

SEPTEMBER IS FASD AWARENESS MONTH



FASD United
THE NATIONAL VOICE ON FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDERS
www.FASDUnited.org Formerly NOFAS

State Proclamations

Traditionally, FASD Awareness is celebrated either on September 9th each year or throughout the month of September. A state proclamation is a great way to kick the month off, however in many states, you may need to apply as many as 6 months in advance. This year, we at FASD United have set a goal that every state has the opportunity to observe FASD Awareness Month and FASD Awareness Day with a State Proclamation. We support member organizations of the Affiliate Network to consider doing a State Proclamation in their State. In states where there isn't a member of the Affiliate Network, FASD United will work with local advocates to support a State Proclamation. In states where more than one affiliate exists, we suggest working together on joint language where consensus can be reached. If your organization prefers to not do a state proclamation, that choice is of course, up to you.

Idea: Do two proclamations. Make FASD Awareness Month about Celebrating People Living with FASD. Make FASD Awareness Day about prevention and healthy pregnancies.

Below you will see two sample proclamations that you are welcome to use, or change based on your State or Organizations priorities. You are not bound to these samples, these are simply for guidance should you need it. Additionally, we have included links to several actual proclamations from 2021 at the end of this document should you wish to see more examples.

As each state has a different mechanism for gaining a proclamation, we recommend that you google "State Proclamation for (INSERT YOUR STATE HERE)" and you should be able to find the State website where the application can be found. Please reach out to wisdahl@fasdunited.org if you experience any challenges or could use some support.

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SAMPLE PROCLAMATION 1

Human service organizations, health care professionals, educators, and the public are called to action to work together to reduce the occurrence of fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASDs). This can be done by increasing awareness and improving public health efforts in the delivery of the preventive health message that there is no safe time, amount, or type of alcohol use at any time during pregnancy. We must increase awareness on how FASDs may present in individuals across the lifespan and the ongoing need for services and support for individuals living with FASDs.

- Whereas, Fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD) is an umbrella term describing the range of disabilities that can occur in an individual who was exposed to alcohol before birth; with fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS) being the most recognizable condition along the spectrum; and
- Whereas, Prenatal alcohol exposure is the leading preventable cause of birth defects and intellectual and developmental disabilities; and
- Whereas, The exact number of people who have FASDs is unknown, but it is estimated that up to 1 in 20 U.S. school children may have an FASD, with 1 in 7 pregnancies being alcohol exposed; and
- Whereas, The lifetime cost for one individual with FAS (does not include other FASDs) is estimated to be \$2 million, with a combined cost to the United States for FAS alone over \$4 billion annually; and
- Whereas, Among pregnant people, 1 in 7 report any alcohol use and about 1 in 20 report binge drinking in the past 30 days; and
- Whereas, Many people may not know they are pregnant for the first 4-6 weeks, contributing to late entry into prenatal care and presenting a barrier to optimal pregnancy management, particularly during the crucial early weeks; and
- Whereas, The good health and well-being of the people of *(name of your state)* are enhanced by the support of a national effort to educate about and prevent FASDs; and

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Whereas, The *(organization)* and the *(organization)* join with the *(partner organization)* as well as many dedicated volunteers, health care professionals, educators, and parent groups by participating in this promotion.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, *(Governor's name)*, Governor of the state of *(name of your state)*, do hereby declare September 9, 2022 as Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Awareness Day [or September as FASD Awareness Month] and pledge to continue to partner with organizations, health care professionals, educators, and the public to raise awareness of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders and support healthy pregnancies free from exposure to alcohol.

SAMPLE PROCLAMATION 2

Human service organizations, health care professionals, educators, and the public are called to action to work together to better understand and support individuals with fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD). This can be done by improving public health efforts to increase awareness on how FASDs may present in individuals across the lifespan and the ongoing need for services and support for individuals living with FASD while also spreading the message that there is no safe time during pregnancy to consume alcohol.

Whereas, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) affect as many as 1 in 20 school aged children in the US and are complex lifelong disorders that affect each person differently, resulting in unique strengths and challenges; and

Whereas, FASD is an umbrella term describing the range of disabilities that can occur in an individual who was exposed to alcohol before birth; and

Whereas, FASD can cause challenges with verbal and nonverbal communication, social interaction, growth, cognition, and adaptive function, and can affect anyone, regardless of age, race, ethnicity, gender, or socioeconomic background; and

Whereas, FASD is often accompanied by medical conditions that impact quality of life; and

Whereas, A comprehensive, collaborative approach will help to advance research, providing a better understanding of the many forms of FASD, while strengthening advocacy efforts and ensuring access to services and resources throughout their life; and

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Whereas, Although FASD can be prevented by supporting pregnancies free of alcohol, prevention efforts should be balanced with support and intervention for people with living with FASD; and

Whereas, Early diagnosis and intervention tailored to individual needs can have lifelong benefits, easing the transition to adulthood and fostering greater independence; and

Whereas, Each person and family affected by FASD should have access to reliable information, supports, and opportunities to live up to their greatest potential.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, **(Governor's name)**, Governor of the state of **(name of your state)**, do hereby declare September 9, 2022 as Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Awareness Day **[or September as FASD Awareness Month]** and pledge to continue to partner with organizations, health care professionals, educators, and the public to raise awareness about FASD and support individuals living with this disability.

A sampling of 2021 proclamations from around the US:

Michigan

https://www.michigan.gov/whitmer/0,9309,7-387-90499_90639-538789--,00.html

Nevada

https://gov.nv.gov/News/Proclamations/2021/Fetal_Alcohol_Spectrum_Disorder_Awareness_Day_in_Nevada/

North Carolina

<https://governor.nc.gov/media/2727/open>

North Dakota

<https://www.governor.nd.gov/sites/www/files/documents/proclamations/Fetal%20Alcohol%20Syndrome%20Awareness%20Month%202021.pdf>

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Arkansas

https://governor.arkansas.gov/images/uploads/proclamations/2021_Arkansas_FASD_Proclamation.pdf

Tennessee

<https://tnsos.net/publications/proclamations/files/2144.pdf>

Hawaii (2017)

<https://governor.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/170908-Proc-FASD-Awareness-Month.pdf>

Ohio

<https://mha.ohio.gov/wps/wcm/connect/gov/9e2b5852-bdbe-48d8-8bce-54a690f4c3f3/2021+FASD+Proclamation.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CVID=nNR7s7->