



ALA Girls State / ALA Girls Nation Newsletter



Jane Thurston: ALA GN Chair

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JANUARY 2026

HAPPY NEW YEAR, ALA Girls State Leaders!

Our wish for you is that 2026 will bring you fresh ideas, lots of motivation, and plenty of energy to execute your programs with positivity and determination!

The mission of Honor Flight is ***to Celebrate America's Veterans by inviting them to share a day of honor at our nation's memorials.***

Honor Flight Network is a national nonprofit organization that provides free trips for U.S. veterans to visit Washington D.C. to visit the memorials that were built to honor their service. There are 128 independent hubs across the country working together to achieve the Honor Flight mission.



Participation in an Honor Flight trip gives veterans the opportunity to share time with other comrades, remember the fallen, and share stories with other veterans. The veterans always travel free of charge, thanks to donations from organizations such as The American Legion Family. While initially focused solely on World War II veterans, eligibility has expanded to include those who served during the Korean War and Vietnam War eras. The Honor Flight TLC program also honors veterans of any service era who are critically ill.

In 2021, American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters entered a formal partnership with Honor Flight Inc. to support their mission. This allows ALA units and departments to donate funds generated from our distribution of poppies directly to Honor Flight.

Honor Flights always end the day with "Mail Call," a special tradition where veterans receive letters of thanks and appreciation during the end of their trip. It is often meaningful and emotional because some of these veterans never received recognition when they first returned from service. While at ALA Girls State, make time to have your participants write cards, letters, draw pictures, or write poetry to be included in Mail Call for the veterans returning home. Our citizens can give them the honor, gratitude, and community support they deserve. It is a great way to thank the veterans for their service. We encourage you to look up the Honor Flight hub(s) in your state.

There is currently a waitlist of 46,380 veterans nationwide who are awaiting an Honor Flight.

Let's Talk Swag



Believe it or not, swag is our most widespread and long-lasting tool for marketing the ALA Girls State programs. Whether it's a cool water bottle or a T-shirt with our logo, each time it is used or worn, it gets the American Legion Auxiliary's name and the ALA Girls State program out in front of new people. Our hope is that it strikes up a conversation and the word is spread about the knowledge gained and amazing life changes that are accomplished at ALA Girls State/Girls Nation. It works best if the swag is items that are trending and create new enthusiasm for young women to check it out!

We encourage you to share your unique swag ideas in the ALA Girls State Leaders Facebook group. Let others know what works well for your department program. New ideas are always welcome. Please share early enough so others can order the item(s) if interested.

All swag with the ALA emblem or wordmark logo must be approved by National Headquarters before you place an order. You may work through your department office or email emblem@ALAforVeterans.org for design approval.



**February 17, 2026,
at 8 p.m. ET**

Engage & Exchange



**February 25, 2026,
at 7:30 p.m. ET**

The Science of the
Samsung Webinar

Have a question for other ALA Girls State programs?

Departments can submit any questions they want answered by other ALA Girls States, whether it's about recruitment, staffing, budgeting, or program structure. Email alagirlsnation@ALAforVeterans.org with your questions, say it is for the newsletter, and we'll highlight questions submitted by leaders who want feedback from their peers.

Suggested Topics for February's Engage & Exchange: *Tuesday, Feb. 17 at 8 p.m. ET*

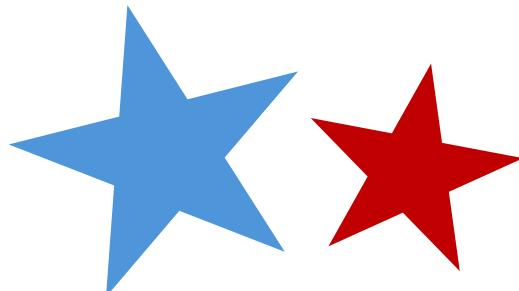
We are looking for topic suggestions for the February Engage & Exchange. Please share ideas that would be helpful for your program as you enter spring planning.

Registration for the Engage & Exchange will be in the February Newsletter.

ALA Girls State Program Formstack

We are still missing some departments' annual Formstack with updated program and leadership information for your ALA Girls State. If your department has not completed it, please do so ASAP.

[ALA Girls State Program Information Form](#)



**March 31, 2026, at
8 p.m. ET**

ALA Girls Nation: What
Every ALA Girls State
Leader and Senator
Should Know



July 18-25, 2026

ALA Girls Nation in
Washington D.C.