

AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY



# American Legion Auxiliary Girls State Program and Operations Guide







# American Legion Auxiliary Girls State Program and Operations Guide

*A resource of practical advice and best practices  
Originally adopted and implemented by the American Legion Auxiliary National Executive  
Committee in 2012 and updated 2018*

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Since some topics of discussion change less frequently than others, this guide is paginated by chapters so that when updates become necessary, only the affected chapter will need to be rewritten. Therefore, page numbers will start over at one (1) with each subsequent chapter.

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**This *American Legion Auxiliary Girls State Program and Operations Guide* (Guide) provides general information about planning and conducting an ALA Girls State program. The Guide is intended to help program volunteers and staff to be mindful of pertinent issues. This Guide constitutes advice and recommendations for operations based on best practices; information within the Guide stating “shall or must” is based on federal law or federal/IRS regulations and mandates. This Guide does not constitute legal advice to your ALA Department or an incorporated subsidiary (incorporated ALA Girls State program). If you have any legal concerns about your ALA Girls State program, you are advised to contact your Auxiliary Department and an attorney licensed in your state.**

**The National governing board of the American Legion Auxiliary, the ALA National Executive Committee, by resolution, adopted and recognizes the American Legion Auxiliary Girls State Program and Operations Guide as a standard of best practices for conducting Auxiliary Girls State programs and advises all departments to utilize the Guide and operate their ALA Girls State programs in accordance with this Guide to minimize the Auxiliary’s exposure to risk and liability so that the Auxiliary can continue the ALA Girls State programs in departments for the future generations of young students who will become America’s adult leaders.**

## **American Legion Auxiliary Girls State Program and Operations Guide**

The American Legion Auxiliary Girls State program is a marquee program of the American Legion Auxiliary that has been preparing female high school students for civic leadership since 1937. Through a weeklong “simulated government” immersive learning experience, America’s future leaders assume roles in the fictional “National” and “Federal” political parties, run for and hold offices that mirror their state’s elective offices, and in one jam-packed week learn fundamentals about the legislative process, the three branches of government, and parliamentary procedure. Students selected to participate in this prestigious program learn lifelong lessons in leadership grounded in civility, teamwork, advocacy, consensus-building and respect. They have fun. They make lasting friendships. And they leave enriched, using what they learn throughout their lives for the betterment of our country.

### **Why this American Legion Auxiliary Girls State Program and Operations Guide?**

Youth programs are now subject to far more laws, rules, and regulations than ever existed, when, in the 1930s, a select few young women initially attended a mixer with The American Legion’s Boys State. ALA Girls State began in 1937 as an Auxiliary youth program that took place over one or two days. The program has since grown from a short program presented in a few states to weeklong programs presented in all 50 states attended by nearly 16,000 ALA Girls State delegates annually.

Today, it is important that anyone involved with the ALA Girls State program has access to this ALA Girls State Program and Operations Guide.

This Guide is intended for educational and informational purposes and provides general, non-specific legal information. Information provided within this American Legion Auxiliary Girls State Program and Operations Guide is **not** legal advice intended as a substitute for consulting with attorneys and public accountants licensed to practice in your state.

This Guide recognizes that some ALA Girls State programs are incorporated as a separate legal entity from their Auxiliary Department, and other ALA Girls State programs are run by the Auxiliary Department. **Regardless of whether an ALA Girls State program is separately incorporated or not, the ALA Girls State program is subordinate to and accountable to the department**, and the relationship between the ALA Girls State program and the Auxiliary Department should be clearly defined.

A separately incorporated ALA Girls State program is a subsidiary of and subordinate to the Auxiliary Department. While a separately incorporated ALA Girls State program may have a separate board of directors and Articles of Incorporation, the Auxiliary Department must maintain certain controls over the ALA Girls State program in order to preserve the American Legion Auxiliary’s trademarks and comply with corporate law. The Auxiliary Department must grant approval of the officers and operations of the ALA Girls State program, including confirming the corporate officers, reviewing and maintaining the program’s financial records,

and approving the program's bylaws and organizational policies. An ALA Girls State program that does not abide by these recommendations can become independent of the American Legion Auxiliary, but it cannot use the name “American Legion Auxiliary”, or “Girls State”, or infringe upon any of the many trademarks held by the American Legion Auxiliary.

**This Guide is intended to help ensure that the American Legion Auxiliary Girls State program remains an outstanding experience for our country’s most promising young women, and that programs adhere to branding requirements and minimize the Auxiliary’s exposure to risk and liability so that the Auxiliary can continue this premier immersive learning experience for the many future generations of young women who will become America’s leaders.**

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## **Acknowledgements**

This American Legion Auxiliary Girls State Program and Operations Guide has come together with countless hours of work by a number of people, notably, former American Legion National Judge Advocate Philip Onderdonk and American Legion National Judge Advocate Kevin Bartlett, American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters Staff, and the ALA Girls Nation committees from 2010 to present who assisted with the original drafting and updating.

Special thanks to those who utilize this Guide to improve their program operations, and to all those who have contributed to the success of the program over the years and whose efforts have influenced the program and this Guide.





# **American Legion Auxiliary Girls State Program and Operations Guide**

## **Chapter 1:**

### **Critical Foundations American Legion Auxiliary Girls State Program**



**CHAPTER 1**  
**CRITICAL FOUNDATIONS**  
**AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY GIRLS STATE PROGRAM**

This chapter contains the following:

- Section 1            ALA Mission and Purpose**
- Section 2            ALA Girls State Program Description**
- Section 3            Department Oversight of ALA Girls State Program**
  - A. ALA Girls State and its Relationship to Other Entities**
  - B. Key Department ALA Girls State Program Oversight Issues**
- Section 4            Trademarks & Emblem Approval**
- Section 5            ALA Girls Nation Program Overview**

***This American Legion Auxiliary Girls State Program and Operations Guide (Guide) provides general information about planning and conducting an ALA Girls State program. The Guide is intended to help program volunteers and staff to be mindful of pertinent issues. This Guide constitutes advice and recommendations for operations based on best practices; information within the Guide stating “shall or must” is based on federal law or federal/IRS regulations and mandates. This Guide does not constitute legal advice to your ALA Department or an incorporated subsidiary (incorporated ALA Girls State program). If you have any legal concerns about your ALA Girls State program, you are advised to contact your Auxiliary Department and an attorney licensed in your state.***

## Section 1

### ALA Mission and Purpose

## Mission of the American Legion Auxiliary

In the spirit of *Service Not Self*,  
the mission of the American Legion Auxiliary  
is to support The American Legion and honor the sacrifice  
of those who serve by enhancing the lives of veterans,  
military, and their families, both at home and abroad.

For God and Country we advocate for veterans,  
educate our citizens, mentor youth, and promote patriotism,  
good citizenship, peace and security.

### Purpose of the American Legion Auxiliary

In fulfillment of the American Legion Auxiliary Mission, we adhere to the following purposes:

*To support and advocate for veterans, military, and their families.*

*To support the initiatives and programs of The American Legion.*

*To foster patriotism and responsible citizenship.*

*To award scholarships and promote quality education and literacy.*

*To provide educational and leadership opportunities that uphold the ideals of freedom and democracy and encourage good citizenship and participation in government.*

*To increase our capacity to deliver our mission by providing meaningful volunteer opportunities within our communities.*

*To empower our membership to achieve personal fulfillment through Service Not Self.*



## **Section 2**

### **American Legion Auxiliary Girls State Program Description**

American Legion Auxiliary Girls State is a privately funded nonpartisan participatory program that teaches young women responsible citizenship grounded in ethics, the principles of our nation's founders, and respect for God and Country. American Legion Auxiliary Girls State is among the nation's most respected educational programs of government instruction and leadership development for U.S. high school students.

Since the inception of the ALA Girls State program in 1937, nearly 1 million young women have had the opportunity to learn firsthand how their state and local government work. The program has grown from a few hundred participants to some 16,000 annually.

Select high school girls who have completed their junior year spend an intensive week of experiential learning working together as self-governing citizens. These young women learn government and the rights, privileges, and responsibilities of franchised citizens by forming a fictitious state of cities; electing public officials at the local, county, and state levels; and carrying out the duties of those offices. The week's activities include simulated legislative sessions and government proceedings, along with presentations, assemblies, and recreational programs.

The American Legion sponsors a separate but similar program for young men called American Legion Boys State, first established in 1935. Currently, American Legion Auxiliary Girls State programs operate in all states, and American Legion Boys State programs operate in all states with the exception of Hawaii.

Female high school juniors are selected and sponsored by American Legion Auxiliary units to participate in the program. Local businesses or community organizations may help underwrite participants' expenses. Because the structure of state and local government varies from state to state, American Legion Auxiliary Girls State programs may vary in content and method of procedure, but each adheres to the same basic core values in teaching government from the township to the state level.

## **Section 3**

### **Department Oversight of American Legion Auxiliary Girls State Program**

Governance and management refer to the two distinct but collaborative components of nonprofit leadership. Very simply stated, governance governs, and management manages. Together, governance and management are the leadership of the organization. Information presented here is only a snippet of what you will find in the ALA Department Operations Guide, available in the Members Only section of [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org).

ALA Girls State is a highly visible ALA program, privately presented and privately funded in an entirely different era fraught with liabilities than when the ALA first launched the program over 75 years ago.

### **Section 3A**

#### **ALA Girls State and Its Relationship to the ALA Department and Other Entities**

Each ALA Girls State program is a subordinate operation of its ALA Department. Regardless of whether it is separately incorporated or not, every ALA Girls State program is a program of the Department and must adhere to corporate and trademark law.

Each program's operations fall under the purview and oversight of the Department and the Department's governing body. The Department executive committee or governing board must approve or confirm the Department's ALA Girls State board and/or directors, its budget, and financial reports and statements, and ensure that the program has appropriate policies in place that avert risk and exposure to liability. Every ALA Girls State program should also inform the Department about major dates and events connected with its ALA Girls State Program.

Note: Each American Legion Department and ALA Department are separate corporations that operate independently. A Legion Department does not control an Auxiliary Department; an Auxiliary Department does not control a Legion Department. American Legion Auxiliary Girls State programs operate independently from Legion Boys State programs. While some Departments plan, coordinate, and conduct their ALA Girls State programs in conjunction with their states' Legion Boys State programs, the two programs are separately structured, organized, and operated.

### **Section 3B**

#### **Key Department ALA Girls State Program Oversight Issues**

The ALA Girls State program is a nationwide program that is nationally trademarked by The American Legion/American Legion Auxiliary. It is not appropriate to represent the program without including the name "American Legion Auxiliary" in front of "Girls State". The program must be referred to, when speaking and in writing, as either American Legion Auxiliary Girls State or ALA Girls State; for example, American Legion Auxiliary Buckeye Girls State or ALA Buckeye Girls State. As prescribed in the American Legion Auxiliary's National Constitution and Bylaws and The American Legion National Constitution and Bylaws, The American Legion has entrusted the American Legion Auxiliary National Secretary with protecting the trademarked name and trademarked emblem and all logos of the organization, and to work with The American Legion to do whatever is necessary to ensure they are used appropriately.

Some ALA Girls State programs operate within their departments as separate 501(c)(19) or 501(c)(3) corporations to facilitate fundraising and cash management (i.e., the establishment of separate bank accounts for convenience of program operations, etc.). Regardless of whether an ALA Girls State program is a separately incorporated program within a Department or not, all American Legion Auxiliary Girls State programs must operate in accordance with federal trademark law.

### **About Incorporated ALA Girls State Programs**

Many departments have separately incorporated ALA Girls State programs operating under the direction of an ALA Girls State board. If your Department's ALA Girls State program has its own tax identification number, its own board of directors, its own bylaws, and its own financial accounts, it IS a subsidiary corporation of the Department and it is wholly accountable to the Department governing board (i.e., your Department Executive Committee or DEC). ALA Girls State is a program of the American Legion Auxiliary, and in each state, the Department is the parent corporation and any incorporated ALA Girls State program, as a subsidiary corporation, must report to the Department as the parent corporation.

Likewise, an American Legion Auxiliary Girls State alumni organization is also accountable to the ALA Department. If an ALA Girls State alumni group is incorporated, the alumni corporation is also a subsidiary organization and must report to the Department as described in this section, the same as an incorporated ALA Girls State program.

The requirements of a subsidiary corporation (e.g., an incorporated ALA Girls State program) are clearly addressed in the ALA's National Constitution & Bylaws, National Standing Rules; the ALA Girls State Program and Operations Guide; and the ALA Department Operations Guide.

If your American Legion Auxiliary Girls State program is incorporated:

- It IS a subsidiary corporation to the Department, wholly accountable to the Department that created it. It is NOT an independent body with no accountability to the Department; it is only a separate corporation that must operate under the authority of the parent corporation – the Department.
- Its officers and directors and any replacements **must** be approved by the Department governing board – your DEC or whatever you call your Department governing board.
- Its ALA Girls State bylaws and policies **must** be approved by the Department governing board.
- The Department treasurer **must** be a signatory on all ALA Girls State financial/bank accounts. It is advisable to have an additional Department signatory. If the Department Secretary is not the Department Treasurer, she may be a signatory, or any other

Department leader duly designated can be a Department signatory on all ALA Girls State accounts.

- The assets of the incorporated ALA Girls State program and board belong to the Department.
- The ALA Girls State board must report its activities monthly to the Department. If there were no meeting, the report submitted may simply state: The ALA Girls State board did not meet this month.
- The ALA Girls State board must submit monthly financial reports to the Department governing board. Financial reports include its financial statements, monthly bank statements, and any investment statements.

These requirements are corporate law. Departments that don't enforce these legal requirements face huge liability, risk exposure, and potential trademark legal situations.

ALA Girls State programs must be operated properly and legally; departments need to have competent staff consistently involved with this program. The ALA Department governing board has an obligation to make sure that its incorporated ALA Girls State program, as subsidiary corporation, complies with corporate law reporting requirements. If a Department governing board is facing a situation where its incorporated ALA Girls State program is not complying with corporate law and reporting requirements, the Department has the obligation of informing the ALA national secretary.

Departments authorized the creation of their ALA Girls State boards; a department has the corporate authority to dissolve the ALA Girls State corporation, remove any and all of its board members, and to take control of the assets.

Department officers and directors – your DEC/Department governing board – is collectively and individually responsible and liable for the actions of the department. Failure of your department governing board to take action to require your subsidiary corporations to comply with corporate law governing subsidiaries makes the officers and department board members personally liable for any court judgments.

American Legion Auxiliary Girls State programs are among the biggest liability risks that the ALA has. Being responsible for the care and housing of someone's child – and in most states that equates to hundreds of teenage children – 24/7 for a week at a location away from their parents. The legal integrity of this program must be maintained.

Every incorporated American Legion Auxiliary Girls State program **must** adhere to the Five (5) Rules of a Subsidiary Organization per corporate law, as noted below and as included in the American Legion Auxiliary National Constitution & Bylaws and Standing Rules:

1. The American Legion Auxiliary Department's governing board (i.e., the Department Executive Committee) **must** approve (confirm) all officers, directors, and/or trustees of the ALA Girls State corporation. Approval is required whether the ALA Girls State program officers, directors, and/or trustees are elected, appointed, serving an original term, a recurrent term, or filling a vacancy.
2. All vacancies on the ALA Girls State board (officers, board members, trustees) must be approved (confirmed) by the Department governing board (i.e., DEC).
3. The ALA Girls State program must provide regularly scheduled reports, including financial reports, to the Department no less frequently than quarterly, the frequency of which is consistent with the Department's reporting requirements to its governing board (i.e., DEC). For example, if the Department's executive committee meets monthly, the ALA Girls State program reports must be submitted monthly to the executive committee. The reports must disclose and include key activities, financial records, and financial accountings. Reports must be submitted even if they merely report that there was no activity for the report period.
4. The Department Treasurer must be a signatory on all bank accounts for the Department's operations and its subsidiaries. An ALA Girls State program incorporated as a 501(c)(19) or 501(c)(3) is a subsidiary corporation of the American Legion Auxiliary Department. Its existence was created by the Department and its operations are accountable to the Department, which is required to ensure that the trademark is protected at all times. Therefore, in every Department, the Department Treasurer must be a signatory for the ALA Girls State bank account(s).
5. The American Legion Auxiliary Department governing board shall approve the establishment of all Department subsidiary organizations and must approve the subsidiaries articles of incorporation, Constitution & Bylaws, and must approve all amendments thereto. That means that if a Department's ALA Girls State program has its own bylaws, those bylaws and any amendments to the bylaws must be approved by the Department's governing body (e.g., the Department Executive Committee).

It is vital that the Department and ALA Girls State program leaders understand and adhere to these rules of corporate law. An ALA Girls State program is a trademarked program and its operations, budgets, income, grants, and finances must be fully disclosed to and approved by the department. The name American Legion Auxiliary Girls State, and a variety of iterations (including American Legion Auxiliary Girls State Program, ALA Girls State, Girls State, and others) have all been federally trademarked by The American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary. Anyone who establishes an independent or copycat program that infringes upon the trademark is in violation of the federal trademark laws and is subject to prosecution.

## Section 4

### Trademarks & Emblem Approval Process

The American Legion holds registered trademarks for the terms, names, and logos “American Legion Auxiliary” and “Girls State”, as well as the official American Legion Auxiliary emblem. The American Legion national bylaws entrust the protected use of the American Legion Auxiliary emblem to the ALA National Secretary. The American Legion Auxiliary National organization (National Headquarters) may grant permission to use the name and emblem in accordance with U.S. trademark law. The National organization is charged with resisting and restraining any unauthorized use of the name “American Legion Auxiliary”, the emblem, or any logo or image that incorporates the name or the emblem.

ALA Girls State programs may not incorporate any other graphic, logo, symbol, or phrase specific to a particular officer’s theme, pin, or any other Department images without written approval from the ALA National Secretary. No other objects or lines shall be directly imposed upon the emblem.

A written request for permission to use any American Legion Auxiliary trademark needs to be submitted to the ALA National Secretary at [emblem@ALAforVeterans.org](mailto:emblem@ALAforVeterans.org) for any merchandise intended to bear the name or emblem of The American Legion Auxiliary Girls State program that is not ordered from American Legion Flag & Emblem Sales.

-The written request for promotional, website, media, applications, program manuals, and documents in print or online must state the name of the product, its intended use, the person or company who will perform the duplicating (manufacturer), and the exact amount being ordered and the description of product (e.g., photo, mark-up, vendor proof) should be included. Additional quantities beyond the initial approved request require new authorization. You must seek approval even if the manufacturer is a member of The American Legion or the American Legion Auxiliary.

-The letter from the National Secretary authorizing use of the trademarks must be issued to the manufacturer and will be sent directly to the manufacturer. Copies of the authorization letter will be sent to the Department Secretary and the person making the request, if that information has been provided.

An American Legion Auxiliary Girls State program may use the “American Legion Auxiliary”, “American Legion Auxiliary Girls State”, and “ALA Girls State” trademarks for stationery, publications, notices, posters, or similar correspondence items without requesting national approval **only** for official Auxiliary business, assuming that such usage complies with the National organization’s preapproved uses of the name, emblem, and trademarks, with no alteration.

If any Department is using a design that the Department cannot demonstrate has been approved in writing, the ALA National Secretary may request the National Judge Advocate issue a cease and desist order to the offending Department.

***Note: See Emblem Use Approval Request Form on following page.***



# American Legion Auxiliary

## Approval Request – American Legion Auxiliary Emblem Use

The American Legion owns the names and trademarks of the American Legion Auxiliary. The American Legion Auxiliary is entrusted by The American Legion with protecting the name and official marks of the organization. Use of the emblem must be approved by the ALA National Secretary for printing. If approval is granted it is a one-time, limited use. The following information must be completed in full and submitted to **your department secretary**.

Requesting Member Name & Unit & Email: Click or tap here to enter text.

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Manufacturer/Vendor Name: Click or tap here to enter text.

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Vendor Address: Click or tap here to enter text.

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City: Click or tap here to enter text. State: Click or tap here to enter text. Zip: Click or tap here to enter text.

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Vendor Contact Email: Click or tap here to enter text.

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Type of Product(s) Emblem is to be used on: Click or tap here to enter text.

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Intended use: Click or tap here to enter text.

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Click or tap here to enter text.

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Exact Quantity of Item(s) to be Ordered\*: Click or tap here to enter text.

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*\*Ordering new quantities requires a new authorization.*

*Please include in your email a sample, photo, link to your website or vendor mark-up of the American Legion Auxiliary emblem use.*

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Department Secretary

State

Date

**SUBMIT TO: [emblem@ALAforVeterans.org](mailto:emblem@ALAforVeterans.org)**

Cc: Requester  
Department Secretary  
National Secretary File

## Section 5

### **American Legion Auxiliary Girls Nation Program Overview**

ALA Girls Nation is a weeklong immersive learning experience that convenes each summer in the Washington, D.C. area. Each American Legion Auxiliary Girls State program selects two of its female student participants to attend ALA Girls Nation as “senators”. During ALA Girls Nation, the senators run for political office, campaign for the passage of legislation and meet with their representatives and senators in the U.S. Congress. A meeting scheduled with the President of the United States at the White House caps the ALA Girls Nation week.

Annually, at the conclusion of ALA Girls State, each ALA Girls State program’s director/chairman designates two girls from among the current year’s participants to represent their state as ALA Girls Nation senators. As described in Chapter 3, the final selection of ALA Girls Nation senators is the responsibility of ALA members, not the students attending ALA Girls State.

The current site for ALA Girls Nation is the National 4-H Center in Chevy Chase, Maryland, a dormitory campus-style setting. ALA Girls State program directors should use the information sent from ALA National Headquarters to prepare their newly selected senators. The packet will include eligibility and identification verification requirements, registration forms, medical forms, media release forms, plus information about travel arrangements, dress code, preparing legislative bills to submit, and opportunities to run for mock political and government offices at ALA Girls Nation. Students selected for ALA Girls Nation are also required to attest that they will abide by the rules emailed to them in advance of the program.

The American Legion Auxiliary Girls Nation program mirrors the United States Constitution, including the requirements to run for U.S. Constitutional offices.

In general, the recommended information provided in this Guide is applicable to the ALA Girls Nation program.

Unlike most ALA Girls State programs where the chairman/director/committee members remain the same from administrative year to administrative year, the chairman and committee for ALA Girls Nation change annually. Logistics for ALA Girls Nation is managed by ALA National Headquarters. Under the shared leadership of the ALA Girls Nation chair and the National Headquarters ALA Girls Nation program manager, ALA Girls Nation operates under unique practices that differ from the way most departments are able to run their ALA Girls State programs.

Departments can follow ALA Girls Nation activities by a daily newsletter created during ALA Girls Nation that is widely circulated to departments. Members can also follow ALA Girls Nation on social media via the ALA National website, [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org), where members can click on icons for:

- American Legion Auxiliary Girls Nation Facebook page (accessible from both the ALA Girls State and ALA Girls Nation pages on the national website)
- Twitter @alaforveterans
- Instagram @alaforveterans @alagirlsnation





# **American Legion Auxiliary Girls State Program and Operations Guide**

## **Chapter 2:**

### **ALA GIRLS STATE COMMITTEE/STAFF MEMBERS: SELECTION, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND LIABILITIES**



## CHAPTER 2

### **ALA GIRLS STATE COMMITTEE/STAFF MEMBERS: SELECTION, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND LIABILITIES**

This chapter contains the following:

- Section 1 ALA Girls State Program  
Structure, Committee, and Staff Overview**
- Section 2 Selecting ALA Girls State Committee/Staff Members**
- Section 3 Background Screening**
- Section 4 Role of ALA Members in Selecting ALA Girls State Participants**
- Section 5 ALA Girls State Committee/Staff Member Preparation and Training  
Prior to ALA Girls State and On Campus**
- Section 6 ALA Girls State Orientation On Site**
- Section 7 Caution: Collaborating With Other Organizations/Causes**
- Section 8 Sample Planning Calendar**

***This American Legion Auxiliary Girls State Program and Operations Guide (Guide)* provides general information about planning and conducting an ALA Girls State program. The Guide is intended to help program volunteers and staff to be mindful of pertinent issues. This Guide constitutes advice and recommendations for operations based on best practices; information within the Guide stating “shall or must” is based on federal law or federal/IRS regulations and mandates. This Guide does not constitute legal advice to your ALA Department or an incorporated subsidiary (incorporated ALA Girls State program). If you have any legal concerns about your ALA Girls State program, you are advised to contact your Auxiliary Department and an attorney licensed in your state.**

## Section 1

### **ALA Girls State Program Structure, Committee, and Staff Overview**

This Guide contains critical information to be used to share and discuss within your departments and among your ALA Girls State Committee members. It is vital to understand the seriousness of your responsibility in caring for these minors during ALA Girls State in order to minimize your department's risk exposure as well as your personal risk exposure.

The ALA Girls State program should be structured in a way that lends itself to organizational effectiveness and the committee/staff should be comprised of members who demonstrate a commitment and passion for American Legion Auxiliary programs. ALA Girls State provides a great opportunity for members who may be new to the organization and have great leadership potential. The structure of the program and the selection of the committee and staff will vary according to the guidelines of each Department.

It is very important that no one individual has all the information, critical passwords, or access to social media accounts. To safeguard the organization and every volunteer and staff member, it is vital to always have at least two people with access to key documents, passwords, and data.

#### **ALA Girls State Program Structure, Committees**

There are many ways an ALA Girls State Program can be structured. Most commonly, Departments either have an ALA Girls State program led by a Department chairman/director, or, when a Department's ALA Girls State program is an incorporated subsidiary of the Department, it may be led by an ALA Girls State program director selected by the ALA Girls State board and whose appointment must be confirmed by the Department governing board (e.g., Department Executive Committee). The structure varies among departments based upon how the program is organized within the Department's governing documents.

The major difference among states is whether or not your ALA Girls State program is incorporated. Regardless of whether your ALA Girls State program is incorporated or not, the program is wholly accountable to the Department, and the person leading your ALA Girls State program – whether her title is chairman, chair, chairperson, or director – must be confirmed by your Department governing board. Therefore, all ALA Girls State programs must be similarly presented because the program is trademarked by the National organization with the expectation that core elements be consistent among all 50 states. Permission is granted by the National organization to use the trademarked name and emblem based on this expectation.

American Legion Auxiliary Girls State is highly regarded as a leadership development program for teenage girls. How well the program is organized and managed is a critical factor in its success. The core elements of the program must be consistent throughout the 50 states.

Consistency in delivering a quality ALA Girls State program will enhance the reputation of the ALA in every state.

## **ALA Girls State Program Committees, Roles, Duties**

ALA Girls State programs are structured similarly but not identically from state to state. When utilized successfully, committees help your American Legion Auxiliary Girls State program operate more smoothly and effectively, and raise awareness of the ALA's mission to the public. Committees help manage the many tasks needed for a successful ALA Girls State program while introducing new ideas and potential leaders into the program and your Department.

Most ALA Girls State program committees are comprised of volunteers:

1. Some committee members may be paid, others may receive stipends for mileage or travel costs, and others may participate on a purely voluntary basis.
2. Some volunteers may be assigned to a committee with one large area of responsibility; others may be assigned to multiple committees with fewer responsibilities.
3. While most committees will consist mainly of American Legion Auxiliary members, other committees may be composed of non-members such as legislative officials, political instructors, lawyers, and court officials.

Ideally, the program should be structured with smaller groups or sub-committees responsible for overseeing key elements of the ALA Girls State program such as government activities, public relations, counselors, ceremonies, and special events. Appointees to these sub-committees ensure no detail is overlooked when planning and presenting an ALA Girls State program. Members appointed to serve on these sub-committees should have the expertise, physical ability, personality, and stamina to serve in these capacities.

A Department ALA Girls State program chairman/director, as an appointee approved by the Department governing board, has significant responsibility for the ALA Girls State program in her state. Remember: As described in Chapter 1 of this Guide, in states where the ALA Girls State program is incorporated, the department governing board must confirm the appointment of the ALA Girls State board, the ALA Girls State chairman or director, the ALA Girls State bylaws must be approved by the Department, and the ALA Girls State board must report monthly to the ALA Department governing board. Please refer to the information on subsidiary corporations in the Department oversight section of Chapter 1.

A sample of ALA Girls State program structure (whether your program is incorporated or not):

**ALA Girls State Program Committee Chair and/or Director** serves as the overall manager of the program, responsible for the safety and security of all the teenage girls participating as well as the program staff. The chair and/or director is responsible for:

- making sure the program complies with applicable federal and state law and operates according to best practices
- if the program is incorporated, ensuring the program complies with the five rules of a subsidiary corporation as explained in Chapter 1
- ensuring the program has a vice chair or assistant director or deputy director with whom she works closely and is capable of stepping in to the chair or director position if needed (While ALA women are strong, none of us are invincible – accidents and illness can happen!)
- minimizing exposure to liability risks
- ensuring personal, medical, and health information is protected according to HIPAA regulations, privacy laws regarding conveying information about minors, and that information and records are conveyed, secured, and retained confidentially and appropriately
- overseeing that properly executed contracts are in place, the program is adequately insured, and record retention policies are followed
- making sure ALA units understand and follow guidelines outlined in Chapter 3 for selecting candidates for the ALA Girls State program
- recommending appointees to serve on sub-committees
- overseeing the timing and quality of logistics
- overseeing communication with key stakeholders
- holding committee members accountable for their individual assignments and responsibilities, ensuring their work is done well and in a timely manner
- adhering to the ALA Girls State budget
- overseeing counselors and serving as a central point of contact for participant-related issues
- overseeing on-site communication with ALA Girls State staff members including emergency protocols, staff meetings, and group texting
- managing the selection of ALA Girls Nation senators and alternates (Note: See Chapter 3 – it is critical that the final selection be the responsibility of ALA members and completes the chosen senators paperwork provided by ALA National Headquarters)
- chairing committee/board meetings and ensuring ALA Girls State program and financial reports are submitted on a regular basis (at least quarterly) and in a timely manner to the Department governing board

The chair and/or director has responsibility for the overall experience of the participants and stakeholders (i.e., students, parents, volunteers, and donors)

**Duties** that may be assigned to the chair, director, or a committee or sub-committee member generally fall into these three categories around which ALA Girls State training is organized. The following list includes examples of duties that need to be considered and assigned for a successful ALA Girls State program:

1. **Health and Safety:** It is critical that the health and safety of every child and adult attending ALA Girls State is protected to the best of the program's ability.
  - a. **Medical:** maintain proper safeguards of health/medical information and on-site medical care;
    - i. ensure that personal, medical, and health information is protected according to HIPAA regulations, privacy laws regarding conveying information about minors, and that information and records are conveyed, secured, and retained confidentially and appropriately
    - ii. manage on-site prescription distribution, maintain participant and staff medical information, quarantines, first aid, and manage emergency medical care including following protocols for informing the director, parent, and guardian
  - b. **Safety:** ensure the safety and security of participants on and off campus, including emergency preparedness and safety patrols; appropriately licensed and bonded transportation, security, and food service providers
  - c. **Selection, Screening, and Training of Program Volunteers/Counselors:** select program staff including senior and junior counselors based on their abilities, expertise, mental and physical capabilities, stamina, and any limitations that would prevent them from fulfilling the requirements of the program staff position; conduct background checks; ensure that pre-event training and on-site orientation occurs for students and counselors including rules, policies, and conduct expectations; provide on-site support to counselors; and conduct post-event reviews and evaluations
2. **Risk Management:** Duties to mitigate risk that are not the specific responsibility of the chair or director:
  - a. **Registration:** determine who serves as the main point of contact to parents and public; verify documentation of applicants' legal habitation eligibility; ensure all registration forms, waivers, etc., are in place and intact; maintain and secure the privacy of documentation; schedule/conduct orientation of the participants and staff prior to arriving on campus; ensure drop-off and pick-up procedures are followed
  - b. **Communication – internal and external and Public Relations:** ensure compliance with ALA communication, branding, and social media policies, including enforcing social media policy compliance by all ALA Girls State participants; establish a crisis communications plan and ensure every program leader understands and abides by the

established process for managing a real or potential crisis; establish and communicate the process for reporting and addressing allegations of harassment, abuse, misconduct, bullying, and sexual harassment, misconduct, or sexual abuse; write and distribute timely ALA Girls State messaging and updates to key stakeholders (parents, sponsors, the public, on-campus contacts, ALA Department) via electronic distributions (emails, texts, social media updates, blogs) and/or local television and print news media

- c. **Logistics/Transportation:** establish drop-off and pick-up procedures for the safety of participants; arrange for licensed on- and off-campus transportation
- d. **ALA Girls State Store:** oversee and manage ALA Girls State merchandise, sales, and inventory
- e. **ALA Girls State Office on campus:** oversee and manage the on-campus ALA Girls State office and central program operation on campus; supervise office staff, if applicable; establish and follow petty cash protocols; provide stamps and supplies for thank-you notes

### 3. Program Content and Itinerary

- a. **Government:** coordinate all government-related aspects of ALA Girls State including the preparation of mock legislative bills, organize and conduct visits to legislators and State government officials, and ensure that offices and candidate eligibility for those offices mirror that of your State Constitution
- b. **Orientation:** develop and provide orientation and instruction to staff assigned specific responsibilities for program activities during the week
- c. **Special Events:** oversee all ceremonial activities including daily flag raising and lowering, vespers/devotions, inaugurations, and commencements
- d. **Activities:** lead elective activities such as band, choir, or talent shows; invite and make arrangements with guest speakers; ensure hospitality for distinguished guests; coordinate details for service projects and field trips

## Section 2

### Selecting ALA Girls State Committee/Staff Members

The ALA Girls State committee/staff should be comprised of members who have already demonstrated a commitment and passion for American Legion Auxiliary programs as well as members who may be new to the organization but have great leadership potential. Selection of the committee and staff will vary according to the guidelines of each Department.

#### Key Attributes of Committee/Staff Members

It is essential that ALA Girls State Committee/Staff members have the physical ability and stamina to serve in this role and demonstrate the following positive traits:

- Commitment to the American Legion Auxiliary's mission of serving veterans, the military, and their families
- Honesty and willingness to speak the truth with kindness
- Positive attitude and patience with people who are learning
- Interest in government; real-life experience with your state's government process is a plus
- High energy; able to be physically active for long stretches with little sleep
- Enjoys interacting with young people; welcoming and hospitable nature
- Enjoy working in a team environment; able to take direction and share responsibilities
- Good role model and behaves in manners consistent with the American Legion Auxiliary's values
- Demonstrates professional attributes such as business expertise, public speaking, marketing, etc., that can enhance the ALA Girls State program

#### Identifying and Recruiting Potential Committee/Staff Members

- Ask Auxiliary members to recommend individuals interested in the ALA Girls State program; invite those who show an interest to apply for a committee position
- Invite teachers from local schools to participate
- Promote the program through ALA social media
- Inform recent ALA Girls State alumnae that applications are being accepted for junior counselor positions
- Ask Legionnaires involved in The American Legion Boys State for leads

#### Considerations for Selecting ALA Girls State Committee/Staff Members:

- Identify roles needed and the qualities that volunteers serving in each role should have
- Schedule convenient times (evenings/weekends) to interview volunteers in person for the various program positions

- Ask all program staff prospects the same questions relative to the roles for which each is being considered
- Evaluate the physical stamina of program staff prospects to respond to an emergency; to react and move quickly with agility, strength, and mental clarity; and to endure long days with much walking and little sleep; counselors especially should be able to walk briskly and unassisted
- Make sure program staff prospects know that those accepted for the program must pass a background check
- Make sure program staff prospects understand the commitment to serving as an ALA staff member requires staying on campus throughout the entire program
  - Involve those leaders who will be responsible for the work of recruited volunteers.

### **Committee/Staff Member Assignments**

When assigning committee members or volunteers to positions, it's important to consider their strengths, weaknesses, interests, and wishes. A well-placed committee member or volunteer staff member is more likely to excel at her job, stimulate innovation, and improve the ALA Girls State program. A poorly placed person may lose interest or detract from the program.

- Ask members or volunteers where they would like to be involved in the program. Try to place them in areas where they feel confident with their duties.
- Try to match volunteers' real-world experience with their job duties.
- Remind committee members and staff that some assignments may be modified or added when they arrive at the American Legion Auxiliary Girls State session.

## **Section 3**

### **Background Screening**

**As a program that primarily serves minors, it is extremely important that your American Legion Auxiliary Girls State program has a background screening process that covers all staff and volunteers. Remember: You are assuming responsibility for and the custody of someone's daughter for a week.**

**Organizations that primarily serve children are often held to the strictest standards** in regard to background screening, and you should be aware of which laws apply to your program. Even if there are legal requirements or only limited requirements for background screening, there are other compelling reasons for mandatory screens:

- Protecting a vulnerable population
- Avoiding public backlash
- Reassuring donors
- Limiting liability

There is no one law that covers whether background checks are required for employees or volunteers or states how extensive those background checks must be; instead, there is an overlay of federal and state laws. You should also remember that there can be both civil and criminal liability for failing to conduct background screenings. Some states may require screening for employees but not volunteers; other states may require them for both employees and volunteers. It is your responsibility to comply with your state's legal requirements.

**Applicants' backgrounds may be screened in a variety of ways**, and your state department should approve your policy. A typical policy would include requiring a national criminal history check, a sex-offender registry check, and a Social Security check. If the person would be transporting minors by motor vehicle, a screening check with your state department of motor vehicles is recommended. Numerous reputable companies provide background checks, often at a reduced rate for nonprofits. Some nonprofits ask potential volunteers to provide personal references. If you use a third-party screener, it might require you to obtain the potential employee or volunteer's written consent before conducting the search, and it is good policy to let volunteers know they will be screened.

Because of the immense liability that the ALA assumes in presenting a program for this many minors across the country, the National organization has adopted strict procedures for conducting background checks on staff and volunteers who work with youth programs at the national level. For example, ALA National Headquarters conducts background checks on national committee members and volunteers who work in the American Legion Auxiliary Girls Nation and the national Junior meetings. In addition to conducting hiring screenings, the American Legion Auxiliary National Human Resources Division conducts background checks on all staff members who spend a significant amount of time working with these programs.

If a background check reveals anything that gives a program leader cause for concern about an individual, that individual should not participate unless the cause for concern is resolved. If the cause for concern is of a nature that cannot be resolved or ignored, then that individual cannot participate.

In regard to junior counselors or volunteers younger than 18, there typically is no legal requirement to perform a background check, and, since juvenile criminal records are usually sealed, a typical background check of a minor would not likely be effective. Social media sites and web-based search engines such as Google are viable ways to help evaluate whether a minor volunteer would represent your program in a positive way, as would asking for and checking references, including any employment history. Demanding that a minor open a private social media account to your scrutiny is not recommended, but an account viewable to the public is considered an open record.

Again, there typically is no legal requirement to screen minor volunteers, but doing so can help maintain the quality of your program. **The results of background checks should be kept confidential, to avoid leaking personal information about the employee or volunteer.**

## **Section 4**

### **Role of ALA Members and Units in Selecting ALA Girls State Participants**

In today's legal and regulatory environment, it is critical that the American Legion Auxiliary be responsible for the promotion, recruitment, screening, and selection of ALA Girls State participants as well as ALA Girls Nation participants. Remember: American Legion Auxiliary Girls State is a trademarked program that is privately funded and presented by a private membership organization. The ALA members should not relinquish this critical responsibility to schools or other organizations, donors, or entities.

Because the recruitment and selection of ALA Girls State participants is a huge liability for the American Legion Auxiliary, an entire chapter on the recruitment screening and selection of students has been added to this Guide. See Chapter 3.

It is important for the Chairman/Directors of ALA Girls State programs to understand and to educate units that sponsor ALA Girls State participants about the ALA's responsibility for interviewing and selecting girls. Units should only accept applicants who understand the program is a privately funded leadership camp presented by a private organization founded to serve God and country. The ALA Girls State programs are specifically exempted from federal sex discrimination laws by a special section in US Code Title IX. It is critical for unit and department members to be familiar with the information in Chapter 3 of this Guide.

ALA Girls State Program Chairman/Directors should communicate with ALA unit leaders in their Department about their critical role in the selection process. In many cases, unit members have turned over the ALA Girls State candidate selection process to their local guidance counselors or government teachers. Getting community leaders, school counselors, and teachers involved is a very important step in the selection of your ALA Girl State citizens; however, all too often, ALA members have allowed others to make the final determination about who attends our privately funded, privately presented ALA Girls State programs. Candidate selection is the sole responsibility of the sponsoring ALA unit because that ALA entity is responsible for funding and presenting the program and bearing the responsibility for the safety and security of all the teenage girls entrusted to our care. Selecting ALA Girls State participants is not a privilege to be relinquished to a school, an individual donor, nor to any other person or entity. See Chapter 3 of this Guide.

## Section 5

### **ALA Girls State Committee/Staff Member Preparation and Training Prior to ALA Girls State and On Campus**

For your ALA Girls State Program to be successful, preparation and training is essential. Much planning and preparation take place months in advance of the on-campus presentation of ALA Girls State. Pre-event planning includes reviewing the timeline to make sure it is comprehensive and takes into consideration the time needed to update materials, select and assign staff, and conduct training.

ALA Girls State training is the primary opportunity to acquaint committee and staff members with the fundamentals of the program. Every ALA Girls State program staff/committee member must be prepared to answer important questions as well as handle difficult situations that might arise throughout the week. Effective training will prepare every staff/committee member to be an on-site resource and risk manager for this elite, privately presented, privately funded American Legion Auxiliary program in order to protect the reputation of the program and the ALA.

Training should cover three basic categories:

1. Health and Safety
2. Risk Management
3. Program Content and Itinerary

The ALA Girls State program planning team establishes a timeline for staff/committee training. Some Departments may be able to allow two to three days for training, while others may only be able to dedicate the day before the ALA Girls State session to train committee and staff members. In the latter case, it is acceptable for some training to take place in advance via conference calls, web teleconferencing, or efficient use of emails. No matter how much time is dedicated to training, it is important that all committee and staff members be sufficiently trained and confident in their knowledge of the program and their roles and responsibilities.

To accomplish adequate training requires both pre-event preparation, meetings, training and on-site orientation for all ALA Girls State staff, followed by post-event evaluation.

### **Preparation**

It is important to understand the seriousness of your responsibility in caring for minors during ALA Girls State in order to minimize your department's risk exposure as well as your personal risk exposure.

No one individual should have all the information, critical passwords, or access to social media accounts. To safeguard the organization and every volunteer and staff member, it is vital to always have at least two people with access to key documents, passwords, and data.

## **Committee/Staff Member Meetings**

There is no prescribed number of committee meetings that must occur during the ALA Girls State planning process. Meetings should be held only when necessary out of respect for people's time.

At a minimum, departments should host a pre-event planning meeting and training, and a post-event evaluation meeting, appropriately timed. The post-session meeting is an opportunity to evaluate the program, noting what went well and what improvements might be desirable. While in-person meetings are ideal, there are many other productive options for conducting meetings, including conference calls and web teleconferencing.

## **Pre-event Training**

- Consult your ALA Girls State Program planning calendar and timeline. Review each year to a) ensure the timeline addresses deadlines for program goals and project completion, and b) that pre-event training is incorporated in the timeline to allow sufficient time to plan and present the pre-event training. The training should include the responsibilities and activities expected of each program staff member.
- Once volunteers have been selected and positions assigned, provide each with all relevant information concerning their assigned positions, including reports from previous years, roles and responsibilities, policies and procedures, schedules, maps, contact information, and useful resources and materials.
- Remind volunteers that accomplishing assigned tasks by each deadline is critical; they should notify the director or chair about anything that might impede their ability to meet a specific deadline.
- Be sure to allow time for volunteers to ask questions regarding their assignments, especially of previous members of the committee or staff.
- Introduce junior counselors to their adult counterparts or supervisors, either in person or via email.
- Staff members should be conscious of treating one another with the same respect as participants, guests, and facility workers.

## **Section 6**

### **ALA Girls State Orientation On Site**

#### **Staff orientation - preparing staff to assume their responsibilities:**

- Clear statement of duties
- A signed behavior agreement
- Communication during the event

#### **Participants and parents orientation - before their arrival:**

- Options on how this can work (online, in person)
- Should orientation be required?
- What should be covered in the gathering?

**Orientation purposes:**

- Provide basic information for participants and parents
- Prevent/reduce misunderstandings
- Level the playing field
- Establish a baseline for expectations
- Answering the basics – who, what, when, where, why
- Logistics – arrival, departures/transportation changes, lodging
- Sharing expectations
- Rules
- Dress code
- Sharing opportunities
- Government organization – political parties, branches of government, elections
- Education opportunities – Samsung Scholarship
- Limit the time of your presentation
- Allow time for questions
- Provide contact information

**Special Guests and Field Trip Orientation:**

- Provide historic context when visiting landmarks in your state
- Provide a copy of your home state's constitution
- Without being political, tie your remarks to current events if possible

## **Section 7**

### **Caution: Collaborating with Other Organizations/Causes**

Due to the visibility and prominence of the ALA Girls State program, leaders in the American Legion Auxiliary are often approached by outside groups that request an opportunity to further their own cause in conjunction with or during the ALA Girls State program. What follows is a suggested response to such requests:

The American Legion Auxiliary Girls State is a cornerstone leadership development program presented annually to 16,000 girls across the country as a highly structured immersive learning experience. The program entails an intense schedule with no down time and no opportunities for the involvement of external interests or organizations.

To maintain the integrity of the program and its seven-decade stellar reputation, American Legion Auxiliary presents its program exclusively, and will continue to present it exclusively.

While we appreciate the interest and admiration other organizations have for the program, we are not in a position to deviate from the very detailed schedule, nor to entertain proposals from other organizations wishing to participate in the program.

We wish you all the best with your endeavors.

## **Section 8**

### **Sample Planning Calendar American Legion Auxiliary Girls State Program Director/Chair**

11 months out:

- Update delegate/alternate applications.
- Meet with department judge advocate for review of forms.
- Begin work on budget for upcoming year.
- Begin identifying key staff.
- Identify prospective organizations/institutions to suggest eligible student applicants.
- Schedule budget meeting with department governing body.
- Draft merchandise plan and budget, including determining any new or revised design elements that will require approval by the ALA National Secretary.
- Prepare and submit required reports to Department governing board as described in Chapters 1 and 2.

10 months out:

- Update contact information for board and committee members.
- Review staff and participant evaluations from previous ALA Girls State session.
- Review standing rules and policies for any necessary updates.
- Print delegate/alternate applications.
- Add ALA Girls State date and application forms to department website.
- Provide invitation materials to volunteers to distribute in the community. Make sure to include libraries and home school associations.
- Submit proposed budget to department finance committee for approval.
- Prepare and submit required reports to Department governing board as described in Chapters 1 and 2.

9 months out:

- Prepare/present any report required by your American Legion Auxiliary Department (e.g., Fall Conference).

- Update school and institution contact information.
- Confirm tentative daily event schedule.
- Send information packets to unit chairs.
- Attend ALA Girls State Leadership Conference in Indianapolis, IN (event usually held in September).
- Prepare and submit required reports to Department governing board as described in Chapters 1 and 2.

8 months out:

- Review roles and responsibilities with key staff.
- Review and evaluate list of on-site staff.(counselors, nurse, government staff).
- Review and update Counselor Handbook.
- Prepare and submit required reports to Department governing board as described in Chapters 1 and 2.

7 months out:

- Send on-site staff invitations.
- Send information to school administrators.
- Plan participant orientations that take place prior to ALA Girls State.
- Prepare and submit required reports to Department governing board as described in Chapters 1 and 2.

6 months out:

- Arrange transportation for any off-site trips.
- ALA Girls State Director prepares welcome letter from sponsoring department.
- Place order for store items.
- Prepare and submit required reports to Department governing board as described in Chapters 1 and 2.

5 months out:

- Deadline for on-site staff commitments.
- Request department secretary order lapel pins/charms for participants.
- Request department secretary order participant flags and Blue Star Banners.
- Confirm speakers.
- Send 30-day reminder that applications are due.
- Prepare and submit required reports to Department governing board as described in Chapters 1 and 2.

4 months out

- Print Delegate Manuals/Handbooks.
- Print Counselor Handbooks.
- Meet with facility to finalize meal schedule, housing plans, audio/visual needs and required contract deposits. Review emergency plan and procedures. Return insurance packet to agent/contact with premium payment.
- Prepare and submit required reports to Department governing board as described in Chapters 1 and 2.

### 3 months out

- Rough draft of committee plans due.
- Participant applications due.
- Capture participant information in central database; be sure to copy department if the department's ALA Girls State program's database is not housed at department headquarters.
- Prepare and submit required reports to Department governing board as described in Chapters 1 and 2.

### 2 months out

- Convene board and committee to finalize the agenda
- American Legion Auxiliary Girls State session plans.
- Notify selected participants.
- Send invitations to special guests.
- Prepare and submit required reports to Department governing board as described in Chapters 1 and 2.

### 1 month out

- Send certificate of insurance to facility.
- Send diagrams to university for A/V and room setups.
- Conduct participant orientation(s).
- Prepare and submit required reports to Department governing board as described in Chapters 1 and 2.

### 0 months out

- ALA Girls State program begins.

### 1 month following

- Submit Sickness and Accident Audit form to agent/contact with any necessary payment.
- File original release and liability forms with department for long-term storage.
- Prepare and submit required reports to Department governing board as described in chapters 1 and 2.





# **American Legion Auxiliary Girls State Program and Operations Guide**

## **Chapter 3:**

### **ALA Girls State PARTICIPANTS: ELIGIBILITY, SCREENING, AND SELECTION**



**CHAPTER 3**  
**ALA GS PARTICIPANTS:**  
**ELIGIBILITY, SCREENING, AND SELECTION**

This chapter contains the following:

- Section 1    Eligibility**
- Section 2    Recommended Components for an ALA Girls State Application**
- Section 3    Program Site, Accommodation of Special Needs**
- Section 4    Role of ALA Members in Selecting ALA Girls State Applicants**
- Section 5    Promoting Your ALA Girls State Program**
- Section 6    Scholarships**

***This American Legion Auxiliary Girls State Program and Operations Guide (Guide) provides general information about planning and conducting an ALA Girls State program. The Guide is intended to help program volunteers and staff to be mindful of pertinent issues. This Guide constitutes advice and recommendations for operations based on best practices; information within the Guide stating “shall or must” is based on federal law or federal/IRS regulations and mandates. This Guide does not constitute legal advice to your ALA Department or an incorporated subsidiary (incorporated ALA Girls State program). If you have any legal concerns about your ALA Girls State program, you are advised to contact your Auxiliary Department and an attorney licensed in your state.***

## **Section 1**

### **Eligibility**

#### **Participation in American Legion Auxiliary Girls State Programs**

Female students who demonstrate leadership, character, scholarship, loyalty, and service in their school and community should be considered. ALA Girls State participants are to be selected on the basis of merit and ability.

ALA units should make every effort to sponsor eligible young women to participate in their department ALA Girls State program. The unit's ALA Girls State chair should inform school districts and individual public and private schools about the benefits of the program, explain eligibility requirements, and distribute information and applications to the schools.

Please consider inviting young women eligible for membership in the American Legion Auxiliary to become members. You will find a Legion Family membership application form on [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org).

Who is the ideal candidate to attend ALA Girls State?

1. High school girls eligible to participate in the ALA Girls State/Girls Nation programs must have completed their junior year of high school and have at least one semester remaining, be a United States citizen or legal inhabitant of the United States as evidenced by a current and/or valid birth certificate, driver's license, visa, passport, Green Card, or other United States government-issued documentation verifying a legal presence in the United States for at least the duration of the ALA State/Girls Nation program. For any girl to be eligible to take part in the ALA Girls Nation program, she must be able to clear a background check by the United States government, the White House, and the U.S. Secret Service.
  
2. A female student who demonstrates leadership potential and maturity to benefit from a weeklong immersive learning experience in a shared living arrangement with strangers. It would be reasonable to assume that the following are not ideal candidates: a teenager who cannot commit to the time schedule and fundamental rules of an ALA Girls State program steeped in belief in God and country – the USA, a republic that practices democracy.
  
3. A teenage girl who has demonstrated scholastic achievement. This is primarily evidenced by good grades in scholarly endeavors. A student could have completed her "high school" secondary course work by age 17. If she is a prodigy in college at age 17, she may not be a good ALA Girls State candidate.

To recruit ALA Girls State delegates with the commitment to participating, units need to select delegates wisely, provide them with an informative orientation, and recognize them when they return home. Although units may seek financial support from outside the Auxiliary, the American Legion Auxiliary sponsors each participant and decides who will participate.

The American Legion Auxiliary Girls State and ALA Girls Nation programs must make a good faith effort to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters recommend that the ALA Girls State application and materials state that this documentation must be provided on site, and that failure to provide documents will result in ineligibility to participate with all expenses incurred up to that point becoming a responsibility of the parent/guardian.

### **Eligibility Considerations when Accepting Out-of-State Delegates**

It is the Department's decision whether or not to accept delegates from outside the state or out of country to participate in its ALA Girls State program. Each situation is unique and will require individual consideration. The following are some items to consider when reviewing an out-of-state or foreign student candidate's eligibility for acceptance into the department's program:

- All delegates, in state, out of state, or out of country, should be held to the same standards when being reviewed.
- If your ALA Department chooses to accept a delegate from outside your state to participate in your ALA Girls State program, you are advised to inform and remind the student(s) that your program is based on, and therefore reflect, the laws of the state in which the program is held. Your state laws may differ from the laws in the delegate's state of residence, and certainly will differ from the laws of foreign exchange students. Reminding participants of this fact is especially helpful as the student delegates are writing and debating bills.
- There are many reasons why a student might ask to attend your Department's ALA Girls State program; however, not all reasons are valid or justifiable for accepting every out-of-state or foreign student who applies to your state's program. Please ask and carefully consider the reason she is unable to attend the ALA Girls State program in her own state.
- Because of some programs' size limitations, some ALA Departments simply cannot accommodate all the students wanting to attend their state's ALA Girls State program. Those Departments may have a waiting list of students applying to become ALA Girls State delegates. Departments are not discouraged to accept out-of-state candidates; you are encouraged to give the eligible and deserving students who reside in your state the first opportunity to attend before you consider out-of-state students.

## American Legion Auxiliary Girls State Pledge

As a "Citizen" at ALA Girls State sponsored by the American Legion Auxiliary, I voluntarily make the following pledge:

- I pledge to cooperate and participate in the activities of ALA Girls State and will abide by its rules.
- I will obey the code of conduct of the facility.
- I will take an active part in the activities of the program and will take a serious and conscientious interest in fulfilling my responsibilities as a "Senator" at ALA Girls State in any capacity in which I may be privileged to serve.
- I will respect the judgment and authority of the staff of ALA Girls State.
- I will participate in all flag and patriotic ceremonies.
- I will be fair, honest, and cooperative in all my dealings with my fellow "Senators."
- I will make a report to my sponsoring American Legion Auxiliary Girls State regarding my ALA Girls State experience and knowledge gained and help to promote the program wherever possible.

I/we have read and understand the above:

ALA Girls State Citizen Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Section 2

### American Legion Auxiliary Girls State Application

#### Recommended Components

*What follows is a series of components recommended for inclusion in your ALA Girls State application for participants. If the delegate is selected for ALA Girls Nation, she will complete a similar online application. These recommendations have been approved for use by the National Judge Advocate who recommends that a student and parent/guardian signature line be added to each page with instructions for both to sign each page as well as initial their answers to each question. Suggested wording for signature lines: "We both certify that the answer to each question above is correct." If you anticipate problems, require a signed form to be notarized.*

*Please consider including the following items in your existing application.*

#### Basic Applicant Information

- Name of applicant
- Date of birth (DOB)
- Address
- Contact information (email, phone number)
- Sponsoring American Legion Auxiliary unit information
  - ALA unit number
  - ALA unit contact name and phone number
- Parent/guardian name
- Parent/guardian contact information (address, daytime/evening phone number)
- Emergency contact information
  - Name
  - Address
  - Daytime/evening phone number
  - Relationship to delegate
- ALA membership eligibility
  - Is any family member currently serving in the military?
    - If so, who? \_\_\_\_\_
    - Relationship to delegate \_\_\_\_\_
  - I am a direct descendant of a veteran: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
Relationship \_\_\_\_\_
- Are you considering a military career? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
- Have you/do you plan to apply to any of the U.S. military academies?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
- Applicant, please a brief bio and include a photograph of yourself

## Applicant Eligibility Verification

□ **Eligibility to participate in ALA Girls State and ALA Girls Nation**

*High school girls eligible to participate in the ALA Girls State/Girls Nation programs must have completed their junior year of high school and have at least one semester of high school remaining, be a United States citizen or legal inhabitant of the United States as evidenced by a current and/or valid birth certificate, driver's license, visa, passport, Green Card, or other United States government-issued documentation verifying a legal presence in the United States for at least the duration of the ALA Girls State/Girls Nation program. For any girl to be eligible to take part in the ALA Girls Nation program, she must be able to clear a background check by the United States government, the White House, and the U.S. Secret Service. The American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters further recommends that your ALA Girls State application and materials state that this documentation must be provided on site, and that failure to provide documents will result in ineligibility to participate in ALA Girls Nation with all expenses incurred up that point becoming a responsibility of the parent/guardian.*

□ **Eligibility to serve in an elected office**

*The purpose of the ALA Girls State program is to provide a nonpartisan participatory program that teaches eligible high school females responsible citizenship grounded in ethics, the principles of our nation's founders, and respect for God and country. For consistency among the 50 states presenting ALA Girls State programs, each program should conform to the structure of its corresponding state government as specified by its state constitution. ALA Girls Nation is modeled after the provisions in the United States Constitution.*

□ **Documentation requirements (copy of U.S. government-issued document required)**

*I attest that my daughter (ward) has a U.S. government-issued birth certificate or legal documentation of her legal presence in the United States provided by the U.S. government (e.g., visa, Green Card, passport, driver's license). I understand that upon arrival and registration at ALA Girls State, I am expected to provide a bona fide copy of her birth certificate or her U.S. government-issued documentation proving that she is a legal inhabitant of the United States for the duration of the event. If I fail to provide current and valid documentation, my daughter will not be allowed to take part in ALA Girls State, and I, as parent/guardian, will be responsible for all expenses incurred up to that point in time.*

## Applicant Health Information

1. Delegate information (name, address, phone)
2. Medical information about delegate
3. Physician information (name, address, phone)
4. Health history
  - a. List of medical conditions (check all that apply, and write in space)
  - b. List of allergies (check all that apply, and write in space)
  - c. Immunizations (list dates of required immunizations)
  - d. List any special dietary needs
  - e. List any additional information regarding special accommodations
  - f. Medication list (list medication, frequency, purpose)
  - g. Consent to Medical Treatment & Over The Counter Medication Permission Release Form

I consent that, should the need arise, medical care may be provided by a licensed medical professional to my daughter as follows:

- Permission is hereby granted to provide emergency medical treatment and hospital services as ordered or recommended by a qualified attending physician.
- In the event of an emergency and I cannot be reached, permission is granted to seek and emergency medical care rendered by a licensed medical professional including the administration of an anesthetic, X-ray examination, laboratory procedures, medical or surgical treatment, or other hospital services.
- Based on my daughter's medical history and medication regimen, permission is granted for my daughter and the American Legion Auxiliary Girls State nurse to develop a medication administration plan(s) to be administered during the program.
- Permission is granted to American Legion Auxiliary Girls State to administer first aid including the use of bandages and to the nurse to administer over-the-counter medications and minor medical care. I understand that the non-prescription medications listed below may be stocked in the Health Center and are used on an as-needed basis to manage illness or injury per the manufacturer's guidelines.
- I have marked through the non-prescription medications listed below that may NOT be administered to my daughter (list common OTC medications).

Include: insurance information (name and address of insurance provider, policy number, name of insured or photos of front and back of insurance card).

Sample Forms-



## American Legion Auxiliary Girls State Participant Medical Information

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's/Guardian's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's/Guardian's Phone # Home \_\_\_\_\_ Work \_\_\_\_\_  
Cell \_\_\_\_\_

Physician Name and Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

### MEDICAL HISTORY

Have you ever had or do you have any of the following medical problems?

	YES	NO		YES	NO
Allergies	_____	_____	Stomach Problems	_____	_____
Diabetes	_____	_____	Back Pain or Injury	_____	_____
Asthma	_____	_____	Joint Pain or Injury	_____	_____
Severe Headaches	_____	_____	Hepatitis	_____	_____
Seizures	_____	_____	Drug Problems	_____	_____
Depression	_____	_____	Dizziness	_____	_____
Broken Bones	_____	_____	Visual Problems	_____	_____
High Blood Pressure	_____	_____	Ear, Nose, Throat Problems	_____	_____
Heart Problems	_____	_____	Eating Disorders	_____	_____
			Other	_____	_____

**Explain all "YES" answers:**

Are you currently under a doctor's care? If so, for what?

Are you taking any prescription medications? If so, list drug, dosage, and frequency.

Are you taking over the counter medications? If so, list drug, dosage, frequency, and for what reason.

Please list any surgeries you have had and the year.

Are there any major illnesses in the family?

Date of last physical examination \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby certify that all of the above information is true to the best of my knowledge

Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Section 3

## Program Site, Accommodation of Special Needs

The American Legion Auxiliary Girls State Program is limited exclusively to female participants.

The Higher Education Act Amendments of 1976 (P.L. 94-482, approved October 12, 1976 by the United States Congress) specifically exempts The American Legion Boys State programs, American Legion Boys Nation, the American Legion Auxiliary Girls State programs, and ALA Girls Nation from provisions of Title IX's barring discrimination on the basis of gender. While the Title IX statute states: "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance," the U.S. Code Title IX statute, however, states that "this section shall not apply to:

(A) any program or activity of The American Legion undertaken in connection with the organization or operation of any Boys State conference, Boys Nation conference, Girls State conference, or Girls Nation conference; or

(B) any program or activity of any secondary school or educational institution specifically for -

(i) the promotion of any Boys State conference, Boys Nation conference, Girls State conference, or Girls Nation conference; or

(ii) the selection of students to attend any such conference

Because the American Legion Auxiliary and therefore its ALA Girls State programs are excluded from certain federal civil rights laws by a special provision of Title IX of the U.S. Code, your Department should not use state-funded or governmental facilities as venues for conducting your ALA Girls State program (e.g., state universities or government campuses). ALA Girls State is a private program presented by a private organization; conducting your ALA Girls State program on state university/college campus puts your program at significant liability risk.

American Legion Auxiliary Girls State programs should keep in mind that there are federal, and, in most cases, state laws that prohibit discrimination in the provision of public accommodation or employment. The American Legion Auxiliary is subject to Federal Civil Rights laws that prohibit discrimination or segregation on the basis of race, creed, color, religion, or national origin, and the Americans with Disabilities Act that prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability.

Because every American Legion Auxiliary Girls State program is subordinate to its department, its anti-discrimination policies should be based on the state department's policies, and it is important that the officers, board members, employees, and volunteers be trained in the department's policy.

Any girl being considered to enter a department's ALA Girls State program or attend any event should be provided the opportunity to advise you of any disabilities or medical conditions she may have. Decisions and actions regarding accommodating specific disabilities or medical conditions should be very carefully considered. The public relations consequences of a dispute regarding these matters can have devastating consequences for the ALA Girls State Program and the American Legion Auxiliary.

**Remember: The general rule is that if a department's ALA Girls State program is required to provide public accommodation, it must provide "reasonable accommodation" for people with disabilities. Your program should make every effort to make reasonable accommodations.**

Accommodations are considered reasonable if they do not change the fundamental nature of the program (for example, creating prohibitive costs for the organization) or alter the essential criteria for participation. If an applicant mentions she has a disability or requests special accommodations, your program's officials should discuss her needs with her and then investigate potential reasonable accommodations. Normal costs for room and board, transportation to program sites, etc., that would be incurred by an ALA Girls State program for an additional person, such as a chaperone or medical aide, to attend the ALA Girls State should never be considered excessive or unreasonable.

If, after discussing the requested accommodation, it is determined by your program that the accommodation(s) requested is/are unreasonable due to excessive cost, program officials can discuss with the participant's parent(s) or guardian(s) a cost-sharing arrangement that would allow the participant to attend without imposing a legally unreasonable burden on your American Legion Auxiliary Girls State program. This discussion would not be a legally binding discussion since the law does not require programs to provide unreasonable accommodations.

If the program and the parent(s) or guardian(s) do agree on a cost-sharing arrangement, you are strongly advised to create a written cost-sharing agreement signed by both parties. Such a signed agreement then becomes a legally binding contract. **Note:** If your program selects such a participant as a senator to ALA Girls Nation, the department or participants' parents will be expected to underwrite the costs for the accommodations.

**Recommended sample wording for a medical release or similar document:**

"If an American Legion Auxiliary Girls State Program applicant cannot meet the program's physical challenges, the American Legion Auxiliary Girls State Program will review the applicant's needs to determine if reasonable accommodations can be made. If such accommodations involve special costs or needs, the cost-sharing arrangement will be determined in advance with the applicant's parent(s) or guardian(s)."

If no reasonable accommodations for someone with a particular disability can be made, the American Legion Auxiliary Girls State program may legally exclude that person from the program, but it is highly recommended that you consult your attorney prior to your taking action.

It is important to remember that there is an overlay of federal, state, and local laws regarding people with disabilities, and even if your local laws are not particularly strict with regard to public accommodation, there are still moral and public relations reasons for accommodating people with disabilities. Any policy an ALA Girls State program develops should be created in consultation with an attorney licensed in your state.

It's important to also remember that declining to provide accommodation can strongly and adversely affect the public perception of your ALA Girls State program.

Remember, again, that you are being entrusted with a minor for a whole week.

**Religious Accommodation:** ALA Girls State is the premiere program of the American Legion Auxiliary and prepares young women to become tomorrow's government and civic leaders. The program also seeks to instill a greater appreciation of Americanism in our country's youth. One facet of Americanism is the freedom of religious expression, which is captured in the First Amendment. Our goal as stewards of Americanism should be to educate students about how to interact respectfully with people who practice religions different from their own. When looking at ways to accommodate religious expressions within our programs, we should look at these circumstances as opportunities to teach Americanism. As members of the world's largest women's patriotic service organization, we stand for God and country.

What are the best practices for accommodating a delegate's religious beliefs or practices? The first step is to give the student an opportunity to express any religious needs early enough that you can determine whether you can reasonably accommodate the request. For this reason, we suggest you include the following statement on your registration forms or application forms:

"The American Legion Auxiliary is an organization that stands for God and country and has done so for a century. Our program starts on \_\_\_\_\_ and ends on \_\_\_\_\_. Part of the ALA Girls State program involves the delegates working together to organize, prepare, and present a non-sectarian religious service that praises and thanks God and those who have sacrificed their lives for our freedom. If you have a religious need, including a need to attend a different service, please let us know by \_\_\_\_\_. Please understand that if we don't hear from you in advance, we may not be able to accommodate a religious request, although we will try."

If a delegate requests a religious accommodation, you should have someone talk with the delegate and her family face to face if possible. The goal of this process is to understand the delegate's request and determine whether she can participate in your program with or without an accommodation. Consider this a fact-finding mission. While you are having the discussion, be sure to keep in mind your agenda or organization plan. This way, you can know what kinds of requests are reasonable given your existing constraints. After you have understood the request, respond with what you CAN do – or say you will see what you can do and make arrangements to talk again by \_\_\_\_\_ (date). Thirdly, inform the delegate about what options are available and seek to reach a reasonable agreement.

Dietary requirements: Whether they are for health or religious reasons, you may have participants who require a special diet. You will very likely find that the food service manager at your venue/institution has dealt with a variety of needs, so involve that person in the discovery and accommodation process. Indeed, you may find that taking the delegate's request directly to the food service manager is the most efficient way to resolve the situation.

When selecting a venue to use for your event, be sure to ask the food service manager what sort of accommodations they are equipped to make for those with special requests. Many venues or institutions have made adjustments to their operations already to accommodate special request. The simplest and most effective approach may be that you take any such requests directly to your housing institution and use its resources to help you accommodate the requests.

When you arrive on site for your ALA Girls State program, you might have a brief sit-down meeting to bring the food service manager together with the special-needs participants.

## **Section 4**

### **Role of ALA Members in Selecting ALA Girls State Applicants**

Recruiting should be done via public, private, and home schooled “high schools.” Getting your community leaders, school counselors and teachers involved is a very important step in the selection of your ALA Girl State citizens; however, all too often we find ourselves allowing others to make the final determination in who attends our ALA Girls State programs.

Directors should communicate with unit leaders about their selection process. In many cases, these unit members have turned over the selection process to their local guidance counselor or government teachers. Candidate selection belongs to the sponsoring ALA unit – not to the school and not to an individual donor.

Interviews for candidates may be performed in your post home with the students and parents present; it is helpful to have some sort of objective tool for candidate evaluation. You might include “bonus” points for being an ALA member or relative of a member, but that should only be a portion of the candidate evaluation. Involve your unit members in the decision-making process as to whether a girl meets the requirements and is a good candidate to attend so they understand the process. If possible, incorporate a service project and candidate interviews on the same day. This will give the student and their parents an opportunity to experience the *Service Not Self* legacy of the ALA.

Introduce your ALA Girls State candidates to the American Legion Auxiliary and explain the mission of the program to them before a selection is made, so they understand that ALA members hold God and country close to their hearts. They may decide this program is not for them.

## **Participant Preparation**

It is a good idea to familiarize yourself with information about your program on your department website to make sure it is accurate, even if the program has its own website. You never know what will pop up in a search engine.

Most programs provide some type of orientation for participants to review the rules, establish a baseline for expectations and answer questions participants and their parents will have about transportation, lodging, and arrival at the ALA Girls State location. This will help prevent and reduce misunderstandings and help everyone prepare appropriately.

Once candidates have been selected, online registration is a fast and free way to register delegates. Consider using Google Forms; most students will be familiar with the online format.

Whether you conduct participant orientation online or in person, you should be sure to cover these topics at orientation:

- American Legion Auxiliary: who we are, what we do, and why we matter
- Required forms participants will need, including proof of citizenship
- ALA Girls State mock government options organization: political parties and elections
- Scholarship opportunities
- What to bring, and what not to bring
- How emergencies will be handled

Keep the orientation brief, leave time for questions, and be sure to provide contact information in case there are last-minute problems or questions.

## **Section 5**

### **Promoting Your ALA Girls State Program**

Because advertising involves purchased airtime or space in publications, the best way to promote your program is through local schools and school district offices, private schools, and home-schooling networks. Information can also be distributed through newspapers, social media networks such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, etc., nonprofit television spots, and radio announcements. Basic information on your ALA Girls State program can also be found at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org). Starting early to promote the program through these sources will ensure the widest audience and best-qualified pool of applicants.

A brochure promoting all of the youth programs of the American Legion Auxiliary, including ALA Girls State, is available for download at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org).

## **How to Reach Girls Eligible for the ALA Girls State Program**

ALA Girls State began as one- and two-day sessions in 1937. The program has grown from a few hundred participants to nearly 16,000 ALA Girls State delegates annually.

As one of the most respected and selective education programs of government instruction, ALA Girls State is a participatory program that develops tomorrow's leaders by helping them understand how our government works and the duties and responsibilities of good citizenship.

### **When Approaching Schools, Be Sure To:**

- Be familiar with the ALA Girls State program, including dates, application process, and contact information of the unit chair.
- Encourage the girl(s) sponsored last year to promote the program in their government class and to friends (if applicable).
- Contact guidance counselors (as they are usually the ones to handle scholarship opportunities) no later than four months prior to the deadline for submitting delegate and alternate applications.
  - When speaking on the phone, give a brief overview of the program, and ask to meet in person or mail them additional information.
    - Mention the opportunity for dual enrollment credit (if applicable).
- If funding is available, contact the school(s) to run an ad for ALA Girls State in the school paper or newsletter.
- Follow any processes already in place by your department in selecting a delegate.

### **Ideas to Reach Every Girl:**

- Ask ALA Girls State alumnae to submit their legislative bill and write an article for the school paper or newsletter.
- Utilize the web to post information about the program as well as quotes from past participants (i.e., unit website and/or Facebook).
  - If the department does not have an ALA Girls State Facebook account, contact the department's ALA Girls State director or chair to encourage them to create one.
- Mention prominent past participants, with emphasis on those from that state or someone the girls might look up to. Examples could include:
  - Cara Mund Miss America for 2018 is ALA member and former ALA Girls Nation Senator from North Dakota

- Erika Dunlap: Miss America 2004, participant on *The Amazing Race 15*
  - Leeza Gibbons: talk show host and reporter
  - Lieutenant General Michelle D. Johnson (Retired): first woman to serve as Cadet Wing Commander at the United States Air Force Academy
  - Jessica Mitchell: VP of Design/Director of Apparel at Liz Claiborne
  - Jane Pauley: national media personality
  - State-specific participants such as former Lt. Governor of Indiana Becky Skillman
- Approach all schools and any applicable organizations in your area about the American Legion Auxiliary Girls State program. This includes students who are homeschooled or attended charter schools, magnet schools, military schools, parochial schools, etc. – not just public schools. Other organizations may include a church youth ministry, local Boys & Girls Clubs of America, Girl Scout troops, and 4-H groups.
    - Contact other local ALA units to find out which schools they are approaching.
      - Consider having the district chair assign units schools to contact.
  - Utilize pre-designed posters from the national ALA website at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org).
    - Consider splitting the cost with your American Legion department, as Legionnaires are generally supportive of both Legion Boys State and ALA Girls State.
  - Contact local newspapers with media releases. Templates can be found on the national website:
    - [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org)
      - ALA Girls State press release template
      - ALA Girls Nation press release template
      - ALA Girls State media kit

## **Section 6**

### **Scholarships**

Every ALA Girls State and American Legion Boys State citizen is potentially eligible for the Samsung Scholarship. The Samsung Group, an international electronics company, has endowed a scholarship fund to be administered by The American Legion. To be eligible, students must be a high school junior and a direct descendant (child, grandchild, great-grandchild or legally adopted child) of a U.S. veteran who served during a period of war. Eligible students must participate in and complete either an American Legion Boys State or American Legion Auxiliary Girls State program.

Each ALA Girls State participant should be provided information about the online application, which must be completed online at [www.Legion.org](http://www.Legion.org). The application must be completed prior to the start of the ALA Girls State program the student is attending. Scholarship information is distributed by The American Legion to each ALA Girls State department director and chair at the beginning of the calendar year.

Initially, all applications are screened by judges at the program level. One young woman from each ALA Girls State program is chosen as a department finalist. These comprise a pool of 50 finalists from across the nation. A national panel of judges decides the final winners. Regardless of the level, applicants are assigned points for every part of their application based on a common national rubric.

The Samsung American Legion Scholarship Endowment Fund is self-perpetuating; it is funded completely through interest earned on the principal. Be sure to check the Samsung Scholarship information at [www.Legion.org](http://www.Legion.org) for the most current information.

Applicants are encouraged to be very dedicated in time and effort while filling out the application, as ultimately, the opportunity to be awarded a \$10,000, \$5,000 or \$1,250 scholarship.





# **American Legion Auxiliary Girls State Program and Operations Guide**

## **Chapter 4:**

### **Protecting Participants and the ALA: Risk Aversion, Liability, Health, and Safety**



## CHAPTER 4

### PROTECTING PARTICIPANTS AND THE ALA: RISK AVERSION, LIABILITY, HEALTH, AND SAFETY

This chapter contains the following:

- Section 1 Participant Policy Awareness**
- Section 2 Working with a Facility**
- Section 3 On-Campus and Off-Campus Safety**
- Section 4 Emergency Preparedness**
- Section 5 Sample ALA Girls State Emergency Plan**
- Section 6 Registration and Check-In/Check-Out Procedures**
- Section 7 Health and Medical Considerations**
  - A. Health Screening**
  - B. Best Practices for ALA Girls State Nurse**
- Section 8 Establishing a Code of Conduct**
- Section 9 Code of Conduct Sample**
- Section 10 Social Media – Recommended Guidelines**

**This *American Legion Auxiliary Girls State Program and Operations Guide* (Guide) provides general information about planning and conducting an ALA Girls State program. The Guide is intended to help program volunteers and staff to be mindful of pertinent issues. This Guide constitutes advice and recommendations for operations based on best practices; information within the Guide stating “shall or must” is based on federal law or federal/IRS regulations and mandates. This Guide does not constitute legal advice to your ALA Department or an incorporated subsidiary (incorporated ALA Girls State program). If you have any legal concerns about your ALA Girls State program, you are advised to contact your Auxiliary Department and an attorney licensed in your state.**

**Remember: You are assuming the custody and responsibility for someone's daughter for a week. You need to be aware of the following information:**

## **Section 1**

### **Participant Policy Awareness**

Youth programs are now subject to far more laws, rules, and scrutiny than ever before; it is important that anyone involved with your ALA Girls State program has access to this ALA Girls State Program and Operations Guide so they know how to handle sensitive situations.

While you do not need to train participants regarding every policy of your program, it's important for them to understand whom to contact to discuss an incident and how that complaint will be handled. Participants should be informed about anti-bullying policies, safety policies, disability accommodation and medical policies, how to initiate a sexual harassment complaint, whom to contact with safety or medical complaints, and any eventuality in which a participant might need take action herself.

Volunteers should be prepared with information that will allow them to handle a situation appropriately. Good policies and a friendly staff will make a better experience all around. It is better to temporarily scale back your program if you do not have the volunteers necessary to run a larger program, in order to put some effort toward cultivating the next generation to take over.

## **Section 2**

### **Working with a Facility**

ALA Girls State programs should not be conducted in government facilities or at state-funded colleges or universities. As explained in Chapter 3 section 2 of this Guide:

"...Because the American Legion Auxiliary and therefore its ALA Girls State programs are excluded from certain federal civil rights laws by a special provision of Title IX of the U.S. Code, departments should not use state-funded or governmental facilities (for example, state universities) as host sites for conducting ALA Girls State programs..."

This exclusion allows ALA Girls State to operate as an all-girls program. Conducting ALA Girls State at a state university or college jeopardizes the ALA operating an all-girls program at a college or university that receives government (state and/or federal) funding.

In the United States, there are some 1,800 public colleges and universities, (those that are government-funded which include those known as state universities) and some 2,500 private colleges and universities (those that receive no government funding, deriving their costs from tuition and donors). The statements in the ALA Girls State Operations Guide are not at odds; it is important to understand the difference between a government facility and a private facility.

Private facilities are not government-funded; therefore, they are not subjected to the same federal and state restrictions as are public facilities – state or government facilities – which include state colleges and state universities.

Work on the program for the ensuing year is best begun with the director or liaison for the American Legion Auxiliary Girls State program working with the university or college to schedule the program on the campus. This time frame is often set for several years in advance of the actual program. Each department will differ on the procedure used to secure a setting for its ALA Girls State program.

Recommended considerations include the campus locations where activities will be held and necessities such as microphones, furniture, dormitories, cafeteria access, etc. Much planning depends on the types of activities taking place, who and how many participants will be involved, and whether an event is formal or informal. The director and/or chair should be aware of the facility and visit and meet with university or college officials.

### **Section 3**

#### **On-Campus and Off-Campus Safety**

- All people associated with an American Legion Auxiliary Girls State program should be readily identifiable by clothing, ID badge, or another method.
- Curfews and visitation policies for participants should be established.
- Participants should not be allowed to leave campus without express permission from ALA Girls State leadership.
- Participants should stay together when off campus, and counselors should continually check to make sure everyone is accounted for.
- Counselors should know where their community members are at all times.
- Never post information on social media sites regarding group site visits until AFTER you return to campus.
- Be sure all ALA Girls State staff understand check-in and check-out procedures (See Chapter 6)

## Section 4

### Emergency Preparedness

In today's age, it is important to be prepared for multiple kinds of emergencies or risks that can occur during your ALA Girls State program. It is important to know how to handle a situation from medical to a security threat while you are on or off campus. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security encourages you to follow a four-part process when preparing for an event like ALA Girls State: Connect, Plan, Train, Report (<https://www.dhs.gov/connect-plan-train-report>). It is important to review your emergency plans every year.

**Connect:** It is important for your ALA Girls State program to build a relationship with the local law enforcement whose jurisdiction is over where your program is being held. For some locations, this may be law enforcement of the city, or it could be the law enforcement or security office of the university. ALA Girls State leadership should meet with those in charge of campus safety to go over their emergency plans. Most importantly, it is important for the first responders to know who their contact is for the program and who the decision maker is of the program.

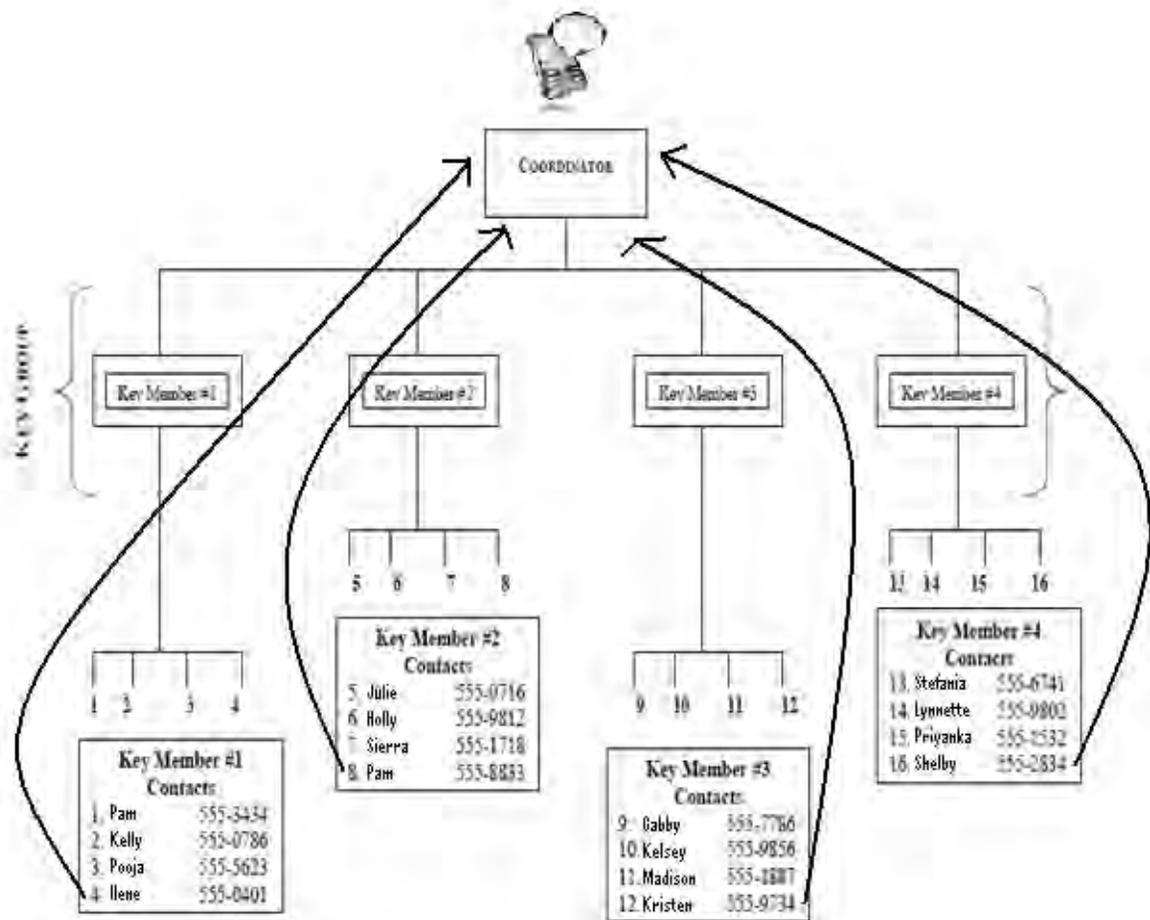
**Plan:** Be aware of different threats to your program, and create a plan in which to handle these situations. These threats can be from a medical emergency or fire evacuation to an active shooter or bomb threat. Create your own emergency procedure plan, making sure it coincides with the event center's plan. Engage the contacts you have made with local law enforcement to have them review your plan.

**Train:** Provide staff with campus safety manuals produced by your event location. Everyone should read and understand the manuals thoroughly. Go over different situations with your staff by reviewing the following:

- Acquaint staff with safety measures already in place on the campus, including emergency call stations, emergency sirens, etc.
- Review evacuation plans for dormitories.
- Create and talk about a detailed medical emergency plan, including whom to call/text, phone numbers, and how to respond to common first aid issues such as cuts, sprains, bee stings, sunburn, etc.
- Create and distribute a phone tree to all staff members to facilitate communication.
  - Collect all staff members' cell phone numbers and room landline numbers if applicable. Based on the following sample, Jan B. would first call Barbara S. and Amy B. From there, the arrows would specify who is responsible for calling the next person. When the last person in each branch has been called (Mary H., Samantha C., Whitney M., and Rachel M.), these people should then call the first person (Jan B.), so she would know that every person has been contacted.
  -

If it's impossible to reach the next person directly after you in the tree, skip that person and call the next. Then, continue to try reaching the person directly after you.

## Sample Phone Tree



## Section 5

### Sample ALA Girls State Emergency Plan

Director \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # \_\_\_\_\_  
Nurse \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

---

If there is an emergency concern, staff should contact the director at the number above, then the director will contact the university. In an extreme or life-threatening emergency, contact 9-1-1 and then the director and university.

If there is an emergency or threatening situation on the campus, university staff will contact the director. The director will then initiate the phone tree with emergency plan instructions. Staff members are expected to contact the next person on the list via phone or text and should have the next two numbers available at all times. If you have difficulties contacting the next name on list, skip and call or text the next in line and continue trying your immediate contact until successful. Those at the bottom of the list should call or text the person at the top to notify them that the loop is complete. Both counselors should be aware of exit routes in the buildings on campus and discuss the escape route with their community during the first few nightly meetings. Be aware of the safety rules posted in all dorm rooms.

**Emergency evacuation:** If asked to leave a building in an emergency, everyone should exit as directed with whatever group they are with at the time. All staff and delegates will congregate at the place discussed earlier, at which time delegates should find their city, and counselors should take roll immediately. The director and assistant director will determine whether all other staff members are present.

**Shelter-in-place (soft lockdown):** If there is a minor threat situation near campus and no one is permitted to enter or leave campus, program leaders would continue as directed with the delegates and staff. Counselors, director, and assistant director should account for all delegates and staff as if it were an evacuation situation. Other staff members would assist as requested.

**Lockdown:** In the dorms, each city should assemble in the designated counselor's room and stay put with the door and windows locked until directed otherwise by the security or emergency team or by phone-tree communication.

**Off campus:** Follow evacuation directions of the tour/site location. Delegates and staff should exit as directed and assemble by cities as soon as possible to take roll. Delegates and staff should always exit first and then find their city. If in doubt about a safe evacuation location, please go to the designated staging area (pick-up/drop-off locations). In lockdown situations off campus, staff should make every reasonable effort to locate all their delegates and stay together.

**Medical emergency:** Assess the situation and determine whether it can be handled by the nurse, or an ambulance needs to be called. If the situation could be life-threatening, call an ambulance immediately. Then call the nurse and director. If you have the most first aid training, have someone else make phone calls while you take care of the patient. For non-emergencies, call the nurse and then the director.

**Basic safety rules (not all inclusive):**

- Wear American Legion Auxiliary Girls State ID/badges at all times so they are clearly visible.
- Remain calm. Follow directions from those in charge.
- In evacuation situations, close the doors behind you. Once you have evacuated, remain outside.
- When an alarm sounds, exit using the stairs. Do not use elevators.
- The nurse should have medical forms available in all locations.

## **Section 6**

### **Registration and Check-In/Check-Out Procedures**

Registration form(s) sent to participants must include information about the check-in process and information about the end-of-session check-out process. The registration form(s) must require that the parent(s) or guardian provide the names, addresses, and phone numbers of:

- a) the primary adult authorized to pick up the student and to be contacted in case of an emergency
- b) at least three additional adults authorized to pick up the student
- c) additional adults who are authorized to be contacted in case of an emergency
- d) adult(s) who specifically are **not** authorized to be contacted or to whom the student may not be released under any circumstance

It is important to have the contact information of at least four authorized adults in the event of an emergency or if the primary contact person does not show up to pick up the student at the conclusion of ALA Girls State and cannot be reached.

The form(s) should also state that in an emergency, the ALA Girls State program chair or director is authorized to facilitate emergency medical care for a student and when attempts to reach the authorized adults are not successful.

**Check-out procedures:**

- When parents or guardians arrive to pick up students, whether at the end of the session or mid-week, their names and state-issued photo ID must be checked against the list of authorized persons.
- If the name of the person picking up the student is not on the list, do not release the participant.
- If a person not on the authorized list attempts to pick up a participant at any time, take the following steps:
  - Call the parent or legal guardian immediately.
  - If the legal guardian or parent is not available, call other authorized persons on the list.
  - Do **not** release a participant to an unauthorized person until written confirmation is made with a person previously authorized by a parent or guardian. In the event that a parent or guardian authorizes the ALA Girls State program director or chair to release a student to an adult who was not originally specified on the authorized list, the ALA Girls State program chair or director must make a note about the person to whom the minor has been authorized to be released, and maintain a detailed description of the person and a copy of his/her photo ID.

The ALA Girls State director or chair is responsible for the release of participants, and she or the ALA department may be liable for any repercussions for releasing a student to a non-authorized person.

## **Section 7**

### **Health and Medical Considerations**

American Legion Auxiliary Girls State staff, as explained in the chapter on staff selection, responsibilities, and liabilities, must have the physical agility, stamina, and mental alertness to protect participants throughout the program. Counselors should be made aware of any specific medical issues of participants within their ALA Girls State community.

A volunteer nurse or doctor should be on call at all times. You need to have a designated room where a healthcare professional can handle a medical emergency in private with a participant; however, it is strongly recommended that a second person be in the room with a participant to protect the program from allegations of wrong-doing.

If there is a specific medical issue within a community, the ALA Girls State nurse should spend one-on-one time discussing all pertinent details with the counselor. For example, if a participant has Type 1 Diabetes, the counselor should be briefed on signs of high and low blood sugar and what to do if those situations arise.

Staff should be trained to look for signs of common ailments, including heat stroke and allergic reactions. ALA Girls State program staff should be aware of participants' allergies to food, medicine, and insect stings.

## **Section 7A**

### **Health Screening**

At American Legion Auxiliary Girls State, transmission of infectious disease is an important concern, given the close quarters in which the participants will live for the week. It takes only one girl to spread a stomach flu virus that can ruin the week for many other participants. Simple measures can be taken during check-in to ensure that if a girl does become ill, other participants will not be affected. This can be accomplished through a simple health screening conducted by the health officer or other ALA Girls State committee member or staff member at check-in. The following questions can help the health officer determine who might become ill and whether that illness is likely contagious:

- In the past five days, have you had a fever or any indication of being ill?
- Has anyone in your home had a fever or any indication of being ill?
- If so, make sure to briefly note the symptoms in case the participant later exhibits them.
- If a participant is suffering from the same symptoms as a family member did a few days before, the ailment likely is contagious, and you should take proper precautions.

## **Section 7B**

### **Best Practices for ALA Girls State Nurse**

Some states have a staff member who is a nurse, but she also has other duties on staff. Some programs have a dedicated nurse who administers all medications – prescription and over-the-counter. The nurse shall document any injuries or reported illnesses and provide nursing care within that person's scope of practice. And there are some state programs that do not have a nurse on staff at all; they rely on university health centers, local urgent care or fast-track clinics, and the hospital emergency rooms. Ultimately, a volunteer nurse or doctor should be on call at all times. Please check your state rules concerning healthcare coverage rules for your delegates.

Before delegates arrive, it is strongly recommended you do the following:

- Identify locations of pharmacies, urgent care centers, and hospitals in close proximity.
- Drive the route to become familiar with these locations in case you need to get to a pharmacy, urgent care center, or hospital quickly.

- Check if your ALA Girls State facility has a defibrillator, and, if so, where it is kept and if the staff is trained in its use.
- Prepare a staff phone tree for all emergencies, including health, weather disaster, and security.
- If you have a cell phone from a different area code, check if 9-1-1 gets you a local emergency management area or the one in your area code.
- Have a healthcare professional review the healthcare forms before the arrival of your delegates, and contact the parents for further information.

Every ALA Girls State program nurse/health provider should have a binder with health information questionnaires that include the following information for staff and delegates:

- Current and past medical history
- Allergies and reactions
- Any prescription and over-the-counter medications the delegate is taking
- Authorization to treat the delegate
- Emergency contact information
- Insurance information
- Whether or not the delegate has had any overseas travel in the six months prior to your program
- Primary physician's name and contact information
- If required in your state, a self-medication administration release form
- Exposure to contagious diseases
- Recent surgery
- New medications
- Change in health status
- Form for documenting any treatment given

Note: During registration, you should update your information if you have any questions about the form you received.

You must maintain patient confidentiality, whether staff or delegate, and make this requirement clear to counselors as you inform them of any health issues that may require assistance at some point during the week. Be sure that any emergency medications are kept with the delegate at all times, such as insulin, glucose tablets, an EpiPen in the case of severe allergic reaction, or any emergency heart medications.

Before your ALA Girls State program begins, you should have procedures in place for the following situations:

- Infectious campers (e.g., when to send a participant home, when to isolate, process for determining if other participants have been exposed)
- Homesickness
- Accommodating participants with special needs
- When to call 9-1-1
- Medication securement policy or self-medication release form
- Appropriate sharing of health information
- Handling an on-site injury or illness of a participant (e.g., when to go to urgent care or hospital, when to contact parent/guardian, what individual should accompany a participant to off-site medical treatment, who is designated to contact the parent/guardian)
- Disposing of health information forms
- Notifying food service of any severe food allergies in advance and requiring that signs be posted in the food prep area (for example, if chicken has been cooked in peanut oil)

If you are treating a delegate for anything, the parents should be kept informed. And unless it is a true emergency, you need to contact the parents before going to an urgent care or hospital. You should have some basic supplies ready in case of an injury. These are supplies that anyone can utilize. There should be nothing in your kit that can't be used by any lay person if you do not have a nurse on staff.

Every ALA Girls State program should have a well-stocked first aid kit. See the Appendix of this Guide and check with appropriate medical personnel.

It is important to know your state's laws and regulations regarding: having a nurse on staff; medication administration; securing medications; medication distribution; required forms/procedures for medication dosing; and labeling, containing, storing, and securing of medications.

It is critical to know your state's laws regarding medical professional licensing and certification. It is also critical to have appropriate malpractice insurance.

## Recommended ALA Girls State Nurse Supplies

The following should be in the hands of every counselor:

- bandages
- tissues
- cold packs
- hand sanitizer
- disposable gloves

A larger, more complete first aid kit should be in the director's office if there is no nurse or in the nursing office. In addition to the supplies listed above, this kit should include the following:

- thermometer
- tweezers
- elastic wrap
- stethoscope
- blood pressure cuff/machine
- medicine cups
- scissors
- spiral-bound notebooks
- Hand sanitizer should be placed throughout commonly used areas. Participants may be required to sanitize their hands at the beginning of the cafeteria line, before entering general legislative sessions, or at other times and places as may be appropriate.

## Section 8

### Establish a Code of Conduct

**Each American Legion Auxiliary Girls State program is strongly advised to adopt a Code of Conduct.**

Under such a policy, even one harassing "event" should subject the harasser to discipline even if it is an isolated occurrence that might not give rise to legal liability. The Code of Conduct should state that every complaint will be taken seriously, every complaint will be investigated promptly, and appropriate remedial action will be taken to assure harassment is not repeated. These policies should extend to cover board members, officers, employees, and volunteers. Each state department should review its policy. Also, you should strongly consider asking an **attorney experienced in nonprofit management to review your policy since many federal, state, and local laws govern this area.**

Every American Legion Auxiliary Girls State program Code of Conduct should:

- describe with specificity behavior that constitutes a violation of organizational policy while giving management appropriate discretion

- unequivocally state that these behaviors will not be tolerated and that anyone found in violation of organizational policy will be subject to appropriate sanctions that may include termination
- provide for confidentiality on a “need to know” basis, but never promise it unequivocally
- promise and provide protection from retaliation for complainants and witnesses
- provide several avenues through which a complaint may be initiated

After your American Legion Auxiliary Girls State program has developed a Code of Conduct you are advised to:

- **Post and disseminate it.** The policy should be widely disseminated to all personnel and posted in a central location. It also should be included in any relevant personnel manuals or handbooks, and be distributed periodically. It is wise to have staff and volunteers sign a document stating that they have read, understood, and agree to abide by the policy.
- **Be consistent.** The policy should be internally consistent with your organization’s other discipline and personnel policies. For example, your policy against misconduct should explicitly provide that conduct violating an organization rule might result in immediate termination, despite a general policy of progressive discipline (if applicable). The policy also should be noted in your organization's progressive discipline procedure (if one exists).
- **Educate and train.** All personnel, particularly supervisors, should be taught what constitutes a policy violation and why such conduct is not permitted, so they can be alert to inappropriate conduct and take appropriate action. Many states already require dissemination of information about certain misconduct, such as sexual harassment. But supervisors should go further and conduct live training sessions at which personnel are encouraged to discuss their concerns, to help raise awareness and sensitivity among their co-workers. Supervisors also should be directed to report all complaints to designated officials, and they should be cautioned against unconscious retaliation against employees who complain. It is generally preferable to conduct training of supervisors and non-supervisors separately. Separate sessions will allow a trainer to emphasize the differing responsibilities of the groups.

Remember that the public relations consequences of a dispute over misconduct can have devastating consequences for the American Legion Auxiliary Girls State program and the American Legion Auxiliary.

## Section 9

### Code of Conduct Sample

The American Legion Auxiliary Girls Nation and ALA Girls State is a youth-serving, community-based organization dedicated to female high school students for civic leadership. Participation in the organization's program is subject to the observance of the American Legion Auxiliary rules and procedures. *The activities outlined below are strictly prohibited.* Any participant, staff member, or volunteer who violates this Code is subject to discipline, up to and including removal from the program.

- Abusive language toward a staff member, volunteer, or another participant.
- Possession or use of alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs during the program or reporting to the program while under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Bringing to the ALA Girls State program property dangerous or unauthorized materials such as explosives, firearms, weapons, or other similar items.
- Discourtesy or rudeness to a fellow participant, staff member, or volunteer.
- Verbal, physical, or visual harassment of another participant, staff member, or volunteer.
- Actual or threatened violence toward any individual or group.
- Conduct endangering the life, safety, health, or wellbeing of others.
- Failure to follow any program policy or procedure.
- Bullying or sexual harassment of any participant.
- Failing to cooperate with an adult supervisor/leader/mentor.

I have read and understand The American Legion Auxiliary's Code of Conduct. I agree to abide by the rules described above and understand that I may be removed as a participant if I violate any of these rules.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Section 10

### Social Media – Recommended Guidelines

Part of your participant behavior guidelines should include rules about social media content. For example:

The American Legion Auxiliary Girls State program recognizes and supports its ALA Girls State participants' rights to freedom of speech, expression, and association, including the use of online social networks. In this context, however, each delegate must remember that participating in the ALA Girls State program is a privilege, not a right. As a delegate, you represent the American Legion Auxiliary and are expected to portray yourself, your state and the Auxiliary in a positive manner at all times. Any online postings must therefore be consistent with federal and state laws, the facility rules, and ALA Girls State rules, regulations, and policies.

Note: Irresponsible social media postings can potentially harm participants and the program.

#### **American Legion Auxiliary Girls Nation & ALA Girls State Policy on ALA Girls Nation Social Networking and Media Use**

The American Legion Auxiliary Girls Nation program recognizes and supports its ALA Girls State/Nation participants' rights to freedom of speech, expression, and association, including the use of online social networks. In this context, however, each delegate must remember that participating in the ALA Girls State/Nation program is a privilege, not a right. As a delegate, you represent the American Legion Auxiliary and are expected to portray yourself, your state, and the American Legion Auxiliary in a positive manner at all times. Any online postings must therefore be consistent with federal and state laws, and ALA Girls State/Nation rules, regulations, and policies (including the Guidelines listed below).

#### Guidelines

If you participate on a social networking site or use social media, you must keep the following guidelines in mind:

- Everything you post is public information — any text or photo posted online is completely out of your control the moment it is posted, even if you limit access to your social media profiles. Information (including pictures, videos, comments, and other posters) may be accessible even after you remove it.
- Think before you post. If you feel angry or passionate about a subject, it's wise to delay posting until you are calm and clear-headed. Post only pictures and comments that you would be comfortable sharing with the general public.
- Use caution when adding someone or inviting someone to be a friend (this includes TAL Boys Nation senators).

- Limit information about your whereabouts and plans in order to minimize the potential of being stalked, assaulted, or the victim of other criminal activity. Post about where you've been, not where you're going.
- What you post may affect your future. Many college admissions officers and employers review social networking sites as part of their overall evaluation of an applicant. Carefully consider how you want people to perceive you before you give them a chance to misinterpret your information (including pictures, videos, comments, and posts).
- Similar to comments made in person, you should be respectful online. The American Legion Auxiliary will not tolerate disrespectful comments and behavior online, such as:
  - derogatory or defamatory language and/or images
  - comments that create a serious danger to the safety of another person or that constitute a credible threat of serious physical or emotional injury to another person
- Take the high ground. Don't pick fights or engage in fights online.
- Respect yourself; respect others; respect the American Legion Auxiliary Girls Nation or the American Legion Auxiliary Girls State program.

Monitoring and Consequences

ALA Girls Nation or the ALA Girls State staff members reserve the right to review and/or monitor delegates' social networking sites and postings.

Any violation of law or ALA Girls State/Nation rules, regulations, or policies, or evidence of such violation in your online content is subject to investigation and possible immediate action by the American Legion Auxiliary Girls State/Nation staff and/or law enforcement agencies. Internal consequences may include, but are not limited to, notice to remove the content and dismissal from the ALA Girls State/Nation program.

As an American Legion Auxiliary Girls State/Nation participant, I attest that I have read, understand, and agree to abide by this policy:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent/Guardian/Responsible Adult if the above is a minor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Parent/Guardian/Responsible Adult

Date Signed:\_\_\_\_\_



**ALA Girls State Participant Media Release Template**  
**Permission to Use Photographs/Videos**

Subject \_\_\_\_\_

Location \_\_\_\_\_

I grant to the American Legion Auxiliary, its representatives, and employees the right to take photographs and/or video of me and my property in connection with the above-identified subject. I authorize the American Legion Auxiliary, its assigns and transferees to copyright, use, and publish the same in print and/or electronically.

I agree that the American Legion Auxiliary may use such photographs/video of me with or without my name and for any lawful purpose, including, for example, such purposes as publicity, illustration, advertising, and web-related content.

I have read and understand the above:

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Printed name \_\_\_\_\_

Organization Name (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

*Signature of Parent or Guardian*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*(if under age 18)*





# **American Legion Auxiliary Girls State Program and Operations Guide**

## **Chapter 5:**

### **Conducting American Legion Auxiliary Girls State Programs On Campus**



**CHAPTER 5**  
**AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY GIRLS STATE**  
**PROGRAM COMPONENTS**

This chapter contains the following:

- Section 1    General Program Information**
- Section 2    Program Considerations**
- Section 3    Example of Daily Schedule**
- Section 4    Example of Elective Offices**
- Section 5    Eligibility to Run for Certain Offices**
- Section 6    Restrictions on Seeking and Holding ALA Girls State Offices**
- Section 7    Fundamentals of Parliamentary Procedure**

***This American Legion Auxiliary Girls State Program and Operations Guide (Guide) provides general information about planning and conducting an ALA Girls State program. The Guide is intended to help program volunteers and staff to be mindful of pertinent issues. This Guide constitutes advice and recommendations for operations based on best practices; information within the Guide stating “shall or must” is based on federal law or federal/IRS regulations and mandates. This Guide does not constitute legal advice to your ALA Department or an incorporated subsidiary (incorporated ALA Girls State program). If you have any legal concerns about your ALA Girls State program, you are advised to contact your Auxiliary Department and an attorney licensed in your state.***

## **Section 1**

### **General Program Information**

A manual of instructions and information should be provided to each participant upon arrival at ALA Girls State. The manual should include the itinerary and expectations at various events, as well as information about her state's government procedures, and ALA Girls State-specific rules.

Many American Legion Auxiliary Girls States organize an orchestra, band, or choir for the week. These groups might perform during special events and ceremonies such as an inauguration, commencement, or a banquet.

Talent shows are a fun way for participants to showcase their unique skills and talents.

Exemplary participants may be presented with special awards on behalf of the department.

Most ALA Girls States programs have pins or charms that bear the ALA emblem and ALA Girls State logo. The pins or charms are normally awarded as a token of completing ALA Girls State.

Every participant in ALA Girls State should have a definite function in the government, no matter how small.

ALA Girls State should aim to encompass all phases of state government, including city and county levels.

## **Section 2**

### **Program Considerations**

Do all service projects directly support the mission of the American Legion Auxiliary?

Do guest speakers advance the mission of the American Legion Auxiliary?

Do all printed materials create a strong link between the American Legion Auxiliary and ALA Girls State program?

Are activities and speakers age-appropriate?

Are activities and guest speakers nonpartisan?

### Section 3

#### Example of Daily Schedule

##### Example One

6:30 a.m.	Wake up
7:00 a.m.	Breakfast
8:00 a.m.	Flag-raising ceremony
8:15-8:45 a.m.	Education session - state government - explanation of structure and positions at state level
9-10:30 a.m.	Political party meetings - intentions of elections - election of party candidate for state government and campaign strategy decided
10:30-11:45 a.m.	Guest speakers - elected state officials - advice and remarks from lieutenant governor and House of Representatives
noon-1:00 p.m.	Lunch with elected state officials
1:15-3:15 p.m.	Education session - legislation at state level - learn how bills work their way through the legislative process
3:30-4:15 p.m.	ALA Service Project
4:15-5:40 p.m.	Free time
5:45 p.m.	Flag retirement ceremony
6-7:00 p.m.	Dinner
7-7:20 p.m.	Blue Star Banner presentation - citizens who have family members in the service will be recognized
7:25-7:35 p.m.	News and updates
7:35-7:55 pm	Preparation for talent and skit night - citizens will have this time to get into costume and prepare last-minute details
8-9:30 p.m.	Talent and skit night
9:30 p.m.	City meeting
10:00 p.m.	In dorm area
10:30 p.m.	Ready for bed/quiet
11:00 p.m.	Bed check/lights out

## Example Two

6:30 a.m.	Wake up
7:20 a.m.	Flag-raising ceremony
7:30-8:15 a.m.	Breakfast
8:30-10 a.m.	City meetings - intentions of local offices - speeches are given and elections are conducted
10-11:30 a.m.	Education session – panel of military personnel - learn about veterans, wounded warriors, and servicemembers
11:35 a.m.-noon	Poppy wreath presentation - military personnel present will be presented with a poppy wreath – poppy’s significance explained
noon-1:00 p.m.	Lunch with military personnel
1:15 - 2:15 p.m.	Education session - presentation of American Legion Auxiliary mission and purpose
3:30-4:00 p.m.	Servicemember letter-writing project
4-5:20 p.m.	Free time
5:20 p.m.	Flag-retirement ceremony
5:30-6:30 p.m.	Dinner
7-9:30 p.m.	General assembly – news and updates - songs and games
9:30-10 p.m.	Snack
10:00 p.m.	In dorm area
10:30 p.m.	Ready for bed/quiet
11:00 p.m.	Bed check/lights out

## Section 4

### Examples of Elective Offices

#### City Offices

- **Mayor** – The mayor is the chief executive officer of the city. She presides over all city meetings and is generally responsible for the city’s conduct.
- **Council** – Each city elects six members of the city council. The council passes ordinances for the city and assists the mayor.
- **Treasurer** – The treasurer holds any money collected for city activities. She also may be asked to investigate and report to the city council regarding monetary matters including the city budget.
- **Clerk** – The clerk keeps minutes for all city meetings. She also acts as court clerk in the event of a city circuit court trial.
- **Commissioner of Revenue** – The commissioner collects any money necessary for city activities such as parties. She works with the treasurer in budget management.
- **Sheriff** – The sheriff is the city’s chief law enforcement officer. She assists the mayor in maintaining proper conduct.
- **Commonwealth’s Attorney** – She is the city’s chief legal officer. She advises the mayor and the city council on legal matters. She prosecutes cases in the circuit court.
- **Senators** – Two senators are chosen from each American Legion Auxiliary Girls State city, for a total of 28. This group sits as the upper house of the ALA Girls State legislature. Senators introduce, debate, and consider legislation.
- **Delegates** – Four delegates are chosen from each ALA Girls State city for a total of 56. This group sits as the lower house of the ALA Girls State legislature. Delegates introduce debate and consider legislation.
- **Other Elected Offices** – Many other officials are elected, including city party chair, state party chairs, legislative leaders, and convention delegates. They are not considered “constitutional officeholders,” as their offices are not established by constitution or law. The method of selection and the function of these officials will be explained during the course of the ALA Girls State weeklong session.

## State Offices

- **Governor** – The position of governor is the highest elected office at American Legion Auxiliary Girls State. The election of the governor usually takes place on Wednesday. The governor appoints and presides over a cabinet of various state officials. The governor, with her cabinet, considers and either approves or vetoes bills passed by the legislature. The governor makes several speeches to the citizens of ALA Girls State, summarizing her activities and decisions. She usually returns the next session to preside until the new governor is elected.
- **Lieutenant Governor** – The lieutenant governor serves as chief executive officer of ALA Girls State in the event that the person elected governor is unable to serve. The lieutenant governor is also presiding officer of the ALA Girls State Senate.
- **Attorney General** – The attorney general is the chief legal representative of ALA Girls State. She sits on the governor's cabinet and advises the governor on legal matters.
- **State Party Clerk (2)** – One for the Federalist Party and one for the Nationalist Party. The state party clerks tally votes at the party conventions and serve as clerks for the legislature.
- **State Party Chair (2)** – One for the Federalist Party and one for the Nationalist Party. The state party chairs preside at party conventions and serve as clerks for the legislature.

## Section 5

### Eligibility to Run for Certain Offices

The purpose of ALA Girls State and ALA Girls Nation is to provide a nonpartisan participatory program that teaches eligible high school female students responsible citizenship grounded in ethics, the principles of our nation's founders, and respect for God and country. For consistency among the 50 states presenting ALA Girls State programs, each program should conform to the structure of its corresponding state government as specified by its state constitution. ALA Girls Nation is modeled after the provisions in the United States Constitution.

American Legion Auxiliary Girls State Leadership Opportunities:

At American Legion Auxiliary (ALA) Girls State, there are many leadership opportunities available during the week. ALA Girls State citizens may serve as political party officials, as state elected officials, as state legislators, and state judicial officials. Each of these positions affords leadership and personal growth opportunities to each participant.

Each mock political party (i.e., Federalist and Nationalist) is led by a party chair, vice chair and a party secretary who run the party caucus meetings and their party conventions. Each party also

has a party platform committee and chair; this committee develops the party's platforms, themes, and rallies. Each party also selects/elects keynote speakers to represent their parties during party rallies. Each party also elects its own party floor leaders and whips.

ALA Girls State legislators perform their duties in keeping with their state's laws. Legislative leadership positions include senate pro tem, senate secretary, senate assistant secretary, senate chaplain, sergeant-at-arms and assistant sergeant-at-arms. A senate reporter is also elected to make a daily report to the Senate. There are also usually six legislative committees, each lead by a chair and secretary to discuss bills covering a variety of topics that are submitted by ALA Girls State senators. Senators will speak on behalf of, or in opposition to, legislation submitted by all of the senators that reaches the floor of the ALA Girls State.

**Note:** Be sure to check with your state election laws so that your program mirrors current state law.

Likewise, as a premier learning program about our nation's government, ALA Girls Nation mirrors our federal government. The US. Constitution provides for the election of one president and one vice president. In keeping with the requirements in the United States Constitution, candidates for the national offices of ALA Girls Nation president and ALA Girls Nation vice president must be natural born U.S. citizens. The only exception to how the ALA mirrors the U.S. Constitution is in regard to the age requirement since the program is for high school female students. Each ALA Girls State senator is allowed floor privileges while representing her state.

As you can see, there are many leadership roles for senators to consider during both ALA Girls State and ALA Girls Nation. Each ALA Girls Nation senator is encouraged to give thoughtful consideration to these many leadership opportunities and how to best utilize her talents to enhance the ALA Girls Nation experience as well as to serve her ALA Girls State constituents.

## **Section 6**

### **Restrictions on Seeking and Holding ALA Girls State Offices**

Running for certain government offices may cause conflicts with other ALA Girls State programming aspects; therefore, some restrictions might need to be put in place to make the election process run more smoothly.

Examples:

- Election commissioners **MAY** run for a county or state office but their position as election commissioner must be filled when they choose to run. They **MAY NOT** be in the chorus. They **MAY NOT** be appointed to a city office, but they **MAY** be appointed to a state office.

- A chorus member MAY NOT be a party delegate, an election commissioner or a state elected official (i.e. senator, representative, or Supreme Court justice) because of time constraints. She MAY run in the city and county elections.
- Elected city officials MAY run for a county or state office but must give up their lower-level positions if elected to a higher office. Example: A mayor gives up that position if elected county commissioner. The same rule applies to elected county officials seeking a state elected position.
- A party delegate MAY NOT be an elected city official. She MAY NOT run for any county office. However, she MAY run for her party's gubernatorial nomination and, if not elected, MAY run as Independent candidate for governor in the general election. Or, she MAY run for Supreme Court justice, senator or representative, but MAY NOT be elected an official in the Senate or the House.
- A party chair MAY run for the party's gubernatorial nomination. If she is nominated, she forfeits the party chair position and the vice chair succeeds her. A party chair MAY NOT run as an Independent candidate.
- A party vice chair MAY run for the party nomination in the gubernatorial race. If she is nominated, she forfeits her vice chair position. A party vice chair MAY NOT run as an independent candidate.
- A delegate MAY ONLY run for one county office during the county convention.
- A delegate MAY run for senator OR representative, but not both.
- ONLY those who have qualified to run in the gubernatorial primary may qualify to run in the general election as independent candidates for governor. (Check with your state election laws so that your program mirrors current state law.)
- When it is known that girls participating in ALA Girls State/ALA Girls Nation are not U.S citizens, Counsel General has strongly advised that they be sworn in as ALA Girls State citizens and/or ALA Girls Nation citizens at the outset of the program. Some states frequently have foreign exchange students participating in their programs; you are strongly encouraged to make them "Honorary ALA Girls State Citizens" for the week.

The makeup of your participant population should mirror your State Constitution. In the event there is a mix-up when calling up an alternate, you should have a backup plan in place. For example, here's what happened at ALA Girls Nation one year: The "extra" senator became a "shadow senator" which DC has. DC elects this person, but the federal government does not recognize the position. The person functions as a lobbyist. The girl could have floor privileges for speaking, but no voting privileges. She could run for party positions.

## Section 7

### Fundamentals of Parliamentary Procedure

- Justice and courtesy for all.
- Do only one thing at a time.
- The majority rules.
- The minority must be heard.
- Each proposition is entitled to a full and free debate.
- The purpose is to facilitate action, not to obstruct it.

#### Motions

A motion is a request that business be brought before the assembly.

- A main motion introduces the action “I move that...”
  - Only one main motion may be addressed at a time.
  - A motion must receive a second to have discussion on the motion.
  - If no second motion is received, the motion dies.
  - If a second is received, after discussion, the presiding officer repeats the motion and calls for a vote. The vote is then taken.
- A subsidiary motion is the amending of a motion.
  - A motion may be modified but the main idea of the motion may not be changed.
  - Each amendment must be voted on before action can be taken on the main motion.
- An incidental motion is the business to be disposed of before an action can be taken on a main motion.
- A privileged motion is the action of the assembly.





# **American Legion Auxiliary Girls State Program and Operations Guide**

## **Chapter 6:**

### **How to Incorporate Mission-Related Projects into the American Legion Auxiliary Girls State Program**



**CHAPTER 6**

**HOW TO INCORPORATE  
MISSION-RELATED PROJECTS INTO THE  
AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY GIRLS STATE PROGRAM**

This chapter contains the following:

**Section 1 Poppy Wreaths**

**Section 2 Postcards or Letters to Troops or Veterans**

**Section 3 Mini Folded Flags**

**Section 4 Other Ideas**

***This American Legion Auxiliary Girls State Program and Operations Guide (Guide) provides general information about planning and conducting an ALA Girls State program. The Guide is intended to help program volunteers and staff to be mindful of pertinent issues. This Guide constitutes advice and recommendations for operations based on best practices; information within the Guide stating “shall or must” is based on federal law or federal/IRS regulations and mandates. This Guide does not constitute legal advice to your ALA Department or an incorporated subsidiary (incorporated ALA Girls State program). If you have any legal concerns about your ALA Girls State program, you are advised to contact your Auxiliary Department and an attorney licensed in your state.***

In an effort to instill a commitment to volunteerism and awareness of the mission of the American Legion Auxiliary, each department is encouraged to incorporate mission-focused projects into their ALA Girls State programs, the main focus being veterans, military and their families. The following sections are good examples.

## **Section 1**

### **Poppy Wreaths**

Take the opportunity to briefly teach the girls about the poppy's rich history, stressing how each poppy is made by a hospitalized or disabled veteran. Explain how the assembly of poppies is used as therapy for the veterans, with all monies collected going directly to help struggling veterans and their families. Have the girls create a poppy wreath to be displayed. One location to lay the wreath may be a veterans' memorial, often located near a state capital. The wreath might also be displayed at the statehouse or other government building (be sure to ask for official approval).

#### **What You Will Need:**

- Floral wreath form. Depending on the number of participants, consider having more than one wreath. Be sure the wreath itself is large enough to be easily visible from at least 40 feet.
- Wreath stand (not necessary if the wreath will be hanging).
- One red crepe paper poppy for each ALA Girls State citizen and staff member.  
Hint: Reach out to units in your department for poppies from previous years that can only be used for decoration purposes.

#### **How to Assemble:**

- Remove the Auxiliary labels from the poppies and wrap the wire stems around the floral picks before the session begins.
- Place the empty wreath in a central location. Give each girl and staff member a wrapped poppy. Let each girl place her fluffed poppy into the wreath.
  - Decide whether you want this to be a solemn event, in which the girls are asked to remain quiet while placing their poppies. Have them keep in mind a veteran or servicemember as they place their poppies.
- Assign one or two ALA Girls State citizens (per wreath) to place the wreaths on a veterans memorial or on display at the statehouse. This honor can be given to someone holding a specific job title or to any citizens who would like to place a wreath.

## Section 2

### Postcards or Letters to Troops or Veterans

Some veterans in the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs system and servicemembers abroad almost never receive letters. Taking the time to write them a note is a quick way to let them know we are grateful for their service and support them.

#### What You Will Need:

- Paper and pen/pencil – Decide whether you want the girls to write more than a paragraph. If not, a postcard might be best. The girls might be more interested in writing more than one letter/postcard, if they don't have to write a lot.
- Tip: For security reasons, it is best not to put the letters in individual envelopes when sending letters to servicemembers abroad.

#### How To:

- Provide the girls with their paper/postcards. For a more heartfelt letter, consider distributing the materials to the girls at the beginning of session and collecting them at the end. Then, they can write the letter at their leisure.
- Allow the girls to decorate the note, but avoid the use of glitter.

#### Tips When Writing Members of Our Armed Forces:

- When writing to current military members, address the reader as “Dear Servicemember” or “Dear American Hero” (“soldier” indicates service in the Army, which might not be their military branch). If you are sending the letters to a U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs facility, you may address the reader as “Dear Veteran.”
- Keep the tone positive and supportive. Do not express political opinions.
- For their safety, ask the girls NOT to include contact information.
- If the servicemember has served in a time of war, do not ask if the servicemember or veteran were engaged in combat, shot anyone or was shot at, or experienced war casualties.

## Section 3

### Flags

The Pocket Flag Project is an organization that believes every deployed servicemember should have a “little piece of home.” Making pocket flags will teach American Legion Auxiliary Girls State citizens the meaning of each fold and how to fold the flag properly. Participation in this project is also a great way to produce a lot of pocket flags! If each girl folded three pocket flags, nearly 1200 deployed servicemembers would be able to carry a smaller version of the flag they protect.

#### What You Will Need:

- Small flags, ordered by mail or emblem sales.
- 3” x 3” zip-close bags, one per flag – These bags can be found at office supply stores in boxes of 1000 for \$30 to \$35 per box. Please try to get this size, as it fits best in a pocket.
- Enclosure cards, printed on card stock or heavy paper. Use the template provided on the web site. Each printout will make 12 cards. To save time during session, precut the cards; otherwise provide scissors for the girls to cut the cards themselves.

#### How To:

- Order the pocket flags and zip-close bags in advance.
- Ask around the department for military units that are deployed to the front lines and already sponsored by American Legion Auxiliary units. Be sure to confirm that these military units have not already received flags by contacting the Project by email. If there is no unsponsored military unit, the Project can provide you with an address to which you can send the pocket flags.
- Develop a brief module to teach citizens about how to fold a flag. Teach the meaning behind each fold.
- Distribute the unfolded flags, zip-close bags, and enclosure cards (with scissors if not precut) to the girls for assembly.
- Contact the Project by email before sending the pocket flags to ensure that your servicemembers will only be receiving flags from your group.

## Section 4

### Other Ideas

- During your flag ceremony, have one girl hold a large photo of a veteran (or fallen soldier/Medal of Honor recipient, etc.) and read a brief bio.
- Have the chosen ALA Girls State delegate give the first poppy of the year to a distinguished member of the community.
- If you will visit historic/important places and/or meet dignitaries, make sure the girls are prepared in advance with information about protocol and historic context.
- Use the explanation of the ALA's emblem as a handout (can be found at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org)).
- Give governor a flag that flew over military base.
- Have the girls copy information about Medal of Honor recipients (name, state, etc.) on white paper bags when they arrive, then use those bags as luminaries – with battery-operated candles – for your closing ceremony.

### Mission-Compatible Collaborators

Organizations with missions similar to the American Legion Auxiliary's mission of serving veterans, the military, and their families can help you with ideas for service projects. You can also visit [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org). Some examples:

- American Gold Star Mothers Inc.: [www.goldstarmoms.com](http://www.goldstarmoms.com)
- Blue Star Families: [www.bluestarfam.org](http://www.bluestarfam.org)
- Blue Star Mothers of America Inc.: [www.bluestarmothers.org](http://www.bluestarmothers.org)
- PsychArmor Institute: [www.psycharmor.org](http://www.psycharmor.org)
- Fisher House Foundation: [www.fisherhouse.org](http://www.fisherhouse.org)
- National Military Family Association: [www.militaryfamily.org](http://www.militaryfamily.org)
- Operation Homefront: [www.operationhomefront.net](http://www.operationhomefront.net)
- Student Veterans of America: [www.studentveterans.org](http://www.studentveterans.org)
- U.S. Department of Defense: [www.defense.gov](http://www.defense.gov)
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs: [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov)
- USO: [www.uso.org](http://www.uso.org)
- Veterans History Project/Library of Congress: [www.loc.gov/vets](http://www.loc.gov/vets)





# **American Legion Auxiliary Girls State Program and Operations Guide**

## **Chapter 7:**

### **Evaluations and Follow-up**



## CHAPTER 7

### EVALUATIONS AND FOLLOW-UP

This chapter contains recommendations for the following:

**Section 1    Committee/Staff Evaluation**

**Section 2    Delegate Evaluation**

**Section 3    Follow-Up/Staying Connected with Alumnae**

***This American Legion Auxiliary Girls State Program and Operations Guide (Guide) provides general information about planning and conducting an ALA Girls State program. The Guide is intended to help program volunteers and staff to be mindful of pertinent issues. This Guide constitutes advice and recommendations for operations based on best practices; information within the Guide stating “shall or must” is based on federal law or federal/IRS regulations and mandates. This Guide does not constitute legal advice to your ALA Department or an incorporated subsidiary (incorporated ALA Girls State program). If you have any legal concerns about your ALA Girls State program, you are advised to contact your Auxiliary Department and an attorney licensed in your state.***

When the ALA Girls State program comes to a close, it is important to solicit feedback from participants – the students, delegates, committee members, and staff – and to use the evaluations and surveys to assess and improve upon the program.

## Section 1

### Committee/Staff Evaluation

We thank you for your participation in the American Legion Auxiliary Girls State program. To help us continue in improving our program, please answer the following questions:

1. For first-time staff members, what training would you have liked to prepare you better for the ALA Girls State program?
2. Please rate the following portions of the program (1 is poor and 10 is excellent):

Formal Opening Session

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Overview of City Government

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Parliamentary Basics

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Disaster Preparedness Project

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Candidates' Forum/Town Hall Forum

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Joint Session of General Assembly

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Inaugural of State Offices the day after election

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Whistle Stops

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

3. Were you comfortable with the duties you were assigned? Please explain.
4. Do you have other skills/experience that could be used?
5. Would you like to return to ALA Girls State again next year?
6. If you had the opportunity to plan ALA Girls State, what changes would you make?

## Section 2

### Delegate Evaluation

In addition to using the delegate evaluations to assess your ALA Girls State program, you can use positive information in the evaluations to develop future marketing, promotional, and fundraising plans. Strong quotes that praise the program can effectively be used to assist with fundraising by providing firsthand insight into how participants benefitted from the ALA Girls State program. The best evaluation designs are simple and ask no more than ten key questions. Example:

We thank you for your participation in the American Legion Auxiliary Girls State Program. To help us continue to improve our program, please answer the following questions:

1. How did you hear about ALA Girls State?
2. What do you know about the organization that presents ALA Girls State and what do you know about its mission?
3. What information would have been helpful to know in advance to prepare you for ALA Girls State?
4. Would it be beneficial to have all information available via the internet?
5. What would have made this experience better for you?
6. How has this program impacted your life?
7. What surprised you about this program?
8. Please rate the listed outside speakers (1 is poor and 10 for excellent):

Speaker One

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Speaker Two

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Speaker Three

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Speaker Four

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Speaker Five

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Speaker Six

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

9. Please rank the usefulness of information the program provided on the following topics:

City Government

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Parliamentary Procedure

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Disaster Preparedness

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Governor's Office/State Government

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Circuit/District Courts

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Finance Cabinet

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

State Legislature

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

10. Which segment of the program did you feel was most beneficial?
11. Which portion of the program did you like the best?
12. Did American Legion Auxiliary Girls State meet your expectations?
13. If you had the opportunity, how would you modify the program? Please be specific.

**Note: Free electronic surveys are available through SurveyMonkey.com**

### Section 3

#### Follow-Up/Staying Connected with Alumnae

Along with friendships the girls develop with each other, one very important lifelong friendship all ALA Girls State citizens should develop is with the American Legion Auxiliary. If eligible, girls should be invited to join. Each Department should formulate a plan so this personal invitation is presented in a nice way at the right time, and ensure that there is adequate follow-up and/or mentorship through the process to join an ALA alumnae group if necessary.

In order to allow for program volunteers to contact former ALA Girls State citizens after the program has concluded, we recommend you include a paragraph in your application or registration materials:

I understand that American Legion Auxiliary Girls State is a trademarked program of the American Legion Auxiliary; that communication with my daughter/ward will include phone calls and emails; and that any and all information provided on the application will be safeguarded and may be privately shared with American Legion Auxiliary Department and/or National Headquarters for appropriate program and program alumnae use.

We also strongly suggest you add the following statement to your marketing, promotional, and application materials:

**American Legion Auxiliary Girls State is a trademarked program of the American Legion Auxiliary, privately funded and presented by volunteers of the American Legion Auxiliary, a nonprofit veterans service auxiliary organization promoting patriotism in service to God and country. Any and all information provided on the application is safeguarded and may be privately shared with American Legion Auxiliary Department and/or National Headquarters for appropriate program and program alumnae use.**

Note: Alumnae is the plural spelling for female alums





# **American Legion Auxiliary Girls State Program and Operations Guide**

**Chapter 8:**

**Appendix**

The Appendix contains the following:

- ALA Girls State Media Release Sample
- ALA Girls Nation Media Release Sample
- Sample American Legion Auxiliary Girls State Waiver and Consent
- Parliamentary Procedure – Frequently Used Motions
- Helpful Websites



American Legion Auxiliary Department of [STATE]

**Media Release**

Street Address, City, State ZIP Code

**www.ALAforVeterans.org** (and your unit's or ALA Girls State website, if available)

Contact: [PR Chair], [PR Chair's Phone Number], [PR Chair's Email Address]

[DATE]

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Local student headed to American Legion Auxiliary Girls State,  
patriotism and leadership conference**

[CITY, STATE]- [ATTENDEE'S NAME] of [HOMETOWN] has been selected to attend American Legion Auxiliary (ALA) [DEPARTMENT] Girls State. As part of the premier ALA program, [ATTENDEE'S LAST NAME] will study local, county, and state government processes during this [# OF DAYS] day nonpartisan political learning experience.

[ATTENDEE'S LAST NAME], a rising junior at [HIGH SCHOOL], was selected to attend ALA [DEPARTMENT] Girls State based on [selection criteria through Auxiliary unit and/or high school]. She also participates in many activities in her school and community, including [ACTIVITIES].

ALA Girls State attendees, known as "citizens," receive special instruction in parliamentary procedure and organize themselves into two mock political parties. The young women 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. Attendees not elected to office are given appointments and visit the offices of those elected to share their viewpoints as citizens.

"QUOTE ABOUT THE PROGRAM AND WHAT IT TEACHES YOUTH," said [NAME], ALA [DEPARTMENT] Girls State chair. [LAST NAME OF CHAIR] and other ALA volunteer leaders at the conference encourage the young citizens to continue their community service by becoming members of the American Legion Auxiliary, as well as leaders in their communities and local governments.

Every spring, approximately 16,000 young women across the country are selected to attend ALA Girls State programs in their respective states. Two outstanding citizens from each of the 50 ALA Girls State programs are then chosen to represent their state as "senators" at ALA Girls Nation held in Washington, D.C. in July.

About the American Legion Auxiliary: Members of the ALA have dedicated themselves for nearly a century to meeting the needs of our nation's veterans, military, and their families both here and abroad. They volunteer millions of hours yearly, with a value averaging \$2 billion each year. As part of the world's largest women's patriotic service organization, ALA volunteers across the country also step up to honor veterans and military through annual scholarships and with ALA Girls State programs, teaching high school juniors to be leaders grounded in patriotism and Americanism. To learn more about the ALA's mission or to volunteer, donate or join, visit [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org).



American Legion Auxiliary Department of [STATE]

**Media Release**

Street Address, City, State ZIP Code

**[www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org)** (and your unit’s or ALA Girls State website, if available)

Contact: [PR Chair], [PR Chair’s Phone Number], [PR Chair’s Email Address]

[DATE]

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

*Photos available upon request*

**Local student selected to represent [STATE] at American Legion Auxiliary Girls Nation, a premier patriotism and government leadership conference**

**Washington, D.C.** – [Delegate, State] is one of 100 young women selected to attend the 70th American Legion Auxiliary (ALA) Girls Nation session in Washington, D.C., July 23-30. As part of the premier ALA program, two outstanding citizens, known as “senators,” are selected during 50 ALA Girls State sessions held across the country. These students then represent their respective states at ALA Girls Nation. The six-day leadership conference provides aspiring young women leaders with practical insight into the workings of government, instills a sense of pride in our country, promotes youth civic engagement, and creates friendships and memories that last a lifetime.

[Delegate], a rising senior at [High School], was active in many ways during her week at ALA [State] Girls State, including performing assignments as [Position]. She has also participated in many activities in her school and community, including [Activities].

A key component of the ALA Girls Nation program is the mock senate sessions in which the senators write, caucus, and debate bills. Campaigns are held to elect party officials and an ALA Girls Nation president and vice president. In addition to their legislative forums, the senators hear from distinguished guest speakers and visit the Pentagon, Arlington National Cemetery, the D.C. monuments, White House, and also meet with their respective state senators and representatives on Capitol Hill.

“The ALA Girls Nation experience is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for young women across our nation to learn firsthand about the inner workings of the federal government before they are of voting age,” said [Name], American Legion Auxiliary Girls Nation chair. “After attending their local ALA Girls State program and then ALA Girls Nation, the girls return home filled with knowledge, patriotism, and pride.”

About the American Legion Auxiliary: Members of the ALA have dedicated themselves for nearly a century to meeting the needs of our nation’s veterans, military, and their families both here and abroad. They volunteer millions of hours yearly, with a value averaging \$2 billion each year. As part of the world’s largest women’s patriotic service organization, ALA volunteers across the country also step up to honor veterans and military through annual scholarships and with ALA Girls State programs, teaching high school juniors to be leaders grounded in patriotism and Americanism. To learn more about the ALA’s mission or to volunteer, donate or join, visit [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org).

**American Legion Auxiliary Girls State  
Waiver and Consent (Sample)**

This will certify that I am the parent or legal guardian of \_\_\_\_\_ who is under the age of eighteen years; she is \_\_\_\_\_ years of age.

I understand and confirm that participation in this [Insert Legal Name of ALA Girls State program] is voluntary and hereby consent and grant permission for my daughter/ward to participate in all activities in conjunction with this program. I further understand that my child's/ward's participation may involve risk of injury and loss, both to person and to property. On behalf of my child/ward, I assume all risks in any way connected with said participation and I accept personal responsibility for any liability, injury, loss, or damage in any way connected with said participation.

This will further certify that I, the undersigned, in consideration of the benefits and opportunities derived by my daughter/ward who is a participant of the American Legion Auxiliary Girls State program, do hereby release and discharge the American Legion Auxiliary, its officers, agents, staff, volunteers, and employees from any and all claims, demands, suits, actions, or causes of action which she may have by reason of illness, injury, or accident incurred or suffered by said daughter/ward while in attendance at said American Legion Auxiliary Girls State program, including while traveling to or from, attending, or participating in said program no matter how caused or occasioned.

I understand and acknowledge that neither basic accident and health insurance nor personal property insurance is required to be offered or provided by the American Legion Auxiliary Department/State or the American Legion Auxiliary National organization in connection with American Legion Auxiliary Girls State, and that the provision of such insurance is my/our own personal responsibility.

I understand that the American Legion Auxiliary Girls State program is privately funded and presented by volunteers/members/staff of the American Legion Auxiliary, a nonprofit veterans service auxiliary organization whose founding purpose is promoting patriotism in service to God and Country.

I understand that American Legion Auxiliary Girls State is a trademarked program of the American Legion Auxiliary; that communication with my daughter/ward will include telephone calls and emails; that photos and/or video may be taken and utilized, and that any and all information provided on the application will be safeguarded and may be privately shared with American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters for appropriate program and program alumnae use.

I do hereby certify that the information provided on this form is true and correct to the best of our/my knowledge.

Parent/Guardian Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Dated this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_\_\_

**NOTARY SEAL**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Notary

## Parliamentary Procedure – Frequently Used Motions

To Do This:	You Say This:	May You Interrupt A Speaker?	Do You Need A Second?	Is It Debatable ?	Can It Be Amended ?	What Vote?
Introduce new business.	“I move that . . .”	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Amend a motion.	“I move to amend the motion by ...”	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Request information.	“I rise for a point of information.”	Yes	No	No	No	No vote
Complain about noise, etc.	“I rise for a question of privilege.”	Yes	No	No	No	No vote
Call for a brief intermission.	“I move to recess for ___ minutes.”	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
Postpone the question to a later time.	“I move to postpone the question until next week.”	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Refer the question to a committee for further study.	“I move to refer the motion to the ___ committee to study.”	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Put a limit on the debate.	“I move that debate be limited to 5 minutes.”	No	Yes	No	Yes	2/3
End debate and vote.	“I move the previous question.”	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
Verify a voice vote by rising.	“Division.”	Yes	No	No	No	No vote

<b>To Do This:</b>	<b>You Say This:</b>	<b>May You Interrupt A Speaker?</b>	<b>Do You Need A Second?</b>	<b>Is It Debatable?</b>	<b>Can It Be Amended ?</b>	<b>What Vote?</b>
Want to do something, but don't know how to do it.	"I rise to a parliamentary inquiry"	Yes	No	No	No	No vote
Reconsider an action.	"I move to reconsider the vote on the motion to..."	No	Yes	Yes/No	No	Majority
Call attention to breach of rules.	"I rise to a point of order."	Yes	No	No	No	No vote
Suspend the rules temporarily.	"I move to suspend the rules so that..."	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
Adjourn the meeting.	"I move that we adjourn."	No	Yes	No	No	Majority

## Helpful Websites

**Background checks through Protect Youth Sports –**

<http://protectyouthsports.com/background-checks-3/>

**Insurance –** <http://www.savandyk.com>

**Survey Monkey –** Offers free electronic surveys if you have email addresses

[www.SurveyMonkey.com](http://www.SurveyMonkey.com)

**Doodle poll -** Offers free, easy-to-use ways to schedule convenient meeting times for members of a group [doodle.com](http://doodle.com)