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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 2023 theme is *Aging Unbound*, 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,” “

¹ Administration on Aging, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, “Older Americans Month 2023,” April 28, 2023, at <https://acl.gov/oam/2023/older-americans-month-2023>.

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’s (HHS’s) 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

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 Constituents*, by Kirsten J. Colello, Michele L. Malloy, and Angela Napili

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

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*. The website provides population, demographic, and economic statistics of the older population.

Administration on 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.

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

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 our older population.

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

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.

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

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

In addition to the resources listed in this report, many other 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 is a resource that promotes lifetime learning.

Road Scholar is a provider of experiential travel learning opportunities.

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

Aging in Place: Growing Older at Home, National Institute on Aging, is a resource that provides strategies for aging at home.

Volunteer Opportunities for Seniors

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

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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