



American Legion Auxiliary Media Sheet

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS
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American Legion Auxiliary Girls State: “I Was Blown Away by the Experience!”

Description: The American Legion Auxiliary Girls State program changes lives by bringing together dynamic young women for an intense week of leadership, patriotism and community. The Girls State program is a proven leadership laboratory. A fictional self-governing state of young ladies elect their own leaders, write bills for debate and run a legislative session. In the process, these leaders—class presidents, top varsity athletes, debate champions—dynamically engage with state representatives and senators. Two participants from each of 49 states are selected to attend the elite American Legion Auxiliary Girls Nation in Washington DC, where they have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to meet the President of the United States. Girls State is where the seeds of patriotism are cultivated in our nation’s finest high-school girls, by women who care deeply about the future of America and take its leadership seriously. It is where future leaders realize their true potential! “Girls State impacted my life and gave me newfound confidence to help my community and society,” said one former Girls State Citizen. “It influenced my career choices and my educational choices. The experience changed me dramatically.”

Objective: American Legion Auxiliary Girls State provides an opportunity for superior high school women who have completed their junior year to experience the “nitty gritty” of state government processes—the chance to live outside the text book. This program not only instills in its attendees a sense of pride and loyalty in America, but also prepares these women for a career in politics, public service, and excellence along their career path. It is the chance to plunge head-first into democracy, develop sharp leadership skills, and create the foundation for informed and responsible world citizenship. “[After attending Girls State], I felt more empowered,” said one former Girls State Citizen. “I had the freedom to make choices for myself.”

History: Since 1937, more than one million politically savvy young women have attended

American Legion Auxiliary Girls State. Alumni include national media personality Jane Pauley, talk show host Leeza Gibbons, Miss America 2004 Erika Dunlap, Miss America 2009 Katie Stam, former governor of Texas Ann Richards, Senators Janis McKenzie and Rosalyn Hester Baker, Brigadier Generals of the United States Air Force Sharla “Kris” Cook and Michelle D. Johnson, and many other accomplished women. Girls State has produced more successful women than any other girls’ citizenship training program in the country.

Activities: Mock caucusing and debating of bills educate young women in the real state legislative processes. Each program is state-run and thus unique to the state in which it is held. Cutting-edge political topics ensure that the debates are relevant, lively and passionate. Fierce political campaigns are held to elect a Girls State governor, party officials, and pass legislation. Girls also have the opportunity to meet with some of their own state representatives and senators, who are genuinely interested in the fresh ideas of these future leaders. “I still believe Girls State is the best program for young women,” said a former Girls State Citizen. “It can change their lives as well as teach them about politics and their country.” For more information, visit: www.boysandgirlsstate.org/girls.html

www.legion-aux.org

The Organization: Founded in 1919, the American Legion Auxiliary is the world’s largest patriotic women’s service organization. With a membership of nearly 850,000, local American Legion Auxiliary units have a strong presence in more than 9,500 communities nationwide. The American Legion Auxiliary’s mission to *serve veterans, their families and their communities* is carried out through its hundreds of outreach programs delivered by its members, volunteers and National Headquarters.

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