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Older Americans Month Speech Resources: Fact Sheet

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Introduction

May is Older Americans Month (OAM)—a time some 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 2024 theme is *Powered by Connection*, which encourages older Americans to “explore the many ways older adults can remain in and be involved with their communities.”¹

This fact sheet 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 “Government Resources” and “Nongovernment Resources” contain selected resources that may be of interest to constituents.

Background

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’s (HHS’s) Administration for Community Living (ACL) website contains historical resources for OAM.

Legislation

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.

For the past several years the U.S. Senate has adopted, with bipartisan support, annual resolutions recognizing Older Americans Month. Below are the most recent examples.

S.Res. 712 (118th Congress)—A resolution designating May 2024 as “Older Americans Month”

S.Res. 234 (118th Congress)—A resolution designating May 2023 as “Older Americans Month”

S.Res. 656 (117th Congress)—A resolution designating May 2022 as “Older Americans Month”

S.Res. 243 (117th Congress)—A resolution designating May 2021 as “Older Americans Month”

S.Res. 597 (116th Congress)—A resolution designating May 2020 as “Older Americans Month”

Related CRS Products

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

¹ Administration on Aging, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, “Older Americans Month 2024,” May 29, 2024, at <https://acl.gov/oam/2024/older-americans-month-2024>.

The Older Americans Act and Related Programs

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

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

CRS In Focus IF11694, *Connecting Older Adults and Individuals with Disabilities to Health Services: Resources for Congressional Offices*, by Kirsten J. Colello, Angela Napili, and Michele L. Malloy

CRS In Focus IF11544, *Overview of Assisted Living Facilities*, by Kirsten J. Colello

Selected Congressional Statements and Remarks

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

Representatives Abigail Spanberger and Marc Molinaro, “During Older Americans Month, Spanberger, Molinaro Reintroduce Bipartisan Bill to Combat Elder Abuse, Improve Link Between Health & Social Services for Seniors,” U.S. House of Representatives, official website of Rep. Abigail Spanberger, press statement released on May 31, 2024.

Senators Tim Scott and Bob Casey, “Scott, Casey Applaud Unanimous Passage of Resolution Commemorating Older Americans Month,” U.S. Senate, official website of the Senate Special Committee on Aging, press statement released on May 27, 2021.

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.

Selected Presidential Proclamations and Remarks

One of the many uses of a presidential proclamation is to call attention to certain issues or events. Some recent OAM proclamations, from the White House website and the *Compilation of Presidential Documents*, include the following:

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)

Older presidential proclamations are available through the govinfo.gov service on the Government Publishing Office website. Other remarks (including selected audio and video clips) are available through The American Presidency Project, established by the University of California, Santa Barbara.

Government Resources

Numerous federal agencies maintain resources for the elderly. Some useful data and information include the following:

U.S. Census Bureau

(This information was provided by the U.S. Census Bureau. Information on the accuracy of Census data in the area of demographics is available at the Pew Research Center's Key Facts about the Quality of the 2020 Census website.)

Stats for Stories: Older Americans Month: May 2023. This website provides population, demographic, and economic statistics of the older population.

U.S. Census Bureau, *Older Population and Aging Data*. This page is dedicated to illustrating where the older population is living and how that is changing.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living

2021 Profile of Older Americans. (Previous editions of *Profile of Older Americans* are available on the ACL website.) The report includes data on the American population aged 65 and older.

Budget. This page provides an overview of ACL's current and recent past budgets, and how the budget supports ACL's initiatives and programs.

Eldercare Locator is a resource to connect users to services for older adults and their families.

Other Agencies

Federal Interagency Forum on Aging-Related Statistics, *Older Americans 2020: Key Indicators of Well Being*. The publication uses data from multiple federal government agencies to provide a comprehensive, easy-to-understand picture of the older U.S. population.

Social Security Administration, *Social Security Matters: Aging*. This page offers brief informative topics of interest to older americans and those that support them.

Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *Healthy People 2030: Older Adults* provides measurable public health objectives and tools to help track progress toward achieving them.

National Institute on Aging, National Institutes of Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *Aging in Place: Growing Older at Home*, is a resource that provides strategies for aging at home.

Nongovernment Resources

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

Health, Care, and Well-Being

USAgging (formerly, the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging) advocates for individuals to age with optimal health, well-being, independence, and dignity.

National Center on Elder Abuse serves as a national resource dedicated to the prevention of elder mistreatment.

Aging and Disability Networks, HHS's ACL, are local, state, and national organizations working to support older adults and people with disabilities.

engAGED, National Resource Center for Engaging Older Adults, leads a national effort to increase the social engagement of older adults, people with disabilities, and caregivers.

National Council on Aging, Benefits CheckUp connects older adults and people with disabilities with benefits programs that can help pay for health care, food, and utilities.

National Long-Term Care Ombudsman Resource Center, The National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care advocates for residents of nursing homes, assisted living facilities, board and care homes, and similar adult care homes.

State Health Insurance Assistance Programs (SHIPs) is a source of information for and about the national State Health Insurance Assistance Program.

Enrichment Opportunities for Older Americans

Numerous programs are available to seniors to provide educational and fulfilling experiences. The following are programs that aim to enrich the lives of the older U.S. population:

Road Scholar is a provider of experiential travel learning opportunities.

AARP, Life-Long Learning is a portal providing free nationwide online courses.

The Corporation for National and Community Service, AmeriCorps Seniors encourages senior involvement to make positive impacts in their communities.

GoEco, 50+ Volunteering provides travel opportunities for senior volunteer projects.

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

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