Great Britain & Ireland (SIGBI), South East Asia Pacific (SISEAP), and Africa (SIAF).

Fellow
Individuals and clubs who donate $1,000 or more to Founder Region Fellowship are honored with the designation 'Fellow.'

Fellowship, Inc.
The identifying service project of Founder Region. Provides financial grants-in-aid to deserving women in the final phase of a doctoral degree within Founder Region's boundaries. The Fellowship program began in 1948.

Financial Transaction Form
A two-page document used to send all financial contributions (dues, Club Giving, Laurel Society, etc.) to SIA Headquarters.

Founder Region Newsletter
Published monthly on the 15th of the month and posted to the Founder Region website. Also see the monthly Governor's Blog.

Founder Region Website
Contains the history of our region, all clubs, the Founder Region Roster, and a Resource page with links to forms, bylaws, and other useful information.

Founders' Pennies
An annual contribution to SIA based on six cents per member times the number of years since Soroptimist's founding in 1921.

Induction
A ceremony that formally brings a person into membership in Soroptimist.

Installation
The ceremony that formally places newly elected members into office. Founder Region has over 120 installation ceremonies to choose from.

Laurel Legacy
By making a planned gift to Soroptimist in your will or trust, you join the Laurel Legacy and help ensure long-term viability of SIA programs.

Laurel Society
A recognition program for individuals who have donated $1,000 or more to support SIA programs. See Stargazer / Monthly Giving.

Live Your Dream (LYD)
SIA's identifying Dream Award project. Established in 1972 to assist women with primary financial responsibility for their families to obtain the skills, training, and education to improve their employment status. Each year, over $3.1 million is awarded to 2,269 women across the countries and territories of SIA's 28 regions.

LiveYourDream.org
An online community empowering offline volunteer action. Covers women's economic empowerment, ending violence against women, human trafficking, and more.

Member
Any person who has joined a Soroptimist club, attends meetings, serves on committees, and pays dues and fees as agreed.

Membership Types
Regular members: individuals who support SIA's vision, mission, and core values. Life members: those who met the 'active life' or 'retired life' definitions prior to July 1, 2001, and chose to retain this status.

Memorial Grove
The Redwood Memorial Grove, a region project initiated during the 1946–1948 biennium. An annual memorial service is held the second Sunday of June at Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park, Humboldt County.

Motion Form
The form used to provide accurate wording for a motion at club business or board meetings.

Name Badge
To be worn on your right side (where it is more easily read) at all club meetings and Soroptimist events.

Program Chair
The board member (governor-elect) who oversees, coordinates, and promotes SIA programs within Founder Region.

Quorum
The number of members required to conduct a valid vote. Consult your bylaws.

Region Awards
Julia "Bess" Combs Membership Increase Award (largest net membership growth July 1–March 31); "S" Club Outstanding Senior Award; "Power of 8" Membership Retention Award (90%+ membership retention, recognized at district meeting).

Ruby Award
Honors a non-Soroptimist who has worked to improve the lives of women and girls through her profession and/or volunteer work. Named for first federation president Ruby Lee Minar. Optional club-level award.

"S" Club
Authorized in 1958; first club chartered in 1960. A group of high school students who wish to serve their school and community through service projects, often in conjunction with their sponsoring Soroptimist club.

"S" Club Outstanding Senior Award
Available to senior "S" Club members. The number and value of awards are set by the Region Board (currently $500). Application on the Founder Region Website.

Sigma Society
Established in 1966. Provides Soroptimists the opportunity to mentor college-age women and instill a desire for volunteerism.

Soroptimist Club Grants
Funds given to clubs to start or continue projects improving the lives of women and girls. Application period: December 1 through April 1.

Soroptimist Pin
To be worn on the left side over the heart at all club meetings and Soroptimist events.

Stargazer / Monthly Giving
The Soroptimist Stargazers Monthly Giving Program allows individuals to work towards Laurel Society membership on a monthly basis.

Strategic Plan
SIA's model — Shaping the Future of Soroptimist through Increased Collective Impact — identifying outcomes in five Pillars for Success: Education, Fundraising, Membership, Programs, and Public Awareness.

Violet Richardson Ward (first president)
One of the first eighty charter members of the Soroptimist Association in 1921; the first charter president. Her motto: 'It's what you do that counts.'

Violet Richardson Award
Recognition for young women ages 14–18 engaged in volunteer action in their communities or schools.

Working With Youth
Procedures developed to support clubs in conducting programs in a safe and secure environment for participating youth. Resources available on the SIA website.

17. Using AI Wisely: Agendas and Minutes

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools such as Claude, ChatGPT, Microsoft Copilot, and Google Gemini can save officers hours of work. They are best used as a helpful assistant: AI drafts, and a Soroptimist reviews, corrects, and approves.

How AI Can Help

- **Agendas:** Turn a list of topics into a clean agenda in standard order, with times and presenters.
- **Minutes:** Turn the secretary's rough notes into properly formatted minutes.
- **Summaries:** Shorten long SIA or Region documents (such as a Call to Conference) into key points for members.
- **Communications:** Draft meeting reminders, thank-you notes, newsletter items, and social media posts.
- **Planning:** Build a club-year calendar from the Club President Annual Timeline & Checklist in this handbook.
- **Editing:** Proofread flyers and letters, and check spelling of names.

Best Practices

1. **A person is always responsible.** The secretary still writes the minutes and the president still sets the agenda. AI only drafts.
2. **Check every fact.** AI can sound confident and still be wrong. Verify names, titles, dates, dollar amounts, motions, and vote counts against your own notes.
3. **Protect member privacy.** Do not enter home addresses, phone numbers, personal emails, health information, bank or account numbers, or donor details. Use first names or titles instead.
4. **Keep confidential matters out.** Do not enter Live Your Dream or scholarship applicant information, member discipline matters, or executive session discussions.
5. **Use the club email account** for any AI tool used for club business, so access passes to the next officer.
6. **Ask before recording.** If a meeting is recorded or transcribed by an AI tool (for example, in Zoom or Microsoft Teams), announce it at the start and get the group's consent. Delete recordings once the minutes are approved.
7. **Members approve the minutes.** AI-drafted minutes are a draft until the club approves them at the next meeting.
8. **Be open about it.** It is fine to say "drafted with AI help." Never present AI writing as a member's personal words, such as a tribute or award nomination, without her review.
9. **Follow Soroptimist branding.** Check that AI-written materials use correct names and terms (see Correct Terminology & Naming Conventions).

Using AI for Agendas

Give the AI the meeting type, date, time, location, and your list of topics. Ask for the standard order of business:

1. Call to Order
2. Introductions of guests and officers
3. Approval of the Agenda
4. Approval of the Minutes of the previous meeting
5. Treasurer's Report
6. Officer and Committee Reports
7. Unfinished Business
8. New Business
9. Announcements
10. Soroptimist Pledge and Adjournment

Sample request: "Create a business meeting agenda for Soroptimist International of [City] on [date] at [time] at [place]. Use standard Robert's Rules order of business. Topics: treasurer's report, Live Your Dream Award update, fundraiser planning, new business on the holiday party. End with the Soroptimist Pledge and adjournment. Keep it to one page."

Using AI for Minutes

Take notes as usual during the meeting. Afterward, paste your notes into the AI tool and ask it to format them. Remind it that minutes record what was done, not everything that was said.

Sample request: "Format these notes into business meeting minutes for Soroptimist International of [City]. Include: date, time, place, presiding officer, members present and quorum, each motion with the maker's name and whether it carried or failed, reports given, and the adjournment time. Do not include opinions, discussion details, or withdrawn motions. Mark anything unclear with [CHECK]."

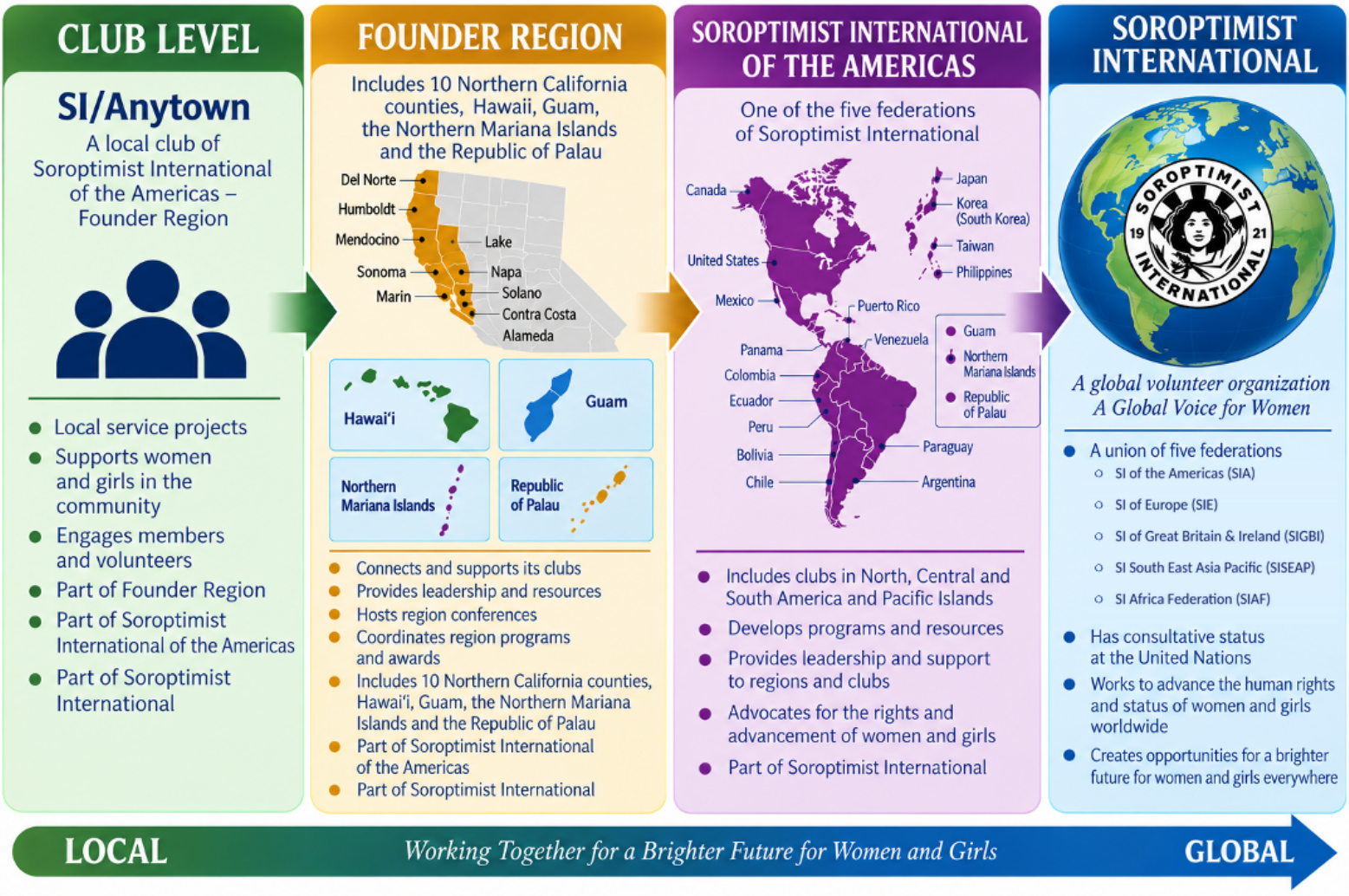
Before you send the minutes, check:

- ☐ Every motion's wording, maker, and result matches your notes
- ☐ Names, titles, and dollar amounts are correct
- ☐ Nothing was added that did not happen
- ☐ No private member information is included
- ☐ Unfinished business is listed for the next meeting
- ☐ Marked "DRAFT" until approved by the club

Quick Do's and Don'ts

Do	Don't
Use AI to draft, format, and proofread	Let AI make decisions or record votes you didn't confirm
Use first names or titles	Enter addresses, phone numbers, or financial account numbers
Get consent before recording a meeting	Record or transcribe without telling members
Read every word before sending	Send AI output without review
Keep approved minutes in the club records	Rely on the AI tool to store club records

How Your Club Connects to Soroptimist International



Every member belongs to a local club. Each club is part of Founder Region, one of SIA's 28 regions. SIA is one of the five federations that together make up Soroptimist International.

Founder Region Organizational Chart 2026–2027

