

## Membership in P.E.O.

P.E.O. was founded more than 155 years ago as a college society. Fellowship and philanthropic service are of great importance to its members. Since membership in P.E.O. is by invitation, it offers potential members the opportunity to learn about the significance of these key attributes of the organization. P.E.O. members refer to each other as sisters, emphasizing the importance placed upon fellowship throughout the organization. Members of P.E.O. affirm their belief in God and work together for the general improvement of themselves and society.

Before receiving an invitation to join, a woman is sponsored by three members in a chapter. The sponsorship and invitation process includes getting to know the prospective member well and explaining P.E.O.'s purposes that come with personal commitment and responsibilities. If a woman is invited to join a chapter, she may then make her decision based on what she has learned about the local chapter and the international scope of P.E.O. When a prospective member accepts the invitation to join, a written acceptance must include an affirmation of her belief in God.

We do not discriminate against any woman based on ethnicity, religion or education. Our Sisterhood is based on friendship and mutual respect. P.E.O. is not political nor is it a political action group. Individually, each member may work for causes of her choice outside of P.E.O. As members, we respect one another's political and religious views and activities. We meet to support each other, for fellowship and for the common and uniting purpose of assisting women in reaching their educational goals.

P.E.O. is a source of encouragement and support for women, both for members in chapter life and for women who benefit from philanthropic assistance as they strive for educational advancement.

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International Chapter P.E.O. Sisterhood  
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# P.E.O. A Philanthropic Educational Organization



Where women **motivate**,  
**educate** and **celebrate** women.

# The P.E.O. Mission Statement

Where women **motivate, educate and celebrate** women.

## Learning About P.E.O. and Our Philanthropies

P.E.O. (Philanthropic Educational Organization) has been celebrating women helping women reach for the stars for more than 155 years. Since its inception in 1869, the nonprofit organization has helped more than 125,000\* women pursue educational goals by providing over \$435 million\* in grants, scholarships, awards and loans. The Sisterhood also owns and supports Cottey College. Through membership, the P.E.O. Sisterhood has brought together more than half a million women in the United States and Canada who are passionate about helping women advance through education while supporting and motivating them. In addition to the educational philanthropies, the P.E.O. Sisterhood provides a framework of support and community for all members.

What started with a bond of friendship among seven women in Mount Pleasant, Iowa, is now one of the oldest women's organizations in North America with nearly 5,500 chapters. Headquarters are in Des Moines, Iowa.

As a philanthropic organization, P.E.O. supports six philanthropies that include ownership of Cottey College, a women's college offering baccalaureate degree programs, and five programs that provide higher educational assistance through scholarships, grants, awards and loans. These P.E.O. philanthropies were developed to assist women in furthering their education. Local P.E.O. chapter fundraisers are one of the ways to support these programs. Each of P.E.O.'s six educational philanthropies is classified 501(c)(3) by the United States Internal Revenue Service.



**Cottey College** A nationally ranked, fully accredited, independent, liberal arts and sciences college for women located in Nevada, Missouri, has been owned/supported by P.E.O. since 1927 and offers baccalaureate degrees in a variety of majors. Cottey College, a debt-free institution, welcomes women from around the world.

**P.E.O. Educational Loan Fund (ELF)** A revolving loan fund established in 1907 to lend money to qualified women students to assist them in securing a higher education.

**P.E.O. International Peace Scholarship Fund (IPS)** A fund established in 1949 to provide scholarships for women from other countries for graduate study in the U.S. or Canada.

**P.E.O. Program for Continuing Education (PCE)** Established in 1973 to provide need-based grants to women in the U.S. and Canada whose education has been interrupted and who find it necessary to return to school to complete a degree or certification that will improve their marketable skills for employment to support themselves and/or their families.

**P.E.O. Scholar Awards (PSA)** Established in 1991 to provide substantial merit-based awards for women of the U.S. and Canada who are pursuing a doctoral-level degree at an accredited college or university.

**P.E.O. STAR Scholarship (STAR)** Established in 2009 to provide scholarships for exceptional women in their final year of high school to attend an accredited postsecondary educational institution in the U.S. or Canada in the next academic year.