



## Pod— Youth Development

- Children & Youth
- Liaison to Child Welfare Foundation
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- ALA Girls State

# 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](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org)
  2. [www.boysandgirlsstate.org](http://www.boysandgirlsstate.org)
  3. [www.leadershipcredit.org](http://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](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org) for additional resources.

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**Committee:**

## Girls State

**Submitted by:**

Kathy Dungan, National Girls State Chairman

**Contact Information for Questions:**

Your Department Girls State Chairman or kdungan@hughes.net

**Objective:**

#1 To utilize the Internet and social networking sites to increase visibility and viability of the Girls State program.

**Step-by-Step Instructions:**

- Increase the visibility of ALA Girls State Department websites and Facebook page.
- Submit articles and pictures of your delegate for posting on the Department website. Get permission to publish pictures on website.
- Ask a Junior to do a presentation on accessing your Department website, the national ALA website and the Girls State/Girls Nation websites. Have them explain how to set up a Facebook account and how to post updates on Facebook.
- Post pictures of your Girls State orientation and ask your delegate to post each day while at Girls State. Encourage your delegates to get involved with the National Girls State Facebook page.



**Committee:**

## Girls State

**Submitted by:**

Kathy Dungan, National Girls State Chairman

**Contact Information for Questions:**

Your Department Girls State Chairman or kdungan@hughes.net

**Objective:**

#2 To instill in all Girls State citizens a commitment of volunteerism and an awareness of the American Legion Auxiliary's mission.

**Step-by-Step Instructions:**

- Educate your Girls State citizens about the programs and mission of the American Legion Auxiliary. During orientation, distribute flyers and/or brochures to your delegates, including publications provided by National Headquarters such as the Membership brochure, Junior Activities brochure, Scholarship Opportunities, Spirit of Youth Fund, and ALA Foundation. Direct the delegate to the Auxiliary website at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org) for information about the Girls State program and our mission. Hold an orientation for your delegate, providing her with information about Girls State and the Auxiliary. Explain some of our veterans programs such as the POW/MIA ceremony, Blue Star Banners/Coins given to those who have a loved one in the military, our Poppy program, including the story of the poppy and the poem *In Flanders Field*, and the Pocket Flag Project.
- Stress the importance of volunteering and giving back to the community.
- Work with past and present alumnae to increase membership for the organization by encouraging the alumnae to join your Unit and become active members. Develop community projects for them to be responsible for in helping veterans in your community.
- Ask alumnae to join the Auxiliary to honor their loved one who served or is serving.



**Committee:**

## Girls State

**Submitted by:**

Kathy Dungan, National Girls State Chairman

**Contact Information for Questions:**

Your Department Girls State Chairman or kdungan@hughes.net

**Objective:**

#3 Continue to attract participants and grow Girls State programs by keeping them relevant and current by encouraging Departments to increase scholarships/funding for their Girls State programs.

**Step-by-Step Instructions:**

- Solicit sponsorships/funding or donations from other civic organizations to sponsor Girls State delegates. Contact banks, Rotary Clubs, Lions Clubs and other civic organizations and request a meeting. Explain the Girls State program and the hands-on training the delegate receives at Girls State. Explain to them that it is an investment in the community. The delegate learns about government and comes back and contributes her time and talents to making the community a better place to live.
- Suggest Auxiliary members set up a memorial scholarship in memory of a loved one.
- Have fundraisers to provide a Girls State scholarship.
- Enlist former Girls State alumnae to help recruit candidates from their high schools.
- Have a former delegate present a program at a local school on her experiences at Girls State.



## Pod: Youth Development

**Committees included: Children & Youth, Liaison to Child Welfare Foundation, Junior Activities, and ALA Girls State**

**Submitted by:**

Janet Jefford, Lisa Williamson, Elsie Bailey-Comer, and Kathy Dungan

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**Objective:**

Adopt a Military Kid Project

**Step-by-Step Instructions:**

- Choose one Unit member to lead the project.
  - Assemble a committee.
- Find a military family. Adopt their children.
  - Contact the Family Readiness Group or Family Support Group at your local armory or military installation.
  - Contact school counselors and churches.
  - Reach out to your Legion Family.
- Arrange a meeting with the child's family to explain what you want to do.
- Offer a Legion Family gift membership to all members of the family.
- Committee should brainstorm to find an activity they can do at least every month to support the child. Some examples:
  - Recognize birthdays and holidays with card and letters.
  - Invite the children and family to Unit and Post events.
  - Special trips or excursions to the mall, movies, bowling, etc.
  - Slumber parties with junior members.
  - Host holiday parties and invite the Legion Family.
  - Present a backpack filled with school supplies for start of school.
  - Celebrate an achievement – such as a school award the student might have received.
  - Have your Junior members act as mentors or tutors.
  - Bring the children with you to distribute poppies.
  - Bring the children to ALA Girls State. Maybe they can help the Girls Staters do an Operation: Military Kids project. They can also share their thoughts and feelings on what it means to be part of a military.
- Set up a monthly calendar of events. *See attached Suggested Calendar.*
- Assign a member to monitor each monthly activity.
- Perhaps you may consider doing things to support the entire family.
- Be sure to include your Public Relations chairmen on your committee. Submit articles and pictures to your local newspaper. Don't forget to obtain permission before releasing any photos. Junior members can help you use social networking tools.
- Keep a journal. Write down what works and what doesn't work. Send a mid-year report to your Department Chairmen.
- In May, report this project to your Department Chairmen and to your National Committees.



## **Pod: Youth Development**

**Committees included: Children & Youth, Liaison to Child Welfare Foundation, Junior Activities, and ALA Girls State**

### **Objective:**

Suggested Calendar, Every Month – remember family birthdays/events as well as TAL Family events.

### **August**

- School supplies/backpacks
- Shopping for school clothes

### **September**

- Labor Day
- Slumber party with Juniors

### **October**

- Plan for Education Week
- Halloween

### **November**

- Veterans Day
- Education Week
- Thanksgiving – food basket service project?

### **December**

- Christmas - food basket service project?

### **January**

- New Year's
- Make A Difference Day – MLK Day – Service project?

### **February**

- Valentine's Day
- Presidents' Day

### **March**

- St. Patrick's Day
- Legion Birthday

### **April**

- Easter
- Children & Youth Month

### **May**

- Recognize school awards
- Mother's Day
- Memorial Day ceremonies and poppy distribution
- Report this project to your Department Chairmen and to your National Committees

### **June**

- Visit ALA Girls State
- Flag Day
- Father's Day

### **July**

- Fourth of July – parades?
- Christmas in July