

Eligibility

1. Open to girls attending high school or home schooled who have completed their junior year.
2. Must be in good health, with a required examination by the girl's physician (M.D.). The physician's report must be issued no more than ten days prior to the opening of Girls State and must be presented at check-in. No one will be accepted without it. A Unit may send a physically challenged delegate. Special arrangements will be made to accommodate special needs.
3. Delegates must possess high moral character, leadership ability, courage, honesty, scholastic ability, cooperativeness, and an interest in government and current events.
4. No girl is eligible to attend more than one session of Girls State.
5. Girls must attend the full seven-day session.
6. The Girls State Director reserves the right to accept or reject any application for citizenship in Girls State.

Method of Selection

Recommendations for a girl to attend Girls State may be submitted by the counselor or other high school personnel, but the local Auxiliary Unit will make the final decision of acceptance. If there is no American Legion Auxiliary Unit near a school that desires to be represented at Girls State, contact the Department Headquarters at the address provided on this brochure.

Sponsors and Patrons

Only authorized American Legion Auxiliary Units may SPONSOR delegates to Girls State. PATRONS may be used for financial aid.



Regulations

Citizens will not be allowed to leave the campus area assigned to Girls State. No visitors are allowed. Smoking is strictly prohibited. Citizens driving cars to Southern Miss must turn in their car keys to their Senior Counselor at check-in.

Fees/Refunds

The fee is \$250 per delegate. Delegates will receive two city t-shirts and one set of pictures. No refund of fees will be made once the application for the selected delegate is received in the Department Office. The delegate must notify her sponsoring Unit and the Department Headquarters at 601.353.3681 immediately if she cannot attend, and an alternate will be sent in her place.

An information packet will be mailed to the delegate once her application card has been received at the Department Headquarters. Although time for recreation is planned, **Girls State is not a recreational camp.**

For further information, see your school counselor, contact your local American Legion Auxiliary Unit or contact the Department Headquarters at the address below:

MAGNOLIA GIRLS STATE

Department of Mississippi
P. O. Box 1382
Jackson, MS 39215

Phone: 601.353.3681
E-mail: ALAMSHQ@aol.com
Web site: www.missala.com/girlsstate
Facebook: Magnolia Girls State Alumni

Cover photo of 2010 "Top Eight," courtesy of Steve Rouse, USM PR and Marketing Services



**American
Legion
Auxiliary**
Department of
Mississippi



MAGNOLIA GIRLS STATE

June 2-8, 2012
The University
of Southern Mississippi

Hattiesburg, Mississippi

Girls State Purpose

Each year, more than 250 high school girls, entering their senior year in high school (or home schooled), are given the opportunity to learn the structure and responsibilities of state government, using a “learn by doing” approach. Girls State, a program of the American Legion Auxiliary, was developed to educate girls about our system of government and to help them understand and appreciate their vital role as a United States citizen.

Our goal is to teach each delegate that they are an integral part of government and are responsible for the character and success of their government. They will see first-hand how political parties are formed, how leaders are nominated and elected to fill various offices, and each girl will practice their right to vote. As citizens of the 64th (tutorial) state—Magnolia Girls State—delegates will organize their own cities, counties, and a state government, in accordance with regular election procedures, and will exercise the duties and responsibilities of the local and state officials.

By using a “learn by doing” approach, the delegates may then return to their communities as better, more informed citizens.

Girls State Program

At Girls State, each delegate will share a dorm room with another delegate in one of the residence hall at Southern Miss. Each floor of the dorm will constitute a “city,” with a population of 30 citizens.

As citizens of that city, they will establish a city government and elect officials. The City Council will enact ordinances to govern the city, while city officials will enforce the ordinances.

Cities will constitute counties, organized by election of senators, representatives, sheriffs, and supervisors, etc. The collective counties will make up the state of Magnolia.

Each citizen will be assigned to one of two parties, the Nationalists (Nats) and the Federalists (Feds), to gain first-hand knowledge of the two party system, developing party platforms and debating issues.

Elections are carried out according to the existing Mississippi laws. Citizens will elect a Governor, Lt. Governor, Secretary of State, State Treasurer, State Auditor, Attorney General, Insurance Commissioner, and Commissioner of Agriculture. An Inaugural Ceremony will be held after election, and these top eight officials will travel to Jackson to meet with their actual counterparts at the State Capitol.

The two branches of the legislature will organize, author, debate, and pass bills. The Girls State Governor will decide to sign passed bills into law or to veto the bill.

Other Activities

- Glee Club and *Alagista* staff (a “yearbook” of the delegates and events of the week)
- City project to be judged at the end of the week
- College Day with representatives from state universities and colleges
- Talent Show

Staff and Guest Speakers

Local and state officials will be our guests during the week to draw on their expertise to give the delegates a realistic view of government.

The program staff is made up of dedicated members/volunteers of the American Legion Auxiliary, Dept. of Mississippi.

Senior and junior counselors reside with the delegates, one senior and two/three junior counselors per city, and supervise the delegates’ activities throughout the week.

Other Information

Three meals are provided daily at the university’s dining facility. 2012 session will be housed in Century Park, a new dormitory complex at Southern Miss.

Scholarships

Girls State delegates will qualify to apply for the prestigious Samsung Scholarship, if she is a

descendant of a United States wartime veteran. To apply, a copy of the veteran’s DD-214 (or discharge papers) are required. One citizen is chosen as Mississippi’s \$1,000 recipient. Her application is then forwarded to National Headquarters of The American Legion to compete with 98 other students from across the country for one of seven \$20,000 scholarships.

For 2012, five \$500 scholarships will also be awarded: the Keet Peetz, McCorkle-Whitten, Shirley Bozeman, Willie Bea Henderson and Moore-Chan Scholarships; and three \$250 Scholarships—the Billie Richardson Memorial Scholarship, the Lou Wilkerson Scholarship and the Mildred Wilson Scholarship, courtesy of Unit 112 in Jackson. A \$2,500 Frances Hale-Bond Scholarship will be awarded to the delegate who is elected Governor. The University of Southern Mississippi awards two scholarships—the Lou Wilkerson Scholarship for room and board (a \$4,500 value) and a \$1,500 Student Affairs Tuition Scholarship.

Over \$10,000 in scholarships were awarded to Girls State delegates at the 2011 session.

Girls Nation

Two citizens from Mississippi’s Girls State program will be selected to represent their state as Senators at Girls Nation, a gathering of delegates from all 50 states in the country. The session is held at the National 4-H Conference Center in Chevy Chase, Maryland, with the focus of the week being on the federal government process.

