

Writing and Promoting Proclamations

Gather attention and support for your **National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month (Recovery Month) events**, and the milestone of the nationwide campaign's 20th anniversary, from key leaders in your community to elevate the general public's and media's attention to the issue. The easiest way to involve government officials and agencies in your celebration is to ask them to issue a proclamation. An official proclamation recognizes **Recovery Month** as a cause that positively affects individuals and families throughout the region and warrants a call to action. This type of effort has paid off, with hundreds of **Recovery Month** proclamations issued in previous years.

Federal government officials, governors, state legislators, or city, county, and town officials can all issue proclamations. For the last several years, the President of the United States has endorsed **Recovery Month** by signing a proclamation, recognizing that this public health problem requires support, recognition, and access to a solution.

Visit the **Recovery Month "Highlights and Accomplishments"** page for proclamations issued in previous years.

This document details the different types of proclamations, steps for getting your **Recovery Month** proclamation signed, and suggested activities that draw the media and community's attention to your effort. Use the templates provided at the end of this document to develop a proclamation that reflects your community's needs and goals.

Types of Proclamations

Traditional proclamations begin with a series of "whereas" statements, meaning since or inasmuch, which state the problem or issue. These are followed by a "therefore" statement, which is the heart of the proclamation and requests specific calls to action. More **modern proclamation** writing also is acceptable. These proclamations are written more like a letter. Both types proclaim September as **National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month**, but inquire about which form your local official prefers.

Samples of the two types of proclamations can be found at the end of this document, and past signed proclamations are posted on the **Recovery Month** Web site at <http://www.recoverymonth.gov> under "Proclamations." Modify the templates provided by including information specific to your area – such as statistics about the prevalence of substance use disorders, treatment, and recovery services, and online resources for people looking for help.

Getting a Signature

The following steps will assist you in developing your **Recovery Month** proclamation:

- **Write your proclamation** before reaching out to government officials. You should reflect the 2009 theme, **"Join the Voices for Recovery: Together We Learn, Together We Heal"** throughout the proclamation and highlight the 20th anniversary of the national **Recovery Month** campaign. Doing so allows you to convey what you want local officials to support and provides them with a sufficient amount of background information about your event.



JOIN THE VOICES FOR RECOVERY

- **Research** local officials and find out who has been a friend of treatment and recovery efforts in the past, or select an official who is willing to discuss the value of recovery and access to treatment. Use this background information to customize your outreach. Remember that some legislatures are not in session during the summer, so build in extra time to schedule your time with a local official.
- To inquire about a local official's interest in issuing a proclamation, contact a member of the official's communications office three to four months in advance **to determine the appropriate process** to get a proclamation signed. At this time, introduce your organization, the details of your **Recovery Month** effort, and why this issue is significant to your community's welfare.
- Be **persistent and timely in your communication** and express your appreciation for the official's participation.
- **Continue to follow up.** After you submit your proclamation, maintain regular contact with the staff member to receive regular status updates and to see if there is anything else the official needs.

Proclamation Publicity

Once an official – or his or her staff – decides to issue a proclamation, publicize and maximize its effectiveness by:

- **Sending** copies of the signed proclamation to the "Local" or "Metro" desks of local newspapers and placing copies in community, school, and business news bulletins.
- **Alerting** people of interest by e-mailing signed proclamations to partner organizations and other groups and reporters you know. Remember, it is best to include all information in the body of an e-mail and not as an attachment, as many reporters will not open attachments.
- **Organizing** a press briefing for the signing of the proclamation and working with the official's press or communications department to combine efforts and resources; this allows you to reach a broader audience.
- **Displaying** copies of the signed proclamation on the **Recovery Month** Web site, as well as in the lobbies of public places, such as government buildings and community centers. Ask public libraries, welcome centers, civic centers, and similar venues to post a copy on their Web sites or include a copy in their bulletins.

Share Your Activities and Successes

Promote your activities and share the success of your **Recovery Month** events by:

- Posting your **Recovery Month** plans on <http://www.recoverymonth.gov> to generate momentum for the campaign, which touches millions of people affected by substance use disorders.
- Completing the “**Customer Satisfaction Form**” to share your stories and other outreach efforts during **Recovery Month**.
- **Sending your promotional materials to:**
Office of the Director, Consumer Affairs
SAMHSA’s Center for Substance Abuse Treatment
1 Choke Cherry Road, Second Floor
Rockville, MD 20857

Scan and post proclamations on your own and partnering organizations’ Web sites, especially <http://www.recoverymonth.gov>.

More Resources on **Recovery Month** and Substance Use Disorders

Various resources exist about **Recovery Month** and substance use disorders:

- All materials from this planning toolkit and an extensive array of relevant information are available electronically at the **Recovery Month** Web site, <http://www.recoverymonth.gov>.
- Substance use disorder, treatment, and recovery information is available at the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s (SAMHSA’s) Web site, <http://www.samhsa.gov>, and by calling SAMHSA’s 24-hour national helpline, **1-800-662-HELP**, for information in English and Spanish.
- Information on treatment options in your area and the special services available can be found at <http://www.samhsa.gov/treatment>, a portal that includes a searchable database of more than 11,000 U.S. treatment facilities and additional treatment resources.

Web sites or event examples mentioned in this document and on the *Recovery Month* Web site are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, or the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment.

SAMPLE PROCLAMATION 1: TRADITIONAL FORMAT

WHEREAS, treatment and recovery improve the community's welfare and provide a renewed outlook on life for those who struggle with substance use disorders and their family and friends; and

WHEREAS, 23.2 million people aged 12 or older in the United States needed treatment for a substance use disorder in 2007, and 5.4 million adults also suffered from a concurrent mental illness; and

WHEREAS, studies have indicated that 8.9 percent of people who made an effort to get treatment, but did not receive it, were concerned that receiving treatment might cause neighbors or community members to have negative opinions of them. However, most say they would not have a negative opinion of a relative or friend in recovery from an addiction; and

WHEREAS, resources exist online and in our community to increase people's awareness about how substance use disorders affect children, families, and our society; and

WHEREAS, such education is essential to overcoming misconceptions and achieving long-term recovery; and

WHEREAS, to help achieve this goal, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, and **[name of a treatment organization in your state or region]** invite all residents of **[city or state]** to participate in the 20th anniversary of ***National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month (Recovery Month)***; and

NOW, THEREFORE, I, [name and title of your elected official], by virtue of the authority vested in me by the laws of **[city, state, or locality]**, do hereby proclaim the month of September 2009 as

National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month

in **[city or state]** and call upon the people of **[city or state]** to observe this month with appropriate programs, activities, and ceremonies supporting this year's theme, ***"Join the Voices for Recovery: Together We Learn, Together We Heal."***

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this **[day of the month]** day of September, in the year of our Lord two thousand nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-fourth.

Signature

[Insert City/State or Other Official Seal]

SAMPLE PROCLAMATION 2: MODERN FORMAT

As indicated by the latest national statistics, in 2007, as many as 23.2 million people aged 12 or older in the United States needed treatment for a substance use disorder. Additionally, 5.4 million adults also were living with a concurrent mental illness. Of those with a substance use disorder, 3.9 million have courageously opted to seek some form of treatment, and we need to recognize their achievements, support them and their families, and reach out to those still in need.

Substance use disorder treatment and recovery can improve the community’s welfare. For the past 20 years, **National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month (Recovery Month)** has tried to do just that. **Recovery Month** offers people and their families the necessary treatment and recovery support services to assist them in regaining a positive place in their community.

Research shows that substance use disorders are medical conditions that can be effectively treated. Yet, studies have consistently found that a successful recovery for many suffering from substance use disorders is impeded by the general public’s misconceptions about the disease and treatment. However, most people say that they would *not* think less of a relative or friend in recovery from addiction to drugs or alcohol. By offering a forum where people can learn about the myths surrounding substance use disorders, treatment, and recovery, we can encourage, educate, and help improve the lives of family, friends, and the community as a whole.

For the above reasons, I am asking all citizens of **[city or state]** to join me in celebrating this September as **National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month (Recovery Month)**. This year’s **Recovery Month** theme, **“Join the Voices for Recovery: Together We Learn, Together We Heal,”** encourages us all to educate one another about the issues surrounding addiction, treatment, and recovery, learn how to help those who are suffering, and access available resources in our communities and online.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, and the **[name of a treatment organization in your state or region]** welcome your participation in **Recovery Month**.

I, **[name and title of elected official]**, do hereby proclaim the month of September 2009 as

National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month

in **[city or state]** and call upon our community to observe this month with compelling programs, activities, and events that support this year’s theme, **“Join the Voices for Recovery: Together We Learn, Together We Heal.”**

Signature

[Insert City/State or Other Official Seal]

