



2026 MICHIGAN AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY GIRLS STATE

PROGRAM DATES: JUNE 14 – JUNE 20, 2026

ALA GIRLS STATE SPONSORSHIP GUIDE 2025 - 2026

DEPARTMENT OF MICHIGAN ALA GIRLS STATE COMMITTEE

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Beryl and Rysta monitor this email

The ALA Girls State Committee is here and anxious to assist you with your ALA Girls State program. If you have any questions, please reach out to any committee member and ask. Our aim is to get back to the days when we had over 500 students! Let's do our best to get the word out about our program, recruit students, and sponsorships!

The 85th session of the American Legion Auxiliary Girls State program is scheduled for June 14 – June 20, 2026, on the campus of Michigan State University. The non-refundable cost per student is \$425.

We proudly offer the opportunity at no cost to the student because we believe every applicant to ALA Girls State deserves the chance to attend. You can help us achieve that goal by pledging to sponsor one or more young women that will complete their junior year of high school in the spring of 2026!

HOW TO MAKE A SPONSORSHIP PLEDGE

- ⊕ To help us connect sponsorships to students in your area, we are continuing our use of an online PLEDGE FORM! This is a way of letting us know that you are interested in sponsoring one or more students to ALA Girls State without having to pay your sponsorship fee until you are matched up with a delegate. The link to the pledge form is: [**https://bit.ly/MIGirlsStateSponsor**](https://bit.ly/MIGirlsStateSponsor).
- ⊕ Please remember that in addition to the Legion Family, we accept full or partial sponsorships from anyone wishing to sponsor a student to ALA Girls State! Invite local businesses and organizations to help sponsor additional students. In the past, Kiwanis, Lions Clubs, Rotary Clubs, Exchange Clubs, schools, parents, and many women's organizations have sponsored students. Contact them early in the fall when they are planning their budgets. Share the Pledge Form with them!
- ⊕ Don't have access to a computer? Call, email or text any of our ALA Girls State committee members with the name and location of your sponsoring organization, contact person's name, mailing address, telephone number and the number of students you are pledging to sponsor.

RECRUITING

- ⊕ Recruit early! High School students are actively involved in multiple clubs and community activities. Applicants must complete their junior year of high school in the spring of 2026, and be a legal inhabitant of the U.S. (a U.S. Citizen or in the U.S. legally with a green card) to be eligible to attend ALA Girls State.
- ⊕ If you need the email address or phone number for a principal or administrator from any Michigan school district, contact Beryl who has access to that information that she can provide to you.
- ⊕ Reach out to your delegate(s) who attended in 2025 to assist with your recruiting efforts! We obtained a list of 2025 delegates that expressed an interest in recruiting students from their schools. We will be emailing them the flyer that contains the link to our online application.
- ⊕ **ALA Girls State Applicants do not have to be members of the American Legion Auxiliary!**

- ✚ If you are recruiting one or more students, please make sure they know the name of the organization and who the contact person is along with a phone number or email address, so they have that information when they are ready to apply using our online application! The first question on the delegate application is: Have you already been recruited by a sponsor? They have the option to answer yes, no, or I am not sure. If their answer is yes, they will need to enter the name and contact information for their sponsor on their application, so it is important that you provide them with that information.
- ✚ Make sure **they want to attend**. It's important that they have an interest in their community, government process and leadership. Important qualities to look for are character, honesty, good scholastic achievement, high moral values, and intellectual curiosity. Enthusiasm for the program and **the desire to get involved!**
- ✚ Inform your candidate that ALA Girls State is a seven-day program that can be physically and mentally challenging. When running for any office, there are speeches to make, reference work to be done, campaigning, lots of walking, and long days. ALA Girls State is a high-energy program!
- ✚ Your Delegate will be required to provide medical information when she registers online. 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 complete a background check and be approved by the ALA Girls State Committee.
- ✚ Explain to your candidate that the primary sponsor of this program is the American Legion Auxiliary, an organization that stands for God and Country. All of our ceremonies begin and end with a non-denomination prayer, and we have a flag raising each morning where we Pledge Allegiance to the Flag. All students can feel confident that they can participate without conflict with her own beliefs, as long as she respects the Auxiliary's commitments, and our American flag.
- ✚ Instruct your delegates to contact the ALA Girls State Chairmen for approval if they need to arrive late or request an early departure. Remember, delegates **MUST** attend the complete session to receive their "Certificate of Completion" and an ALA Girls State pin, unless approved by the ALA Girls State Chairman.
- ✚ Make certain that each candidate knows and understands that **THIS IS NOT A SUMMER SPORTS CAMP**, but an interactive government simulation & leadership program that will require her to participate in learning the governmental process based on the Michigan Constitution. In addition to learning, she will experience fellowship and friendships that will last a lifetime.

THE ONLINE DELEGATE APPLICATION

- ⊕ The online application will be activated and able to accept applications beginning October 1, 2025. The deadline for accepting applications is June 1, 2026.
- ⊕ **We have eliminated the Word version of our Delegate Application form!**
Please DO NOT use an old form, they will not be accepted. All students must apply online, no exceptions! It is recommended that they complete the entire application form in one sitting, otherwise, it can result in multiple incomplete application records. Some students have been able to access the application they started in order to complete it.
- ⊕ The link to the online delegate application is: [**https://bit.ly/MIGirlsStateApply**](https://bit.ly/MIGirlsStateApply). There is a flyer available that contains a brief description of our program with a link and a QR code that takes the student directly to the online application.
- ⊕ This flyer can be provided to school counselors, or displayed at local libraries and other places students frequent.
- ⊕ The flyer is available on the department website's ALA Girls State page at: www.michalaux.org/girls-state/. We will also have copies of the flyer available at Fall Conference, Winter Meeting.
- ⊕ As Beryl receives notice of an online application, she will first check to see if that applicant is already working with a sponsor. If the answer is yes, she will forward that application to her sponsoring organization. If the answer is no, Beryl will first check the pledges she has on file for sponsors in the student's area. If Beryl has a pledge form, she will email the application directly to that sponsor for their consideration. If not, she will continue our practice of contacting District and Unit Presidents, and sponsors we have worked with in the past.
- ⊕ **Once Beryl emails an application to the sponsor, it is the sponsor's responsibility to make contact with the student, or with the student's school counselor. The counselor's contact information is now available on their application. This is a great opportunity for you to establish a relationship with the school's counseling staff!**
- ⊕ **It is highly recommended that you receive confirmation from the student that they are aware of the program dates and committed to attending the entire program, prior to mailing in your reservation form and sponsorship fee!**
- ⊕ **Stay in touch with your delegate(s), stress the importance of reviewing their acceptance letter and attachments as soon as they receive them, not two days before ALA Girls State begins. The earlier they receive and review this information, the better prepared they will be!**

THE RESERVATION PROCESS

- ⊕ **Reservations will be accepted beginning October 1, 2025. The deadline for reservations is May 22, 2026.** Our reservation fee is \$425 per student. This fee is non-refundable – NO exceptions! The student is responsible for paying a \$25 registration fee (see page 6 for other options.)
- ⊕ **A fully completed reservation form must accompany your check.** The form is available on the ALA Girls State page found at www.michalaux.org/girls-state/. Copies of the form will also be available at Fall Conference and the Winter Meeting.
- ⊕ When completing the reservation form, please print legibly, and make your check payable to **ALA Department of Michigan**, with ALA Girls State on the memo line. Mail your form and check to: **American Legion Auxiliary, Department of Michigan, 212 N. Verlinden Avenue, Ste B., Lansing, MI 48915-1200.**
- ⊕ Poppy funds **cannot** be used to send delegates to ALA Girls State.
- ⊕ Collect pledges from your local businesses to help defray your cost of sponsoring a delegate. Some ALA Districts, Units and AL Posts have been successful in the past!
- ⊕ Once your reservation form and sponsorship fee has arrived at our department office, it will be scanned and emailed to Beryl, who will assign a reservation number for each delegate you are sponsoring. She will email an acceptance letter and a consent/registration fee form directly to each delegate, her parent or guardian and the sponsor's contact person. **We no longer mail the paperwork to the sponsor unless it is absolutely necessary or a special request is made by contacting Beryl.**
- ⊕ It is totally up to the sponsoring organization if they wish to present the student with a contract for reimbursement of the \$425 sponsorship fee if the student cancels, fails to show up at all, or leaves the program early. The wording and enforcement of that contract also falls upon the sponsoring organization.

THE ONLINE REGISTRATION PROCESS

- ⊕ The acceptance letter will inform the student that she has been selected as a Delegate to ALA Girls State. It will contain her reservation number with the name and contact information of her sponsor. It also includes the link to apply for the Samsung Scholarship and other important information. **The student must be a direct descendant of a veteran in order to apply for the Samsung Scholarship.**
- ⊕ **Students must register online by June 8, 2026! We are required to give our attendance numbers to MSU by that date.** Please encourage them to follow the instructions in their acceptance letter for returning their consent form and \$25

registration fee at their earliest convenience. **They will need their reservation number and name of sponsor when they register.**

- ✚ The parental consent & registration fee form that accompanies the acceptance letter must be reviewed, signed, and sent along with a \$25 registration fee to the ALA Girls State Chairman, Beryl Robbins. There are two methods they can use to accomplish this task:
 - Mail the consent form, along with a check or money order for \$25, made out to **ALA Department of Michigan** to Beryl Robbins, 1112 5th Street, Wyandotte, MI 48192.
 - They can either mail the consent form to the address above, or scan it and email it to Beryl at berylrobbins1980@gmail.com and Venmo the \$25 registration fee to @Beryl-Robbins.
- ✚ We encourage students to pay their own non-refundable registration fee. We have found it reduces the number of cancellations and “no-shows” because they “have some skin in the game.” If the sponsor really wants to cover this cost, or feels the student may be experiencing financial difficulties and wants to pay it for them they have three options:
 - Provide the student with a check for \$25 they can submit with their consent form. Some sponsors choose to reimburse the students the \$25 when they return to their organization to report on their ALA Girls State experience.
 - Include the \$25 when sending in your reservation form and check, make a notation that your check includes the student’s \$25 registration fee.
 - Venmo the \$25 to @Beryl-Robbins, and make sure you add a notation with the name of the student you are paying for.
- ✚ Once Beryl receives their consent form and registration fee, she will email the student, her parent/guardian, and copy the sponsor, with the link to register online along with the Checklist. They will receive a confirmation from Wufoo that their registration was completed.
- ✚ Please DO NOT share the link with other students you are sponsoring. Each student will receive their email with the link once we receive their parental consent form and registration fee.
- ✚ The Checklist is a brief summary of what they need to bring to ALA Girls State. What to wear, where to go, and instructions to visit the ALA Girls State page at www.michalaux.org/girls-state/ where they can review the Government Manual and other material prior to attending. This document should answer all their questions!

PUBLIC RELATIONS

- ⊕ Check out our Facebook page, search for *Michigan American Legion Auxiliary Girls State* and our ALA Girls State webpage www.michalaux.org/girls-state/ for the most up to date information.
- ⊕ If you are able, contact your school board to request time to make a short presentation at one of their meetings. We will have a sample statement available on the ALA Girls State webpage that you can use.
- ⊕ Publicize the ALA Girls State program in your local newspapers and high school media. There are sample press releases available at ALAforVeterans.org for your use in recruiting students and associate sponsors in your communities.
- ⊕ Contact your school about posting a notice on their message board, or school radio program.
- ⊕ Contact local cable television stations to see if you can submit a public service announcement. Some cable programs offer to tape an interview with you, an ALA Girls State counselor or your delegate from a previous year.
- ⊕ Consider doing another press release with pictures upon selection of your delegates.
- ⊕ 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.
- ⊕ Consider doing another press 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 selected to attend ALA Girls Nation, or is awarded the Samsung Scholarship, make sure you contact your local newspaper! This is HUGE news!

ALA GIRLS NATION

- ⊕ Two delegates will be selected through an interview process to represent Michigan as “Senators” to ALA Girls Nation that will be held in July 2026, in the Washington DC area. The ALA Girls Nation program is based on our federal system of government. Candidates are chosen to be interviewed by a panel comprised of government and ALA staff members. They are selected based on their participation, leadership skills and broad knowledge of the process. Don’t encourage them to “campaign” for ALA Girls Nation!

SAMSUNG SCHOLARSHIP

- **Applicants for this scholarship must be a descendant of a U.S. wartime veteran.** Every eligible ALA Girls State citizen is encouraged to apply for this financial assistance. Each Department selects one winner, in accordance with the foundation rules. Her application is forwarded to the National headquarters of The American Legion. Ten National scholars receive \$10,000 each (two from each region), Ten National runners-up receive \$5,000 each (two from each region), and the remaining Department finalists receive \$1,250.
- Make sure your delegate(s) **follow the rules** set by the Samsung Scholarship Foundation. Information for this scholarship, the application and criteria can be found at: [Samsung American Legion Scholarship | The American Legion](https://www.samsungamericanlegion.org/scholarship). The Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) that contains additional information is available on our ALA Girls State webpage: www.michalaux.org/girls-state/.
- The form is completed and submitted by the student on-line with a completion deadline of midnight on the first day of the session. Competition is tough so students are encouraged to start working on the application early to allow time to review their essays, double check that their entries are accurate, and they have included the required documents. It is highly recommended that they complete it prior to arriving at ALA Girls State! They will not have time to work on it once they arrive at MSU. Our department winner will receive an award certificate at the closing ceremony.
- **Required Documents.** Applications determined to include incomplete, incorrect, or illegible documentation are not eligible for consideration. To be considered complete, each Samsung American Legion Scholarship application must include the following:
 - Veteran proof of service (full acceptable documentation listed in the rules.)
 - Student High School Record Certification Form and High School Transcripts (Does not need an official stamp or raised seal, however, both must be **Certified** by a HS official with the official's signature, printed name, their official title and date.)
 - Parent/Guardian Acknowledgement and Agreement Form
 - Certification Form (Extra-Curricular/Non-Curricular Activities, Community Service/Volunteerism, Work Experience/Career Preparation.)
 - Two original essays will be 450-550 words each on each topic determined by the Committee on Youth Education at the Fall meeting prior to the opening of the Samsung American Legion application window.
 - Each department finalists' essay is scrutinized through an online plagiarism check to ensure originality.
- **Grading Criteria.** There are 103 possible points.
 - Grade Point Average (unweighted), *20 points maximum*.
 - Essays. Two essays at 10 points possible for each, *20 points maximum*.
 - Work Experience/Career Preparation, *15 points maximum*.
 - Extra-Curricular/Non-Curricular Activities, *15 points maximum*.
 - Honors and Awards, *15 points maximum*.
 - Descendant of Korean War Veteran, *award 3 points*.

- ⊕ We highly recommend that your delegates obtain the documents and signatures needed for the Samsung Scholarship application process from their high school early! DO NOT wait until the school years ends! Please note it can take approximately six weeks to obtain a veteran's proof of service documentation.

ORIENTATIONS

- ⊕ **PLAN AHEAD!** The best time to schedule an orientation is in April or May and can be very beneficial to your delegates, giving them a chance to meet other students that have been selected and learn more about what the program is about. ALA Girls State Committee members are available to assist you with your orientations. You are encouraged to reach out to them to ensure that everyone is receiving correct, up to date information. For large districts you may want to consider holding more than one orientation. **Informed ALA Girls State delegates make better ALA Girls State citizens!**
- ⊕ 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.
- ⊕ Extend an invitation to an ALA Girls State Committee Member, Unit members, city officials, your school counselors, history or social studies teachers and any potential sponsors in your community. Keep it simple, snacks and drinks are fine!
- ⊕ Make sure you notify the Department's ALA Girls State Chairman with the date, time and location of your District's Orientation so we can post a schedule of the orientations on our ALA Girls State webpage and Facebook page.
- ⊕ **NOTE:** Many times, delegates sponsored by associate sponsors, are not known to your district or unit ALA Girls State chairman, and therefore, are not included on your invitation list. Contact Beryl Robbins to get the names of all delegates from your district. ***These girls need the orientation information too!***
- ⊕ There will be two PowerPoint Presentations available on our ALA Girls State webpage, one will be an Orientation, giving them information on things to know and learn, what to wear and what to bring. The other will be an Overview that outlines what our daily activities are.

AWARD PROGRAM

- An award certificate will be given for the best narrative attached to your ALA Girls State Annual Report.
- Award certificates will be presented at either the 2026 Convention, or Fall Conference, for monetary donations (not sponsorships) made to the Michigan American Legion Auxiliary Girls State program, in the 2025-2026 fiscal period.
- Donations help us cover items such as capitol expenses, including bus travel to and from the State Capitol, water for staff/volunteers, supplies for nurses' clinics, convention "goody bags" for the delegates, office supplies and other miscellaneous items.
- Certificates will be presented for donations of:

\$ 50.00 - \$ 250.00
\$ 251.00 - \$ 500.00
\$ 501.00 - \$1,000.00
\$ 1,001.00 or more

Make check payable to: **ALA DEPARTMENT OF MICHIGAN**.
Earmark donation for: **ALA GIRLS STATE PROGRAM**

Send all donations to:
American Legion Auxiliary
Department of Michigan
212 N. Verlinden Avenue, Suite B
Lansing, MI 48915

ANNUAL REPORT QUESTIONS

To better prepare you for the annual reports, these are the questions you will be asked to report on for ALA Girls State:

1. The ALA Girls State Committee encourages the submission of a narrative that includes:
 - a. How does your Unit recruit students?
 - b. Did you solicit contributions from other businesses and organizations?
 - c. Did you invite your delegate(s) to a District or Unit meeting or banquet to report on their ALA Girls State experience? If yes, what did they express as the most rewarding part of their experience?
 - d. If you don't sponsor delegates to ALA Girls State, let us know why, and how we can help.
 - e. Include other comments or your suggestions.
2. Did you assist or host an ALA Girls State orientation in your Unit or District?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
3. Did a member, Unit or District make a donation to ALA Girls State?
 - a. If yes, amount of donation(s)
4. Did a member, Unit or District make any "in-kind" donations to ALA Girls State?
 - a. If yes, list item(s) donated
5. If we had to raise the cost in the future, how would that affect your willingness to sponsor delegates to our program?
 - a. Yes (explain why)
 - b. No