

2016-2017 American Legion Auxiliary Programs Action Plan

ALA Girls Nation

ALA Girls Nation and the 2014-2019 Centennial Strategic Plan – As our single most consistent community outreach program, ALA Girls Nation and ALA Girls State help us cast a wider membership net (Goal 1) and raise awareness of our mission (Goal 5) with a population that can have a positive impact on our organization, our mission and our nation.

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What is this program and why do we have it?

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 allowing them to actively run 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 and 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. This year ALA Girls Nation will convene July 22-29, 2017.

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 delegates.
- 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” in 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 delegates and their families.
- Promote opportunities and benefits of membership as a source for volunteerism.
- Coordinate your efforts with other members so recruitment doesn't become a nuisance to participants.

Unit

- Invite eligible ALA Girls State delegates 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 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 delegates.
- Network with schools (charter, private, home schools) that have no active units in their communities.
- Ask parents of past ALA Girls State delegates 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 scholarship

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 and is guaranteed to receive a scholarship. The amount of this scholarship varies each year. National winners are then chosen from the pool of department finalists, each receiving a \$20,000 scholarship.

Ideas:

Member

- Write an article for your local paper 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.
 - Twitter handle is @ALAGirlsNation.
 - Facebook page is "American Legion Auxiliary Girls Nation."

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. For example, Instagram and Snapchat are currently popular forms of social media to consider.
- Prepare an article about your ALA Girls State delegates and submit it to your local newspaper. 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 Twitter and Facebook.
- Encourage the chartering of an eUnit within your department for ALA Girls State alumnae.
- Encourage ALA Girls State citizens to start a closed Facebook group with their cities at their ALA Girls State program.

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

Ideas:

Member

- Sign up to receive the *In the Know eBulletin* and the *ALA eNews* from ALA National Headquarters. (www.alaforveterans.org/Media/ALA-eNews)

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., September 23-25, 2016.
- Read and implement the ALA Girls State Program and Operations Guide.
- Maintain regular contact with the units in your department.

ALA Girls State Reporting

Mid-Year Reports

Mid-Year reports reflect the program work of units in the department. Each department ALA Girls State chairman is required to submit a narrative report by **January 5, 2017** to her respective division ALA Girls Nation chairman plus copy the national ALA Girls Nation chairman.

Annual Reports

Annual reports reflect the program work of units in the department. Each department ALA Girls State chairman is required to submit a narrative report by **May 15, 2017** to her respective division ALA Girls Nation chairman plus copy the national ALA Girls Nation chairman. Members and units should follow their department's protocol and deadlines.

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 In the Know eBulletin* and *ALA eNews*
- www.BoysandGirlsState.org
- Your national ALA Girls Nation committee members (see front page of this Plan)