Zonta International Amelia Earhart Fellowship Program Background/Statistics

Purpose
To empower women through encouragement and financial support of women pursuing Ph.D./doctoral degrees in aerospace engineering or space sciences. The Fellowships, established in 1938 as a living memorial to Zontian and aviatrix Amelia Earhart, encourage women to expand their career options beyond traditional boundaries.

Program Statistics
Since the inception of the program in 1938, there have been 1,824 Amelia Earhart Fellowships, totaling more than US$12.5 million, given to 1,395 women from 81 countries.

The Fellowship
Originally envisaged in 1938 as a US$500 loan, the award was changed to a scholarship the following year. In 1964, the scholarships became fellowships to make the award more specific. In 1984, the Fellowship amount was increased to US$6,000. In 2008, the Fellowship amount was increased to US$10,000. In 2015, the eligibility changed stating that previous Amelia Earhart Fellows are not eligible to apply to renew the Fellowship for a second year. This change took effect for the 2016 Amelia Earhart Fellowships. Now as the 90th Anniversary of the Fellowship approaches, the Fellowship has increased to $12,000 for the 2027 Amelia Earhart Fellowship.

Years	Award Amount
2027-Present	US$12,000
2008-2026	US$10,000
1984 -2007	US$6,000
1979-1983	US$5,000
1976-1978	US$4,000
1970-1975	US$3,000
1959-1969	US$2,500
1957-1958	US$1,800
1953-1956	US$1,200
1948-1952	US$1,000
1940-1947	US$500

How does the program support Zonta's mission to build a better world for women and girls?
The Amelia Earhart Fellowships focus on eliminating the gender bias that women face in pursuing doctoral degrees in research applied to aerospace engineering or space sciences. Women are beginning to demonstrate a progression from limited representation in aerospace engineering or space sciences to being leaders in the field. During the first years of the program, the awards committee had trouble finding qualified applicants and worked as mentors with potential applicants to help them become qualified for the awards.

Today, as evidence of the increasing numbers of women in aerospace engineering or space sciences, the challenge is choosing the most promising women from among the many qualified applicants. In addition, while professional and academic recommendations in this field were once written exclusively by males, many of today's applicants receive recommendations from respected professors and professionals who are previous Amelia Earhart Fellows themselves.

How many Amelia Earhart Fellows are chosen on an annual basis?
Up to 30 awards are given to Fellows around the globe each year.

How are the Amelia Earhart Fellows chosen?
Candidates for the Amelia Earhart Fellowships are required to fill out an online application, which includes information on their academic background, their professional goals, and their research program. In addition, the candidates submit three academic and/or professional references from professors (or supervisors) and their academic detailed transcripts of courses and grades from all universities/colleges attended. The Zonta International Amelia Earhart Fellowship Committee, whose members are all previous Fellows and Zontians, reviews the applications and recommends recipients to the Zonta International Board (or the Executive Committee acting on its behalf) for approval.

> **Special Note**: In 2025, Past International President and two-time Amelia Earhart Fellow (1977 and 1978) Sharon Langenbeck, Ph.D., showed her dedication to the fellowship with an extraordinary donation to the Amelia Earhart Endowment Fund. In recognition of this incredible gift and Sharon's unwavering impact to the Amelia Earhart Fellowship Program, one fellow will be officially recognized as the "Sharon Langenbeck Amelia Earhart Fellow" every year. The Sharon Langenbeck Amelia Earhart Fellow is designated from the 30 Fellows already selected by the Zonta International Amelia Earhart Committee each year based on pre-established criteria.

How are the Amelia Earhart Fellowships awarded?
The monetary awards are sent directly to the Fellows after they have returned the appropriate address, enrollment verification and tax information forms. In addition, each Fellow receives a certificate and wings pin. These items are sent to the governor (or the governor's designee) in the area where the Fellow is studying. The district may invite the Fellow to attend a district conference (or some other high profile Zonta event) to make a presentation. Other options include having the area director, district Amelia Earhart chair or club president present the items at a local event.

Application Deadline
Applicants may apply for the 2027 Amelia Earhart Fellowships at https://zontainternational.awardspring.com/. Hard copy and email applications will not be accepted. The 2027 Amelia Earhart application must be submitted in full by 15 November 2026 to be considered.