

Proclamation

Proclamations are great policy tools for publicizing or building awareness about an issue. They can serve as effective segues to special events about the issue or additional policy and practice changes to improve services and supports. This section will help you plan your proclamation. It poses important considerations and questions designed to help make key decisions, design effective strategies, and identify next steps in a comprehensive action plan to promote your proclamation.

This section of the Policy Action Guide will walk you through the key aspects of a proclamation initiative, including:

- Understanding the Context and Process
- Who Should Be Involved
 - Establishing Leadership
 - Identifying Partners
- What Needs to Be Done
 - Developing the Draft
 - Planning an Outreach Strategy
 - Identifying Resources

Proclamation – A generally non-legally binding declaration by a President, governor, tribal chief, county executive, mayor, or other government executive about an issue.

Reminder: As you proceed, keep in mind your initial policy objectives and how they apply to an initiative to obtain a proclamation.

Understanding the Context and Process

A proclamation initiative generally involves efforts first to develop and obtain the actual proclamation and later to use the proclamation to support change. Generally, key steps in obtaining a proclamation include:

- An initial contact to the appropriate executive office
- Submission of a request and supporting information
- Development, review, and revision of draft language
- Executive signature
- Outreach and accompanying events (e.g., press conference, community events, release of related publications, special Web site pages).

The specific process for requesting a proclamation likely will vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction because each executive office has a unique way of conducting business. The office's Web site may provide guidance and contact information. Your proclamation development team will need to understand the established procedures and protocols, become familiar with the key players, and align your strategies accordingly.



Important considerations for understanding and planning for the process include:

- Have you familiarized yourself with the proclamation process of the executive office?
- How much lead time do you need to meet key time points in the process? (For example, if you want to declare April Child Abuse Prevention Month in your county, how early will you need to submit the proclamation?)
- Are you linking your local proclamation to a national proclamation (e.g., National Foster Care Month)? Will you try to make the proclamation an annual initiative?
- Has this type of proclamation been attempted previously? If yes, how can you learn from and improve upon the previous efforts?
- What connections do team members have with the executive office? Who will take the lead in contacting the appropriate staff in the executive office to request a proclamation?



Resources

- [California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare](#)
- [Laws and Policies](#) – Child Welfare Information Gateway
- [Laws and Policies](#) – U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families
- [Laws and Policies That Promote Systems of Care](#) – Child Welfare Information Gateway
- [National Conference of State Legislatures](#) – Provides information about State and Federal legislation and resources on a variety of issue areas.
- [Promising Practices Network on Children, Families and Communities](#)
- [State and Local Government on the Net](#)
- [THOMAS](#) – Library of Congress. Information about Federal legislation.

Who Should Be Involved

Determining who should be involved, as well who will serve as leader, is a key component to any policy initiative. In some cases, a single person from one organization will carry out the work to receive a proclamation. In others, the proclamation will result from a united effort among multiple parties.

Establishing Leadership

Proclamations are typically initiated and led by a person, group, or organization with a passion for an issue and a desire to raise awareness among a designated population about that issue. This person should be able to bring together various partners and constituents to support an effective campaign to establish the proclamation.



Important considerations when selecting the appropriate leader include:

- Does the proposed leader have a pre-existing relationship with the office of the executive official who will sign the proclamation? If so, is it positive?
- Is the proposed leader in a position of authority and a credible expert on the issue? Can the leader draft an effective proclamation?

Please respond to the following:

1. Who will lead the proclamation development?

2. What are that person's responsibilities?

3. What other considerations, decisions, or next steps need to be addressed to establish leadership for your policy initiative?



Resources

- **The Center for Community Leadership**
- **The Community Toolbox** – University of Kansas, Work Group for Community Health and Development. See Part E for information about leadership, management, and group facilitation.
- **Leadership Guidance** (PDF – 239 KB) – American Public Human Services Association, Positioning Public Child Welfare Guidance
- **Leadership in the *Improving Child Welfare Outcomes through Systems of Care Initiative*** (PDF – 573 KB) – U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children’s Bureau
- **Leadership Resources** – Child Welfare Information Gateway
- **National Child Welfare Leadership Institute**
- **Systems of Care Infrastructure Toolkit: Governance** – National Technical Assistance and Evaluation Center for Systems of Care

Identifying Partners

The effort and support of various stakeholders, including staff, the children and families you serve, and other community members, may be required to bring your issue to the attention of the executive office and make a case for establishing a proclamation. As you identify the partners to be involved in the development of the proclamation and any accompanying events, you should keep in mind the resources that will be required to do the work and make it credible.

The selection of potential partners for a proclamation initiative may be shaped by:

- The topical focus or issue addressed by the proclamation (e.g., child abuse prevention month, children’s mental health awareness day, adoption of systems of care principles)
- The audience (e.g., every citizen, potential adoptive parents)
- The objective (e.g., raise awareness of a problem, commemorate an event or group, gain media attention for an initiative, create support for policy change)
- The geographic scope (e.g., Nation, State, county, city, town, Tribe)



Some important considerations for identifying partners include:

- Who are the appropriate contacts and potential partners in the executive’s office (e.g., the mayor, press secretary, a public relations staff member)?
- What groups or organizations have an interest in the issue and might be interested in being a part of the development of the proclamation? How can each of these groups contribute (e.g., support the request to the executive’s office, develop draft language, publicize the proclamation)?
- Who are the key stakeholders addressed by the proclamation (e.g., children with special needs, foster parents, social workers)? How will stakeholders be given a voice in the development of the proclamation?

Please respond to the following:

1. Potential Partners

Name of individual or organization	Affiliation (if an individual)	Current or prospective partner?	Role in the policy initiative

2. What other considerations, decisions, or next steps need to be addressed to identify potential partners for the policy initiative?



Resources

- **Building and Sustaining Child Welfare Partnerships** (PDF – 595 KB) – National Technical Assistance and Evaluation Center for Systems of Care
- **Collaboration** – National Child Welfare Resource Center for Organizational Improvement
- **Community Partnerships: Improving the Response to Child Maltreatment** – U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Children’s Bureau, Office on Child Abuse and Neglect. Chapter 3 describes how to build and sustain community partnerships, including selecting partners.
- **The Community Toolbox** – University of Kansas, Work Group for Community Health and Development. See Chapter 9 for information about establishing a team to create and run your initiative.
- **Interagency and Cross System Collaboration** – Child Welfare Information Gateway
- **Interagency Collaboration** – National Technical Assistance and Evaluation Center for Systems of Care
- **Promising Practices: Building Collaboration in Systems of Care** (PDF – 372 KB) – University of South Florida, Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute, Research and Training Center for Children’s Mental Health
- **2007 CFSR Toolkit for Youth Involvement: Engaging Youth in the Child and Family Services Review** (PDF – 3,119 KB) – National Child Welfare Resource Center for Organizational Improvement and the National Child Welfare Resource Center for Youth Development

What Needs To Be Done

The specific action steps for obtaining a proclamation will vary, depending on several factors, including the issue, your goals, the locality, and the executive office’s process for requesting proclamations. (See Understanding the Context and Process for key steps in obtaining a proclamation). When you plan for a proclamation, there are certain general steps that should be incorporated:

- Developing the draft
- Planning an outreach strategy
- Identifying resources.

Developing the Draft

Carefully crafted and compelling language is a core component of a proclamation. The foundation for the draft can draw from stakeholder input and a review of similar proclamations. The contents and requirements for a proclamation will vary, depending on the cause and the guidelines set forth by the executive office, but the following components often should be included in the submission:

- A brief summary of the event or organizations sponsoring it
- Text of the proclamation itself, which usually contains several “Whereas” clauses that provide facts or background on the issue (e.g., Whereas 15,000 children are substantiated victims of maltreatment in the State) followed by a statement declaring the month, week, or day of recognition
- The month, week, or day for the proclamation.

Contact the executive’s office or visit its Web site for information specific to your locality.



Important considerations for developing the draft proclamation include:

- Have you looked at similar proclamations from other jurisdictions or related issues? Have you spoken with individuals or groups that have been successful in getting a proclamation?
- What data or credible anecdotes tell the most compelling story for the importance of your proclamation? How will these be presented in your draft?
- Will information about related laws, programs, or initiatives be presented in the proclamation?
- How will you obtain stakeholder input on the proposed proclamation (e.g., meetings, committees)?
- Who will take the lead in drafting the proclamation?
- Who will need to review and sign off on the proclamation before it is submitted to the executive’s office?

Please respond to the following:

1. What research, data, stakeholder input, or other policies support the content of your proclamation?

2. What are the key elements that you would like to see included in the proclamation?

3. Who will draft the proclamation?

4. Who will review and approve the proclamation before it is presented to the executive office?

5. What other considerations, decisions, or next steps need to be addressed to successfully develop the draft proclamation?



Resources

- The following are the instructions for obtaining a proclamation for several States (it is not a comprehensive list of all sites):
 - [Georgia](#)
 - [Iowa](#)
 - [Kentucky](#)
 - [Maine](#)
 - [Oregon](#)
- [How to Get a Proclamation from your Governor](#) – First Candle
- [National Child Abuse Prevention Month: Proclamations and Press Releases](#) – Child Welfare Information Gateway
- [Policy Matters: Setting and Measuring Benchmarks for State Policies](#) (PDF – 1,541 KB) – Center for the Study of Social Policy
- [PolicyForResults.org](#) – Provides information on research-based policy strategies to improve the lives of children and families.
- [Process for Securing State Governor’s Proclamations](#) (PDF – 392 KB) – Partners for Understanding Pain
- [Requesting a Governor’s Proclamation for Jazz Appreciation Month](#) (PDF – 73 KB) – Smithsonian National Museum of American History
- [Systems of Care Infrastructure Toolkit: Policy](#) – National Technical Assistance and Evaluation Center for Systems of Care

Planning an Outreach Strategy

An effective outreach strategy can encourage the buy-in of stakeholders in the development of the proposed proclamation and also garner their support after its release. Organizations often hold events to publicize the proclamation and their cause. Outreach may be within your organization or to external partners who are involved in the planning or publicity of the proclamation, either as full partners or as-needed participants (e.g., writing a letter of support to the executive office).



Important considerations for developing an outreach strategy for your proclamation include:

- Outside of your partners, is there anyone that should be contacted about the proposed proclamation in order to garner support? How will they be contacted (e.g., phone calls, one-on-one meetings, group meetings)?
- Who needs to be notified about the proclamation after it is signed to publicize it? How will they be contacted (e.g., flyers, community meetings, Web sites, social media, mass media)?
- What activities will be planned to coincide with the signing of the proclamation (e.g., press conference, summit, fundraising walk, publication release)? Will you ask the executive or the executive’s designee to play a role?
- Do you intend the proclamation to be part of a broader education or awareness program? How will it be linked to other ongoing initiatives?
- Should your team contact the media to publicize the enacted proclamation? If so, who will be responsible for media contact?

Please respond to the following:

- 1.** Who needs to be contacted about the signed proclamation to publicize it?

Population of interest	Message to each audience	How will the message be delivered?

- 2.** Do any partners have connections to media members or organizations that could be used to help publicize the effort?

- 3.** Is there an official spokesperson for your effort?

- 4.** Describe any activities that will coincide with the signing of the proclamation.

5. What other considerations, decisions, or next steps need to be addressed to develop an outreach plan?



Resources

- **Gaining Buy-in From the Front Line During Times of Change** – National Technical Assistance and Evaluation Center for Systems of Care
- **Improving Child Welfare Outcomes Through Systems of Care: Systems of Care Guide: Guide for Strategic Planning** (PDF – 4696 KB) – National Technical Assistance and Evaluation Center for Systems of Care
- **The Role of Social Marketing in System Reform** – Child Welfare Information Gateway
- **Systems of Care Infrastructure Toolkit: Communication** – National Technical Assistance and Evaluation Center for Systems of Care
- **Use of Communication in Quality Improvement** – Child Welfare Information Gateway

Identifying Resources

While obtaining a proclamation typically does not require funding, it is important to consider the monetary and nonmonetary resources that will be required throughout the development and outreach process. For example, funding could be required to implement events that accompany the signing of the proclamation. Nonmonetary resources may include tangible items, such as meeting space, as well as the intangibles that each partner brings to the table (e.g., knowledge of how to obtain a proclamation, personal connections to executive office, content-area expertise). As you identify the required resources for your initiative, you should keep in mind the partners that will be able to provide them.



Important considerations for identifying and obtaining resources include:

- What resources will be required to develop the proclamation?
- What resources will be required to implement any accompanying events or publicize the signed proclamation?

Please respond to the following:

1. What resources will be required?

Resource	Source	Purpose

2. What other considerations, decisions, or next steps need to be addressed to gather adequate resources for the policy initiative?



Resources

- **Community Partnerships: Improving the Response to Child Maltreatment** – U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Children’s Bureau, Office on Child Abuse and Neglect. Chapter 3 provides an overview of how to build and sustain a community partnership, including securing funding and other resources.
- **The Community Toolbox** – University of Kansas, Work Group for Community Health and Development. See Part L, which provides information about generating, managing, and sustaining financial resources, and Part M, which provides information about soliciting contributions and in-kind support.
- **Effective Financing Strategies for Systems of Care: Examples from the Field: A Resource Compendium for Developing a Comprehensive Financing Plan** (PDF – 2,809 KB) – University of South Florida, Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute, Research and Training Center for Children’s Mental Health
- **Finding Federal Funding** – The Finance Project
- **Grants.gov** – U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- **Management and Supervision Funding** – Child Welfare Information Gateway
- **Maximizing Program Services Through Private Sector Partnerships and Relationships: A Guide for Faith- and Community-Based Service Providers** (PDF – 2,590 KB) – U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Substance Abuse Treatment
- **Systems of Care Infrastructure Toolkit: Finance** – National Technical Assistance and Evaluation Center for Systems of Care

Wrap-Up

Carefully thinking through the considerations and responding to the questions in each of the preceding sections of the Action Plan Form can help your policy team systematically plan and set the groundwork for a successful proclamation initiative. Additionally, you can use this information to complete the Next Steps Template, which is at the end of this document. You can share your Action Plan, including the Next Steps Template, with partners and other stakeholders to further develop the decisions and strategies. Furthermore, you can review this document throughout your policy initiative and amend it as needed.

As you proceed with your proclamation initiative, remember that there is not a one-size-fits-all policy process. You should remain flexible in your approach, which will better enable you and your partners to work within an ever-changing social and political environment. Additionally, keep in mind that policy change is only one component in a comprehensive and ongoing change process and needs to be implemented in conjunction with supportive infrastructure elements. Above all, though, remember the ultimate underlying goal in your policy efforts: improving the lives of children and families.

