

AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY
TEXAS BLUEBONNET GIRLS STATE
PROGRAM ENGAGEMENT PLAN
2025 - 2026

TEXAS GIRLS STATE DIRECTOR: Lori Swann

TEXAS GIRLS STATE CO-DIRECTOR: Connie Bridges

TEXAS GIRLS STATE COMMITTEE

Ann Doan, Division I, Chairman

Karen Rodriguez, Division II

Phyllis Janke, Division III

Martha Collis, Division IV

ALA Texas Bluebonnet Girls State is an outstanding, unique, nonpartisan, and coveted educational opportunity for the young women of Texas that instills the basic ideals and principles of government through responsible citizenship and leadership training. This mythical 51st state affords these young ladies (finishing their 3rd year of high school) the opportunity to learn firsthand how their state and local governments operate. The citizens of Girls State are assigned to a City, the House or the Senate, and the National or Federal Party. Within this framework, the young women elect city/county/state/party officials and assume the responsibilities of their roles as senators and representatives.

During the 2025 GS Session, the use of online platforms was expanded to promote better communication and delivery of educational content. The participants' use of the online platform led to increased participation in our legislative activities, doubled application volumes for key positions and increased the number of participants running for elected office by 15-20%.

The 2025 citizens were encouraged to write "Thank You for Your Service" letters to Veterans. These "acts of kindness" were sent to

VA Hospitals for distribution. ALA TBGS provides information about the American Legion Auxiliary and offers membership opportunities to eligible Girls State citizens (past and present) and their families.

Invited speakers included former Girls State Citizens who shared various perspectives on local, state, national, and international public service careers. Our guests included the Mayor of a small town, the current Texas Railroad Commissioner, the Executive Director of a non-profit legal organization, and a United Nations Deputy Special Representative.

Obviously, the principles and processes of city, county, and state governments are learned. More importantly, the citizens of ALA TBGS are encouraged to find their voices, step out of their comfort zones, embrace the discomfort of controversial situations that challenge them intellectually, and work together to offer solutions that benefit most. Throughout the session, the young ladies are reminded to be respectful listeners and speakers.

College Scholarships are available to Texas Girls State Citizens. Before the session, delegates are informed about the Samsung Scholarship opportunity. The Cindy Mae Scholarship is awarded to a deserving citizen of ALA Texas Bluebonnet Girls State each year. ALA TBGS will continue to increase awareness and visibility of the Girls State Experience by maintaining the current Website (www.girls-state.org), Facebook Page, and Instagram Account. ALA TBGS Directors will stay current on the latest ALA Girls State programming and best practices with regular communication between Units and Girls State leaders around the country.

The ALA TBGS Committee and Directors are in the process of planning the 2026 ALA Texas Bluebonnet Girls State Session. It will convene on the campus of Texas Lutheran University in Seguin, Texas. It will begin on Sunday, June 14, 2026, and conclude on Saturday, June 20, 2026. More specific ALA TBGS Information and Instructions will be available in late Fall 2025.