

# **The American Legion of Iowa Boys State**

*Iowa's Premiere Civic Education Program*



## **A Guide for Post and District Boys State Chairmen**

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## Timetable and Deadlines

- September** Post reservation available: [www.ialegion.org/boysstate](http://www.ialegion.org/boysstate).  
Extra Chairman's Guide to selecting delegates and alternates is available online at [www.ialegion.org/boysstate](http://www.ialegion.org/boysstate), or by calling Department at 1-800-365-8387.
- December 31** Delegate Fees (\$250 per delegate) due to Department.  
Checks payable to: The American Legion of Iowa Boys State.  
Fee **increases** to \$300 per delegate January 1 – no exceptions.
- January 15** Delegate registrations will open after January 15 and will close after April 1. Post Chairmen need to give their delegates the instructions provided for them in their reservation confirmation email.  
Samsung scholarship applications are available online through National Headquarters at: <https://www.legion.org/scholarships/samsung>.  
Other scholarship available may be reviewed at: [www.ialegion.org/boysstate](http://www.ialegion.org/boysstate).
- April 1** Delegate must be registered online per letter of instruction. No registrations will be taken afterwards.  
Refund Requests are available from January 1 – April 1 and must be submitted online at [www.ialegion.org/refunds](http://www.ialegion.org/refunds).  
**NO REFUNDS AFTER APRIL 1.**
- April - May** Ensure Boys State delegate(s) and parents/guardians have read the Boys State Handbook, available online at [www.ialegion.org/boysstate](http://www.ialegion.org/boysstate). A copy will be provided in the delegate registration confirmation email.  
District Orientation information will be provided in an email but will also be available online at [www.ialegion.org/boysstate](http://www.ialegion.org/boysstate). Please ensure your delegate(s) and their parent(s)/guardian(s) receive information from District Chairman or Board Members concerning orientation and transportation issues.
- June 13-18, 2021** The American Legion of Iowa Boys State Program

**TO:** American Legion Post Boys State Chairmen & District Chairmen

**FROM:** Boys State Director, Jack St. Peters

**RE:** 2021 The American Legion of Iowa Boys State

1. The American Legion of Iowa Boys State is scheduled for June 13-18, 2021. Please complete the online RESERVATION FORM through The Department's Website, and mail in your check (\$250 per delegate reservation) by December 31, 2020. Submissions after that date will be on a 'first come, first served' basis, and will be \$300 each. Early registration is encouraged!
2. Each Legion Post that has made reservations and mailed in the appropriate fees, will receive an email confirmation with instructions for your delegates. Please give that portion of the email directly to your chosen Boys State Delegate – not the school! Post Boys State Chairmen are responsible for ensuring that their delegate follows the instructions in the letter, and registers ONLINE before April 1, 2021. No registrations will be taken after.
3. If you are interested in being part of the Boys State Staff for the upcoming session, please apply online at [www.ialegion.org/boysstate](http://www.ialegion.org/boysstate), and follow the instructions, to include submission for a background check. While we refer to Boys State as a week that shapes a lifetime, those who join the staff and counselors during the week are the volunteers who make that happen! It is an experience you will never forget!
4. For more information on the reservation and registration process, please contact your District Chairman, District Board Member, District Commander first. Unanswered questions may be Department Headquarters at 1-800-365-8387 or [programs@ialegion.org](mailto:programs@ialegion.org).

For God and Country,

*Jack St. Peters*

Director, The American Legion of Iowa Boys State

***Iowa's Premiere Civic Education Program***

## **History of The American Legion Boys State**

### *Iowa's Premiere Civic Education Program*

The creation of The American Legion Boys State is credited to Hayes Kennedy, who in 1935 was an instructor at Loyola University School of Law in Chicago, and Americanism Chairman of The American Legion Department of Illinois.

Hayes Kennedy became concerned about a project underway in the 1930s called, "Young Pioneer Camp" promoted by the Communist Party to attract high school students. At these camps, the Communist Party would advocate the virtues of the Communist form of government and the uselessness of our Democracy. He felt that a counter-movement should be started among the ranks of the nation's youth to stress the importance and value of our Democratic form of government and maintain an effort to preserve and perpetuate it.

The American Legion of Illinois approved Hayes' project, and in June 1935, the very first "Boys State" in the nation was held on the grounds of the Illinois State Fair.

From the beginning, the program swiftly spread among other American Legion Departments (states). By 1941, 34 states were conducting a "Boys State" program. Today, The American Legion conducts a "Boys State" program in 49 states. The District of Columbia sends delegates to either Maryland or Virginia Boys State programs.

Hawaii is the only state in the nation that does not have a Boys State program.

### **A Part of Legion History**

The history of The American Legion is important and part of the tradition of The American Legion of Iowa Boys State.

The cities at Iowa Boys State are named after Past Department (State) Commanders of The American Legion of Iowa, and the counties are named after Past National Commanders and prominent Legionnaires of The American Legion.

## **What is The American Legion of Iowa Boys State?**

### ***Iowa's Premiere Civic Education Program***

Iowa conducted its first American Legion Boys State in 1938 and has held one every year since, except for 1945, when World War II gasoline rationing made it impossible. Most of the time it has been held at Camp Dodge.

Boys State is a six-day course in government. Participants will learn more about the functioning of city, county and state government in the State of Iowa than 75 percent of the population of Iowa.

The knowledge young men gain will be by actual experience, at American Legion Boys State is a total "hands-on" program. The young men will be divided into 12 cities. Three (3) cities constitute a county and four (4) counties constitute Boys State. In each city, half of the citizens will be members of the Nationalist Party and half will be members of the Federalist Party.

Boys State Delegates will hold party caucus meetings, conventions, conduct campaigns, and hold a primary and general election. Once the election process is complete, elected delegates will appoint the necessary staff to assist them in conducting the office, and immediately begin to govern in whatever subdivision they have been elected to. As in real life, everyone cannot be elected to office, and everyone does not work for the taxpayers. At American Legion Boys State, there will be other jobs to be filled.

There is a daily newspaper that will require the service of reporters, photographers, editors, cartoonists, layout and copy people, and business management.

There is a fully functioning Court System, General Assembly (House and Senate) and Law Enforcement System. To educate the young men on the process of how our schools and school districts in the State of Iowa operate and function, a School Board section provides instruction, again through a "hands-on" process, in the business of running Iowa schools.

For those young men with musical interests and experience, American Legion Boys State offers the opportunity to play and/or sing in The American Legion Boys State Band and/or Chorus. The band performs at all major functions during the week and the chorus sings several times during the week.

American Legion Boys State wishes to afford each young man the opportunity to worship as he would in his home community. Special religious requests are coordinated by the Director.

The staff of highly motivated and qualified individuals at American Legion Boys State are drawn from members of The American Legion, Boys State Board of Directors, Iowa State Patrol, agencies of Iowa government, Iowa National Guard, U.S. Military Services and Military Academies, professional career fields (lawyers, college admission counselors and teachers), and, former Boys State delegates.

## Where Your Post Fits In

Now that your post has background on The American Legion Boys State, let's start talking about where and how a post fits into the overall planning of the program. will give you a few pointers on what your post should do, when to do it, and how to do it, for your post to have a successful Boys State program. The suggestions made to your post in this guide are all tried and true methods of operation. Boys State has found through years of experience that the suggestions really do work.

Posts that follow the procedures for the selection and attendance of delegates are rewarded by sending the best of the best Iowa has to offer at Boys State, and the program is successful because of it.

Your post should decide that every effort will be made to follow the recommendations in this guide. As all American Legion Posts are autonomous, you may use the selection process that works best for you – as long as you and your post members have the final say in the selection of the delegate. Please do not leave it in the hands of the school to select and register your delegates. Consult with them of course, but members of your post have the final say as to who attends this premiere program. Be involved!

Many American Legion Posts in Iowa seek community involvement as well, accepting donations from other civic organizations, to afford the opportunity for these young citizens. Why would they do this? Because THEY know the benefit of a good citizen coming back to their community and support the local American Legion's program with open arms.

## American Legion Post Commander

If you are the Post Commander, we suggest that you appoint a member of your post as Boys State Chairman or form a Boys State Committee. It is to your advantage to have as many of your post members active in the work of your post. Your duties as post Commander will be more productive as you distribute tasks to the members of the post.

Be sure that you pick someone for the position of American Legion Boys State chairman who is qualified for the job. You may not be able to look around the meeting room and find that chairman. It could be the one who doesn't have time to attend meetings but will make time to find delegates to Boys State.

Go over the membership roster and look for someone who is good at working with other people and can communicate effectively with young people. It may be a teacher, coach, scout leader, newspaper reporter, etc. Don't look for someone you think will accept the job - look for someone who you know will **do** the job.

Make personal contact and ask him/her to accept the position of Boys State Post Chairman and tell them why you think they would be good for the job and what they bring to the table!

## **Post Boys State Chairman**

You have an opportunity to help shape the leaders of your community, state and nation for the future. Former Boys State Citizens are or have been, leaders in many facets of government, military, business, and professional life, including the President of the United States.

Be very proud of the job you have been selected to perform for your American Legion Post. Proper planning and follow-up is important to a Boys State Chairman.

You will want to swing into action as soon as practicable. Make personal contact with the high school principal, government teacher, superintendent, school board members, and even clergy within your community. Make an appointment to address them and take along the Boys State Handbook, available at [www.ialegion.org](http://www.ialegion.org) that explains the program. You may even ask them to make recommendations of students – but you and your post, after interviewing the candidates, should maintain and have the final say as to whom you will sponsor.

It is important that these individuals fully understand the program; what Boys State is, and what it is not. As Post chairman, you need to know the program yourself. Take time to read the hand book and see what the delegates see and review the timeline for reservations and registrations process (see Page 2 of this guide). Visit with the District Chairman or District Commander, if you have questions, or call American Legion of Iowa Department headquarters at 1-800-365-8387.

Wear your American Legion Cap – be proud of the fact that our organization created Boys State.

YOUR POST will be making the final selection of delegates. Many posts choose delegates AND alternates, to ensure you have a delegate for the spot your post has paid for! Each young man is expected to should have a desire, and ability, to attend, for the entire six days. It is also important that each selected delegate to Boys State knows what the program is about in a general way, and what the dates for the program are.

Boys State recommends that you have a list of names to interview by February, so that you will have plenty of time to hold your interviews and make the final selection. A sample questionnaire/application is in this guide, for each young man to complete, or you may develop one. It is important that your post have forms that provides information on each candidate so that you can let your Post Selection Committee study them over - prior to the interviews at the post. Also included in this guide is a 'grading' form for you and/or your committee.

When selecting your delegates, keep in mind that the delegate/s you select will be representing your post, and the community. If your post selects the best possible delegates, their experience, and yours, will change their lives.

When you select the people to help you with the interviews, be sure to select people who have an interest in young people and some experience in dealing with them. Pick people who can make a sound decision about your delegate selections and who can observe the attitudes of the young men and their answers.



## **Guidelines for Selecting Boys State Delegates and Alternates**

A candidate **MUST** have completed the 11th Grade (Junior year) and have at least one semester left prior to graduation.

Candidates should have good scholastic ranking.

Candidates should possess qualities of leadership, scholastic achievement, good citizenship, and a willingness to participate.

Candidates shall be citizens of or lawful permanent residents of the United States. Exchange students will not be accepted.

Candidates should demonstrate an interest in United States history, Government, and Civics. Ability to debate or speak in public are a definite asset to candidates.

Candidates are required to be in attendance for the entire program. They will not be excused for sports activities. If any candidate attends but does not complete the program for any reason other than illness or emergency, fees will not be reimbursed to the post.

Candidates **MUST** believe in United States citizenship and the ideals of "For God and Country" on which our nation and The American Legion were founded.

## Boys State Interview Score Sheet

Candidate's Name	_____
Parent/Guardian	_____
Full Address	_____
Phone Number	_____
E-Mail Address	_____
School	_____ Home Schooled? _____

Rate each candidate on a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 being the lowest and 10 the highest.  
Use the space to make any notes as well.

### Leadership

### Scholarship Potential

### Public Speaking

### Self-Confidence

### Citizenship

## Boys State Application (for post use only)

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

County: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (mobile preferably): \_\_\_\_\_

Home Schooled? (Yes or No) \_\_\_\_\_

School Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade Point Average: \_\_\_\_\_

Favorite Class & Why? \_\_\_\_\_

Student Government: \_\_\_\_\_

Musical Instrument: \_\_\_\_\_

Extracurricular Activities: \_\_\_\_\_

Community Activities: \_\_\_\_\_

Awards/Achievements: \_\_\_\_\_

Why would you like to attend American Legion Boys State?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Online Registration

Once your post has made the final selection of delegates and alternates, the young men will need to register online. Instructions on how to do that will be provided in a letter to the sponsoring post in the middle of January for the program year.

The Boys State Handbook and Orientation are critical to each delegate that registers online. If the delegate is not able to attend one of the orientations scheduled, you should direct him to the website to at least view the orientation video. Your post is still responsible for providing specific transportation as outlined by your District.

It will be your responsibility to see to it that each delegate selected by your post registers online **BY APRIL 1ST** and reads through the handbook provided on the website. The delegates will learn about The American Legion Boys State program and what will be expected of them, what to bring, as well as what they can expect upon arriving at Camp Dodge on Sunday.

## What Was Boys State Like? A Post Follow-Up

After Boys State, you and your post will want to know what you got for your money. After all, your post may be spending more money on Boys State than on any other program your post participates in all year. The American Legion of Iowa Boys State Staff, of course, thinks your money couldn't have been better spent, if you have done the proper job in selecting your young men and seeing to it that they are properly instructed before attending the program.

More importantly, you want to know about the experience gained and shared at Boys State by the young men sponsored by your post. Your post should let your entire membership and your community know about the experience your delegates had at Boys State and at the same time, get publicity for your post and The American Legion.

It is suggested you have a dinner in the Fall, after the young men return to school. Invite all your delegates and their parents. Invite school officials and civic leaders, and any other people that might have been involved in the process. Invite the Mayor and the City Council and don't forget to invite the local news media. Include the local paper, the local radio stations, and if you are lucky enough to have a TV station, be sure to invite them, too.

Plan your dinner carefully. Don't have it on the same night that a big football game is scheduled or any other activity that is bound to attract a large segment of the community away from your post. If your post has an Auxiliary Unit, involve them in helping to plan, cook and serve the meal. Show the community how well entire families work together in The American Legion for the common good.

When you contact your young men about attending the dinner, explain that they will be called upon to give a short report to all in attendance about their experience at Boys State.

Introduce your guests but leave the speeches up to the young men. You are having this affair for them and they should have the limelight. Everyone else is there to show the young men how proud they are of them.

The American Legion and your post have got a product to be proud of, so don't keep it a secret. Share Boys State and the work of The American Legion with as many people as you can.

### **The Next Time: Planning for the Future**

Now that your post has selected the best possible delegates to represent your post, they have been properly registered, and they have attended Boys State for the full six days and have come back home full of enthusiasm, and the entire community has shared in their experience at your dinner, you will find out that subsequent Boys State work will go a lot easier.

The delegates will be anxious to tell all their friends about what a great time they had at Boys State and how much they learned while they were having fun. Now, every prospective delegate in the junior class will want to get selected to attend Boys State. The more the word gets out, the better position your program will be in. How did this positive attitude get started? You were the person who made it happen.

Use your Boys State Delegates from last year or former delegates who live and work in your community as part of the post selection committee.

Don't forget to look over the suggested forms and letters included with these guidelines. Feel free to use any or all of them.

Permission is hereby granted to any American Legion Post within the Department of Iowa to reproduce any or all the material contained in this guide for its own use only.

***Iowa's Premiere Civic Education Program***

## NOTES

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