

What is the American Legion Auxiliary Girls State?

The American Legion Auxiliary (ALA) Girls State began in 1937, guided by the principle “For God and Country.” ALA California Girls State (CAGS) offers training in the practical process of self-government and good citizenship as practiced in a democratic society.

Each summer, approximately 20,000 enthusiastic young women participate in ALA Girls State sessions across the nation. At ALA CAGS the “citizens” study local, county, and state government processes. They do this by setting up their own city, county, and state governments and administer them according to the laws of their state. At the conclusion of the Session two outstanding girls from each program are selected as Senators to attend ALA Girls Nation in Washington D.C. where they will gain further opportunities to sharpen their leadership skills.

After arriving at ALA CAGS, the citizens are divided into two political parties. These parties do not reflect the two major political parties in today’s system of government. The parties allow citizens to gain knowledge about the operation of a two-party system. ALA CAGS citizens participate in these instructional political parties and elections are held to fill city, county, and state positions.

Activities at ALA CAGS include legislative sessions, campaigning, party rallies, debating, voting, and journalism. The citizens also receive special instructions in parliamentary procedure and engage in County Superior Court Mock Trials and State Supreme Court. Throughout the week there are guest speakers who motivate, educate, and stimulate interest in responsible leadership. Many of the speakers are local and state elected officials and active military personnel. There is also a talent show where citizens showcase their individuality.

ALA CAGS afford participants an opportunity to live together as self-governing citizens by informing them about the privileges, rights, and responsibilities of American citizenship. This learning experience better familiarizes the young women with their duties as United States citizens and encourages their participation in the democratic process.

Members of the ALA have structured the ALA CAGS Program to meet the following objectives:

- To develop leadership and pride as citizens of the United States
- To educate citizens about our system of government
- To instill a greater understanding of American traditions
- To stimulate a desire to maintain our democratic government process



ALA Girls State Promise Nancy Bryan Evans, 1948

I, a citizen of ALA Girls State, promise to defend the ALA Girls State Banner and all the things it represents against all evil which seeks to destroy them . . . therefore, it will be my duty to constantly endeavor to promote and perpetuate true brotherhood and democracy to which all humanity is entitled. With God as my judge and justice as my motto, this is my promise from this day forward.

AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY

Founded in 1919, the **American Legion Auxiliary** is the world's largest women's patriotic service organization. The **American Legion Auxiliary's** mission is to support The **American Legion** and to honor the sacrifice of those who serve by enhancing the lives of our veterans, military, and their families, both at home and abroad.

The American Legion Auxiliary (ALA) sponsors ALA Girls State programs across the United States and has held ALA Girls State sessions since 1937 to train young women in the process of self-government. Because of World War II, no sessions were held in 1943, 1944, 1945, and 1946. ALA Girls State is a nonpartisan program staffed by ALA members, former ALA Girls State citizens, and other volunteers. The ALA defrays the cost of attendance and selects ALA Girls State participants, who are rising seniors in high school, based on leadership qualities and academic achievement, with the help of high school principals, counselors, and teachers. Today, ALA Girls State is a coveted program due to the caliber of its participants and the experience it provides.

The ALA is a non-profit veterans support organization which sponsors various programs, including but not limited to Cavalcade of Memories, Education, ALA Girls Nation, Junior Activities, Legislative, Music, National Security, Poppy Program, Youth and Children, and Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitations. For more information about these programs, please visit the ALA California Department's website at calegionauxiliary.com.

The ALA is composed of members who are mothers, wives, sisters, daughters, granddaughters, great-granddaughters, and grandmothers of an American Legion member or a deceased veteran who would have been eligible for American Legion membership, or a female veteran due to her own military service. Initially, the ALA was organized by concerned women who took on the day-to-day responsibilities of life when their male family members went overseas during World War I. Aware of the many fatherless families and the needs of returning veterans, ALA women vowed to continue their supportive roles when the veterans of World War I founded the American Legion. The commitment of "Service not Self" has carried through the generations to develop a strong spirit of volunteerism.

If you are eligible to join as a member of the American Legion Family, we encourage you to speak with any ALA member. The mission of the ALA is:

- To support the American Legion and its programs for veterans, young people, and community.
- To provide for today's needs while being advocates for a brighter future
- To advance the understanding of patriotism and responsibility of citizenship.
- To promote individual integrity and family values
- To ensure as volunteers, that ALA members continue to be the leaders in all that is good in the nation today, tomorrow, and for generations to come through service to others first and not self.

The ALA and the American Legion also provide scholarships and educational opportunities. For more information on these opportunities, please visit legion.org/scholarships and alaforveterans.org/Scholarships.

To read more about the American Legion Auxiliary, Girls Nation, and Girls State program:

American Legion Auxiliary alaforveterans.org

ALA Girls State alaforveterans.org/ALA-Girls-State

ALA CA Girls State cagirlsstate.org/about-california-girls-state

ALA CA Girls State 2018 - One Delegate's view youtu.be/l_ROEIZbuzQ

ALA CA Girls State Alumnae Leadership cagsaf.org

ALA Girls Nation alaforveterans.org/ALA-Girls-Nation

USA Today Girls Nation

usatoday.com/story/news/politics/onpolitics/2018/08/02/ala-girls-nation-these-teens-learned-government-washington/857453002

