



American Legion Auxiliary Michigan Girls State

212 N. Verlinden Avenue, Suite B, Lansing, MI 48915
www.michalaux.org Phone (517) 267-8809 (Ext. 19)

ALA GIRLS STATE GUIDE 2016 - 2017



National American Legion Auxiliary (ALA) Girls Nation 2014–2019 Centennial Strategic Plan: As our single most consistent community outreach program, ALA Girls Nation and ALA Girls State help us case a wider membership net (Goal 1) and raise awareness of our mission (Goal 5) with a population that can leave a positive impact on our organization, our mission and our nation.

The National 2016-2017 ALA Girls Nation/Girls State Plan of Action can be found on the National ALA website www.ALAforVeterans.org and on our Girls State webpage www.michalaux.org, click on Girls State. Their Plan of Action has some great ideas, and we encourage all of you to read it.

The 77th session of Michigan's American Legion Auxiliary ALA Girls State 2017 will begin on Sunday morning, June 18, 2017 and ends on Saturday afternoon, June 24, 2017 at Shaw Hall, on the beautiful campus of Michigan State University, East Lansing.

RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE ALA GIRLS STATE PROGRAM:

DISTRICT CHAIRMEN:

- Keeps a copy of the ALA Girls State materials available for copying at all times.
- Handles requests for information from the Units in her District.
- Checks with each Unit Chairman in her District to be sure she has her materials and is contacting her local schools.
- Holds an orientation for all delegates and alternates in the District in the spring of 2017.
- Informs Units when the Orientation PowerPoint Presentation is available on the Web.
- Makes a motion at their District meeting to sponsor a Delegate to ALA Girls State.

UNIT PRESIDENTS:

- **Make sure your Unit ALA Girls State Chairman receives this guide and all monthly fliers sent in the monthly Unit mailings!** Instruct your chairman to check the Department Website regularly for the Unit mailings, reservation application, delegate application form, and Samsung Scholarship information. **She will need all of these tools to do her job!**

UNIT CHAIRMEN:

- **Read your materials!** (If you don't receive our fall mailing by October 31st, contact your president.) **Remember, all of the Girls State information will also be posted on the Department's website at www.michalaux.org click on Girls State.**
- Contact your local schools' counseling departments, or school Principal as early as you can! It is recommended that you do this in October/November.
- Make certain those in charge understand what the program is about, the type of girl we're looking for, who pays the fees, and the deadlines. Reinforce the fact that our program is recommended by the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP).
- If they haven't received their information, copy yours for them, contact the Department Office and provide their contact's name and address, or direct them to the Department website.
- Convey **the importance and excitement of the program** to potential delegates.
- **Make your selection of delegates from girls that commit to attending the entire program.**
- **Stay in contact with your Alternates, tell them to plan on attending and not make alternate plans. Send all of your Alternate applications to Beryl Robbins. If they want to go, we will get them there!**
- Instruct your delegates to contact ALA Girls State Chairman and/or Co-Chairman for approval if they need to arrive late or request an early departure. Remember, delegates **MUST** attend complete session to receive their "Certificate of Completion".

THE SELECTION PROCESS:

The American Legion Auxiliary has provided a unique citizenship educational opportunity for America's female high school juniors for over 80 years. The program has grown from a few hundred participants to over 25,000 annually.

When making your selection(s), you should be looking for the following attributes:

- You should interview your candidates. **MAKE SURE THEY WANT TO ATTEND.**
- Important that they have an Interest in Government process and leadership abilities.
- Important qualities to look for are character, honesty, good scholastic achievement, high moral values, and intellectual curiosity.
- Enthusiasm for the program. **THE DESIRE TO GET INVOLVED.**
- Fitness, as the program is both physically and mentally challenging for the entire week. When running for any office, there are speeches to make, reference work to be done, campaigning, etc. ALA Girls State is a high energy program!
- Participation in community, school and church activities.
- **Understanding that the American Legion Auxiliary stands for God and Country**, and that a delegate can participate without conflict with her own beliefs, as long as she respects the Auxiliary's commitments, and our American Flag.
- **MUST UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF ARRIVING BEFORE 11 A.M., ON REGISTRATION DAY, ATTENDING THE ENTIRE SEVEN-DAY SESSION, THROUGH AND INCLUDING THE AWARD CEREMONY, IN ORDER TO RECEIVE HER "CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION".**
- Must be a junior (11th grader) who will complete her senior year of high school in 2017.

• ***Candidates do NOT need to be the descendent of a veteran.***

Make certain that each candidate knows and understands that THIS IS NOT A SUMMER SPORTS CAMP, but an interactive government simulation program that will require her to participate in learning the governmental process. In addition to learning, she will experience fellowship and friendships that will last a lifetime.



**PLEASE READ THIS SECTION
CAREFULLY! IT GIVES YOU ALL THE
INFORMATION YOU NEED FOR THE
REGISTRATION PROCESS!**

RESERVATION AND SPONSORSHIP FEE:

- The fee is now \$350.00, and is still **NOT** refundable – **NO Exceptions!**
- Reservations will be accepted at the Department office beginning October 1, 2017. Send your payment early, you don't need to wait until you find a Delegate.
- **A fully completed RESERVATION FORM must accompany your check.** Please write legibly, and make the check payable to ALA DEPARTMENT OF MICHIGAN.
- You can now include additional funds with your reservation form to pay for your Delegate(s) T-Shirts. You can also send a donation that will be designated to a fund for sponsoring our Alternates.
- **Have the funds to sponsor a Delegate, but can't find one? Contact Beryl Robbins and she will select a delegate for you from the Alternate applications she receives.**
- **Don't have enough funds to sponsor a delegate? Consider pairing up with one or more Units in your District (2 Units would pay \$175 each, 3 Units about \$117)!**
- Poppy funds **cannot** be used to send delegates to ALA Girls State.

THE APPLICATION PROCESS:

- Recruit early! High School juniors are very active these days, so contact your schools in the fall and ask them to get the word out that you're looking for applicants. Make sure they have updated Application forms and informational materials. Take copies with you!
- The application form is a ***wonderful tool for your Unit to use for your selection process.*** It can be used in conjunction with other application methods such as requiring them to write an essay or scheduling personal interviews. **Please note that the Delegate Application Form NEVER gets mailed to the Department Office.**
- If you receive **Application Forms from your Alternates**, or additional girls you do not have the funds to sponsor, **send them to Beryl Robbins**, who will match them up with a sponsor, or put them on the list to be called to cover cancellations and no-shows. **Any girl that applies to ALA Girls State that has a strong desire to attend deserves to go!**

GETTING YOUR DELEGATES AND ALTERNATES REGISTERED FOR ALA GIRLS STATE:

- Once the Department office receives your Reservation Form and Sponsorship Fee they will assign you a Reservation Number for each Delegate you are sponsoring.
- **For each paid reservation you will receive:**
 - one (1) *Delegate Reservation Letter*,
 - one (1) *Girls State Checklist* (will explain everything they need to know and do)
 - one (1) *Alternate Letter and Alternate Registration Form.*
- **Sponsors will be responsible for getting the Delegate Reservation Letter and Checklist to their Delegate(s), either directly, or as an alternative, to the school counselor who can help with the registration process.**

- The letter will inform them that they have been selected to attend ALA Girls State.
 - It will contain their **Reservation Number** that is assigned by our Department office. They cannot register with MSU without that Reservation number.
 - **It is the Sponsor's responsibility to complete the Sponsor information portion of the form before you give it to your Delegate. Please provide them with the Sponsor name, contact person, address, phone number and email. They will need this information to register with MSU, and when they send you a thank you after their Girls State experience! Make sure you keep a record of your reservation numbers. Those numbers are important when you need to fill a spot with an Alternate!**
 - Contains instructions for reporting special needs, allergies, cancellations, and following up with their sponsor when they return from their ALA Girls State Experience.
 - It will include complete instructions for **mandatory on-line registration with MSU.**
 - The CHECKLIST is a brief summary of the mandatory forms they need to bring to Girls State, what to wear, where to go, and instructions to visit the Girls State page on the Department website where they can obtain their forms and detailed information. There will also be an Orientation PowerPoint Presentation in case they can't attend a live presentation.
 - Please stress the importance of reviewing this material early, not 2 days before Girls State. The earlier they receive this information, the better prepared they will be!
- **Sponsors will also be responsible for getting the Alternate Letter and Registration Form to their Alternate(s), either directly, or through their school counselor.**
 - Their letter will give them notice to remain prepared to attend. They can be called upon to fill a spot caused by a cancellation at any time!
 - It will contain instructions for completing and sending their Registration Form and Application to Beryl Robbins, 14683 Shenandoah, Riverview, MI 48193. It will also include her email address and cell number if they have any questions.
 - As Alternates are called to fill a spot Beryl will make arrangements with Department Headquarters to send them a Delegate Registration Letter and their Checklist.
 - **Make sure you tell your Alternates to plan on attending, and not to make other plans! STAY IN TOUCH WITH THEM – KEEP THEM INTERESTED!**
 - All the forms and information they need will be posted on the Department's ALA Girls State webpage. Encourage your Alternates to view that information and attend an orientation so they can be prepared to attend.
 - Alternates CANNOT register with MSU until they receive a Delegate letter with their Registration number!
- **The ALA Girls State Delegate will be responsible for Registering on-line with MSU, using the information contained in their registration letter. MAKE SURE THEY GET IT!!**
 - There is a **\$25 Registration Fee** the Delegates are responsible for paying at the time of their registration. If the sponsor wishes to cover the \$25 registration fee, your options are:
 - provide your Delegate(s) with a pre-paid credit card;
 - reimburse the Delegate(s) directly once they have registered; or
 - Present the Delegate(s) the reimbursement as a gift when they attend one of your meetings or banquet to give their report on their ALA Girls State experience.
 - **DO NOT SEND THE \$25 TO DEPARTMENT AS PART OF YOUR RESERVATION COSTS!**

ALA GIRLS STATE MAILINGS:

- There will only be one Michigan ALA Girls State mailing sent out in late October to the Schools and Units from Department. It will be an 8 page newsletter, and will include all the information the school officials and you will need to know to send a Delegate to ALA Girls State.
- An ALA Girls State/Boys State poster will be made available on the National and Department websites. You are encouraged to make multiple copies and post it wherever girls in their junior year of high school will see them. Take them to your local schools, grocery stores, McDonalds, Burger King, anywhere they will allow you to hang them!
- **REMEMBER**, today's young people begin planning their summers very early in the school year, so contact your school(s) before the holidays.

PUBLIC RELATIONS:

- Publicize the ALA Girls State program in the local and school newspapers.
- Place a notice on local and/or school radio and cable television stations.
- Mention the American Legion Auxiliary whenever possible in the interviews, literature and discussions in connection with ALA Girls State to increase the awareness of our program.
- Do a better job associating the name of the American Legion Auxiliary as the program sponsor.
- News releases and pictures should be given to the media upon selection of your delegates. Make sure you include "Michigan American Legion Auxiliary Girls State", your name and contact information, Unit name, number and location.
- Submit another news release when your delegate returns home from her week at ALA Girls State. Include a picture, her name, hometown name, sponsor information, a quote about her experience and activities she participated in at ALA Girls State.
- If your Delegate is chosen to attend ALA Girls Nation make sure you contact your local newspaper!
- A copy of National's suggested press release and media sheet is attached to this guide for your use, and is also available on their website.
- **Invite other civic and non-profit organizations to help with finances. Most are willing to help financially, recognizing that the ALA Girls State program is known nation-wide. Once again, contact them early in the fall when they are planning their budgets.**
- Collect pledges from your local businesses to help defray your cost of sponsoring a delegate.
- A letter that can be sent to company and corporate sponsors is available on the website.

MEDICAL FORMS:

- MSU requires that we keep medical information on file for each of our delegates, and the medical centers/hospitals require insurance information, in case of illness or the need for emergency treatment. We will accept a copy of a school sports physical, signed by her physician, and ***dated after May 1, 2016***
- If a school sports physical is not available, the upper portion of the ALA Girls State Medical Form must be completed by the girl's physician.
- ***IN EITHER CASE, THE SECTION OF THE MEDICAL FORM ASKING FOR THE INSURANCE INFORMATION AND SIGNATURE OF THE PARENT/GUARDIAN MUST BE COMPLETED, SIGNED AND BROUGHT TO ALA GIRLS STATE.***

THIS FORM MUST BE TURNED IN AT ALA GIRLS STATE ON REGISTRATION DAY, JUNE 18, 2017. Make sure you give your delegate a heads up about this form, and please stress the importance of giving us advance notice if they have a severe allergy of any kind! We will continue to contact the parents if we do not receive this form, if one is not produced the student will be sent home.

If a delegate is physically, visually, or hearing impaired and needs assistance to fully participate in the program, the contributing group must furnish a full-time female aide to assist the delegate. This aide must be 21 to 30 years of age and, preferably, someone other than a family member. The contributing group will be responsible for all expenses for the aide, including conference fees, meals and lodging. The aide must be approved by the ALA Girls State Committee.

SAMSUNG SCHOLARSHIPS:

Every eligible ALA Girls State citizen is encouraged to apply for this financial assistance. Applicants must be a descendant of a U.S. wartime veteran. Each Department selects one winner, in accordance with the foundation rules. Her application is forwarded to the National Headquarters of The American Legion. The State winner is guaranteed no less than \$1,100, and could win a National scholarship for \$20,000! Make sure they **follow the rules** set by the Samsung Scholarship foundation. Information for this scholarship, the application and criteria can be found at: www.michalaux.org, www.ALForVeterans.org or www.legion.org. The form is now completed and submitted on-line by the student.

GIRLS NATION:

Two delegates will be selected to represent Michigan as "Senators" to ALA Girls Nation, a similar program based on our Federal system of Government. Candidates are recommended by the ALA Girls State Government Staff. An interview is conducted by the ALA Girls State Chairman, Department President, Government Program Coordinator and the Judicial Advisor. ALA Girls Nation will be held in late July of 2017 at the National 4-H Conference Center in Chevy Chase, MD.

INFORMATION FOR DELEGATES:

- Smoking is prohibited by Michigan State University in accordance with their written policy.
- Delegates must bring their own toiletries, washcloths, hair dryer, watch, radio, alarm clock, fan, rain coat, and sweater or jacket.
- Casual clothing (shorts & jeans) is acceptable. **NO short shorts, or midriff tops are allowed.**
- Dresses (skirt and blouse or dressy trousers and blouse) are required for the opening session, Wednesday city photos, and on Saturday for the awards ceremony.
- Comfortable walking shoes are a must! While flip flops are acceptable, remind them that there is a ten minute walk multiple times a day to the hall where their classroom activities take place.
- It is not wise to bring valuable jewelry or large amounts of cash.
- Bring a calculator for use in the program.
- Laptop computers or tablets are not mandatory, but can be beneficial for research projects. There is wireless service in some areas of Shaw Hall and Wells Hall.
- Spending money for ALA Girls State T-shirts, caps, and other ALA Girls State merchandise (Your Unit may wish to provide one or more of these items for your delegates).
- The ALA Girls State Bank is open at Registration and available daily during the lunch and dinner hours. Delegates are encouraged to bank their money to avoid loss or theft.
- ALA Girls State Staff and/or MSU are **NOT** responsible for the loss of money that is not banked, jewelry that comes up missing, nor the loss or damage to laptops, and other electronic devices they choose to bring.
- Girls from the same school or home town are not assigned to room together.

ORIENTATIONS:

- **PLAN AHEAD!** It's the goal of the ALA Girls State Committee to have every ALA Girls State DELEGATE AND ALTERNATE attend an orientation. Although attendance is not mandatory, it is very beneficial to them. ALA Girls State Committee members are available to assist you with your orientations. You are encouraged to invite them to speak at your orientation to ensure that everyone is receiving correct, up to date information.
- When you set your date, take into consideration spring breaks, special activities of the schools in your District; including, proms, musicals, plays, major sports events, etc., to assure the best attendance for your orientation.
- If you contact us, we will do everything in our power to have one of our six committee members available for your orientation. In Districts with large numbers of delegates, we are willing to do more than one orientation. In fact, we encourage you to hold more than one. If your delegates are unable to attend on the day you have chosen, perhaps they can attend on another date, or make plans to attend an orientation in another district.
- Extend an invitation to Unit members, City officials, your school counselors, the history or social studies teachers and any potential sponsors.
- Make sure you notify the ALA Girls State Chairman with the date, time and location of your District's Orientation. This schedule will be posted on the ALA Girls State page of the Department's website: www.michalaux.org. If you have girls that can't attend yours, encourage them to check the Orientation calendar for one they are available to attend. **Informed ALA Girls State Delegates and Alternates make better ALA Girls State Citizens!**
- Don't be too extravagant with your ALA Girls State tea. Punch and cookies or snacks on the tables is sufficient.
- **NOTE:** Many times delegates sponsored by associate sponsors, are not included on orientation invitation lists. Feel free to contact Beryl Robbins to get the names of **all** delegates and their alternates from your district. ***These girls need the orientation information too.***

Printed certificates for presentation to your associate sponsors are available. Send the following information **to the Department Chairman:** name of the sponsor(s) (including American Legion Posts) the name, address, and zip code of the person to whom you want it sent. (Please allow 2-4 weeks for receipt.)

DONATION AWARDS PROGRAM:

The following awards will be given, at the 2017 Department Convention, for donations made to the Michigan American Legion Auxiliary Girls State program, in the 2015-2017 fiscal period.

<u>Donations of</u>	<u>will receive:</u>
\$ 50.00 - \$ 250.00	A Certificate
\$ 251.00 - \$ 500.00	Name on Attorney General's Plaque at Department Office
\$ 501.00 - \$1,000.00	Name on Secretary of State's Plaque at Department Office
\$ 1,001.00 or more	Name on Governor's Plaque at Department of Office

Make check payable to: **AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY.**

Earmark donation for: **ALA GIRLS STATE PROGRAM.**

Send donations to Department Headquarters:
212 N. Verlinden Street, Suite B, Lansing, MI 48915

DEPARTMENT ALA GIRLS STATE COMMITTEE

BERYL ROBBINS, CO-CHAIRMAN
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Riverview, MI 48193
313-318-6845 (C)
734-283-7290 (H)
berylrobbins@comcast.net
Unit 426 – 16th District

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Unit 274 – 10th District

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Unit 50 - UPAA

ALEXUS CHAMPION
6656 Ridgeview Drive
Clarkston, MI 48346
248-464-9172
purplequeen14127@aol.com
Unit 377 -18th District

We are here and anxious to assist you with your ALA Girls State program. If you have any questions, no matter how insignificant it may seem, please ask. We want all the reservations available to be filled. Shaw Hall will accommodate 600 plus girls! Let's do our best to fill it.

Stay in touch with your Delegates AND your Alternates! Keep them interested, be available to answer their questions. If you don't know the answer contact one of the Committee Members listed above.

Let's make our 77th year a memorable one!

Sample Contract for Delegates

(Date)

(Delegate's Name)

(Delegate's Address)

(Delegate's City, State & Zip Code)

Dear (Delegate's Name):

It is my pleasure to inform you that you have been selected as a delegate to the American Legion Auxiliary (ALA) Girls State Session to be held at Michigan State University, June 18 - June 24, 2017. Your sponsor is (Name of Unit or outside sponsor).

(If you have an orientation)

An orientation program to familiarize you and your parent(s) with the program will be held, (Date) at (Where held with full address) from (Time). At that time a member of the ALA Girls State Committee will present a program and answer any questions that you have regarding the program and the events of the week. We strongly recommend that both you and your parent(s) attend.

You will receive a Checklist full of information regarding the program with specific information on appropriate clothing, personal articles to bring, as well as information regarding the government program. The Checklist will direct you to the Girls State page on our American Legion Auxiliary Department website: www.michalaux.org. where you can print the MANDATORY FORMS required to attend ALA Girls State, and detailed information you will need to know before you attend ALA Girls State.

The American Legion Auxiliary Girls State Program is a weeklong session with room, board, and classes entirely funded by the sponsoring organization. Presently the delegate fee is \$350.00 and is paid in advance by the sponsoring organization. (Unit name and number) usually sponsors (number of delegates sponsored) individuals, and I am sure you are sensitive to the fact that it takes a great deal of work by our membership to earn these funds to enable you to attend.

In past years, one or more delegates (s) have declined to attend at the last minute, or have failed to stay for the entire week, resulting in the money being lost to the sponsoring organization. It is our expectation that the high caliber young women that we choose to attend ALA Girls State will demonstrate and accept responsibility for their commitments. Therefore, we are requesting that reimbursement of the delegate fee be made by you to (Unit name and number) for failure to attend without thirty (30) days notification prior to the start of the ALA Girls State Session to the ALA Girls State Chairman. Likewise we will expect reimbursement on a pro-rata basis if you fail to complete the ALA Girls State Session. Exceptions will be made for a death in the family or major illness.

Please sign and have your parent's sign and return the enclosed acknowledgement to me by April 15, 2017 at the address listed below.

At the completion of the program, you will receive an invitation from your sponsor to present a talk to their group on your experience. We hope that you will participate with them.

Again, congratulations on your selection as a delegate to the program. We know it will be a rewarding experience. Not only will you gain much knowledge, you will make many lasting friendships.

Sincerely,

(Unit Chairman's name)
ALA Girls State Chairman
(Unit Chairman's address)
(Unit Chairman's city, state & Zip Code)
(Unit Chairman's Phone Number)
(Unit Chairman's email address if you have one)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF REIMBURSEMENT PROVISION

I, _____ having been selected as a delegate to the ALA Girls State Program, sponsored by (Unit name and number) American Legion Auxiliary agree to attend the entire week session. Failure to attend without notifications to the ALA Girls State Chairman thirty (30) days prior to the start of ALA Girls State session for the year selected will result in my responsibility to reimburse (Unit name and number) the amount of the delegate fee, \$350.00. I additionally understand that my failure to complete the entire ALA Girls State session will result in my owing a pro-rata amount of that delegate fee.

It is my understanding that the sponsoring organization will waive this reimbursement in the case of family death or major illness.

ALA Girls State Delegate

Date

In the case of a delegate who is below the age of eighteen, the responsible adult for the delegate must acknowledge and accept responsibility for this reimbursement provision.

Responsible Adult

Date



American Legion Auxiliary Media Release

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Street Address, City, State ZIP Code

www.ALAforVeterans.org (and your unit's Website, if available)

Contact: [PR Chairman], [PR Chairman's Phone Number]; [PR Chairman's e-mail Address]
for [Department President's Name]

[DATE]

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Local Student Headed to American Legion Auxiliary Girls State

[CITY, STATE]- [NAME] of [HOMETOWN] has been selected to attend American Legion Auxiliary [DEPARTMENT] Girls State. [LAST NAME] was selected based on [selection criteria through Auxiliary unit and/or high school]. Representing her state as a legislator, [LAST NAME] will study local, county and state government processes in this nonpartisan political learning experience. Every spring, the American Legion Auxiliary Girls State Program provides approximately 25,000 young women with a hands-on educational opportunity designed to instruct tomorrow's leaders in the privileges and duties of responsible citizenship.

Delegates receive special instruction in parliamentary procedure and organize themselves into two mythical political parties. They then campaign, hold rallies, debate and ultimately vote to elect city, county and state officials. Once elected to office, delegates are sworn in and perform their prescribed duties. Citizens not elected to office are given appointments and visit the offices of those elected to share their viewpoint as citizens.

“QUOTE,” said [LAST NAME], ALA Girls State Citizen.

“QUOTE” said [NAME], American Legion Auxiliary Girls State chairman. [LAST NAME OF CHAIRMAN], along with other Auxiliary volunteer leaders, will attend the conference and encourage the delegates to continue their community service by becoming members of the Auxiliary.

Two outstanding citizens, known as “senators,” are selected at each of the 49 American Legion Auxiliary Girls State sessions held across the country to represent their state at American Legion Auxiliary Girls Nation held in Washington, D.C. in July.

Founded in 1919, the American Legion Auxiliary is the world's largest patriotic women's service organization. With a membership of nearly 850,000, local Auxiliary units have a strong presence in more than 9,500 communities nationwide. The Auxiliary's mission to *serve veterans, their families and their communities* is carried out through its hundreds of outreach programs delivered by its members, volunteers and National Headquarters.



American Legion Auxiliary Media Sheet

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS
8945 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46260
www.ALAforVeterans.org



American Legion Auxiliary Girls State: “I Was Blown Away by the Experience!”

Description: The American Legion Auxiliary Girls State program changes lives by bringing together dynamic young women for an intense week of leadership, patriotism and community. The ALA Girls State program is a proven leadership laboratory. A fictional self-governing state of young ladies elect their own leaders, write bills for debate and run a legislative session. In the process, these leaders—class presidents, top varsity athletes, debate champions—dynamically engage with state representatives and senators. Two participants from each of 49 states are selected to attend the elite American Legion Auxiliary Girls Nation in Washington DC, where they have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to meet the President of the United States. ALA Girls State is where the seeds of patriotism are cultivated in our nation’s finest high-school girls, by women who care deeply about the future of America and take its leadership seriously. It is where future leaders realize their true potential! “ALA Girls State impacted my life and gave me newfound confidence to help my community and society,” said one former ALA Girls State Citizen. “It influenced my career choices and my educational choices. The experience changed me dramatically.”

Objective: American Legion Auxiliary Girls State provides an opportunity for superior high school women who have completed their junior year to experience the “nitty gritty” of state government processes—the chance to live outside the text book. This program not only instills in its attendees a sense of pride and loyalty in America, but also prepares these women for a career in politics, public service, and excellence along their career path. It is the chance to plunge head-first into democracy, develop sharp leadership skills, and create the foundation for informed and responsible world citizenship. “[After attending ALA Girls State], I felt more empowered,” said one former ALA Girls State Citizen. “I had the freedom to make choices for myself.”

History: Since 1937, more than one million politically savvy young women have attended American Legion Auxiliary Girls State. Alumni include national media personality Jane Pauley, talk show host Leeza Gibbons, Miss America 2004 Erika Dunlap, Miss America 2009 Katie Stam, former governor of Texas Ann Richards, Senators Janis McKenzie and Rosalyn Hester Baker, Brigadier Generals of the United States Air Force Sharla “Kris” Cook and Michelle D. Johnson, and many other accomplished women. ALA Girls State has produced more successful women than any other girls’ citizenship training program in the country.

Activities: Mock caucusing and debating of bills educate young women in the real state legislative processes. Each program is state-run and thus unique to the state in which it is held. Cutting-edge political topics ensure that the debates are relevant, lively and passionate. Fierce political campaigns are held to elect a ALA Girls State governor, party officials, and pass legislation. Girls also have the opportunity to meet with some of their own state representatives and senators, who are genuinely interested in the fresh ideas of these future leaders. “I still believe ALA Girls State is the best program for young women,” said a former ALA Girls State Citizen. “It can change their lives as well as teach them about politics and their country.” For more information, visit: www.boysandgirlsstate.org/girls.html
www.legion-aux.org

The Organization: Founded in 1919, the American Legion Auxiliary is the world’s largest patriotic women’s service organization. With a membership of nearly 850,000, local American Legion Auxiliary units have a strong presence in more than 9,500 communities nationwide. The American Legion Auxiliary’s mission to *serve veterans, their families and their communities* is carried out through its hundreds of outreach programs delivered by its members, volunteers and National Headquarters.