

ALA Girls State

2011-2012 American Legion Auxiliary Plan of Action

Plan of Action: Girls State Committee

Purpose: To provide an outstanding, unique and coveted educational opportunity for the young women of our nation that instills the basic ideals and principles of American government through the Girls State and Girls Nation citizenship training programs.

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For examples on how to implement each objective in this Plan, refer to the *How To* component at the end of this section.

ALA Girls State

National-level Objectives

1. **Objective:** To utilize the Internet and social networking sites to increase visibility and viability of the Girls State program and obtain 2,500 Girls State Facebook “likes” by July 2012.

Action Steps

- a. Increase the visibility of Girls State Department websites.
 - b. Encourage Departments to electronically keep registration info from year to year, alumnae outreach (i.e., sponsorship, guest speakers, e-mail blasts).
 - c. Educate Girls State Directors on using Facebook and invite previous participants to join the Girls State Facebook site.
2. **Objective:** To instill in all Girls State citizens a commitment of volunteerism and an awareness of the American Legion Auxiliary’s mission.

Action Steps

- a. Educate Girls State citizens in each Department about the programs and mission of the American Legion Auxiliary by including “Auxiliary Facts” in every Girls State program agenda.
 - b. Incorporate a veterans program (example: POW/MIA ceremony with table and accessories, present Blue Star Banners/Coins for those on staff and citizens who have a loved one in the military) to bring more emphasis on what we as Auxiliary members stand for.
 - c. Stress the importance of volunteering (example: have a field service orientation for all citizens) and giving back to the community.
 - d. Work with past and present alumnae to increase membership for the organization (example: e-Units, membership applications on site at Girls State).
3. **Objective:** Continue to attract participants and grow Girls State programs by keeping them relevant and current and by encouraging Departments to increase scholarships/funding for their Girls State programs.

Action Steps

- a. Encourage units to solicit sponsorships/funding or donations from other organizations to sponsor Girls State delegates.
- b. Apply for grants and/or have fundraisers to increase scholarships for the citizens.
- c. Work with colleges to award college credit to participants.
- d. Increase networking with schools (charters, private, home-schooled) that have no active units in their communities.
- e. Enlist former Girls State alumnae to help recruit candidates from their high schools.

Programs and Activities

Girls State Core Program

American Legion Auxiliary Girls State is a nonpartisan program that teaches young women responsible citizenship and love for God and Country. Since the inception of the Girls State program in 1937, nearly 1 million young people have had the opportunity to learn firsthand how their state and local government works. The program has grown from a few hundred participants to nearly 20,000 annually. High school girls who have completed their junior year spend an intensive week of study, working together as self-governing citizens. These young women learn government by actually creating a mythical state through the election of public officials on local, county and state levels and then by carrying out the duties of these respective offices.

Units should make every effort to sponsor eligible young women to participate in their Department Girls State program. The unit Girls State Chairman should inform school districts and individual schools

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ALA Girls State

about the benefits of the program, explain the eligibility requirements and distribute information and applications to the schools.

To recruit Girls State citizens with the appropriate commitment of participation, Units must make wise selections of delegates, provide them with informative orientations before the session begins, and then give them recognition when they return home. Although Units may seek financial support from outside the Auxiliary, always remember that it is the American Legion Auxiliary that sponsors each participant and it is the Auxiliary that decides who participates.

Samsung Scholarship

The Samsung Group, an international electronics company, has endowed a scholarship fund of \$5 million to be administered by The American Legion.

Eligibility - Student must be a high school junior and a direct descendant (i.e., child, grandchild, great-grandchild or a legally adopted child of a U.S. veteran who served during a period of war). Student must participate in and complete either an American Legion Boys State or American Legion Auxiliary Girls State program.

An application should be given to each participant in the Girls State program. Each American Legion Auxiliary Girls State program selects one application to forward to The American Legion National Headquarters. These applications become national finalists and are reviewed by the National Selection Committee each fall. National winners usually receive a \$20,000 scholarship. Each national finalist will receive a \$1,000 scholarship if he/she is not selected as a national scholarship winner.

Girls Nation

Two girls are selected from each Girls State program (with the exception of Hawaii) to attend Girls Nation. Girls Nation “senators” meet for a week in Washington, D.C., where they run for political office, campaign for the passage of legislation and possibly meet with state representatives and senators. Capping off the week of Girls Nation is a meeting with the President of the United States at the White House.

This year, Girls Nation will convene at the National 4-H Center in Chevy Chase, Maryland, from July 20-28, 2012. Girls State Directors should designate two girls to represent their state as Girls Nation senators. Directors should work with their senators to help them prepare legislative initiatives to be presented at Girls Nation and to inform them about campaign rules and running for elected office.

Resources

1. www.ALAforVeterans.org
 2. www.boysandgirlsstate.org
 3. www.leadershipcredit.org (College Credit)
 4. American Legion Auxiliary Girls State Facebook Page
 5. American Legion Auxiliary Girls Nation Facebook Page
- See program page on www.ALAforVeterans.org for additional resources.

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