AMERICAN LEGION BOYS STATE IS ...

To the participant: A richly rewarding and educational program that has prompted many former participants to seek careers in public service. Selection serves as testimony to a participant's character and leadership skills and is an experience recognized by many employers, service academy and university admissions boards as an indicator of strong leadership and character traits.

To the sponsor: An opportunity to make a positive difference in a young person's life. For a few dollars, a sponsor provides a character-building and educational experience that the participant will remember for a lifetime. It is also a source of great satisfaction to the sponsor.

To the parents: Assurance that their son is participating in a character-building program of rich tradition that is open to those who have earned the right to attend.

To the school: A practical experience that teaches young men about state government and how to become better leaders. As participants return to their schools for their senior year, they are able to take a more active role in student government.

AMERICAN LEGION BOYS NATION

Boys States select two outstanding participants each year to represent them at American Legion Boys Nation, an extension of the Boys State experience. Boys Nation has similar objectives and characteristics as that of Boy State except that the focus is on the study of the federal government. The weeklong program in our nation's capital combines lectures, forums and visitations to federal agencies, institutions, memorials and historical sites in and around the District of Columbia.

At Boys Nation, each delegate represents his state as a Senator and participates in senate sessions. They organize into committees and conduct hearings on bills submitted by the senators. Instruction and operation of the Boys Nation Senate is based on the rules of the U.S. Senate.

THE AMERICAN LEGION

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

General information about the Boys State program in your state can be obtained by contacting either an American Legion Post in your community or the State Headquarters of your state's organization. Information about Boys State and points of contact are included on the American Legion's website at www.legion.org.

The Boys Nation program is administered at the national level by the National Americanism Commission, The American Legion, PO Box 1055, Indianapolis, Indiana 46206,
phone: (317) 630-1207 or
e-mail: acy@legion.org.

Participants at American Legion Boys State programs develop friendships that will last a lifetime. (Badger Boys State)

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THE AMERICAN LEGION

BOYS STATE

A week that shapes a lifetime.

BOYS STATE

American Legion Boys State is a unique summertime educational program for high school juniors that focuses on participation and personal experience in a model state, complete with government bodies and elected public officials. It is designed to mirror the structure and operation of its respective state government, providing training in practical citizenship, leadership and character development.

The American Legion believes that our American government can survive only with an educated populace. By teaching youth to understand and appreciate our democratic republic, America can remain strong and ensure our freedom for future generations.

OBJECTIVES

American Legion Boys State seeks to:

1) develop leadership and pride in American citizenship;
2) arouse a keen interest in the detailed study of government;
3) develop a full understanding of American traditions and a loyalty to the United States of America;
4) arouse in the young citizens a determination to maintain our form of government;
5) to inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state and nation, and
6) to safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom and democracy.

Nevada Boys State visits the Nevada Statehouse.

INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

The effectiveness of American Legion Boys State in teaching state government is in its instructional program, consisting of limited classroom instruction, functional activities (learning by doing), and general assemblies of instruction. Generally, about half the program hours are directed to government instruction and practical exercises.

Every citizen becomes an integral part of Boys State, assuming responsibilities and performing duties either as an elected or appointed official, or otherwise fulfilling an assignment entailing the duties of responsible citizenship.

POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

Participants are assigned to a mythical political party which results in involvement at the precinct level, the city, county, judicial circuit, senatorial or legislative district as well as at the state level of government. The government organization provides for elections at all levels and includes party caucuses and conventions, platform development, and the organizing and operation of local government units such as county boards, agencies and courts.

Boys State allows the participants to form and operate their government without strict control and excessive supervision by the adult volunteer staff.

ELIGIBILITY AND SELECTION

The American Legion's National Americanism Commission has established certain qualifications for prospective Boys State citizens and works with the respective programs to insure compliance. Guidelines for Boys State participation include:

- Only males who have successfully completed their junior year of high school and have at least one semester of high school remaining are to be considered.
- Any boy who has previously attended a Boys State is not eligible to attend a second session.
- Only boys with outstanding qualities of leadership, character, scholarship, loyalty and service to their schools are to be considered.

In the actual selection process, merit and ability are the two most important factors considered. Fees, or "tuition" are paid by American Legion Posts or other community minded organizations, with little or no expense to a young man or his family.

The selection process varies in the state-level organizations of The American Legion, but it is generally conducted with the school recommending several more boys than a sponsor has quotas for. The sponsor (either a Legion Post or other organization) then selects representatives from this list.

Boys State Programs develop leaders for tomorrow. (Nevada Boys State)