

2026

UOAA

Advocacy for Ostomy Awareness Day



STATE PROCLAMATION TOOLKIT

Ostomy Awareness

Why raise ostomy awareness? With limited public awareness stigma prevails. Through education and awareness we can erase the myths and embarrassment that are sometimes associated with having an ostomy. We can dispel the fear for those about to undergo this surgery, as well as the fear that confronts their families.

For more information about ostomy awareness visit our dedicated webpage.

The growth of ostomy awareness is realized each time a person living with an ostomy shares his/her story and advocates. Join advocates across the country by spreading this year's World Ostomy Day theme of "Invisible Disabilities. Visible Support. The Global Unity of Ostomates." with a state proclamation. Together we can help the country better understand that not all disabilities are visible.



From left to right: Shamika Heidelberg, Tonya Kelly M.Ed, State Representative Meredith Lawson-Rowe, Angie Davenport, and Pam Harris

Photo courtesy of Tonya Kelly, M.Ed



October 3, 2026

Frequently Asked Questions

- **Who can issue proclamations?** Government officials, such as governors, mayors, state legislators, members of Congress and the President of the United States sign and issue proclamations. *This toolkit is specifically for obtaining a state proclamation through the Governor's office.*
- **Why should I request a proclamation?** Proclamations are a great way to raise awareness and recognize important issues such as saving lives with ostomy surgery.
- **When should I request a proclamation?** The public can request a proclamation at any time during the year. Since they can take weeks to months to process a request they should be submitted well in advance of your need (4-8 weeks in advance is typical). In this case October 3, 2026.
- **What should the wording of this year's Ostomy Awareness Day proclamation include?** [HERE](#) is a sample for you to download and include with your request. There is an example on the next page of the toolkit. You can also download a [Word doc](#).

What is a proclamation?

A proclamation is a government document that officially recognizes or designates an observance or event in your community (such as city or state). They can also be used to honor or commend individuals. Proclamations are not law or have any legal binding, but they are a useful tool to raise awareness.

Frequently Asked Questions

- How do I request a proclamation from my Governor? For governors many will have a designated webpage on their website explaining the guidelines. ***Read the directions carefully.*** You will probably either have to submit an online form or email someone in the governor's office to request the proclamation. Links to state webpages for proclamations are included in this toolkit. Proclamations are not automatically renewed. They must be requested annually.

Requests must be made by a state resident. Some states require a request to be from a non-profit organization, search for a local UOAA Affiliated Support Group to assist you or contact advocacy@ostomy.org for assistance.

All offices tend to have a disclaimer like this: "The Governor's Office reserves the right to deny requests at its discretion. Please note that we will be unable to process incomplete or inaccurate requests." They also reserve the right to edit any drafted materials/samples for final wording.

When you reach out to make an official request, be sure to include your personal ostomy story. They want to hear from constituents about why this is important to them and how it impacts the state.

2025 Examples





SAMPLE PROCLAMATION (not full template)

Sample proclamation:

Support from the Governor or lawmakers from your state can increase awareness about this year's Ostomy Awareness Day, a health observance where the United States unites annually to raise ostomy awareness. Use the sample below to request public recognition of this year's Ostomy Awareness Day through a proclamation – a government document that officially recognizes an observance in your community.

Ostomy Awareness Day “One Community - Stronger Together”

WHEREAS, an ostomy is a type of surgery that creates an opening (stoma) in the abdomen that allows for the removal of bodily waste when a person has lost the normal function of digestive or urinary systems due to birth defects, colorectal cancer, bladder cancer, Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis, and other medical conditions. They are also necessary in cases of severe abdominal or pelvic trauma resulting from accidents or from injuries sustained during military service. The bodily waste passes through the stoma into an ostomy 'pouch' on the outside of the body or in the case of continent diversion surgeries, an internal surgically created reservoir.

WHEREAS, approximately 725,000 to 1 million Americans have an ostomy, with approximately 100,000 new ostomy procedures performed each year and

WHEREAS, ostomy or continent diversion surgery can occur at any age and affects people from all cultural backgrounds and

WHEREAS, the United States of America celebrates Ostomy Awareness Day every year on the first Saturday of October and

WHEREAS [state name] is committed to increasing public understanding of “ostomy” to eventually help dispel the fear of those about to undergo this surgery, as well as the fear that confronts their families. This day can serve as a reminder to the American public that this is a life-saving and life-restoring surgery and

WHEREAS [state name] recognizes the need that public education and awareness is vital to ensure those who are living with an ostomy face no discrimination and are accepted as normal, healthy individuals. Through education and awareness we can erase the myths, stigma and embarrassment that are sometimes associated with

State Proclamation Request Information Links (and required notice):

- **Alabama** - https://contact.governor.alabama.gov/contact_procs.aspx - thirty day notice
- **Alaska** - <https://gov.alaska.gov/contact/cr-request/> - four to six week notice
- **Arizona** - <https://azgovernor.gov/engage/form/proclamation-request> - accepted no less than six weeks but no more than twenty-six weeks in advance of the proclaimed date
- **Arkansas** - <https://governor.arkansas.gov/online-services/proclamation-request> - thirty day notice
- **California** - <https://www.gov.ca.gov/contact/> - under topic/request - No proclamation request process identified but try this with the link: Select request: commemorative message; When requesting a commemorative message a draft of the requested language (200 words or less) All requests must be submitted no later than 30 days prior to your requested date.
- **Colorado** - <https://www.colorado.gov/governor/proclamations> - four week notice
- **Connecticut** - <https://portal.ct.gov/office-of-the-governor/contact/request-a-proclamation> - at least four weeks prior but no more than 3 months
- **Delaware** - <https://governor.delaware.gov/proclamation-request-form/> - three week notice
- **Florida** - <https://www.flgov.com/eog/news/proclamations> - 4-6 weeks
- **Georgia** - <https://gov.georgia.gov/contact-us/proclamations/proclamation-request> - 30 days in advance
- **Hawaii** - <https://governor.hawaii.gov/contact-us/request-a-commemorative-message/> at least four (4) weeks prior to the requested completion date and not more than three (3) months in advance of the event date.
- **Idaho** - <https://gov.idaho.gov/proclamations/> - three week notice
- **Illinois** - <https://gov.illinois.gov/contact-us/proclamation.html> at least 30 days in advance but no more than 90 days in advance
- **Indiana** - <https://www.in.gov/gov/2916.htm> - six to eight week notice
- **Iowa** - <https://governor.iowa.gov/services/request-proclamation> - four to eight week notice
- **Kansas** - <https://www.governor.ks.gov/serving-kansans/constituent-services/proclamations/proclamation-request-form> - eight week notice

State Proclamation Request Information Links (and required notice):

- **Kentucky** - <https://secure.kentucky.gov/formservices/Governor/ProclamationRequestForm> - thirty day notice
- **Louisiana** - <https://gov.louisiana.gov/page/request-a-proclamation> - at least 45 days in advance and no earlier than 90 days before the recognized date
- **Maine** - https://www.maine.gov/governor/mills/contact/request_proclamation - 45 days in advance
- **Maryland** - <https://md.accessgov.com/governor/Forms/Page/cs/letter/> - thirty day notice
- **Massachusetts** - <https://www.mass.gov/forms/request-a-proclamation-from-governor-healey> - twenty day notice
- **Michigan** - <https://www.michigan.gov/whitmer/news/proclamations> - four week notice
- **Minnesota** - At this time, the office is no longer accepting proclamation requests. You can email the office at <https://mn.gov/governor/connect/contact-us/contact-form.jsp> and suggest they issue proclamations again
- **Mississippi** - No proclamation request process identified. This governor has issued a proclamation for other causes in 2026 so make inquiry by calling 601-359-3150 or email governor@govreeves.ms.gov
- **Missouri** - <https://governor.mo.gov/contact-us/proclamation-request> - At least 60 days in advance
- **Montana** - <https://gov.mt.gov/forms/GovernorsOffice/GovernorRequest>
- **Nebraska** - <https://governor.nebraska.gov/proclamation-request> - thirty day notice
- **Nevada** - <https://www.gov.nv.gov/constituent-services/request-a-proclamation/> - four week notice
- **North Carolina** - <https://governor.nc.gov/request/request-proclamation> - at least 90 days notice

State Proclamation Request Information Links (and required notice):

- **North Dakota** - <https://www.governor.nd.gov/proclamation-request> at least 60 days in advance and no more than 6 months in advance
- **New Hampshire** - https://new-hampshire.secure.force.com/support/GOV_Proclamation - thirty day notice
- **New Jersey** - https://www-njlib.nj.gov/GOV_TRANS_APPLICANTS/BTProclamationServlet
- **New Mexico** - <https://www.governor.state.nm.us/contact-the-governor/requesting-a-proclamation/> - forty-five day notice
- **New York** - <https://www.governor.ny.gov/programs/proclamations> - at least 6 weeks in advance
- **Ohio** - <https://governor.ohio.gov/contact/recognition-request> - thirty day notice
- **Oklahoma** - <https://oklahoma.gov/governor/contact/commendation-or-proclamation.html> - thirty day notice
- **Oregon** - <https://www.oregon.gov/gov/Pages/Proclamation-Request-Guidelines.aspx> - forty-five day notice
- **Pennsylvania** - <https://www.governor.pa.gov/contact/#OnlineForm> - four to six weeks notice. Click on guidelines at bottom of page.
- **Rhode Island** - <https://governor.ri.gov/constituent-services> - Information under the box for “Commemorative Documents”; Click link to instructions - forty-five day notice
- **South Carolina** - <https://contactgovernor.my.site.com/constituents/s/contact-the-governor> - Select “request a recognition” then select “proclamation” - thirty day notice
- **South Dakota** - <https://governor.sd.gov/office/executive-proclamation.aspx> - three to four week notice

Remember to read and follow the guidelines.

State Proclamation Request Information Links (and required notice):

- **Tennessee** - <https://www.tn.gov/governor/contact-us/constituent-requests/proclamation-request.html> - at least twenty-one day notice
- **Texas** - <https://gov.texas.gov/apps/contact/assistance.aspx> - Click “I need assistance”. Complete required fields. Under issue select “Ceremonial items.” Include request for a proclamation for Ostomy Awareness Day October 3, 2026 in the comment box - thirty day notice
- **Utah** - <https://gocentral.utah.gov/Request/Declarations> - Under “Correspondence - Declarations and Letters” Click on “Request a declaration” - six week notice
- **Vermont** - <https://governor.vermont.gov/proclamation-request> - Go to “quick links” “Request a proclamation” four to six week notice
- **Virginia** - <https://www.governor.virginia.gov/constituent-services/request-a-proclamation> - Requests must be made no fewer than 45 business days in advance and no more than 120 business days in advance of the date you need the proclamation
- **Washington** - <https://www.governor.wa.gov/contact/requests-invites/request-ceremonial-proclamation-greeting-or-letter> - at least a forty-five day notice
- **West Virginia** - <https://wv.accessgov.com/governor/Forms/Page/gov-request-proclamation/proclamation-governor/> - thirty day notice
- **Wisconsin** - <https://wi.accessgov.com/public/Forms/Page/governor/document-request/> - forty-five - 120 day notice
- **Wyoming** - <https://governor.wyo.gov/contact/proclamation-requests> - forty-five day notice

No reply to your request?

Follow-up with the governor’s office after 2-3 weeks.

Promote Your Success!



You Did It! *Celebrate Your Accomplishment!*

Try to attend the signing!

- Inquire with the governor's office if you can be present during the ceremonial signing. You may have to submit a Photo Op Request to the office of your governor. Oftentimes, this can be arranged by submitting a Scheduling Request form

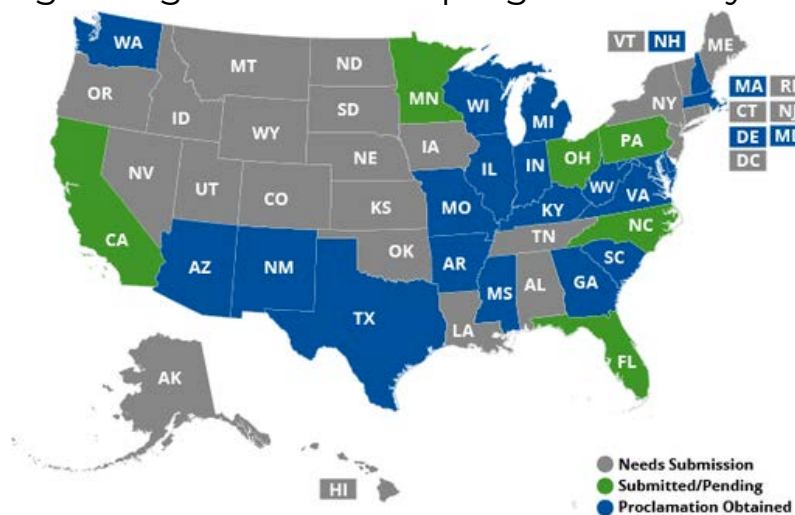
Take a picture of you with the proclamation!

- Depending on the office, you may have the official proclamation mailed, emailed or held in the office for you to pick up

Get your state on UOAA's map!

- Notify UOAA that you were successful and obtained a proclamation. Send us a picture of the proclamation or a pdf file of the proclamation. Contact advocacy@ostomy.org. Our goal is to track progress and try to get all 50 states involved!

2025 Map!



Share the good news!

- Post on social media and tag UOAA so we can share too
- Submit a letter to your local newspaper



Still have questions? Contact: Jeanine Gleba, UOAA Director of Advocacy, advocacy@ostomy.org

