



How to request a proclamation or a letter from a public official to recognize Active Aging Week

When a public official recognizes Active Aging Week, it's a good way to create awareness about the events you are hosting. In addition, it is rewarding to hang a letter or proclamation on the wall, to read the text during your events, and commend your participants.

Active Aging Week benefits the older adults who attend and the community at large. The week's activities promote healthy, active lifestyles among older adults, all the events are free, and often many community organizations and groups participate. It is an advantage to a public official to recognize a worthy cause.

The following information is a general guide to the types of recognition a public official could provide.

Who to contact

Contact officials in your local area who have jurisdiction over the area where you will be holding Active Aging Week events. These officials are most likely to be interested in the activities of their constituents. For example:

- Mayor
- Councilperson
- County supervisor
- Congressperson
- Member of parliament
- State senator or assemblyperson

Telephone or e-mail the official's office and ask about the steps for requesting a proclamation or letter. You may immediately be speaking with the proper person or be referred to an office of protocols or public affairs.

Once you are at the proper office, the person can provide you with specific guidelines of what to include in your request, the turnaround time and the presentation options.

What can be requested

The following items may differ depending on which official you are contacting (for example, a local mayor versus a state senator or member of parliament).

Letter of greeting. This letter might welcome people to Active Aging Week events, congratulate the host sites for providing quality-of-life events for older adults or express support for the philosophy and events of the week.

Letter of commendation. These letters are prepared to recognize good deeds. This type of letter might be appropriate for older adults who significantly contributed to the week, for example, as a volunteer. Please note that the accomplishment must be significant to merit a commendation letter.

Proclamation. In this document, an official proclaims the entire week or a day as Active Aging Week (Day) to honor the purpose of the event. A proclamation is the document that has “Whereas...” throughout.

How these documents are presented may vary. For example, a letter may arrive in the mail or be picked up. A proclamation may be presented by the mayor or a councilperson to a representative group. This presentation may take place in the council chambers during a regular meeting, or it may be presented on site by an official who is willing to travel to the Active Aging Week event.

A public official will only provide so many documents to any organization in a given year. Check the guidelines to be aware of limitations.

On the following pages are lists of what needs to be included in a request for each type of document, along with an example.

When to request a document

Generally 3-6 weeks notice is required by a public official. Officials with a large population of constituents may need more time because they are likely to receive many requests. Requests for proclamations are likely to take a longer period of time because they will receive more scrutiny.

Submitting your request

The type of document requires different background. Be thoughtful and complete in your statements. The official’s staff will use this information to determine if they will issue a letter or proclamation. Make sure you show how Active Aging Week or the persons receiving a letter have a direct impact on the city or area the official oversees.

Public recognition as a stepping stone

Public recognition is an honor for your participants and reinforces the value of their actions. This is a complement to your planning efforts as well as a stepping stone for more publicity about the events you plan during Active Aging Week.

Spend the time to decide on which public official to contact, then be sure to telephone in advance to find out what documents are available from that official, and what information and format the office requires.

For a one-page fact sheet on Active Aging Week, along with other materials to publicize and plan the week's events, visit the ICAA website.

International Council on Active Aging
Networking and Education, Active Aging Week
<http://www.icaa.cc/aaw.htm>

Active Aging Week 2009

Theme: Choose an active life

Goal:	Active Aging Week promotes the benefits of a healthy lifestyle on a national scale by giving older adults the opportunity to experience activities and exercise in a safe, friendly and fun atmosphere.
When:	Monday, September 21 through Sunday, September 27, 2009
Highlights:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Free to the older adult.• Emphasize fun and education.• A chance to build a sense of community and camaraderie, which are keys to motivating older adults to start and stay active.
Active aging:	Individuals who live life as fully as possible within the six dimensions of wellness (physical, spiritual, social, emotional, cognitive/intellectual and professional/vocational) embrace the active-aging lifestyle.

Example of a letter of greeting

What's needed:

- Name of event being recognized
- Why the event is significant to the community
- Event date(s)
- Due date
- Contact information, including mailing address, telephone and email
- Two paragraphs that state what the participants are doing that is valuable.

For example:

Active Aging Week is an annual health promotion event for older adults in the last week of September. Older adults, their families and friends have the opportunity to experience a variety of free activities, such as classes, educational seminars, health fairs and community walks, in a safe, friendly and fun atmosphere.

Older adults who participate are learning how to stay mentally and physically healthy. They are finding out how they can stay productive and engaged in life through all their years, which enables them to be leaders in their communities and in their families. By participating in Active Aging Week, older adults are taking the steps to stay healthy, be independent and able to live in their homes.

I [public official] congratulate all of you for attending this week's events, and for being leaders in our community.

Example of a letter of commendation

What's needed:

- Name of person being recognized
- Event date(s)
- Due date
- Contact information, including mailing address, telephone and email
- Two paragraphs on the individual's accomplishment, which details the deeds and contribution to the Week.

For example:

During Active Aging Week [volunteer] provided exceptional services to improve the quality of life for older adults. Active Aging Week is an annual health promotion event for older adults in the last week of September. Older adults, their families and friends have the opportunity to experience a variety of free activities, such as classes, educational seminars, health fairs and community walks, in a safe, friendly and fun atmosphere.

[Volunteer] was the leader of the planning committee that worked for 6 months preparing events that would encourage physical and arts activity. At 84 years, she showed enthusiasm and purpose by contributing over 96 volunteer hours. During the week, she led group stretching, taught two classes on watercolor painting (one for grandkids and grandparents), and joined the group that walked along the river for two miles. [Volunteer] was resourceful, capable, cheerful and a role model for all of us.

Example of a proclamation

What's needed:

- Name of event
- Event date(s)
- Due date
- Contact information, including mailing address, telephone and email
- Five to eight short paragraphs on why Active Aging Week is significant and should be proclaimed as a special event.

Write a letter of request for a proclamation to accompany your draft of the proclamation. An example of a draft proclamation is on the following page. In your request letter, make the case by outlining:

- How Active Aging Week (now in its sixth year) is the annual health promotion spearheaded by International Council on Active Aging that contributes to the community by introducing older adults (and their families) to the options for increasing their independence and quality of life.
- Facts, such as the number of older adults in the service area, and projections of that number increasing. The area agency on aging or library reference desk will know how to find the number of older adults in the area, as well as projections for future growth. Some cities or counties post this information on their websites.
- How the week's activities support the (city, district or county) mission to keep older citizens healthy and independent. Encouraging older adults to be healthy, independent and live at home (thus reducing healthcare costs and usage) is a goal of federal, state and provincial governments, local health departments and area agencies on aging. Some states are emphasizing preventive care.

Visit the website of the local government's senior services or area agency on aging to find their statement of purpose.

- The positive effects of being active, such as reducing the risk of obesity, high blood pressure, diabetes, osteoporosis, stroke, depression, Alzheimer's disease, colon cancer, and premature death. The evidence on how physical, social and intellectual activity prevent and control chronic disease is found on the websites for:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (<http://www.cdc.gov/aging/>)
Federal Interagency Forum on Aging-Related Statistics
(http://www.agingstats.gov/agingstatsdotnet/main_site/default.aspx) have compiled.

- Active Aging Week's availability for all older adults, regardless of income level, age or background. The activities are free to older adults and allow seniors to participate as much or as little as they wish. The week is fun and educational.
- Why your organization is hosting Active Aging Week events (because of X years of serving older adults and belief in the philosophy of the week).

For example:

[This organization has served 55+ adults for over 20 years, providing housing, recreation and wellness services to maintain our client's health and quality of life. We support Active Aging Week and are hosting [name the activities] because we believe in providing opportunities for older adults to stay engaged in life as fully as possible. We agree with the week's philosophy of providing activities that are educational, free of cost to older adults and set in a fun and friendly atmosphere.]

Include the website of ICAA (www.icaa.cc) and of your organization in the letter so the person receiving the request can immediately find more information if required.

Example of a draft proclamation:

Name of event: Active Aging Week
Event date(s): September 21-27, 2009
Due date: September 15, 2009
Contact information, including mailing address, telephone and email

WHEREAS, Active Aging Week is an annual health promotion event for older adults, their families and friends and allows the participants to experience activities and exercise in a safe, friendly and fun atmosphere; and

WHEREAS, the key messages of Active Aging Week encourage seniors to choose an active life to stay mentally and physically healthy as they age; and

WHEREAS, there are [number of older adults 60 years] and older living in the city, and it is in the best interest of each individual and of the city to help all seniors stay as healthy and independent as possible: and

WHEREAS, the [city] has committed to providing quality services to seniors, including health and leisure services, and Active Aging Week events, including community walks, health fairs and health lectures], support the city's efforts: and [

WHEREAS, older adults who are physically and mentally healthy contribute to the city as volunteers, mentors and role models, and

WHEREAS, Active Aging Week supports the city's aging population, which is our fastest-growing population segment, and activities are hosted at multiple sites across the city by private and government organizations working together for the mutual goal of improving the health and well-being of the city's older citizens; now

BE IT SO RESOLVED that [public official, city or state] proclaims the last week of September as Active Aging Week, and we encourage all citizens to recognize the value of active aging for older adults and participate in the week's events.