

2027



ZONTA
INTERNATIONAL

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\$5,000 each and a complimentary one-year supporting membership in Zonta International for the next financial year.

Timetable

Clubs determine their own timelines for receipt of applications

Club recipient is selected and application is sent to governor..... 30 November 2026 or
deadline determined by the district

District applicant selected and application received by Zonta International Headquarters..... 2 January 2027

Official announcement of international recipients..... 28 February 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.

Previous Zonta Women in Business Leadership Awardees are **not eligible** to apply to renew the Award for a second year. 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.

Z club and Golden Z club members **are eligible** to apply. Recipients of a Zonta fellowship or award who have received a complimentary one-year supporting membership from Zonta International **are eligible** to apply during their complimentary membership year, provided that they are not applying for the same fellowship or scholarship they previously received from Zonta International.

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.

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.

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.

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 2026 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.

2027

ZONTA WOMEN IN BUSINESS LEADERSHIP AWARD



APPLICATION FORM

SEND APPLICATION AND DIRECT ANY QUESTIONS TO:

DEADLINE: October 31, 2026 (set by club applicant is applying to)
Zonta Club/e-Club of: Brewerton, NY - Friends for Equality
District/Area: 02/04
Attention: Scholarship Committee
Address: _____
City/State: _____
Province/Country: _____
Email address: Brewerton@ZontaDistrict2.org

Name: _____
Last (Family) First

Email address: _____ Telephone: _____

Birth date: _____ Birthplace: _____ Country of Citizenship: _____
(Date / Month / Year) (City and Country)

Current mailing address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Postcode: _____ Country: _____

Permanent mailing address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Postcode: _____ Country: _____

Current Study Details (if studying):

Name of college/university/institute: _____

Degree Sought: _____ Expected graduation date: _____
(Month / Year)

Current Employer Details (if employed):

Name and address of employer: _____

Position held: _____ Nature of work: _____
(Full time / Part time / Casual / etc.)

Education / Academic Background

Applicants are required to send transcripts of grades or equivalent records from all universities, colleges or institutes attended.

University/college/institute/online	Degree Received / Sought with Major Field(s)	Dates Attended (Month/Year - Month/Year)	Date Degree Received / Anticipated (Month/Year)
ex. University of Oxford	ex. Executive MBA	ex. August 2016-May 2020	ex. September 2020
ex. Imperial College London	ex. Bachelor of Science majoring in Biology Sciences	ex. August 2016-May 2020	ex. August 2020

Employment History (if applicable)

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

Employer	Location (City/Country)	Type of work or position held	Dates From - To (Month/Year - Month/Year)
ex. Major University Name Leadership Institute	ex. Long Major City, USA	ex. Director of Operations	ex. August 2019 - Present
ex. My Start Up Name	ex. Tamaki Makarau, NZ	ex. Co-Founder	ex. Match 2023 - Present

Volunteer and/or other activities

Please describe your key volunteer, community, non-scholastic activities, memberships, and cultural interests

Organization / Initiative	Location (Country)	Role and primary responsibilities	Dates From - To (Month/Year - Month/Year)
ex. Engineers without Borders	ex. NZ	ex. Volunteer, visited schools to teach children about engineering	ex. March 2015-2017

Awards, scholarships, honors received

Awarding Body	Award / Scholarship / Honor	Basis for Award (e.g. academic merit, leadership, service, entrepreneurship)	Year(s)
ex. Major University Name	ex. Deans List	ex. Academic Merit	ex. 2016, 2017

Recommendations

Please use the following fields to name and send a recommendation letter 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 are returned by the Zonta club’s deadline.

Please list below those who will submit recommendations:

	Name	Position	Organization	Relationship to Applicant
1				
2				

Please type your answers to the following questions in English, noting the word limit for each.

Business Leadership and Entrepreneurial Spirit

Please describe how you have demonstrated exceptional leadership, entrepreneurial spirit, and ethical conduct in a business-related field of study or industry. In your response, address each of the following:

- Leadership: How you influenced others or took responsibility to achieve outcomes
- Entrepreneurial spirit: How you showed initiative in identifying and acting on opportunities or challenges
- Ethical conduct: How your values guided your decisions or actions

(Maximum 350 words) Please provide the word count at the end of your answer.

Placeholder example:

Throughout my academic and extracurricular pursuits, I have demonstrated leadership, entrepreneurial spirit, and ethical conduct. As president of my school's business club, I motivated team members to develop projects that resulted in a successful community event, which increased engagement and interest. I took responsibility for organizing the event and making sure everyone contributed, showing my ability to lead and work with others. When I saw a need for more financial literacy among my peers, I started a peer-tutoring program. I took the initiative to plan the program, recruit volunteers, and find resources. I also reached out to local businesses for support, which helped the program grow. This experience showed my willingness to identify opportunities and act on them to create something beneficial for others.

My values of honesty and fairness guided my decisions throughout these activities. I made sure that all fundraising and outreach efforts were transparent and ethical, earning the trust of those involved. I believe that leadership means inspiring others while taking responsibility for the group's success. I always aimed to communicate clearly and ensure everyone felt included and valued. My entrepreneurial spirit is reflected in how I look for ways to improve and create new opportunities. I am not afraid to take risks or try new approaches if I believe they will make a positive difference. I also stay true to my values, which help me make decisions that are fair and respectful to everyone involved. These experiences have taught me the importance of acting ethically and taking initiative, qualities I plan to carry forward in my future career in business.

(Word count: 264)

Contributions to Women, Girls, and/or Climate Justice

Please describe your most significant contributions to addressing global or local issues affecting women and girls and/or climate justice. Your response should include:

- The issue addressed and how it affects women and girls and/or climate justice
- Your role and individual contributions. Highlight the specific impacts of your involvement, even if you were part of a team
- Any partnerships or wider team you collaborated with
- Outcomes achieved towards addressing the issue

(Maximum 200 words) Please provide the word count at the end of your answer.

Placeholder example:

My most significant contribution was starting a workplace campaign to address gender-based discrimination and harassment, which can hold women back in their careers and affect their well-being.

I was motivated by my own experiences and a desire to create a safer, fairer environment for women and girls at work. I organized unconscious bias training and helped set up a peer support group to encourage respectful behavior. I worked closely with HR and partnered with local women's groups to make sure our efforts matched broader equality goals.

As a result, more people reported issues, and the organization improved its policies on harassment. The culture gradually became more open and respectful. I learned that ongoing education and strong leadership are key to lasting change. This experience showed me how small, focused efforts can make a real difference and how working with others is essential to creating a more inclusive environment.

(Word count: 148)

Personal Goals

Please describe your aspirations and why the path you are pursuing is important to you. In your response, please explain:

- How your experiences and ongoing personal growth will help you achieve your goals
- How the Zonta Women in Business Leadership Award will support the next stage of your journey

(Maximum 200 words) Please provide the word count at the end of your answer.

Placeholder example:

My goal is to become a transformative business leader by obtaining an MBA that will deepen my strategic, financial, and leadership skills. My experiences managing projects and leading teams have laid a strong foundation, but I recognize the need for advanced education to propel my career forward. I am continuing to develop my expertise in finance, strategic planning, and organizational change to better serve in executive roles.

The Zonta Women in Business Leadership Award will be instrumental in supporting my pursuit of an MBA, providing essential funding and mentorship that will enable me to focus fully on my studies without financial burden. This opportunity is vital for my professional growth, as it will equip me with the skills and networks necessary to lead innovative initiatives and promote diversity in the workplace.

Ultimately, this path is important because I aspire to leverage my education to create impactful change within organizations and contribute to a more inclusive and sustainable business environment. The award will be a pivotal step toward achieving these ambitions.

(Word count: 173)

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 identify as a woman and am between 18-35 years of age at the time of application.
- ☐ 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 (excluding recipients of a Zonta fellowship or award who have received a complimentary one-year supporting membership from Zonta International).
- ☐ I confirm that I have not applied for the 2026 Zonta Women in STEM Award.
- ☐ I confirm I am not a previous international Zonta scholarship or award recipient.

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

Date

Data Protection Policy

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.

Checklist to be completed by applicant

Essay responses in English (not exceeding word limits)	☐
Recommendations (2), submitted directly by recommenders to the Zonta club or district	☐
Academic transcripts from all universities / colleges / institutions attended (if applicable)	☐
Translated transcripts in English (if applicable)	☐
Verification of Current Enrollment Form (if studying)	☐
Letter from employer verifying employment (if employed)	☐
Privacy Policy and Publicity Authorization Form	☐
Signatures	☐

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

Social Media	☐
News media	☐
Department/Teacher	☐
Directory of grants at university	☐
Directory of grants not at university	☐
Website	☐
Previous recipient	☐
Zonta Club	☐



Recommendation for Zonta Women in Business Leadership Award

Applicant: _____
Last (Family) Name First Name

Recommendation From: _____
Name Email

Position / Title Organization

The applicant above has applied for a Zonta Women in Business Leadership Award. The Zonta Women in Business Leadership Award Jury greatly values your opinion in assessing the applicant's leadership capability and potential to succeed in a business-related context. In your letter, you may wish to comment on her:

- Leadership: How she influences others or takes responsibility to achieve outcomes
- Entrepreneurial spirit: How she identifies opportunities and takes initiative to create value
- Ethical conduct: How her values inform her decisions and actions
- Wider impact: If applicable, contributions you have observed where she addresses issues affecting women and girls and/or climate justice

You may write your recommendation letter on the letterhead of your choice; however, you must sign and submit this form with your letter of recommendation to the address below.

How well do you know the applicant? _____

Please rate the applicant's potential to succeed 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

Please return this form by:	
To the Zonta Club/eClub of:	
Email address:	



Recommendation for Zonta Women in Business Leadership Award

Applicant: _____
Last (Family) Name First Name

Recommendation From: _____
Name Email

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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

Please return this form by:	
To the Zonta Club/eClub of:	
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