



**ZONTA**  
INTERNATIONAL

**Marian de Forest**  
**Membership Manual**

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## INTRODUCTION

### Purpose

The purpose of this manual is to guide and assist the leadership of Zonta International and Zonta Foundation for Women in discharging its responsibilities. This manual discusses the organizational fundamentals of Zonta, retaining and growing membership, and club and country expansion.

### Audience

This manual should be read and followed by club presidents, club treasurers, standing club committees, area directors, lieutenant governors, governors and the Sponsoring, Organizing and Mentoring Committees (SOM), as well as any member interested in membership matters.

### Contents and Use

The manual describes processes for recruiting and retaining members, establishing new clubs and new Zonta countries and should be read together with the *Zonta International Club Manual*, the *District Manual* and the *International Manual* as well as the Membership Tools on the website<sup>1</sup>.

The manual is not a substitute for the Bylaws of Zonta International or Rules of Procedure of Zonta International, which are the primary rules that govern the operations of Zonta International, or for policies adopted by the International Board<sup>2</sup>. The bylaws, rules of procedure and policies should be read in conjunction with this manual.

### Update

This manual should be reviewed and, if required, updated once per biennium, unless relevant legal or policy requirements necessitate additional editions.

### Style

*The Associated Press Stylebook* and the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* are style guides utilized in this manual.

### Parliamentary Authority

*Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*, 12th Edition

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<sup>1</sup> ► References to other manuals and policies refer to the Zonta International website, unless otherwise indicated.

<sup>2</sup> Throughout this manual, *Board* signifies Zonta International Board and *manual* signifies this manual, except where expressly stated otherwise. Wherever governor is mentioned, it includes the regional representative and when Zonta club(s) or club(s) are mentioned, it includes e-clubs.

## SECTION ONE – Membership Basics

### The Value of Membership

Zonta club members:

- volunteer time and talents in initiating changes that will strengthen women's role in the world,
- participate in service projects that empower women worldwide, help women to achieve their aspirations and enjoy a better quality of life,
- advocate Zonta International's position on women's issues locally and internationally, safeguarding women's rights as human rights,
- achieve greater impact on the international platform by combining our voices with like-minded organizations and through our consultative status as a non-governmental organization with the United Nations,
- work with government and community leaders who share common goals, and
- encourage and help students to develop leadership skills, explore career options, and participate in community projects.

Through membership in a forward-looking global organization whose voice is heard and respected locally and internationally, including at the United Nations and the Council of Europe, Zontians:

- unite with other members to foster high ethical standards and world fellowship,
- connect with Zontians from all professions and cultures worldwide and share their passion in organizing women's projects,
- benefit from mentoring and leadership development programs organized at the local and international levels,
- discuss viewpoints with other Zontians and benefit from the exchange of ideas,
- participate in project management to widen their exposure and experience, and
- are groomed as dynamic leaders in organizing various projects and activities.

Zonta International is the organization of choice for individuals sharing a common goal; *Build a Better World for Women and Girls*.

### Members of Zonta International

The members of Zonta International are Zonta clubs in good standing, supporting members, international honorary members and past international presidents.

- ▶ *Bylaws of Zonta International*, Article IV Members
- ▶ *International Manual*, SECTION SEVEN - Members
- ▶ *International Honorary Membership Guidelines*
- ▶ International Honorary Member List
- ▶ Past International Presidents list

**Clubs.** A club becomes a member of Zonta International and a charter is issued once the club has paid its dues and fees, has elected officers and has the minimum charter membership of 15 members. Club meetings can be held in person or by electronic means.

The International Board must grant prior approval to organize clubs in a new country.

The International Board may terminate a club's membership in Zonta International if the club:

1. fails to pay dues or other financial obligations to Zonta International, or and district or area dues, if applicable, or
2. fails to function as a Zonta club.

► *Bylaws of Zonta International*, Article IV, Section 2.

► *Membership Manual*, SECTION FOUR - Expanding and Creating New Clubs

**International Honorary Members.** The International Board may elect persons to international honorary membership in recognition of international achievements that advance the status of women. International honorary members in Zonta International may attend and speak at Zonta International conventions, district conferences and club meetings but may not hold office, make motions or vote.

► *International Honorary Membership Guidelines*

**Past International Presidents.** Past international presidents are entitled to attend and speak at international conventions, district conferences and club meetings. They can make motions and vote at the Zonta International convention, but not at district conferences unless they are a club delegate or an elected district officer. A past international president may also be a member of a Zonta club.

**Supporting Members.** A supporting member holds direct membership at the international level but is not a member of a Zonta club. They may participate, without voting rights, in convention, events and programs. They may also serve on an international Zonta committee.

## **Members of Clubs**

There are three categories of Zonta club members: individuals who are actively engaged in a club, past international presidents and honorary members.

► *Bylaws of Zonta International*, Article XIV, Section 2

Members must have experience in a recognized business or profession and must be willing to actively support and implement the Objects of Zonta International.

Members of a club may make motions, participate in debate, hold any office for which they meet the prerequisites pursuant to the *Bylaws of Zonta International*, and vote.

**Diversity of Club Membership.** Club shall have a membership composition that is inclusive and diverse.

► *Bylaws of Zonta International*, Article IV, Section 2(b)

**Past International Presidents.** A past international president may be retained as a member of a club or elected to club membership and have the same rights and responsibilities as classified members, including the responsibility to pay district, area and club dues.

**Honorary Members.** Club honorary members, which are different from Zonta International honorary members, are elected to honorary membership by the club and must have distinguished themselves by some unusual service other than their service to Zonta. Honorary members have all the privileges of membership except holding an elective office or directorship, making motions or voting and representing the club as a delegate or alternate. Honorary members are exempt from payment of dues, but the club is responsible for paying their international and district dues.

### **The Club Membership Committee**

The club membership committee is the main committee responsible for the retention and recruitment of club members. Its responsibilities include:

- Define goals for recruiting new members and monitor progress towards those goals.
- Encourage every member to identify prospective members and invite them to meetings and events.
- Adhere to the membership approval process in the *Bylaws of Zonta International*.
- Identify a mentor for each new member and facilitate the new member's involvement in club activities.
- Communicate with the district lieutenant governor, as appropriate.
- Maintain an updated record of the club membership.

Additionally, the membership committee:

- Promotes continued membership growth and encourages the formation of new clubs in accordance with current biennial goals.
- Recommends club membership goals for consideration by the club board.
- Recommends a plan for how these goals can be achieved, implements the plan, and regularly reports to the club board and club on its progress.
- Encourages every member to identify prospective members throughout the year.
- Invites prospective members to attend an information session about Zonta.
- Ensures that the prospective member has attended/participated in sufficient club meetings and activities to gain further knowledge of the club prior to receiving an invitation to join Zonta.
- Ensures that members represent a variety of professions.
- Reviews all proposals for membership and makes recommendations to the club board.

Unless the club bylaws provide otherwise, the club board decides whether to invite a prospective member to join the club.

- ▶ *Bylaws of Zonta International*, Article XV, Sections 4 and 11.
- ▶ *Zonta International Club Manual*

## SECTION TWO – Member Engagement and Retention

### Strengthening the Club by Retaining Membership

Membership is the heart of our organization. The commitment, energy and resources of Zonta members enable us to fulfill our mission and achieve our vision.

By sharing skills, competencies and experience, every member provides valuable resources for the club and the improvement of women's lives at the local, national and international levels. Members are also crucial to Zonta's public image within the community. To retain existing members and make them real advocates for women's empowerment is therefore of utmost importance.

As Zonta members, we are committed to empowering women and girls but we need to empower ourselves and our fellow club members as well. This personal growth is also a benefit for Zonta.

Every club should establish strategies for member engagement and retention and follow up and adjust when needed.

When a member decides to leave the club, conduct an exit interview and maintain contact. The leaving member may return or can be of use in finding new members.

On the website, an extensive number of support materials for engagement and retention of members can be found.

If a club has a retention problem, the lieutenant governor is a primary resource for these clubs. Clubs should also inform the area director and governor of the situation.

Zonta International Headquarters staff can always be contacted for help and support via email at [memberrecords@zonta.org](mailto:memberrecords@zonta.org).

► Club Tools under My Zonta/Tools/Membership Tools

Service and advocacy projects in clubs should be carried out using the best judgment according to local laws and customs of the country in which they are performed.

► *Advocacy Tools* under My Zonta/Tools

## SECTION THREE – Member Recruitment

### How to Join

Members may join Zonta through the following two ways:

**By Application.** Prospective members may complete the *Prospective Member Questionnaire Form*. Once the form is completed and submitted, the nearest club contacts a prospective member to meet with the club members and learn more. A prospective member can also contact a club directly.

**By Invitation:** Many Zontians directly invite people to attend their club meetings or social events to learn more about becoming a member.

Approval for membership is given according to the club's bylaws.

- ▶ *Prospective Member Questionnaire* on Get Involved/Join
- ▶ *Prospective Member Questionnaire Mail-in-Form* on My Zonta/Forms

### Finding Potential New Members

**Personal Networks.** When recruiting new members, it is important to make use of personal networks. These networks include:

- friends,
- family,
- colleagues,
- business associates,
- former classmates, teachers and school administrators,
- hobby groups,
- speakers and local community leaders,
- local civic, faith-based, professional and other organizations,
- former Zontians,
- current/former Golden Z club members, and
- recipients of local, district, or Zonta International fellowships, scholarships or awards.

**Attracting Potential Members through Club Meetings, Area Meetings and District Conferences.** Consider including potential members in club meetings, area meetings and district conferences, or other events that are open to non-Zontians. Such events might include speakers on issues of concern or topics of interest to local communities and potential members.

**Recruitment Events.** The club membership committee should arrange at least one recruitment event annually to introduce potential members to Zonta. The event should include information on Zonta's mission and vision, the basic structure of the organization and Zonta International's projects and programs, as well as information about the district, the area and the club. Turn every event into a membership drive.

- ▶ Membership Recruitment under My Zonta/Tools/Membership Tools

**Social Media.** Creating social media accounts specifically for your club opens up opportunities for your friends, family, peers and prospective members to see what your Zonta club is doing. Use the advantage of these free tools to create new avenues of communication with both your members and the outside world.

It is recommended that you keep account management to a limited number of people to maintain a consistent voice and message and protect the Zonta brand.

**Local Advertisements.** Advertisements can also be used to promote Zonta in your community, and many clubs use fliers and presentations for marketing purposes.

There are several tools available on the website to assist clubs.

► *Electronic Communications Policy and Electronic Communications Guidelines*

### **Introduction of New Members**

All new members need information about our organization as soon as they have agreed to join. Use a checklist to track the information you have given to the new member and the information to be given later.

Choose how you want to deliver the information—all at once or over a period of weeks/months. Also, choose in which order you want to use the different information areas. Add and take out information that does not suit your club.

Other suggested ideas to integrate a new member into the club are to appoint a mentor and to include the member in committee work as soon as possible.

## SECTION FOUR – Expanding - Creating New Clubs

### Charter of a New Zonta Club

- ▶ *Step-by-Step Guide to Charter a New Club* under My Zonta/Tools/Membership Tools/Chartering A Club. Available in eight languages.

### Sponsoring, Organizing, Mentoring (SOM) Committee

The group of members tasked with organizing a new club is the SOM Committee. Members of the SOM Committee can belong to the same or to different Zonta clubs.

- SOM committees are typically composed of four to six members, including:
  - One or two members with knowledge of Zonta’s organization at club, area, district and international level, including Zonta’s role at the UN and Council of Europe.
  - One member with knowledge of Zonta’s advocacy initiatives and tools.
  - One member with knowledge of Zonta’s programs and projects—with both local and international impact and Zonta’s cooperation with UN partner agencies.
  - One member with knowledge about finance, including dues payments.
  - One member willing to tell her personal story on *Why I am A Zontian*.

The SOM Committee should be prepared to sponsor the expenses for doing the work as a service project. However, in some districts, the district/area may have set aside money for this activity.

- ▶ *Step-by-Step Guide to Charter a New Club* under My Zonta/Tools/Membership Tools/Chartering A Club. Available in eight languages.
- ▶ *Authorization Request for Organizing a New Zonta Club* under My Zonta/Forms
- ▶ *Authorization for Entering a New Country Form* under My Zonta/Forms
- ▶ *Naming Clubs Policy*

### Chartering in a New Country

If a member or a potential member shows interest in starting a Zonta club in a new Zonta country, the country approval procedure shall be followed.

1. Headquarters receives an inquiry from an interested person in a non-Zonta country who wants to join Zonta. This inquiry can come from the person directly or from a current Zonta member.
2. Headquarters immediately sends a response with information that the application is received, acknowledging it is a new Zonta country and needs board approval (copy to Zonta International Membership Committee) and that this process will take approximately two to four months.
3. Headquarters creates a fact sheet about the country for presentation to the ZI Board and the Zonta International Membership Committee.
4. The board decides on pre-approval and assignment to a district/region after recommendation from the Zonta International Membership Committee.
5. The recommended district/region is contacted by the board liaison and a SOM club is identified.

6. The governor/regional representative sends the form *Authorization for Entering a New Country* to the ZI Membership Committee with a copy to headquarters and the board liaison. The attachment provides supplementary information according to the New Country Criteria.
7. The ZI Membership Committee assists in completing the new country charter package and requests a motion for approval from the board.
8. The board or Executive Committee, if so decided by the board, votes on the inclusion of the new country/club. If agreed on, the international president signs the authorization form confirming approval of the new country and the new club.

This approval is valid for four years. After four years, a quick reapproval by the board/Executive Committee is sufficient. If the political/social situation in the country changes negatively, approval can be canceled within the four-year period.

For former Zonta countries, a quick approval process is possible when the local situation in the country allows pre-approval according to the fact sheet.

### **New Country Criteria**

- The goals and objectives of Zonta International can be accomplished under the local government structure.
- Residents of the proposed country are free to join and participate in meaningful local and international activities.
- If required, an approval for the organization of Zonta clubs in the new country has been obtained from the local government.
- Entering the proposed country will have no adverse effect on already existing clubs in neighboring or affiliated countries.
- Future clubs of the proposed country may operate under Zonta International Bylaws.
- The banking regulation in the proposed country allows for Zonta to open bank accounts and permits transfer of funds.
- A report verifying the legal processes for establishment in the proposed country has been obtained.

### **Charter Process**

The SOM club works with Zonta Headquarters to establish a club in-formation. This includes completion of the Authorization Request for Organizing a New Zonta Club form and following procedures as established by headquarters.

The in-formation designation is valid for a period of two years, after this time a new application must be filed.

Clubs may officially charter when:

- A minimum of 15 individuals are ready to pay dues. Exceptions to the 15 may be approved by the International President; however, the number may not be fewer than 10.
- Membership lists have been entered into the membership database and full dues payment has been received by headquarters.

The SOM club manages the official charter ceremony; however, this should not be scheduled until ample time has been allowed for the payments and processing of the new members to be completed by headquarters.

### **After Charter**

It is the responsibility of the SOM club, together with the new club board, to develop and conduct a sustainability plan for the new club. Some practices that have shown success in the past are described below:

- The SOM committee chairman attends, if needed, the board meetings.
- The first decision of the board is to determine a date for the charter celebration ceremony of the club. The board of the new club sends the proposed date to the governor, lieutenant governor and area director. The governor approves the date after ensuring that the governor, lieutenant governor or area director can attend and informs the Zonta International board liaison.
- The SOM committee chairman helps with the preparations for the charter ceremony celebration, where it is important to invite representatives from the local community, including the mayor, so the community will know what a Zonta club is.
- The SOM committee chairman is in touch with the new club and receives the minutes, attends meetings and assists with solving any questions. This will continue as long as needed in order to make sure the club functions well. For some clubs it could be a couple of months; for others, up to one year.
- For the first year, minutes of meetings of the new club are typically sent to the area director and governor so they can follow the club's progress.

## SECTION FIVE – E-Clubs

### The Value of e-Clubs

A Zonta e-Club is a Zonta club that has all the rights and responsibilities of a traditional Zonta club but holds its club meetings electronically. E-Club members may meet in person for service projects, fundraisers and other activities that rely upon members' proximity to one another.

Members are encouraged to have at least one face-to-face meeting per year with members of other Zonta clubs, e.g., at the district conference, inter-district seminars or the international convention.

Each e-Club belongs to a district. District involvement in the design, planning, establishment and ongoing quality assurance of e-Clubs is essential.

There is no limit to the number of e-Clubs in a district.

### Establishing an e-Club

As with traditional Zonta clubs, e-Clubs cannot be chartered in countries that do not yet belong to Zonta International. The approval process for an e-Club in a new country is the same as that for any other club. However, prospective members from any country, including countries where Zonta does not exist, may join an e-Club.

As with any other club, e-Club bylaws must be consistent with the *Bylaws of Zonta International*. E-Clubs in formation should establish a Bylaws and Resolutions Committee to develop club bylaws and present them to the club membership for adoption. A sample of club bylaws is available on the website. E-Clubs may choose to have more specific bylaws provisions regarding requirements for service and for participation in electronic meetings.

The currency of the e-Club should be the currency of the country in which the club is chartered. If an e-Club is chartered throughout multiple countries, the club should decide with the SOM Committee chairman what its currency will be.

- ▶ *Step-by-Step Guide for Charter of a New Zonta E-Club* under My Zonta/Tools/Membership Tools/e-Clubs
- ▶ *Club Bylaws Template* under My Zonta/Forms
- ▶ *Naming Club Policy*
- ▶ *Electronic Communications Guidelines*

### Transitioning into an e-Club

If a traditional Zonta club decides to change to an e-Club, the club's name would simply change to an e-Club name that represents the current club location.

A club that chooses to become an e-Club must inform its governor and headquarters; the governor should also advise the ZI Board liaison.

A member cannot be a member of both a traditional club and an e-Club at the same time.