

Frequently Asked Questions

BEFORE GIRLS STATE

What are the dates for the upcoming session?

The 2011 session of Palmetto Girls State will begin on Sunday, June 12, 2011, and will conclude on Saturday, June 18, 2011. Delegates attending the 2011 session of Palmetto Girls State should report for registration between 9:00 am and 12:00 noon on Sunday, June 12.

Where is the program located?

The 2011 session of Palmetto Girls State program will be held on the campus of Presbyterian College in Clinton, South Carolina.

How do I apply to attend Palmetto Girls State?

All delegates selected to attend Palmetto Girls State are sponsored by American Legion Auxiliary Units in South Carolina. Girls do not apply directly to Palmetto Girls State, and Palmetto Girls State does not accept at-large applications. Delegates must be selected and sponsored by an American Legion Auxiliary Unit.

How does my school participate in Palmetto Girls State?

Delegates to Palmetto Girls State are selected by American Legion Auxiliary Units and must be sponsored by an American Legion Auxiliary Unit. If an American Legion Auxiliary Unit sponsored delegates from a school last year, then that Unit will probably be assigned spaces for delegates from that school for this year. However, there is no guarantee that a Unit will sponsor delegates from the same schools each year. School personnel (such as principal, guidance counselor, or other school administrator) should contact an American Legion Auxiliary Unit in the city or local area where the school is located and request that the American Legion Auxiliary Unit consider sponsoring delegates to Girls State from the school. If the school is one that did not have representation at Palmetto Girls State last year, the American Legion Auxiliary Unit will need to request assignment of spaces for delegates for that school. Girls State has a finite number of spaces for participants, and assignment of spaces for delegates cannot exceed the

capacity of the program. Palmetto Girls State attempts to work with requests from the American Legion Auxiliary Units to sponsor delegates from as many schools as possible. However, once the assignment of spaces reaches the capacity of the program, requests for spaces are then placed on a waiting list. Requests for spaces on the "Waiting List" are usually notified in May if the request can be accommodated.

When will I be notified if I am selected to attend Palmetto Girls State?

The American Legion Auxiliary Units usually begin their contacts with the schools from which delegates will be selected in January and February. The selection process for delegates and notification of the delegates selected are handled by the American Legion Auxiliary Unit which sponsors delegates from a particular school. Typically, delegates are notified of their selection in March and April.

What should I bring with me to Palmetto Girls State?

In May, information packets will be available for all delegates selected to attend Palmetto Girls State. These packets will be accessible on this website or may be mailed to registered delegates. Included in the information will be a "What to Bring with You" list. That document will explain the dress code and will contain a suggested packing list. The most important things to bring to Palmetto Girls State are a good attitude and a commitment to participate during the week. A positive attitude, an open mind, an honest commitment to participate, a desire to learn, and enthusiasm will serve the delegate well and will truly help her succeed during the week. Girls State is NOT a recreational camp. To truly experience Palmetto Girls State and reap the benefits of the program, one must commit to being involved and to participating in the activities of the week. It is by working through the activities that delegates will make new friends, learn of our government and the political process, and have an enjoyable and rewarding experience. Palmetto Girls State is an opportunity for fun and learning, but the experience will only be as great as the effort a delegate puts forth.

What should I expect?

Delegates should expect a fast-paced, high-energy educational program designed to test their leadership, citizenship and scholastic abilities. Delegates should expect to compete with the best and brightest high

school students in the state of South Carolina. One should expect to push herself like never before. Delegates should expect to commit themselves to the program for the entire week and not allow outside influences to be a distraction. Finally, delegates should expect to leave the program a better, more informed, and more aware citizen.

The program is very structured. There are many activities which must be covered during the week, and many events which must be completed. A strict schedule is required to accomplish all the events of the week. Every person attending Palmetto Girls State is expected to participate in all events and all aspects of the program.

Can I drive my car to the program?

Delegates of Palmetto Girls State are not allowed to drive themselves to the program for the week. Delegates will need to arrange for transportation to and from Palmetto Girls State.

Can I bring my laptop computer, I-pod, I-pads, or other electronic equipment?

There is no need for delegates to bring most of these things to Girls State. Alarm clocks are suggested so a clock/radio or other small radio is permitted. Palmetto Girls State is not responsible for lost, misplaced, forgotten, or stolen items. Because of the sheer size of the program and the number of citizens, we cannot keep track of expensive and valuable belongings for nearly 500 delegates. Items such as laptops and I-pods/I-pads are not needed at the program so please leave them at home.

Can I bring my cell phone?

Cell phones are permitted and may be used during free time. However, cell phone use is absolutely prohibited during assemblies, meetings, and scheduled functions during the week. This prohibition during the Girls State activities applies to all operations of the cell phone including: voice communication (calls); data communication (texting or email); web-browsing; games; etc. Delegates may use cell phones only at designated times and places. PGS is not and cannot be responsible for the security of a delegate's cell phone. PGS is sensitive to the need and desire for delegates to communicate with their families and friends, and cell phones may be

used by delegates during free time only. However, such communications cannot interfere with the delegate's participation in Girls State activities.

What should I do to prepare for the program?

Get plenty of rest! Girls State is a very structured program with scheduled events from early morning to late evening. Also, read the information provided to delegates prior to the Girls State program. The more delegates know about the program the better they will fare. This information contains all the pertinent information about Girls State. Delegates may also want to brush up on their public speaking skills since they will be using those skills during the week!

How much money should I bring?

Excessive cash is not required. Delegates will need to pay a \$30.00 registration fee and \$40.00 room key/dorm access card deposit at registration on Sunday, June 12. In addition, delegates may want to have some cash on hand for purchases of PGS shirts and other merchandise in the Palmetto Girls State Store or for snacks/drinks from vending machines. Delegates are responsible for any money that they bring. Credit cards may be used for purchases in the Palmetto Girls State Store, and there is an ATM machine on the campus. More information will be provided in the May information packets.

Can I bring my own campaign materials?

No. When the delegates arrive at Palmetto Girls State, everyone is on a level playing field. When campaign materials are allowed during certain portions of the program, Palmetto Girls State will make supplies available for the delegates to produce campaign materials.

What offices are available at PGS?

There are elected offices on three levels – city, county, and state. Delegates can offer and run for any office, whether it is Mayor of their city or Governor. All it takes is determination and the will to succeed. If one does not win an election, one may run for another office. Girls State depends on the leadership of its elected officials.

What time do I have to arrive at Palmetto Girls State?

Registration is Sunday morning, June 12, 2011. Registration hours are 9:00 am to 12:00 noon. Delegates must plan their arrival on campus in order to complete registration by 12:00 noon.

What if I arrive late?

If a delegate has a conflict and absolutely cannot arrive at Palmetto Girls State during the registration time, she must have prior approval from the Director or Administrative Staff. Even if permission is obtained for a late arrival, the delegates must arrive by Sunday evening. No delegate is admitted after Sunday evening.

Do I have to stay all week?

Yes! Gaining the best experience possible at Girls State is dependent on full participation during the entire program. Delegates have been selected over many others at their high school to attend this program. Being a delegate to Palmetto Girls State is a once in a lifetime opportunity. Leaving early not only wastes the sponsor's money but also keeps another student from the experience of a lifetime. Delegates are to remain in the program through the closing assembly on Saturday, June 18, 2011. Those who do not stay the entire week could lose eligibility for scholarship money and college credit. When one commits to attend Palmetto Girls State, she is making a commitment to attend the entire session. Delegates to Palmetto Girls State are expected to honor this commitment.

DURING GIRLS STATE**Will I see other people from my high school during the week?**

Probably. However, one wonderful aspect of the program is the opportunity to meet new people from across South Carolina. Everyone should come to Palmetto Girls State with an expectation of meeting new friends and a goal of meeting as many new people as possible.

Can my best friend be my roommate?

No. One of the best experiences of Palmetto Girls State is meeting new people. Students from the same high school are assigned to different

cities. While delegates will see people from their high school or home town at meals and assemblies, this week is the chance to get to know other people and to have other people get to know you.

Are there phones so I can call home?

Phones jacks are available in each dorm room, but delegates must bring their own phones. Local, collect, or credit card calls may be made from the dorm rooms. While there will be some time in which a delegate may call home, our schedule keeps us busy from early morning until late at night. While delegates will be able to call home periodically, they should not expect to do so every night.

Will I have access to my email?

Computer labs will be available during the week, and some of the dorms have computers available. The computers in the computer labs and the dorms will be available during free time. However, some of the computers will be dedicated only to use for Girls State activities (such as the newspaper), and the remaining computers will be available on a first-come basis.

Can I have visitors while I am at Girls State?

No. Our program does not have the space or time to allow visitors during the week.

What are the lodging arrangements?

During the week, we will all stay in the dorms at Presbyterian College. Everyone will share a room with one or more roommates. In some dorms, two or more rooms are grouped as suites, where each suite shares a bath. In other dorms, the rooms on a hall share a community bath.

What is the food service like?

The Presbyterian College cafeteria provides dining facilities for the week. We provide three meals a day with a variety of menu items during the week.

What kind of sporting activities are available?

There are no organized sporting activities, but there may be an opportunity for you to participate in a morning run/workout around the campus. We do not have workout facilities available during the week.

How much free time is there?

The schedule at PGS is full, and everyone is kept busy. During the day, there may be some free time set aside, but typically delegates will be working on some aspect of the program. Meals are also considered "free time," and there is some "free time" before and after City Meetings at night. City curfew is set around 11:00 pm, but due to some events curfew could be extended. Delegates may think this is too early, but at the end of each day, you will be tired. Breakfast is typically from 7:15 – 8:15 am with the morning assembly starting at 8:30 am.

Can I leave the campus during the week?

No. Delegates must stay on campus during the entire week. The Palmetto Girls State program takes place on the campus of Presbyterian College with limited off campus events. If an off campus event is scheduled, the Director must approve the event for the participants and transportation is provided through the program with our direct supervision. The PGS experience is a residential program, and by attending PGS, each delegate agrees to stay in residence at the program for the entire session.

What is the political structure of Palmetto Girls State?

The delegates are considered the citizens in our mythical state of "Palmetto." At Palmetto Girls State, every citizen is allowed to vote and participate in the political process. Palmetto Girls State employs a two party political system, and each citizen will be assigned to a political party. The two parties at Palmetto Girls State are the Federalist Party and the Nationalist Party. Neither party is associated with any real life political party. Each year, citizens develop their own party platforms and their own style of governing. At Palmetto Girls State, the city and county elections are nonpartisan, while elections for House, Senate, and statewide offices (such as Governor, Lt. Governor, Attorney General, State Treasurer, etc.) are partisan elections.

What is a typical day like?

Each day is packed with activity. Breakfast starts at 7:15 am, and City Curfew is at 11:00 pm or later. Assemblies with outside speakers addressing the assembly are held at various times throughout the day and evening on topics addressing an educational aspect of the program. After educational instruction, mock elections are held. No two days are the same, and there are a variety of topics, activities, and elections to peak everyone's interest. And throughout the week, we have lots of singing of patriotic songs!

Do I have to participate in all the activities?

Palmetto Girls State is what one makes it, but all in attendance at Palmetto Girls State are expected to participate in all aspects of the program. We are there to participate. Seizing every opportunity for involvement in the activities makes the Girls State experience more meaningful and fulfilling. At the end of the week, awards will be given for a variety of accomplishments, including the most outstanding city at Palmetto Girls State.

OTHER QUESTIONS**How long does the program last?**

Palmetto Girls State lasts 7 days and 6 nights (Sunday to Saturday). Delegates are to register by 12:00 noon on Sunday, June 12, 2011. The session concludes after the closing ceremony on Saturday, June 18, 2011, which will be at approximately 11:00 am.

What scholarship opportunities are available?

Each year Palmetto Girls State, in conjunction with Palmetto Boys State, receives a list of scholarships from colleges and universities within South Carolina. This list identifies scholarship opportunities which are strictly for Girls State and Boys State delegates who complete the program and graduation on Saturday, June 18, 2011. This list is available to delegates at the end of the week.

Can I receive mail while at Girls State?

Sure. Please do not send mail after Wednesday as we cannot ensure that it will be received before the program has ended. Mail should be addressed as follows:

Name of PGS Delegate
Palmetto Girls State
Presbyterian College
503 South Broad Street
Clinton, SC 29325