

TIPS FOR WRITING A NATIONAL PREVENTION WEEK PROCLAMATION

Issuing a proclamation on behalf of your city, county, town, state, or tribal community is a way to raise public awareness of National Prevention Week. A proclamation is an official announcement that publicly recognizes an initiative or observance. Proclamations are typically signed and issued by federal officials, governors, state legislators, mayors, or other government officials at the local level. Issuing a proclamation designating the third week in May as National Prevention Week can help draw attention to prevention issues and the events and activities held in your region in honor of this health observance.

Getting Started

Before creating a proclamation about National Prevention Week, contact local officials who may be interested in supporting this effort. It's best to email the official or his/her communications office 2–3 months prior to the observance and follow up with a phone call, if necessary. Explain the purpose of National Prevention Week, highlight the local events or activities that you would like to share, and emphasize the importance of governmental and public support for this observance. Once you receive word that the official will support your efforts and issue a proclamation, it's time to start writing.

Developing the Proclamation

While there are different styles of writing a proclamation, one approach is to write the document in a letter format (see examples of Presidential proclamations). For your National Prevention Week proclamation, be sure to insert local information or statistics that will resonate with your community. When you have finalized the proclamation and received any required approvals within your organization, submit the proclamation to your local official's office and allow time for the official to review and sign the document. Follow up to check the status of the proclamation until you receive the signed copy.

Publicize

Once you have the signed proclamation, publicize it! Visit local businesses, health clubs, libraries, schools, college campuses, addiction and mental health treatment centers, and government buildings to see if they will allow you to display copies of your proclamation. You can also arrange a press conference or town hall meeting and have your local official sign the proclamation there as an additional publicity option. The event can be accompanied by a roundtable discussion on issues related to substance use prevention and the promotion of mental health. Finally, you can have your proclamation featured in a local publication to increase awareness. Distribute electronic copies of the document to the "local" or "metro" desk of your community's newspapers, along with a press release to announce the signing of the National Prevention Week proclamation.