

Dear Applicants to the 2021 Session of American Legion Auxiliary Colorado Girls State,

As you are well-aware, it has been a long, strange year with unprecedented challenges. A little over a year ago, faced with concerns over staff and delegate safety, the steering committee made the difficult decision to cancel the 2020 session of ALACGS. We did so with the hope that surely by the next year, the situation would have vastly improved. Unfortunately, it's now the next year, and the situation is not especially improved, but we cannot in good conscience deprive the young women of Colorado of this opportunity for yet another year.

As such, we've made another difficult decision, but this time, the choice has been to host the 2021 ALACGS session virtually. This is not ideal, and it is certainly not the same kind of involved experience that an in-person session would be. That said, we still believe we have a great deal to offer and are working on formulating a program that will promote civic engagement, encourage leadership, and embody the same spirit of sisterhood as previous ALA Colorado Girls State sessions.

Additionally, because last year's juniors were not able to attend, this year's seniors are invited to apply to this year's session along with this year's juniors thanks to a resolution passed by the American Legion Auxiliary Department of Colorado. The program will take place virtually from June 7th through June 10th. Further details pertaining to the schedule will be released at a later date, but know that we have the same intensive sessions relating to electoral and legislative processes in mind.

Though the program is at its core educational, there are more lighthearted traditions that come with it. Each year, the program director chooses a theme and a song to accompany it, and these two things are woven into different aspects of the program. In light of the events of the past year, I believe we can all relate to a message of perseverance and what comes with the 'ups' after a great many 'downs.' So instead of making you wait until you receive your registration materials, I'm just going to tell you now that the theme for 2021 ALACGS session will be, "Rise," accompanied by this session's theme song, "On Top of the World," by Imagine Dragons. If you've never heard of it, don't worry- you'll hear it many times during our session! Through the difficulties of a pandemic and hosting this program virtually, we will indeed rise.

We are so excited to continue the tradition of ALACGS with a new delegation, and as you consider your future endeavors, including your summer activities, I hope you will keep this wonderful program at the forefront of your mind. It is a joy and a pleasure to coordinate this program and share it with each new generation of young women. I look forward to working with all of you, and if you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to me at any time.

Sincerely,

Marissa Sotomayor
2021 Director
American Legion Auxiliary Colorado Girls State
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