

2026



ZONTA WOMEN IN BUSINESS LEADERSHIP AWARD

DESCRIPTION

The Zonta Women in Business Leadership Award celebrates excellence and recognizes outstanding achievements by women between 18-35 years of age who are driving innovation and creating an impact in the business world. This prestigious award honors exceptional leadership, entrepreneurial spirit, ethical conduct and significant contributions while addressing global or local issues affecting women and girls or climate justice.



The program operates at the Zonta club, district and international levels. Zonta International offers 10 international awards of US\$10,000 each and a complimentary one-year supporting membership in Zonta International for the next financial year.

Timetable

Zonta Club of Central Oklahoma Application Due Date..... 15 August 2026

District applicant selected and application received by Zonta International Headquarters..... 15 October 2027
Official announcement of international recipients..... December 2027

Who is Eligible?

Women, aged 18-35 at the time of application, who demonstrate evidence of the following, are eligible to apply.

- ☐ Exceptional leadership in a business-related field of study or industry.
- ☐ Entrepreneurial spirit.
- ☐ Ethical conduct.
- ☐ Significant contributions to addressing global or local issues affecting women and girls or climate justice.

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 scholarship recipients are not eligible to apply. Applicants for the 2026 Zonta Women in STEM Award may not also apply for the 2026 Zonta 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 must 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. Do not use AI to write the essay

Application Requirements

- ☐ Completion of the official application, including essay, (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 confirming employment (if applicable). The letter from employer must be on letterhead with signature from the employer stating the applicants date of hire and job title.
- ☐ Two recommendations from adults, not related to the applicant, such as teachers, school officials, employee supervisors or business leaders, which must be sent directly to the Zonta club **or** district and not through the applicant.

Supporting documentation not requested as part of the application 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 hold a list of all clubs' deadlines. The club evaluating committee will consider applications and select the club awardee. Zonta clubs each select one application to send to their respective Zonta governor.

A district evaluating committee reviews the applications and selects one applicant per district to submit to Zonta International Headquarters. Districts with at least 1,200 members as of 31 May 2024 may submit two applications. The International Zonta Women in Business Leadership Award Jury will select 10 international Zonta Women in Business Leadership Award recipients from the district applicants received at Zonta International Headquarters.

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 Women in Business 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.

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ZONTA
INTERNATIONAL

ZONTA WOMEN IN BUSINESS LEADERSHIP AWARD

APPLICATION FORM

SEND APPLICATION AND DIRECT ANY QUESTIONS TO:

Deadline:

(Deadline set by club

applicant is applying to.)

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

Middle

Current mailing address:

City: _____ State: _____ Postal Code: _____ Country: _____

Email address: _____ Telephone: _____

LinkedIn address: _____

Permanent mailing address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Postal Code: _____ Country: _____

Secondary email address: _____ Telephone: _____

Birth date: _____ Birthplace: _____ Country of citizenship: _____
(date/month/year) (city and country)

Name of college/university/institute currently attending (if applicable): _____

Current year of study (if applicable): _____ Expected graduation date (if applicable provide month/year): _____

Department/field of study (if applicable): _____

Degree sought (if applicable): _____

Name and Address of Employer (if applicable): _____

Academic background:

Applicants are required to send transcripts of grades or equivalent records from all universities, colleges or institutes attended. An explanation of the grading system must be included for each transcript. Please add your degree obtained or current degree sought, if applicable, and expected graduation date (month/year). **Do not upload unofficial transcripts as they will not be accepted.**

In the tables below, please list the institutions you have attended:

University/college/institute/online	(Year) to (Year)	Major Field	Date Degree Received/ Anticipated

Employment history (if applicable):

(If you started your own company, please include that information here.)

From (month/year)	To (month/year)	Employer	Address	Type of work or position held

Scholarships, fellowships, honors received:

	Month/year

Volunteer and/or other activities

(Please describe your volunteer, non-scholastic activities, memberships and cultural interests):

Recommendations

Please use the following fields to name and send a recommendation letter request to a faculty member in the major field of study (if applicable) and/or to a supervisor, employer, volunteer supervisor, or academic advisor. **These recommendations are confidential, and you will not be able to view the completed responses. It is the responsibility of the applicant to make sure these recommendations have been turned in by the Zonta club's deadline.**

Please list below those who will submit recommendations:

Name	Position	Title	College/university/institute/employer
1.			
2.			

Professional information and goals

(Please type in English.)

In 500 words or less, please describe how you have demonstrated exceptional leadership, entrepreneurial spirit, and ethical conduct in a business-related field of study or industry, any significant contributions you have made to addressing global or local issues affecting women and girls or climate justice, and how the Zonta Women in Business Leadership Award will assist you in reaching your goals. (Essays cannot exceed 500 words to be considered.) Please provide the word count at the end of your answer. Please do not use AI

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 for advancing to district and international levels. I understand that, at the option of the Zonta club sponsoring my application or the Zonta district or Zonta International, I may be interviewed as a candidate for the Zonta Women in Business 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.
- ☐ I confirm that I have not applied for the 2026 Zonta Women in STEM Award.
- ☐ I confirm I am not a previous international scholarship recipient.

Signature (required) _____

Date _____

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

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).

(Please check the appropriate items.)

How did you learn of the Zonta Women in Business Leadership Award?

Social media:	
▪ LinkedIn	☐
▪ Facebook	☐
▪ Instagram	☐
Department/teacher	☐
Directory of grants at university financial aid office	☐
Directory of grants not at university (e.g., public libraries)	☐
Website (name):	
Previous recipient (name):	
Zonta club name:	

Checklist to be completed by applicant:

Official detailed transcripts (if applicable)	☐
Translated transcripts in English from all universities/colleges/institutions attended (if applicable)	☐
Recommendations (2)	☐
Essay (not exceeding 500 words)	☐
Verification of Current Enrollment Form (if applicable)	☐
Letter from employer verifying employment (if applicable)	☐
Signatures	☐



Recommendation for Zonta Women in Business Leadership Award

Please return this form by: _____

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

Applicant: _____
Last (Family) Name First Middle

Recommendation from: _____
Name Position/Title

College/university/institute/business/organization

The applicant above has applied for a Zonta Women in Business Leadership Award. The Zonta Women in Business Leadership Award Jury greatly values and appreciates your opinion. Please discuss the applicant's accomplishments; current academic program or work experience; intellectual independence; capacity for analytical thinking; ability to organize and express ideas clearly; creativity; motivation; and potential for learning and succeeding in a business-related field. 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 below.

How long have you known the applicant? _____

Please rate the applicant with respect to your experience with other students/employees in this field/position:

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Exceptional	Very Good	Good	Average	Below	Insufficient opportunity to
Top 5%	Next 10%	Next 15%	Next 30%	Average	observe
				Last 40%	

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

Date

Return form to Zonta Club of:		Mailing Address:	
City:		State/Province:	
Postal Code:		Country:	
Fax:		Email Address:	



Recommendation for Zonta Women in Business Leadership Award

Please return this form by: _____

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

Applicant: _____
 Last (Family) Name First Middle

Recommendation from: _____
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How long have you known the applicant? _____

Please rate the applicant with respect to your experience with other students/employees in this field/position:

☐ Exceptional Top 5%
 ☐ Very Good Next 10%
 ☐ Good Next 15%
 ☐ Average Next 30%
 ☐ Below Average Last 40%
 ☐ Insufficient opportunity to observe

Signature is required (Insert image of your signature or print, sign and scan this page.) _____ Date

Return form to Zonta Club of:		Mailing Address:	
City:		State/Province:	
Postal Code:		Country:	
Fax:		Email Address:	



ZONTA INTERNATIONAL

Verification of Current School Enrollment for Zonta Women in Business Leadership Award

I certify that _____ is currently enrolled in
(name of student)

_____ in _____
(year of degree program) (name of course/degree being studied)

at _____
(name of college/university/institute)

(address college/university/institute)

(signature is required of college/university/institute official)

(date)

(Expected graduation date)

(official stamp of the college/university/institute)



Privacy Policy and Publicity Authorization
Zonta Women in Business Leadership Award

Zonta International and the Zonta Foundation for Women are committed to honoring the privacy and wishes of all our Zonta Women in Business 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 personally 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 and the Zonta Foundation for Women conducts various marketing activities to promote the Zonta Women in Business Leadership Award. 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 about recipients of their donations. Zonta retains the right to use your name, photograph and biographical information to promote the Zonta Women in Business Leadership Award in various promotional materials, including the website.

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

Please print your name

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

Date