

## American Legion Auxiliary Girls State

The American Legion Auxiliary's marquee Girls State program is one of the most respected and coveted experiential learning programs presented in the United States.

The program epitomizes the ALA's mission to honor those who have brought us our freedom through our enduring commitment to develop young women as future leaders grounded in patriotism and Americanism. The young women become knowledgeable of the democratic process and how our republic form of government works at the state and national levels.

Each summer, approximately 20,000 young women participate in week-long ALA Girls State programs across the nation. Every American Legion Auxiliary Girls State program operates with the same patriotic values through a nonpartisan curriculum where students assume the roles of government leaders, campaigning as "Federalists" and "Nationalists" to become mayors and county and state officials of their ALA Girls State.

The program is a weeklong immersive learning experience held on a college campus where girls live in "cities" within the residence halls. The learning, experience, memories, and friendships last a lifetime.

### Purpose Statement

*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 American Legion Auxiliary Girls State and American Legion Auxiliary Girls Nation citizenship training programs.*

### Program Objectives:

The American Legion Auxiliary Girls State program:

- Develops leadership and pride in American citizens.
- Educates citizens about our system of government.
- Instills a greater understanding of American traditions.
- Stimulates a desire to maintain our democratic government processes within our republic.

### A Brief History of Girls State

The purpose of this program, which began as one of the youth activities of the Americanism Committee of the American Legion Auxiliary, is to educate young women in the duties, privileges, rights, and responsibilities of American citizenship in order that they may understand and participate in the functioning of their government and to help them grasp the meaning of some of the responsibilities they must assume as they become adults.

The first Girls State was conducted in 1938 and, since 1948 has been a regular part of the Auxiliary's better citizenship activity nationwide. Through its sponsorship of these miniature states, the American Legion Auxiliary provides the capable, patriotic leadership needed for America's future.

From a very small beginning in 1942, the first Girls State was held in Alabama at Camp Grandview Park with less than 70 girls in attendance. The second and third sessions were also held at Grandview in 1943 and 1944. The 1945, due to conditions caused by World War II, the session was cancelled.

The 1946 Girls State was convened at Huntingdon College. The number of girls enrolled had not exceeded 70 and it was not until 1947 that enrollment was 78, a record year. From these early beginnings, the American Legion Auxiliary Alabama Girls State program is now held on the campus of University of Alabama with approximately 350 delegates each year.