

2026 CORNHUSKER GIRLS STATE

Dear Unit President and/or Unit Girls State Chair

The American Legion Auxiliary Cornhusker Girls State is one of the major programs of our organization. Your Unit plays a vital role in the success of Girls State by selecting the most outstanding girls from your community based on their leadership, character, and scholarship achievements. This year 350 delegates will be accepted into the program.

The information in this mailing will assist you in selecting your delegate and completing the application process. Please read this information carefully and distribute accordingly.

Girls State will be held on the University of Nebraska-Lincoln campus the week of May 31-June 6, 2026. The application deadline is March 1, 2026. The application fee for 2026 is \$450 and the activity fee is \$25.

We look forward to receiving your application(s) for one or more delegates as well as alternate delegates (no payment required for alternates) to attend the 2026 session of Girls State. If you have questions about the application process or Girls State, please contact Kathy Mazur or myself. Contact information can be found at the end of this document.

Vicki Ozenbaugh

American Legion Auxiliary "Cornhusker" Girls State Chairman

Selecting your Girls State Delegate

Selection of Girls State Delegates is the responsibility of every American Legion Auxiliary Unit. The method used should be based on fairness to every eligible candidate. Girls State is intended for the most outstanding girls, from the standpoint of leadership, character, and scholarship.

Girls are eligible to attend Cornhusker Girls State if they meet the following criteria:

- Junior standing in a certified Nebraska high school or the equivalent thereof (includes state recognized Home Schools).
- Scholastically in good standing (a potential leader may not necessarily be the best scholar).
- Interested and knowledgeable about government, current events, and parliamentary procedure.
- Of good character and demonstrates leadership qualities.
- Physically and emotionally healthy and able to participate in a strenuous week of activity.
- Vigorous, enthusiastic, and outstanding personality.
- Able to get along well with others.

Information to Schools

To help get the schools ready for your contact, a letter, brochure, and transportation information from the western part of the state were sent to the schools across Nebraska. This letter served as an introduction to Cornhusker Girls State and Boys State. Enclosed you will find a copy of this mailing. The information schools receive is general and does NOT include the application. It is your Unit's responsibility to contact your local school administrator, counselor or teacher and ask for their assistance in promoting

the program. Please take the school letter with you in case the school copy has not yet filtered down to the Counselors.

Selection Process

It is recommended that all Girls State candidates be interviewed to determine that they have a complete understanding of what the Girls State program is, what will be expected of them if selected to attend, and to confirm, if selected, they will attend all sessions of Girls State. Interview each candidate individually. Select only delegates who can attend the entire Girls State week. Beginning in 2017 all Nebraska High School Juniors take the ACT for free in April during school hours. In 2026 the ACT testing date of June 13 DOES NOT conflict with our session dates. If a citizen leaves, they will not receive their Girls State pin or certificate of completion and Units will be notified by Girls State. Also, you may want to ask your candidates if they have applied to attend any other camps or trips that take place during the same week as Girls State. If so, they may be ineligible for Girls State.

Choose your alternates using the same criteria used to select your delegate. Your alternate will become your delegate in the event the delegate originally chosen is unable to attend. You may select more than one alternate for each delegate. **NOTE: Each Unit may sponsor more than one delegate if funding is available (with approval from Girls State) and all candidates meet eligibility requirements. Applications will be accepted until the 350 quota or March 1 deadline is reached.**

Home Schooled Students

Home schooled students are eligible to attend Cornhusker Girls State. Units must obtain verification that the student is classified as a soon-to-be high school senior, the teaching parent is working under State of Nebraska guidelines, and information on outside activities and volunteer work is provided.

Special Needs Students

Girls State and the University of Nebraska policies require that all special needs delegates must have a female aide over the age of 21 accompany them during their week at Girls State. The name of the aide and the fee in the amount of \$450 must accompany the delegate's application in order for her to be accepted. Any special needs citizen arriving at Girls State without an aide will not be permitted to register.

Payment of all expenses incurred by the aide, traveling to and from Girls State, and the \$450 fee to cover expenses of the aide during the Girls State week is the responsibility of the sponsoring Auxiliary Unit, any contributing organization, or the delegate.

Guidelines for completing the application

One application form, one Girls State Pledge form, and a list of interview questions are enclosed. Feel free to use any or all of the suggested questions in your interviews. Do not give this list of interview questions to the delegates. It is meant for interview use only. **Please make as many copies of the application form (both sides) and pledge as needed. An application that does not include the second page cannot be processed.** Interested candidates should be provided an application and pledge form. Due to the past protests during the National Anthem at sporting events, there has been an addition to the last line of the third paragraph on the Pledge. Please know this is an important part of our session and must be complied with.

The application is divided into four sections:

Section 1. This section of the application is to be completed by each interested candidate. Units should not complete this section. By having candidates complete the section assures correctness of name, address, and other requested information. **Please verify all information in this section is correct, complete, and legible.**

Section 2. An official from the applicant's school must complete this section which certifies that the candidate meets all specified requirements.

Section 3. The applicant's parent or guardian must complete this section. **It is page 2 (backside) of the application form and must be signed in all 3 places.**

After completion of Sections 1, 2 and 3, and the Girls State Pledge has been read and signed, the applicant must submit her application to the sponsoring American Legion Auxiliary Unit. When all applications have been received, the selection and interview process can proceed.

Section 4. PLEASE - Make sure Section 4 is complete. This section is to be completed by your Unit after selection of delegates and alternates has been made. **Don't forget to include your Unit number and District number on the form.** If the mailing of the application is left to the school counselor, please have this information filled in before turning it over to them. **IF THERE IS NO INFORMATION IN THIS SECTION, THE APPLICATION CANNOT BE PROCESSED AND A LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE HAS NO PLACE TO BE SENT.**

NOTE: On the front page above Section 2, please indicate Delegate or Alternate status by placing a check mark in the box to the left. If more than one alternate has been selected for a delegate, indicate the alternate order by placing a 1, 2, 3, etc. on the line to the right of the word "Alternate."

Confirm that the contact person listed for the Unit IS the person who will be available to receive the acceptance letter and any other correspondence or inquiries from Girls State. **Please verify all information in this section is correct, complete, and legible.** It is a good idea to make copies of all applications and pledge forms for your Unit files.

Send the **ORIGINAL application** form for each delegate and alternate along with the **ORIGINAL signed Girls State Pledge** form for each delegate and alternate you submit to Girls State by the March 1 application deadline. **Originals only – no copies.**

- DO NOT include applications of candidates you do not select as a delegate or alternate.
- DO NOT include essays, grade point averages, or any other paperwork your Unit uses to judge and choose a candidate.

Girls State assumes you are sending qualified candidates when completed applications are received.

Girls State Application Fee

An application fee of \$450 is required for each delegate. Community and other patriotic organizations, religious groups, local school organizations, and local businesses are potential contributors that can assist you with the delegate fee. Personal contributions or donations given to assist in defraying the cost of the Girls State application fee **must be given to your Unit.**

- Applications must include payment of the \$450 Girls State fee.
- Check must be made out to **ALA Cornhusker Girls State**. Multiple fees should be included in one check if possible, please.

Delegate Costs

Each delegate will be assessed a \$25 activities fee to be collected at Girls State. This fee will cover the cost of pictures and other special activities. The delegate is also responsible for any transportation expenses to and from Lincoln, and any nominal miscellaneous expenses. Units may choose to pay the activities fee of \$25 for their delegate(s).

Delegate Acceptance Notification

Your Unit will be sent a letter from Girls State after the March 1 deadline notifying you that your delegate has been accepted to attend Girls State. **NOTE: Applications must include all requested information and signatures, a signed Girls State Pledge, and the \$450 application fee in order to be accepted. This is YOUR responsibility as the sponsoring Unit.**

If you submitted an application for Girls State by March 1 and do not receive an acceptance letter by April 1, please contact the Girls State Secretary immediately. Mail does get lost.

The American Legion Auxiliary “Cornhusker” Girls State, Inc. reserves the right to accept or reject any application for citizenship in Girls State.

Notifying your Delegate

Notify your delegate(s) immediately of her/their acceptance **after you have received your acceptance letter. Do not notify her or publicize her selection prior to receiving your acceptance letter.** Ask her to re-confirm that she plans to attend Girls State and be present from May 31-June 6, 2026. Information will be sent to delegates after acceptance letters have been sent to Units, so it is important that your delegate is aware of her acceptance prior to receiving her welcome letter from Girls State.

Delegate Cancellations

If your delegate is unable to attend Girls State, notify her alternate and the Girls State Secretary immediately. With proper notification before the following dates, Girls State will refund Units based on the following criteria:

- **Before April 1** - If you do not have an alternate or if the alternate is unable to attend, a full \$450 refund will be given.
- **April 1–May 1** – A partial refund of \$250 will be given.
- **After May 1** - If your delegate cancels or is a no-show at Girls State. **NO REFUND** can be allowed.

It is suggested that your Girls State candidates be made aware of the cancellation deadlines and refund policies. You may request they repay any fees that are not refunded to you as indicated on the application form (Section 3: Parental Waiver, paragraph 3).

******IMPORTANT REMINDER No. 1******

Maintain contact with your delegate(s) prior to Girls State. Make certain they know they need to contact you if they find they cannot attend Girls State. In past years several delegates have not attended Girls State and Units were not aware they were not going to attend. This causes many administrative issues for Girls State and in these situations a refund cannot be given.

****IMPORTANT REMINDER No. 2****

Provide your delegate with the names of contact information for at least two of your Unit members. If your delegate is unable to attend Girls State or has questions, she will know who to contact. It is recommended that these members have access to the information provided by your delegate(s) and alternate(s) on their applications (which you have copied for just this purpose). This is for ease in contacting the applicants as well as contacting Girls State with any cancellations or changes in delegate/alternate status.

Girls State Orientations

The Girls State Executive Council decided it to hold on-line Orientation meetings again. This format for Orientations gives all the delegates the opportunity to receive the same information. The schedule of these Orientations will be on the Girls State website and will be accessible with a QR code they will receive in their welcome packet following acceptance.

IMPORTANT: There will be a packet of information sent by mail to your delegate(s). Included with the packet will be a Welcome Letter with instructions to complete their registration via our Girls State website. An access code will be provided to do this. If a delegate does not use her access code, the Unit will be contacted.

Please contact your delegate and confirm that she has received this packet in the mail and has participated as instructed.

District Bus Transportation

In Districts 1, 4, 5, and 9, bus transportation is arranged by The American Legion District organization for both Boys and Girls State citizens. This is for their convenience in traveling from western Nebraska to and from Lincoln. Girls State is not involved in making these arrangements. The District's American Legion will provide bus information. Questions should be directed to your American Legion District Commander or other designated person. ***Please do not contact Girls State with questions about bus service. We can only direct you back to your District's American Legion officials.***

Questions????

Girls State staff is available to assist you in any way we can. Your questions and concerns are important to us. Staff members are volunteers and out of courtesy for their employers, please do not contact them at their places of employment. You may reach them at home after work hours or by e-mail or text message. Leave your name and number on their voice mail if they are not available and your call will be returned as soon as possible.

Thank you for your cooperation and assistance with this wonderful American Legion Auxiliary program. We hope the information we provided will be helpful to you.

Vicki Ozenbaugh
Girls State Chair
402-759-0411

Kathy Mazur
Girls State Secretary
(402) 659-6689

negirlsstate@outlook.com



GENERAL INFORMATION

GIRLS STATE DATES: May 31 – June 6, 2026

LOCATION: University of Nebraska – Lincoln, City Campus

HOUSING: Sandoz Hall, 820 N 17th Street

APPLICATION FEE: \$450

APPLICATION DEADLINE: MARCH 1, 2026

WEBSITE: www.cornhuskergirlsstate.com

PHONE: 402-466-1808

ENCLOSED:

1. Letter and information for Units
2. Application form
3. Pledge form
4. Girls State brochure
5. List of suggested interview questions
6. Copy of letter sent to schools

APPLICATION RETURN CHECK LIST:

- Application for delegate(s) (front and back completed)
- Application for alternate delegate(s) (front and back completed)
- Girls State Pledge (signed) for **ALL** delegate and alternate applications
- \$450 application fee for delegate(s) only – Checks payable to **ALA Cornhusker Girls State**
- \$25 activities fee (optional) if Unit chooses to pay

MAIL APPLICATIONS AND CHECK TO:

❖ **Cornhusker Girls State**
150 NW 40th St – Unit B
Lincoln, NE 68528