

## **WHAT IS BOYS' STATE?**

Boys' State is a program of the American Legion developed from the concept that youth should be offered a better perspective of the practical operation of government; that the individual is an integral part, and commensurately responsible, for the character and success of his government. As such, it is an activity of high educational value, born of a need for youth training in practical citizenship.

To elaborate – Boys' State is easily classified as a Leadership Action Program wherein qualified male high school juniors participate in a practical government course designed to develop in the young citizens a working knowledge of the structure of government and to impress upon them the fact that their government is just what **THEY MAKE IT.**

To summarize – Boys' State is an objective citizenship training program, which inculcates individual responsibility to the community, state, and nation. It is operated on a two-party system on the basis of the political government organization as it exists in New York State at all levels from local municipalities to the State.

Boys' State is not a summer camp! Although there will be designated recreation times, Boys' State is NOT a picnic – NOT an outing – NOT a sports camp. Sponsoring groups are asked to note that Boys' State is in no way a rehabilitative, disciplinary, or recreational camp. **Only young men with outstanding qualifications in leadership, character, scholarship, service, and citizenship who have a serious attitude toward an intensive citizenship training program should be selected.** Appearance, neatness, and good grooming are expected of Boys' State participants. Attitude and appearance go together and the ability to follow directions is a must. The image projected by candidates to Boys' State reflects upon the youth of America.

Physical fitness is an integral part of Boys' State. There will be time set aside for a physical program to include calisthenics and marching to meals and assemblies to prepare the boys for the parade, which is one of the high points of the program.

## **WHAT ARE THE OBJECTIVES OF BOYS' STATE?**

Naturally, a program of this scope and magnitude encompasses many objectives, all of which are important, however, the objectives we feel are the most important and those for which we strive the hardest to attain are as follows:

- A. To develop civic leadership and pride in American Citizenship. It is our earnest hope that each young man who attends Boys' State will return to his community a better citizen than when he left and that he will have a desire to demonstrate this fact by his willingness to make civic contributions which will help make his community a better place in which to live.
- B. To stimulate a keen interest in the detailed study of our government.
- C. To incite in these young citizens a determination to maintain our form of government.
- D. To develop in these young men a full understanding of our American traditions and a belief in the United States of America.

The American Legion aims to inculcate a sense of individual obligation to their community, state, and nation in these young men and to charge them with the safeguarding of the principles of America – Democracy, Justice, and Freedom – the legacy of their forefathers.

## **WHERE AND WHEN WILL BOYS' STATE BE HELD?**

Boys' State is scheduled to be held from June 27 through July 2, 2026, at SUNY Morrisville in Morrisville, NY. The boys may check in between 11:00 am and 1:00 pm on Saturday, June 27, and may leave on Thursday, July 2 after attending the Final Assembly. **Lunch will not be provided on Saturday, June 27, 2026. Attendees should have lunch prior to their arrival.**

Morrisville State College is located in the picturesque Cherry Valley area of New York State on Route 20, thirty miles east of Syracuse. The dining hall will serve delicious, nutritious food; however, special diets can sometimes be accommodated. The boys must notify staff immediately upon arrival to make arrangements. A gymnasium, tennis courts and athletic fields are available to participants.

Each registrant will receive two (2) Boys' State shirts and a badge upon reporting in. Additional shirts (at a cost of \$5.00 each) may be purchased at the Morrisville Boys' State Headquarters on Saturday.

## **WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO ATTEND BOYS' STATE?**

**Leadership, character, scholarship, and service** are the necessary qualifications a young man must possess in order to be admitted to Boys' State. Participants should be able to tolerate the demanding physical aspects of this program (long days, physical/mental strenuous activity). Physical incapacity can be a deterrent to participation in this program.

Candidates for Boys' State must meet the following requirements:

- A. Be at least 15 years of age at the time of application.
- B. Have completed their junior year with at least an 80% or B average.
- C. Have at least one semester of high school remaining.
- D. Be a resident of New York State, or reside in another state but attend school in New York State

Candidates should possess the following qualifications:

- A. Leadership
- B. Ability to get along with others
- C. Mental alertness
- D. Physical cleanliness and neatness
- E. Honesty
- F. Good personality
- G. Vigorous attitude
- H. Enthusiasm
- I. Good Citizenship

**Applications for the selected candidates/alternates will be available online November 2025.**

**The Board of Directors of Boys' State reserves the right to accept or reject any application for admittance.**

## **HOW DO WE SELECT QUALIFIED CANDIDATES?**

- A. Local American Legion posts consult with area high school principals/guidance counselors and ask them to recommend a group of boys as possible candidates.
- B. American Legion Post Committees interview each candidate and select those best qualified.
- C. Candidates should be chosen with regard to the following:
  1. Seriousness of purpose
  2. Industriousness
  3. Initiative
  4. Influence
  5. Concern of others
  6. Responsibility
  7. Emotional Stability
  8. Interest in Government

The New York Boys' State Program does not discriminate against any person on the basis of race, ethnicity, nationality, disability or handicap, gender identity/expression, religious, creed, or individual political opinions.

## **WHO ARE BOYS' STATE COUNSELORS?**

The Boys' State Counseling staff is comprised of American Legion members, Sons of the American Legion, government officials, college professors, high school teachers and former Boys' State members, many of whom have been with the program for a number of years. Their services have contributed much to the success of this program as they are experienced in parliamentary procedure.

Ten (10) counties will be formed at Boys' State. Each county will contain two (2) cities and each city will consist of approximately thirty-six (36) boys. A counselor will be assigned to each city. It will be his duty to assist the boys and guide them in their daily activities. There will also be a United States Marine assigned to each county. His job is to teach the Boys' Staters how to keep their rooms in order, teamwork, morning PT, etc. He will also teach them how to march in formation to get to and from events and for the final ceremony. ROTC and US Military Academy cadets also assist with daily duties.

## **WHAT KIND OF ACTIVITIES WILL BE PROVIDED FOR PARTICIPANTS?**

In addition to their government work, participants will attend informational assemblies with guest speakers such as elected officials and a public speaking expert to name a few. Softball, basketball and pickle ball tournaments will be held as announced in assemblies. Boys who play instruments are encouraged to bring their instruments and a lyre and join the band. A few of the larger wind instruments will be supplied. Participants must bring their own mouthpiece and drummers bring sticks. Past Boys' State bands have consisted of approximately 60-70 pieces. A daily newspaper is published. A state police force is organized, and court trials are held. Examinations will be given to those boys who wish to be admitted to the Bar of Boys' State. A program on Sustainability and Economic Development will help create awareness of alternative energy sources and recycling opportunities in communities. Boys' State Chaplains will participate in daily assemblies and seminal programs. A yearbook, website and video production will be developed and staffed by Boys' Staters.

## **WHAT ARE THE HEALTH AND MEDICAL REQUIREMENTS?**

The Board of Directors of Boys' State requires each participant to undergo a physical exam by his primary physician. The signature of the participant's parent/guardian giving consent for emergency treatment is required. There will be a para-professional, nurse or doctor on duty 24 hours/day to care for all emergencies. General sick calls will be held daily at 8:00 am. Local physicians, hospital staff and emergency care facilities stand ready and willing to cooperate in critical health matters.

## **THE AMERICAN LEGION BOYS' STATE OF NEW YORK, INC. IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY INJURIES, ACCIDENTS OR ILLNESSES INCURRED BY THE PARTICIPANTS DURING THIS PROGRAM.**

Participants **will not** be permitted to drive automobiles while at Boys' State. Those who must drive to Boys' State must turn in their keys at Boys' State Headquarters upon arrival.

Parking on the campus is at the participants' own risk. New York State Boys' State Program and SUNY Morrisville are not responsible for damage to automobiles, jointly or severally.

**WARNING -- Any delegates found off campus will be sent home. There will be no exceptions to this rule.**

**WARNING -- Any participant found in possession of liquor, drugs, firearms, knives, or explosives will be immediately dismissed and barred from Boys' State.**

**WARNING -- Bullying, harassment or any other unacceptable behavior will result in immediate dismissal.**

**WARNING -- Boys' State of New York, Inc. is a NON-SMOKING Program. There will be no exceptions to this rule.**

**The parents of any boy dismissed for any of the above reasons will be required to pick up their son and transport him home. In addition, violators will be immediately reported to their sponsoring organization and/or American Legion Post.**

**Electronic devices ARE NOT permitted. They will be collected by Boys' State staff upon arrival. Cell phones will be allowed. They must be turned off during the day, except for break/down times. If you choose to bring any of these items with you, we will not be responsible for them and will not replace lost or stolen items.**