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Older Americans Month Speech Resources: Fact Sheet

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Introduction

May is Older Americans Month (OAM)—a time to celebrate and pay tribute to older people across the country. Since 1992, the Administration on Aging (AOA) has selected an annual theme for OAM. The May 2022 theme is *Age My Way*, which encourages older Americans to “explore the many ways older adults can remain in and be involved with their communities.”¹

This Congressional Research Service (CRS) guide is designed to assist congressional offices with work related to OAM celebrations. It contains a brief history with resources for additional historical, legislative, and budget information; CRS reports; examples of speeches and recognitions from the legislative branch; presidential proclamations; and statistics and projections from authoritative government sources. The sections “Resources for Older Americans,” “Educational Opportunities for Seniors,” and “Volunteer Opportunities for Seniors” contain selected resources that may be of interest to constituents.

History

President John F. Kennedy designated May 1963 as Senior Citizens Month to pay tribute to citizens aged 65 and older. President Jimmy Carter changed the name to “Older Americans Month” in 1980. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Administration for Community Living (ACL) website contains historical resources for OAM.

Legislation and Budget

The Older Americans Act (OAA; P.L. 89-73) was signed into law by President Lyndon Johnson on July 14, 1965, and supports a range of social services and programs for individuals aged 60 years or older.

Congress has reauthorized and amended the OAA numerous times since it was first enacted. Most recently, President Donald J. Trump signed the Supporting Older Americans Act of 2020 (P.L. 116-131) on March 25, 2020. The law reauthorized the OAA through FY2024.

The Older Americans Act (P.L. 89-73)

Supporting Older Americans Act of 2020 (P.L. 116-131)

Current Budget Information (ACL)

CRS Reports

CRS has prepared several reports that explain or address issues of concern to older Americans. Some of these include the following.

The Older Americans Act and Related Programs

CRS Report R43414, *Older Americans Act: Overview and Funding*, by Kirsten J. Colello and Angela Napili

¹ Administration on Aging, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, “OAM 2022,” May 4, 2022, <https://acl.gov/oam/2022/older-americans-month-2022>.

CRS Report RS22549, *Older Americans Act: Funding Formulas*, by Kirsten J. Colello

CRS In Focus IF10633, *Older Americans Act: Nutrition Services Program*, by Kirsten J. Colello

CRS Report R45626, *Older Americans Act: Senior Community Service Employment Program*, by Benjamin Collins

CRS Insight IN11410, *COVID-19: Selected Financial and Social Service Resources for Older Americans*, by Tamar B. Breslauer, Angela Napili, and Abigail R. Overbay

CRS Report R46439, *Older Americans Act: 2020 Reauthorization*, by Kirsten J. Colello and Jared S. Sussman

Other Programs and Issues Focused on Older Americans

CRS Report R40425, *Medicare Primer*, coordinated by Patricia A. Davis

CRS Report R42035, *Social Security Primer*, by Barry F. Huston

CRS In Focus IF10322, *Medicaid Primer*, by Alison Mitchell

Sample Congressional Speeches and Recognitions

Members of Congress often make floor statements, issue press releases, or enter Extensions of Remarks into the *Congressional Record* to recognize federal holidays and observances. The following are some recent examples that may be of assistance in preparing such statements.

Senator Robert P. Casey, Jr. (representing a bipartisan group of Senators), “Senate Resolution 243 – Designating May 2021 as ‘Older Americans Month,’” Senate, *Congressional Record*, vol. 167 (May 26, 2021), pp. S3510-S3511.

Senator Susan M. Collins, “Supporting Older Americans Act of 2020,” Senate, *Congressional Record*, vol. 166 (March 4, 2020), pp. S1471-S1472.

Representative Joyce Beatty, “Recognizing the 52nd Anniversary of the Older Americans Act,” Extensions of Remarks, *Congressional Record*, vol. 163 (July 14, 2017), p. E990.

Presidential Proclamations

One of the many uses of a presidential proclamation is to ceremoniously honor a group or call attention to certain issues or events. Some recent OAM proclamations, from the *Compilation of Presidential Documents*, include

Presidential Proclamations—Joseph R. Biden, Jr. (2021-)

Presidential Proclamations—Donald J. Trump (2017-2020)

Presidential Proclamations—Barack H. Obama (2009-2016)

Presidential Proclamations—George W. Bush (2001-2008)

Presidential Proclamations and remarks from 1993 to the present are available through the govinfo.gov service on the Government Publishing Office website. Earlier remarks (including selected audio and video clips) are available through The American Presidency Project, established by the University of California, Santa Barbara.

Statistics

Numerous federal agencies maintain statistics on the elderly. Some useful data include

U.S. Census Bureau, *Stats for Stories: Older Americans Month: May 2022*.

Administration on Community Living, *2019 Profile of Older Americans*. (Previous editions of *Profile of Older Americans* are available on the ACL website.)

Federal Interagency Forum on Aging Related Statistics, *Older Americans 2016: Key Indicators of Well Being*.

Resources for Older Americans

A vast number of resources exist to directly help and inform older Americans and their caregivers, including the following:

Eldercare Locator

USAgging (formerly, National Association of Area Agencies on Aging)

National Center on Elder Abuse

engAGED, National Resource Center for Engaging Older Adults

National Council on Aging, Benefits CheckUp

National Long-Term Care Ombudsman Resource Center, The National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care

Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, HealthyPeople.gov

State Health Insurance Assistance Programs (SHIPs)

In addition to the resources above as well as below, many additional community-based programs can be found using local resources, such as a public library or a recreation department.

Educational Opportunities for Seniors

Numerous programs are available to seniors to provide educational and fun experiences. The following are three broader well-established resources:

Making Education Accessible to Seniors, A Place for Mom

Road Scholar

AARP, Life-Long Learning

Volunteer Opportunities for Seniors

Active seniors may enjoy sharing their knowledge and skills by volunteering to help others. The following selections provides diverse volunteer opportunities, including some for living and volunteering abroad:

The Corporation for National and Community Service, AmeriCorps Seniors

GoEco, 50+ Volunteering

Additional community-based programs can be found using local resources, such as a public library or a recreation department.

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