

American Legion Auxiliary

Department of Washington



2025

Evergreen Girls State Unit Chairman Handbook

OVERVIEW

The purpose of the Evergreen Girls State Unit Handbook is to provide an overview of the American Legion Auxiliary Evergreen Girls State program as well as the Unit Chairman's responsibilities as it relates to the program.

Your role as the Unit Chairman for Evergreen Girls State is to be the communications expert. The American Legion Auxiliary Evergreen Girls State Unit Chairman is the initiator of the program. Units must make the first effort to contact the schools, set up the selection committees, and facilitate the selection process. You must be able to communicate the program to others. This is the purpose of this handbook: to help chairmen kindle the initial interest among prospective candidates and provide all necessary information. For further information visit our website at www.evergreengirlsstate.com and refer to the other materials provided in your Unit Chairman packet.

CHAIRMAN'S RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Read your handbook!
2. Make an appointment to visit the high schools in your area. Contact counselors, junior class advisors, principals or U.S. History teachers. Introduce yourself and the program!
 - a. Information is available at www.evergreengirlsstate.com or www.walegion-aux.org. Information has also been sent to each school around the state.
3. Seek funding. Ask various groups to help you secure funds for future citizens. A sample donor letter has been included in your materials this year to help reach out to potential donors. Some of the following groups may prove to be helpful:
 - a. Lions Club
 - b. Rotary Club
 - c. Kiwanis Club
 - d. Local Chamber of Commerce
 - e. Elks
 - f. Local Businesses
4. Seek candidate nominations from:
 - a. School staff – counselors, teachers, principals
 - b. Churches – clergy, youth group leaders
 - c. Other youth program advisors – scouting, YWCA, FFA
5. Set up an interview or selection process. Be sure to contact each school in your area. Check the qualifications of each applicant and make sure the interview process is fair to all. Even if you will not need to eliminate any applications (i.e. you have enough funds to send all citizens who apply), still go through an interview process to meet and vet the candidates.
6. Make a reservation for each citizen you are sending. Send this money to the Department as soon as possible (but no later than the deadline of May 30th).
7. Notify students once they have been chosen to attend.
 - a. Communicate with your chosen citizens
 - b. Reconfirm with the citizen that she is attending the entire week (chosen citizens cannot have conflicts during the program week)
 - c. Confirm their attendance 1-2 weeks prior to Evergreen Girls State
 - d. Confirm their attendance 1-2 days prior to Evergreen Girls State

8. (Optional) Request refund if needed. The deadline for refunds is **June 6, 2025, by 5:00pm to the Department office.**
9. Make transportation arrangements.
10. Contact the local newspaper. Submit the citizens' names and advertise the program!

CHAIRMAN MATERIALS

Along with this handbook, you should receive a copy of the following materials to assist your Unit's Evergreen Girls State process:

- Unit Chairman Letter
- Evergreen Girls State Brochure
- 2025 Quick Facts
- Reservation Form
- Donor Letter Template
- Letter to School Personnel Template
- Evergreen Girls State Application

DEFINITIONS AND TERMS

The American Legion Auxiliary – The Auxiliary Organization for women and spouses in support of the American Legion, which is the world's largest veteran's organization.

The Department of Washington – The Washington State organization of the American Legion Auxiliary.

The American Legion Auxiliary Unit – The local and smallest group in the organization known as the American Legion Auxiliary.

The American Legion Auxiliary Evergreen Girls State – An Americanism program of the American Legion Auxiliary Department of Washington. One of the many programs of the Children and Youth Division.

Candidate – A young woman interested in attending the American Legion Auxiliary Evergreen Girls State program.

Citizen – A citizens that has been selected by a local ALA Unit to attend the ALA Evergreen Girls State program.

Sponsor – The ALA Unit, a group, organization or someone who is providing funds to pay the reservation fee for a citizen to attend the ALA Evergreen Girls State program.

Nominations – A recommendation of a young woman to attend the ALA Evergreen Girls State program, usually made by a staff member of a high school.

Selections – Choice of citizens who will be attending the Evergreen Girls State program. These are to be made only a local ALA Unit, or the Evergreen Girls State Director. Selection processes can be chosen by the individual Units.

Reservation Fee – This is the fee to sponsor a citizen at Evergreen Girls State. For 2025, the fee is \$320.00 per citizen. Previously known as the attendance fee.

Registration Fee – This is the fee paid by the citizen upon arrival at Central Washington University. For 2025, the fee is \$210.00 per citizen.

Citizen Packets – a complete set of instructions will be mailed to each citizen after the sponsoring Unit has accepted her application and her registration form has been received by the Girls State Committee.

Alternate – An eligible candidate who is selected to attend the ALA Evergreen Girls State, without application fee funding, or an open position available.

Visitor – Anyone, not a member of the staff or a citizen, who wishes to attend the ALA Evergreen Girls State program. Visitors are welcome, see below.

PROGRAM PURPOSE

Evergreen Girls State is an Americanism and government training program sponsored by the American Legion Auxiliary (ALA). It is a nationwide program for citizens who have just completed their junior year of high school. This program allows citizens an opportunity to live together as self-governing citizens, and informs them about the duties, privileges, rights and responsibilities of American citizenship. Through participation, citizens will have a better understanding of the functions of their government and the responsibilities they will assume as they become adults.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The ALA Evergreen Girls State program is conducted on a “learn by doing” basis whereby the selected citizens will learn the mechanics of county and state government; the functioning of political parties; and the operation of state legislature. It is a workshop in democracy whose goal is to develop active and intelligent citizens.

There are four counties and two political parties that make up ALA Evergreen Girls State. Each citizen is assigned to a county and to a political party prior to arrival. ALA Evergreen Girls State teaches the two-party political system using mock parties: the Nationalist party and Federalist party. Citizens organize their political parties and develop their own party platforms to decide what their parties stand for. Political parties are organized at the city precinct level and continue through county and state conventions. Platforms are developed, candidates for county and state offices are endorsed, and primary and general elections are held.

Two citizens will be elected United States Senators to represent Evergreen Girls State at Girls Nation in Washington D.C. in July. These U.S. Senators and the Girls State Governor will have additional responsibilities following the end of the session.

The Evergreen Girls State Legislature is organized upon the principles of the Washington State Legislature. Bills are introduced and, by legislative process, defeated or enacted into law.

Procedures are conducted according to Reed's parliamentary rules and the laws of the State of Washington. Throughout the session, real life city, county and state officials come to Evergreen Girls State to share their knowledge of government.

The flag is raised each morning, presented at all assemblies, and lowered each evening. Citizens will be taught how to show proper respect for the American Flag. Grace will be given before each meal and invocation at the beginning of each assembly.

Every afternoon there is an activity period. This is a time where the citizens will have some free time to relax, work on city projects, or spend time at the Evergreen Girls State store or CWU bookstore. Each day ends with a city meeting, giving the citizens time to share ideas with their fellow citizens and work on city projects. Attendance at all functions is required; there may be a choice of which activity to attend, but never a choice of whether or not to attend. Each day begins around 7:00am and ends by 11:00pm each night.

From this practical school of government, the young citizens have the opportunity to learn for themselves that their government is just what they make it. They learn the part each citizen must play in our system of government. Each citizen can run for office, vote for the candidate of her choice and has a voice in shaping the policies of her government.

NON-PARTISAN

The ALA Evergreen Girls State program is non-partisan, non-sectarian and non-military. Problems will be considered without reference to any existing political party and will be free from propaganda. The sole purpose is to enable the citizens to grasp the meaning of some of the responsibilities that she will be called upon to assume as she becomes an adult.

It should be distinctly understood that selection and assignment of the citizen to political parties is in no way connected with existing political parties in the State of Washington. They are purely mythical and none of the principles typifying any of the existing parties will be assigned to the parties at Evergreen Girls State.

ALA GIRLS NATION

Since 1947, more than 6,000 politically astute citizens have attended ALA Girls Nation in Washington D.C., gleaning a firsthand glimpse of the inner workings of federal government and a chance to experience civics and American government outside the textbook. Every year, two citizens are selected from each ALA Girls State program to attend ALA Girls Nation, an additional weeklong learning experience in federal governance, leadership development and American heritage. As Girls Nation "senators" they campaign for political office, craft and debate the passage of legislation and meet with their real-life counterparts on Capitol Hill.

PHYSICAL EXAMINATION

A physical examination by a physician is NOT required. Applicants must meet normal health standards and complete the application questionnaire. Evergreen Girls State is a strenuous and exhausting program, physically and emotionally. It is no place to recover from an illness.

HEALTH AND MEDICAL

During Evergreen Girls State, first aid and/or medical attention, if required, will be available. Every care will be taken to avoid accidents and prevent illness, but ALA Evergreen Girls State will not be responsible for either injuries or sickness should they occur. Participants who do not already have group insurance coverage are insured under a group policy underwritten by Sentry Insurance.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT

Any citizen of Evergreen Girls State found to be using, or in possession of intoxicants, tobacco products, illegal drugs, firearms, or other weapons or explosives; gambling, destroying property, or leaving the Evergreen Girls State campus area without permission from the Director or staff, will be subject to immediate dismissal from the program without refund and barred from further participation in the program.

TIME AND PLACE

The 2025 American Legion Auxiliary Evergreen Girls State program will be held on the campus of Central Washington University in Ellensburg, Washington, from June 22nd to June 27th, both dates included. The first meal will be served Sunday evening, June 22nd. Citizens should not arrive prior to June 22nd. Registration will begin at noon on June 22nd. The final session will close by 4:00 pm on Friday, June 27th. Housing and meals will not be provided prior to registration or following the closing time.

REGISTRATION

Registration will be held at the entrance of the Kamola building on University Way, CWU Campus, Sunday, June 22nd, 2025, from 12:00pm to 2:00pm. Citizens must present a signed Evergreen Girls State pledge sheet and \$210.00 registration fee at this time. The registration fee must be paid in cash or cashier's check (no personal checks). Details regarding the pledge sheet and registration fee will be provided in the packet mailed to each citizen.

DRESS CODE

Citizens are asked to abide by a dress code while in attendance at Evergreen Girls State. Business casual attire is required during the day. Slacks, skirts and professional dresses are best. Bare shoulders, midriff and short skirts are now allowed. Casual shorts are restricted to activity period. Jeans are allowed only on "T-shirt Tuesday" or during activity period. Jeans should be free of stains, holes, and tears. Citizens will do a significant amount of walking during the week, so comfortable dress shoes and flats are most appropriate. It can be chilly and windy in Ellensburg, so we recommend citizens bring a light jacket and/or coat. Also, citizens should bring pajamas and/or other comfortable clothing to wear in the residence halls at night.

SCHOLARSHIPS

The Samsung American Legion Scholarship is available to those who attend Evergreen Girls State. The citizen chosen to represent Evergreen Girls State will win a \$1,000 scholarship to be used at the college of her choice. Her application will then be sent to National Headquarters where it will be judged with others from around the country for \$20,000 scholarships awarded by the national judging committee.

The Samsung American Legion Scholarship requires information from school records for eligibility. Applications must be submitted on the website at <https://www.legion.org/samsung-scholarship-application>. Working on the application early allows for adequate time to acquire the required information. Please encourage the citizens to take the time to fill out this scholarship. Scholarship deadline is June 22nd, 2025, prior to arrival at CWU.

COLLEGE CREDIT

Citizens who attend Evergreen Girls State may earn 3 college credits from The University of Colorado, Colorado Springs. The cost is \$240 for the class. The class offered is *Leadership for the Next Generation: Citizenship and Community Service (PSC 1510)*. Girls State citizens may find more information at www.leadershipcredit.info. Information about the requirements are found on the website. Materials on these courses will be given to each citizen during the week at Evergreen Girls State.

GRADUATION

Citizens who actively participate and complete the full course of instruction will earn a certificate of achievement which will be presented during the formal graduation ceremony. Parents, relatives, friends and sponsoring Units are invited to attend the ALA Evergreen Girls State graduation ceremony which takes place Friday evening.

Citizens who do not participate fully or who, in the opinion of the staff, do not complete the training or violate the rules, will not be allowed to graduate. Sponsoring ALA units, parents, and schools will be notified of citizens failing to successfully complete the program. All citizens will be expected to report to their schools and their sponsoring organizations about their ALA Evergreen Girls State experience.

TALENT

Girls are invited to perform at ALA Evergreen Girls State. All performances are coordinated through an informal audition process conducted during registration at Evergreen Girls State. Please advise citizens to bring their instrument, sheet music, costume, or any other items they might need for a performance (besides a piano which will be provided). See the website for more details. Performances will be spread throughout the week at various assemblies.

VISITORS

Visitors are cordially invited to view the activities of the ALA Evergreen Girls State program at any time. Representatives of sponsoring organizations are especially invited to attend scheduled events. Due to arrangements necessary for dining, it will not be possible for visitors to have meals with the citizens. All visitors must check in to the Evergreen Girls State office on campus for a visitor's pass before attending any session.

EVERGREEN GIRLS STATE STAFF

The Director, Assistant Director, office staff, counselors and junior counselors in charge of this program are well-trained and experienced leaders. They are women of high ideals who are recognized as being responsible citizens in their respective communities and occupations. Counselors, who by experience know the functions and procedures of state government and its political subdivisions, guide the citizens. They are careful, however, to allow the citizens to

function themselves. Most of the staff are members of the ALA and donate their time during this week.

TRANSPORTATION

Local ALA Units may arrange for transportation to and from Evergreen Girls State. It is suggested that such transportation be used, and that each citizen and her parents be responsible for the cost of their own transportation. Transportation is NOT the responsibility of the ALA Evergreen Girls State.

ELIGIBILITY

Applicants must be juniors in high school. Citizens must be 16 to 17 year of age and must not have attended a previous ALA Girls State program. Candidates who have not completed the 11th grade or who have graduated will not be accepted. The greatest benefit can be achieved from high school juniors when they return home to offer leadership in their school and communities during their senior year. Applications of candidates who do not meet the above requirements will be returned to the sponsoring Auxiliary Unit.

Any citizen selected cannot be obligated to any other organization or have any other plans during the dates ALA Evergreen Girls State is being held. The citizens selected must plan to stay in Ellensburg from 2:00p.m. on Sunday to 4:00pm on Friday. If finals conflict with Evergreen Girls State, citizens may make arrangements to take their finals while they are at Evergreen Girls State. The staff are happy to proctor exams and work with school staff to work around exam schedules if finals cannot be taken early. We do not want school finals to hinder any citizens from attending Evergreen Girls State if at all possible! Please let candidates or school personnel know that Evergreen Girls State staff are willing to work with them, or contact the Director or Unit Liaison for arrangements.

SELECTION

Selection of citizens is the responsibility of the local ALA Unit. Use a selection process that works for your Unit! As chairman, become involved with your selection committee. You may choose to use the expertise of school officials or past Evergreen Girls State citizens in your selection process as well.

The method used should be based on fairness to every eligible candidate. The program is aimed at developing citizenship. Emphasis should be made to secure an all-around school leader. Selection should be based on the following five-point criteria: citizenship, leadership, character, scholarship and service. Please note: race or creed can have NO bearing on eligibility or selection.

If a special needs student is selected who needs assistance to fully participate, that student's contributing organization must furnish a full-time female aide, over 25 years of age, to assist that student. All expenses for the aide, including the transportation, meals, and lodging must be furnished to the ALA Department office with the registration form of the special needs student. Also, the Department office and Evergreen Girls State Committee must be assured that proper insurance is provided for the student and her aide. The contributing organizations, Auxiliary Unit, parent or guardian of the special needs student must assume any additional premiums.

Select only candidates who can stay for the entire week of the program. You may choose an alternate in case the candidate originally chosen is unable to attend. The local American Legion Auxiliary Unit must approve all alternates. Notify the ALA Department at once in case substitution is necessary.

Consult school personnel throughout your area and see that each school is represented if at all possible. Remember to reach out to private schools as well as the public schools. As Units contact the schools, please inform the school personnel that the Evergreen Girls State staff is happy to proctor finals the students may need to complete during the week. The staff is more than willing to work with the schools to provide this service, and we have multiple teachers on staff at Evergreen Girls State.

THE DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY RESERVES THE RIGHT TO ACCEPT OR REJECT ANY APPLICATION TO THE AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY EVERGREEN GIRLS STATE PROGRAM.

After the ALA Evergreen Girls State program is in progress, the right is reserved for the Director to dismiss any citizen for violation of rules of the ALA Evergreen Girls State regardless of sponsorship.

EXPENSES

The reservation fee is \$320.00 to be paid by the sponsoring Auxiliary Unit. This fee covers all program costs, with exception of a \$210.00 registration fee to be paid at the time of registration by the citizen. If the Unit opts to pay the registration fee, please send the money to the Director along with the name of the citizen the Unit is paying for.

SPONSORSHIP

This year, we are allowing you to send as many citizens as you can afford. Send reservation fee to the Department Secretary, via your local ALA Unit, by May 30th, 2025. Make checks for sponsorship payable to: The ALA Evergreen Girls State.

The American Legion Auxiliary Department of Washington wishes to invite local, civic, educational, religious, labor and other compatible organizations to fund scholarships for properly qualified citizens to attend. All selections, however, must be made through an ALA Unit. Due to limited enrollment, Auxiliary Units are urged to contact other organizations immediately. Emphasis should be on sending registrations fees at once through the local American Legion Auxiliary Unit in order to ensure a reservation. Experience has proven that the privilege of sponsorship is one that will be eagerly assumed when the program is properly explained. Emphasize to the organization they are donating the sponsorship fee to the ALA Unit to be used as the Unit sees fit in the citizen sponsorship.

Upon your citizen's return home, she should be expected to appear before her sponsoring organization. She should make a report to its members about her impressions of the ALA Evergreen Girls State program.

REFUNDS

A refund of the reservation fee will be made only if the cancellation is made in writing and received in the ALA Department office by **5:00pm on June 6, 2025**. No other fees are refundable.

CITIZEN PACKETS

Complete instructions will be mailed to each citizen by the end of May. These materials will help them prepare for a successful week. Program information is also available at www.evergreengirlsstate.com. Information will include program rules, scholarship information and a list of helpful items to bring. Upon arrival, citizens receive guidebooks that will list times and locations of every activity during the week along with other information pertinent to the program. The information packet will also include the Evergreen Girls State pledge sheet which each citizen is required to sign and bring with them upon registration on June 22nd.

If you have any questions or need additional materials or support, please contact your Evergreen Girls State Unit Liaison:

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