

2017-2022 American Legion Auxiliary Programs Action Plan

ALA Girls Nation

American Legion Auxiliary units in all 50 states proudly host ALA Girls State, an amazing week of learning focused on responsible citizenship, leadership, and love for God and Country. Participants are assigned to mock cities and to either the “Federalist Party” or “Nationalist Party.” They are immersed in learning about the political process by electing officials for all levels of state government and actively running a mock government. Assistance from dedicated ALA volunteers ensures the program’s nonpartisan governmental, patriotic, and civic objectives are carried out through interactive learning. Though the week is filled with many learning opportunities, there is always time for fun and the formation of long-term friendships.

Two girls are selected from each ALA Girls State program to attend ALA Girls Nation. ALA Girls Nation “senators” meet for a week in Washington, D.C. where they run for political office, campaign, debate for the passage of legislation, and meet with U.S. Congressmen and Senators from their states. Capping off the week of ALA Girls Nation is a possible meeting with the President of the United States at the White House.

Committee Contact Information

ALAGirlsNation@ALAforVeterans.org

What can you do?

1. Instill an awareness of the American Legion Auxiliary’s mission in all ALA Girls State citizens.

Ideas:

Member

- Encourage eligible young ladies to become involved with volunteer projects in their communities that involve veterans, active military, or the American Legion Auxiliary.

Unit

- Invite your ALA Girls State delegates, both past and present, to participate in service projects with your unit, even if they are not ALA members.
- Use the invitation to donate/participate as an opportunity to raise awareness of your local ALA unit in your community.
- Encourage unit members to solicit sponsorship/fundraising or donations from other organizations or businesses to sponsor ALA Girls State participants.
- Increase networking with schools (including charters, private, and home schools) that have no active units in their communities.

Department

- Educate ALA Girls State citizens about the programs and mission of the American Legion Auxiliary by including “Auxiliary Facts” into the ALA Girls State program agenda.
- Incorporate a veterans’ program to bring more emphasis to the American Legion Auxiliary’s mission:
 - POW/MIA ceremony with table and accessories; include citizens in the program.
 - Present Blue Star Banners to staff and citizens who have a loved one in the military.
 - Invite veterans and/or active military to be guest speakers during your session (possibly someone who has benefited from the ALA’s mission).
- Stress the importance of volunteering and giving back to the community.
 - Incorporate a mission-based service project during your ALA Girls State session in which all citizens participate.
- Invite alumnae to join the ALA or participate in the organization’s service projects.
- Refer to resources on the National website during ALA Girls State.

2. Actively encourage all eligible ALA Girls State citizens (past and present) to join the American Legion Auxiliary.

Ideas:

Member

- Ask ALA Girls State citizens who have become members to pass on the benefits of membership to other eligible family members.
- Prepare talking points about the ALA and use them when you are speaking with ALA Girls State participants and their families.
- Coordinate your efforts with other ALA members so recruitment doesn’t become a nuisance to participants.
- Promote opportunities and benefits of membership as a source for volunteerism.

Unit

- Invite eligible ALA Girls State participants you sponsor to join your unit.
- Actively engage ALA Girls State citizens (past and present) to pass on the importance of membership to other eligible family members.
- Develop a very brief, mission-focused presentation to showcase the ALA mission, history, and relevance to current issues affecting the military and their families.
- Promote opportunities and benefits of membership as a source for volunteerism.

Department

- Have membership applications, eUnit information, and information on the American Legion Auxiliary available during your ALA Girls State session.
- Encourage ALA Girls State volunteers that joined the ALA after attending ALA Girls State as a citizen to discuss their reasons for joining and what opportunities and

benefits they have gained as members. (I.e.: Have your members share at a program fair or in local city council meetings.)

3. Increase participation by highlighting college scholarship/funding possibilities for ALA Girls State program participants.

A. State participation scholarships

Ideas:

Member

- Make a donation to your local ALA Girls State program.
- Ask other organizations you volunteer with to donate to ALA Girls State.

Unit

- Solicit donations from other veteran, civic, or booster organizations to sponsor ALA Girls State participants.
- Network with schools (charter, private, home schools) that have no active units in their communities.
- Ask parents of past ALA Girls State citizens to contribute to the ALA Girls State program.
- Invite members to set up a memorial scholarship in memory of a loved one. Contact your department ALA Girls State chairman or director for information.

Department

- Ask your housing institution (ALA Girls State host location) to contribute a scholarship for ALA Girls State delegates.
- Have fundraisers to increase scholarship funds available to participants.
- Encourage ALA Girls State alumnae to consider providing scholarships to support the program.
- Apply for private grants to increase scholarship funds available to participants.
Note: Use caution when it comes to state funding.

B. College/Samsung scholarships

Every year, a participant of each ALA Girls State program, who is a direct descendant of a veteran, is eligible to apply for the Samsung scholarship at the state level. One ALA Girls State citizen from each state is named as a department finalist. Ten national winners and 10 national runners-up are then chosen from the pool of department finalists, each receiving a \$10,000 and \$5,000 scholarship, respectively. The remaining department finalists are guaranteed to receive a scholarship of \$1,250.

Ideas:

Member

- Write an article for your media with Samsung scholarship information.
- Take a photo of past/present Samsung scholarship winners for the inclusion in department publications.

Unit

- Include a flyer promoting the Samsung scholarship in your ALA Girls State packets to the schools.
- Identify eligible Samsung scholarship recipients during the interview process.

Department

- Include a flyer promoting the Samsung scholarship in your bulk mailing to units.
- Acknowledge the recipient of a previous Samsung scholarship during your ALA Girls State program.
- Share a photo of the recipient along with a short article in department publications and the recipient's local newspaper.

4. Utilize the Internet, social networking sites, and written media to increase awareness and visibility of ALA Girls State.

Ideas:

Member

- Link personal social media accounts to ALA Girls State program accounts, as well as ALA Girls Nation sites. Since this program involves minors, please be sure to familiarize yourself with safety precautions found in the ALA's social media policy.
 - Twitter and Instagram handle is @ALAforVeterans.
 - Facebook page is "American Legion Auxiliary Girls Nation."
 - ALA Girls Nation blog at www.ALAGirlsNation.blogspot.com.

Unit

- Review candidate selection process and marketing efforts to ensure attraction of quality candidates.
- Establish various social media accounts (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or use current sites and include how to maintain them.)
 - Include social media etiquette.
 - Include safety when using social media sites.
- Create a Facebook page and/or Twitter account for your unit and "like" your ALA Girls State program page and the ALA Girls Nation page.
- Engage with possible participants as to the best ways they may be reached.
- Prepare an article about your ALA Girls State participants and submit it to your local news media. If it is published, share the link on your social media sites.

Department

- Link your ALA Girls State website with other relevant programs in your state and the ALA Girls Nation website.
- Invite previous participants to join any social media sites your ALA Girls State program manages.
- Create and use hashtags on social media.
- Encourage the chartering of an eUnit within your department for ALA Girls State alumnae.

5. Stay up to date on the latest ALA Girls State program news and best practices.

Ideas:

Member

- Sign up to receive *ALA eNews* and *In the Know eBulletin* from ALA National Headquarters at www.ALAforVeterans.org.

Unit

- Maintain regular contact with your ALA Girls State department leaders.

Department

- Send at least one member to the ALA Girls State Leadership Conference held in Indianapolis, Ind. in the fall. Please refer to the Annual Supplement to the Programs Action Plan for this year's dates.
- Read and implement the *ALA Girls State Program and Operations Guide*. This guide is intended for educational and informational purposes and provides general, non-specific legal information. It includes information about planning and conducting an ALA Girls State program and is intended as a guide to make program volunteers and staff aware of pertinent issues. You can download a copy from the ALA Girls State and Girls Nation program committee page in the Members Only section at www.ALAforVeterans.org.
- Maintain regular contact with the units in your department.

ALA Girls Nation Reporting*

Mid-Year Reports

Mid-Year reports reflect the program work of units in the department, and are intended as an opportunity for mid-year correction. Each department ALA Girls State chairman is required to submit a narrative report to the division ALA Girls Nation chairman, plus copy the national ALA Girls Nation chairman.

Year-End Reports

Annual reports reflect the program work of units in the department, and may result in a national award for participants if award requirements are met. Each department ALA Girls State chairman is required to submit a narrative report to the division ALA Girls Nation chairman, plus copy the national ALA Girls Nation chairman. Members and units should follow their department's protocol and deadlines.

**For deadlines and contact information, please consult the Annual Supplement to the 2017-2022 Programs Action Plan or visit the ALA Girls Nation Committee page on the national website, www.ALAforVeterans.org.*

As part of your narrative report, please include answers to the following questions:

- What have you done within your ALA Girls State program to encourage membership?
- What methods do units utilize to recruit ALA Girls State delegates for membership? Are they effective?
- Does your ALA Girls State program initiate a mission-based activity during your session? If so, please detail the success of this activity.
- Discuss the success of your ALA Girls State alumnae Facebook page or other social media.
- Discuss units' successful solicitation of funding outside of the Legion Family.
- How have you improved the unit involvement and understanding of all aspects of the program? Has the program participation increased because of this?

Additional Resources:

- www.alaforveterans.org
 - *ALA Girls State Program and Operations Guide*
 - Sign up for the *ALA eNews* and *In the Know eBulletin*
- Your national ALA Girls Nation committee members (see ALA Girls Nation program page on the national website or Annual Supplement for contact information).
- Facebook:
 - @AmericanLegionAuxiliaryGirlsState
 - @ALAGirlsNation