



OKLAHOMA AMERICAN LEGION BOYS STATE

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
THE AMERICAN LEGION DEPARTMENT OF OKLAHOMA HEADQUARTERS
P.O. BOX 53037
OKLAHOMA CITY, 73152

To: 2023 Boys State Delegates and Their Parent(s)
From: Senator Corey D. Brooks, Ret., Oklahoma Boys State Director
Subject: **Essential Information for Boys State Delegates**

Parent(s) and Delegates,

Congratulations on your selection to Oklahoma American Legion Boys State! Please read every word of the following information in order to fully understand what to expect from the Boys State experience. If you have any questions, please contact either your Legion Post Representative or the Boys State Staff. You may also visit the Boys State website at okboysstate.com.

You have been selected for one of the highest honors that can be given a high school student. Your community has determined that your potential for service and leadership is so great as to merit your participation in the 2023 session of Oklahoma Boys State. Both you and your community will benefit from your attendance at Boys State if you take full advantage of the opportunities presented. To help you do this, I am providing some information which will help you prepare for the Boys State experience, what we call, "The week that shapes a lifetime."

Success at Boys State comes not just from winning high office, or any office at all for that matter. Success comes from sharing this week of government, leadership, and patriotism with several hundred other young men like yourself who constitute the best and brightest our state has to offer. Your success will be marked not only by your experience during the week, but also by what you will carry with you for the rest of your life. To fully benefit from this experience you must be active; get to know your fellow delegates, learn about your city, listen to your counselors and to the assembly speakers, talk, discuss, argue, laugh, and yes, maybe even weep. If taken seriously, you will leave with a new appreciation for the men and women who built this nation and have given the ultimate sacrifice to keep it free.

1. Location, Date, and Time of Arrival and Departure:

- a. Rogers State University
1701 West Will Rogers Blvd
Claremore, OK 74017
 - i. Delegates should be dropped off at the Dr. Carolyn Taylor Center where you will be directed to your City.
- b. Delegates should arrive no earlier than 1:30 P.M. and no later than 2:30 PM on Saturday, May 27th, 2023
- c. A meeting of your city will commence at 3:00 PM sharp. Dinner will be served after this meeting and a welcome and orientation assembly will follow.
- d. Plan to be picked up by your transportation at approximately 12:00 PM on Saturday, June 3rd, 2023. Exceptions need to be arranged in advance with your Boys State Senior Counselor.

2. Transportation:

Transportation to and from Boys State is the responsibility of the delegate's parent(s). If the delegate drives his own car, he must turn in his car keys to the Boys State Staff for the week, to be returned at the end of the session.

3. Extracurricular Time:

- a. Plenty of extra-curricular time is provided including both organized and leisure activities. You may want to bring such items as: swimming trunks, items for basketball, volleyball, and the weight room, as well as inexpensive games such as chess, checkers, cards, etc.
- b. Gambling, in any form, will not be permitted during Boys State.

4. Music and Talent Night:

Boys State has an outstanding music program for both voice and instrument as well as a talent night. Delegates may want to bring personal instruments for the band (tubas and percussion equipment will be provided) as well as guitars, fiddles, banjos, and other props for talent night. Know that each city will select one act to represent their city at the talent show.

5. Bedding:

Bring your own bedding! No bedding is provided except for a bed. Some Boys Staters bring sleeping bags and find this very satisfactory, while others bring sheets (college dorm long twin bed) a pillow and blankets.

6. Clothing:

- a. Boys State delegates are expected to present a neat, uniform appearance. Except during recreation time, delegates will wear the Boys State T-shirt (2 are issued at no charge), trousers (jeans or slacks), closed toe shoes (no sandals), and NO caps except for the official Sons of the American Legion cap. During recreation time and while on the dorm floor delegates may wear caps, shorts, and sandals. Dress clothes are not required at any time. Delegates should wear socks with shoes as they will spend more time walking than usual.
- b. Each delegate is issued two official Boys State T-shirts. Additional shirts will be available at the Boys State Store
- c. Each delegate is also issued two Boys State athletics shirts.
- d. Washing machines are available.

7. General appearance:

Delegates are expected to arrive neat and well groomed and remain so throughout the Boys State week.

8. Personal Items:

Bring sufficient under clothing, toiletries including bath soap, shaving items, over-the-counter medications such as aspirin and allergy relief, contact lens solution and/or extra glasses, etc. Inform your counselor of all prescription medications (including insulin) you are taking. **Also bring bath towels and washcloths.**

9. Money:

How much money a delegate brings is entirely up to him and his parent(s). Since we provide all meals and housing in the delegate fee, it is possible for a delegate to go the entire week and spend no money. However, vending machines are available for snacks with some vending machines accepting credit cards and tap to pay. Also, the Boys State store has souvenir items, Boys State clothing and merchandise, snack foods, beverages, and water, as well as extra t-shirts. The amount of cash to bring is up to you, however cash for vending machines could be useful. Major credit and debit cards are accepted.

10. Bank, Post Office, and Store:

A bank, post office and store can be found in the Boys State Headquarters. **It is highly recommended that delegates deposit any extra cash in the bank for safekeeping.** Although Boys State delegates are the finest young men in the state, prudence nevertheless dictates that one take care of his personal belongings and cash. Money may be withdrawn from the bank as needed. Near the bank are the post office and store. Mail will be delivered to each city as it arrives daily. Mail will also be taken to the local post office on a daily basis. The store will have various items for sale such as caps, lapel pins, letter jacket patches, pens/pencils, etc. Every effort is made to safeguard the personal items of delegates. **Oklahoma American Legion Boys State cannot assume any responsibility for loss or damage to personal effects.**

11. Mailing Address:

Delegate's Name, Delegate's City
c/o Oklahoma American Legion Boys State
Rogers State University,
1701 West Will Rogers Blvd
Claremore, OK 74017

12. Do Not Bring pre-printed campaign material:

All campaign material must be produced at Boys State. You may bring materials with which to make campaign signs, etc. You may campaign for office prior to Boys State but no information regarding delegates will be released by Oklahoma Boys State.

13. Rules: You will be given a complete orientation upon arrival at Boys State:

- a. Do Not Bring Firearms, fireworks, drugs, alcohol, pornography or gambling materials. None of these are permitted at Boys State and will result in immediate dismissal of the delegate.
- b. Do Not Bring Tobacco: Most Boys State delegates are minors and as such it is illegal for them to possess or use tobacco in any form. It is also illegal to have tobacco products on state school campuses for anyone. Tobacco use by any delegate will not be permitted, regardless of age.
- c. Do Not Bring Any Items of Great Value such as expensive items of clothing, jewelry, etc.

14. Early Departure:

- a. The full benefit of the Boys State experience can only be obtained through complete participation. Early departure is not permitted without the express permission of the Boys State Director.
- b. If you cannot stay the entire time due to a pre-existing schedule conflict of a significant nature, you must obtain the approval of the Director of Boys State in advance in order to register.
- c. If you come to Boys State and choose to leave Boys State before the closing ceremonies on Saturday for other than a pre-planned/approved absence, you must relinquish all materials issued to you by Boys State (including t-shirts even if you purchased them, [you will be reimbursed]) and you may not, at any time, list yourself as a graduate of Boys State.

15. Checkout Time:

Boys State officially ends at approximately 12:00 PM on June 3rd. Delegates MUST sign out with their counselor noting time of departure and mode of travel home.

16. Visitors:

Unfortunately, the Boys State program is not designed to facilitate visitors. The program is structured around close interaction between the delegate and the other members of his city, both during scheduled events and recreation time. As such, it is

difficult for delegates and visitors to find time to interact. However, if the delegate does receive a visitor, the visitor must check in and remain at Headquarters. Delegates are not allowed to interact with visitors except in the Headquarters area, with the express permission of a Senior Staff member.

17. College Credit:

Through participation in the Boys State Program delegates may obtain up to three hours of college credit upon the payment of additional tuition to Rogers State University and the completion of the requirements. RSU will send the details closer to the week of Boys State. You may also contact the RSU Admissions office directly or visit <https://www.rsu.edu/admissions/apply-now/> to apply.

18. Government Practicum Participation:

Throughout the week of Boys State the delegates will simulate the state and local government of Oklahoma. As the week progresses, the delegates will have the opportunity to run for office at the city, county and state levels. They may also choose to seek positions within the senate, judiciary, or law enforcement community, or remain and advance within the house. Regardless of position or election outcome, each delegate will play a role in the simulated government and learn by doing in the process.

19. Legislation:

At the heart of our democracy is representative government and public debate. As such, Boys State puts a great emphasis on our Legislative Simulation. Each delegate will spend time in either the House or the Senate learning parliamentary procedure; debating bills and resolutions; and learning the committee system. For this process to work smoothly, each delegate should bring with him at least one piece of legislation to present to his peers during the simulation. Some topics to consider include: *Welfare, Drug Policy, Public and Higher Education, Taxation and Budget, Employment, Agriculture, Criminal Justice and Corrections, Transportation and Highways, Environmental Laws, Hunting and Firearms, and other items of general interest.*

20. Running for Governor and other High Office:

Those delegates wishing to run for Governor, Lt. Governor, Attorney General or Chief Justice are encouraged (but not required) to check the appropriate box during registration to help the staff equally distribute high-office candidates throughout the state. All delegates will have the opportunity to declare candidacy for these offices after arrival at Boys State regardless of their indications during registration.

21. American Legion Oratorical Competition:

Boys State is proud to offer a separate path for delegates to compete in the American Legion Oratorical Contest. The Oratorical Contest is a nationwide competition where high school students present prepared orations over selected topics. Scholarships are awarded for winning state contests and for achieving certain stages of the national competition, including a **\$25,000.00 scholarship** for the winner of the national competition. At Boys State, delegates compete against their peers for a chance to advance to the state competition and bypass the district competitions. Also, the winner of the Boys State competition will present their oration to Boys State on Friday evening during the week of Boys State. The topic for the 2023 Oklahoma Boys State competition is **Remembering the Forgotten War**. This year marks the 70th anniversary of the signing of the armistice that ended the Korean War. The speech should be between eight (8) and ten (10) minutes long and the competition will occur during rec time during the week of Boys State. For more information about the Oratorical Competition, visit <https://www.legion.org/oratorical>

22. Cell Phones / Smart Phones:

Delegates are strongly encouraged, but not required, to bring their smart phone and other mobile devices to assist with research, communications, and creating memories while at Boys State. All tests and elections will also be conducted electronically. Responsible and polite usage will be expected and required, and certain Boys State specific rules for usage will be promulgated upon arrival.

23. Emergency Contacts:

Delegates may be contacted by phone only in an emergency, and may take time to be reached. Boys State security operates 24 hours per day and will know the whereabouts of delegates at all times. In an emergency you may call 405-578-4627.

24. Medical Care:

Boys State is fortunate to have a physician on staff. Delegates and staff have access to around-the-clock medical care and an in-house infirmary. In addition, many members of the Boys State staff have medical training. Furthermore, in cases of emergency the Claremore area hospital is only a short distance away. If you have any medical condition please inform your Senior Counselor and the doctor when you arrive. **If you develop a medical condition during your stay at Boys State, inform your counselor immediately.**

25. Physical Limitations:

Due to our facilities and the campus atmosphere at Boys State, please let us know immediately if you have difficulty climbing stairs, walking or are on crutches or some other mobility aid. We will try to assign you to a first floor dorm room and make other provisions as necessary.

26. Walking:

Delegates walk more during Boys State than normal. Although the campus is compact, frequent movement between buildings is common. In addition, since it is often necessary to move large groups in mass, delegates may be "marched" from place to place. Bring good walking shoes. **NO RUNNING IS REQUIRED**, though it can be a big part of Rec Time.

27. Weather:

- a. Weather in Oklahoma is unpredictable. Some sessions of Boys State are hot and humid, others mild and pleasant, and others downright cold. There is always a good chance of rain as well. Bring a light, waterproof jacket just in case.
- b. Each dormitory has emergency procedures to follow in case of storms and severe weather.

28. Photographers, Web Developers/Designers, and Audio-Video Production:

We will have a number of opportunities for photography and A/V production as part of our yearbook and journalism teams. Please bring your own equipment if you so desire. When not in use, it can be locked away. Be sure to indicate on your registration if you are interested in helping with photography, Video Production or working on the Web/Social Media Sites that will be updated on a routine basis.

29. Samsung Scholarship:

The Samsung Corporation of Korea granted the American Legion with a very large endowment in gratitude for the sacrifice of American Servicemen during the Korean War. The money is to be used for scholarships awarded to children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, or adopted children of a U.S. Veteran who served during a time of war. An undergraduate scholarship to be used at an accredited U.S. college or university; the scholarship is awarded only to Boys State and Girls State delegates who qualify nationally. If you think you are eligible, we STRONGLY encourage you to apply at okboysstate.com/samsung.

30. For God and Country:

The American Legion exists “For God and Country” and any delegate who is not a believer or who is uncomfortable with patriotism or saluting the Flag of the United States will be **VERY** uncomfortable at Boys State. Boys State provides non-denominational religious activities. It is very important that religious tolerance be emphasized; nevertheless prayer and religious observances as well as patriotic observances are a part of the Boys State experience.

31. Website and Social Media:

Please note that we will update our website and social media platforms with events and photos on a daily or more often basis. Our web address is okboysstate.com. Feel free to contact us by email if you have questions at info@okboysstate.com

32. WHAT BOYS STATE IS NOT:

You may have heard the story of the blind men in India who were asked to describe an elephant using only their sense of touch. The first, grabbing the elephant’s leg said, “it feels like a tree,” another holding the trunk stated, “it feels like a snake,” while a third grasping the tail defined it “like a rope.” Delegates from Boys State often come home with descriptions, which, depending on their perspective and focus may be equally disparate.

Despite what you may have heard, Boys State is NOT a leadership seminar although delegates have an excellent opportunity to lead during the week. It is NOT a sports camp but delegates do have the chance to compete athletically with many of Oklahoma’s premier athletes during recreation periods. It is NOT a government course, even though instruction in state and local government is provided for college credit if the delegate chooses. Boys State is NOT military or religious training, but the subjects of patriotism and faith are an important, integral part of the Boys State Experience. What then is Boys State? It is none of the above because it is all of the above. The motto of the sponsoring American Legion, “For God and Country” serves as a backbone that supports our intensive week-long discovery of the essence of civic duty, citizenship and understanding of the American way of life from a participatory perspective. The delegate will not only learn how the American System of government and politics works theoretically, but also in a hands-on laboratory setting. He will experience all of this as one of Oklahoma’s “best and brightest” high school students. It has been described as, and is **“A week that shapes a lifetime”**

I look forward to seeing and working with you in the 2023 session of Oklahoma American Legion Boys State!



Sen. Corey D. Brooks, Ret.
Director