



AMERICAN LEGION BOYS STATE

DEPARTMENT OF MISSISSIPPI

Dear Counselors,

I'm writing you on behalf of the Mississippi American Legion Boys State program searching for the top students Mississippi has to offer. Boys State is a leadership program for young men — juniors becoming seniors in high school — where they are involved in a “learn by doing” approach to state and local government, the election process, and legislation. The 2020 session of Mississippi Boys State will take place the week of May 24th – May 30th on the campus of the University of Mississippi. Throughout the week, these young men will compete not only for elected positions, but also in sports and projects for the honorary title of “Best City.” To add to the schedule, we will host various elected officials and top leaders from across Mississippi to speak and engage with our Boys State delegates. A college and military day will be planned in which all Mississippi universities/colleges and military schools will be in attendance.

I have been involved with this program for the past seven years and cannot tell you how much it has impacted my life and the lives of all those who have completed our program. These young men are at the age where they are about to embark on the biggest journey of their lives — college. This program gives them the opportunity to spend a week away from their family on a college campus, using the college's facilities, and meeting the top students from all over our great “state of Magnolia.” I challenge you to send us your finest students that possess qualities of honor, character, courage, leadership, service, and discipline. We are creating tomorrow's informed responsible citizens... today.

In this packet you will find all the necessary materials for future delegates, and with much earnestness, I encourage you to review it with them. Explain to them the importance of continuing their education and how Boys State can help pave that road by offering scholarships and an environment for networking with colleges and the military. There is a fee to attend Boys State, but there are plenty of ways for the young men to become sponsored. Money should not be a deciding factor when debating whether or not to join this once in a lifetime experience.

Our online application is live as of January 1st, 2020. The application and more information can be found on our new website at www.msboysstate2020.com If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to us at msboysstate@gmail.com. Our staff is looking forward to meeting your best and brightest.

All the best,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "R.G. Pickering".

R.G. Pickering
Chief of Staff, American Legion Boys State
Department of Mississippi

Mississippi Boys State Interest Packet

WHAT IS BOYS STATE?

The American Legion is dedicated to strengthening America. We believe there is no better way to this end than to work with our nation's youth in order to prepare them for the tasks they will face in the years to come. The American Legion, through its youth activities programs, plays a leading role in the development of tomorrow's informed, responsible citizens. The American Legion's programs of Boys State and Boys Nation are our finest examples of citizenship instruction for youth.

Boys State is quite uniform in program structure through each Department (state) of the American Legion. Forty-nine states and the District of Columbia conduct a Boys State program annually and more than 28,000 young men participate in these civic workshops each year. Through the week-long program, the young citizens learn how city, county and state governments function by actually doing the job themselves. Eligibility for all Boys State citizens requires them to be juniors in high school, with one year remaining before their graduation. This allows the young man the opportunity to apply his "practical experience" in leadership and service to his senior year in high school, and at the same time endorse and promote the program among fellow students.

A "LEARN BY DOING" APPROACH

The purpose of American Legion Boys State is to identify young leaders and instill in them constructive attitudes toward the American form of government. The program attempts to show that a democracy needs an intelligent citizenry and a moral, honest and impartial administration responsive to the will of the people. Boys State should be thought of as a mythical 51st state with the Constitution, Statutes and Ordinances constructed by its citizens to govern themselves. Citizens not only will be required to review knowledge already acquired concerning the political machinery of state, and local government, but they will find themselves performing exactly the same functions as real office holders in the everyday world. Delegates learn the duties of various city, county, and state officials and introduce and argue bills in their own legislature. Each citizen will have the opportunity to learn for himself that his government is exactly what he makes it.

The entire program is non-partisan. Problems will be considered without reference to existing political parties and will be free from propaganda. The sole purpose is to enable the delegate to grasp the meaning and responsibilities upon which he will be called to assume when he becomes an adult. It should be distinctly understood that the selection and assignment of citizens to parties is in no way connected to existing political parties in Mississippi. Boys State "political parties" are called "Nationalists," "Federalists," and "Independents". They are purely mythical and none of the principles typifying any of the existing parties will be adopted. In this way, we try to assure a democratic government in its purest sense

HISTORICAL SKETCH OF BOYS STATE

Boys State was originated by the Illinois Department of The American Legion in 1934. The plan was adopted by the National Organization in 1945 and has since been put into operation in forty-nine states. Although Hawaii does not operate a program, it does send delegates to attend the program of other states. American Legion Posts in the Panama Canal Zone, the District of Columbia, and Mexico have, in the past, sent delegates to Boys State in Mississippi. The American Legion Department of Mississippi incorporated Magnolia Boys State on May 2, 1939 and the first session was held in Jackson, June 11-17, 1939, and every year thereafter, except for 1943, 1945, 1949, and 1970.

In 1955, the name was changed from Magnolia Boys State, Inc. to The American Legion Boys State, Inc. Since the inception of Boys State in Mississippi, over 25,000 delegates have attended these sessions. Those chosen to attend have just completed their junior year of high school and possess qualities of honor, character, courage, leadership, service, and discipline. Each local American Legion Post is assigned a quota by the Department Headquarters and where this quota more than one, the Post usually offers the opportunity of sponsorship to civic clubs, churches, schools, Boys State alumni, civic leaders, businesses, and other responsible organizations. On occasion, when a young man is deserving but a sponsor cannot be located, he may be sponsored by his own family through his local American Legion Post or State Department. The cost to sponsor a delegate for Boys State is \$275.00. Cost should never be a hindrance to a student wanting to be a part of our program. If a financial burden does arise, please reach out to our staff.

The American Legion Boys State program in Mississippi is recognized as one of the most outstanding and successful Boys State programs in existence. Mississippi's Boys State is known for its leadership development and motivation, its dynamic and energetic young staff, and for the exceptional support the program receives from Legionaries from across the state. Our Boys State was the first program in the nation to include a "College and Military Service Information Day" where representatives from every state college, university, various branches of the Military, and cadets from the U.S. Military Academies actually come to Mississippi's Boys State to speak to the young men about post-high school plans. It is not uncommon for delegates to actually discover scholarship opportunities while at Boys State.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Participants to Boys State are eligible for scholarships from the American Legion Department of Mississippi and Posts totaling over \$35,000.00. One lucky Boys State Delegate will receive the Harold F. Hale Scholarship worth \$2,500.00. The American Legion Department of Mississippi also presents multiple scholarships of \$1,500.00, \$1,000.00, and \$500. The Senior Staff will also choose a delegate to be eligible to receive the Samsung Scholarship.

Additionally, multiple scholarships will be offered by Millsaps College, Mississippi State University, the University of Mississippi, and the University of Southern Mississippi. A Boys

State Certificate will be presented during our awards ceremony concluding Boys State to Delegates who complete the entire program. This will serve as proof of completion for Delegates wishing to take advantage of these scholarships.

Millsaps College

- Boys State, “Big Eight” Scholarship
 - o Award Amount: \$4,000 [\$1,000/year]
 - o Eligibility: Entering freshmen who are named as one of the “Big Eight” elected officials and completion of a short essay, no more than 500 words, reflecting on how Boys State has shaped their educational and career goals.

Mississippi State University

- Boys State Governor and/or Boys Nation representative
 - o Award Amount: \$6,000 [\$1,500/year]
 - o Eligibility: Entering freshmen who are named as Governor to their state OR the state delegate to Boys Nation. Must have a scholarship GPA of 3.0.
- Boys State Scholarship
 - o Award Amount: \$1,000 [one-year only]
 - o Eligibility: Entering freshmen or transfer student (with university specified credit hours) who participate in Boys State. Must have a scholarship GPA of 3.0.

University of Mississippi

- Boys State Governor and/or Boys Nation delegate
 - o Award Amount: \$4,000 [\$1,000/year]
 - o Eligibility: Entering freshmen who are named as Governor to their state OR the state delegate to Boys Nation
- Boys State Scholarship
 - o Award Amount: \$1,000 [one-year only]
 - o Eligibility: Entering freshmen who participate in Mississippi Boys State

University of Southern Mississippi

- Boys Nation delegate Scholarship
 - o Award Amount: \$4,000 [\$1,000/year]
 - o Eligibility: Entering freshmen who are named as one of the state delegates to Boys Nation
- Boys State Scholarship
 - o Award Amount: \$1,000 [one-year only]
 - o Eligibility: Entering freshmen who participate in Mississippi Boys State