Step-By-Step Guide to:
2009 State Awareness Proclamations

A State Proclamation is an official document signed by your state or local elected official declaring their formal support for an event or issue – in this case, for November as Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month. While it is important to note that proclamations are not necessary for us to coordinate or participate in our awareness activities during the month of November, they are an important tool for your growing advocacy program because they inform your elected officials of up-to-date pancreatic cancer statistics and keep them in touch with our cause, sometimes even creating local legislative champions for awareness and federal research funding. In addition, proclamations attract media attention, support volunteer development, and can help you to build upon your other volunteer efforts – including fundraising, event coordination, and volunteer recruitment.

Our Government Affairs staff is here to help you every step of the way. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact our Government Affairs Coordinator. (Phone: 202-772-1875; E-mail: advocacy@pancan.org)

Here’s how you can reap the benefits of this relatively easy and fun volunteer activity!

It is ideal to start this process in April. However, please begin no later than August. Proclamations generally require about 60 days to process.

Step 1: Develop A Committee & Chairperson
- Determine who the Chairperson is (this should be your Advocacy Coordinator if you are in an affiliate and have the position filled). Determine who will be on the committee – there can be any number of members.
- The Chairperson is responsible for keeping track of all proclamations being requested and for keeping the Government Affairs office informed of the status of the requests moving forward.
- Decide which proclamations the committee volunteers will request. One factor to consider is whether other affiliates in your state are pursuing statewide proclamations. If there are, we request that you work together. The Government Affairs staff can help facilitate these discussions with others in the state. If you are requesting a proclamation from an area that doesn’t overlap with another affiliate, for example, from the city of Baltimore, you do not need to collaborate with neighboring affiliates.

Step 2: Request State & Local Proclamations
- You will need to identify a sponsor for each proclamation request you would like to make. Regardless of the level you decide on, you will need a sponsor to introduce your proclamation. You should be able to find links to the appropriate level through your state’s web page (usually, the state web page is www.state.xx.us, where the “xx” is the state’s Post Office abbreviation).
County/Parish: County Commissioners, County Executives, County Council, etc.
City/Town: Mayor’s office, City Council, etc.
State: Governor, State House of Representatives (or Delegates), State Senate, etc.

- Note about State Legislators: Most Governors have the authority to issue proclamations. However, you may find it helpful to have a State Legislator who is willing to help you push this forward. Try starting with your State Representative or State Senator.

- Call the office of the person you have identified as a potential sponsor and ask them what the process for a proclamation request is and how long it usually takes. Let them know that you have a draft of the proclamation.

- Follow-up by sending a letter to your potential sponsor. Personalize the Template Cover Letter and Proclamation Text we have provided, and then send your request in writing (unless specifically requested to send electronically or via fax).
  - Be sure to include in your letter: your contact information, the date by which you need the proclamation issued – especially if you’d like to showcase the proclamation at an upcoming event or fundraiser, and the number of copies you will need. Because one copy must be mailed to our archives in D.C., please request at least two copies of each proclamation.

- Politely follow up on your request by calling after a week or so to see that the process is moving along – be patient but persistent, and be willing to mail or fax another copy of your request if necessary. And remember that you are representing the Pancreatic Cancer Action Network – even when your first three requests are lost in their office shuffle!

- The Chairperson of the committee should keep a record of which volunteers will send requests to which state and local elected officials. Please remember that if, for example, you are requesting a proclamation from a County Council – you should live in that county. The same logic applies for all proclamation requests – volunteers should make requests to elected officials who represent their district/city/county/parish/state, etc.

- The Chairperson should then send this record – with the names and phone numbers of committee members, and the identified sponsors and proclamation requests - immediately to advocacy@pancan.org. The Chairperson can e-mail us to ask any questions that the committee might have, or he/she can call 202-772-1875. Given the number of proclamations across the country, it is important that the Chairperson is the only person contacting us with the updates for your committee’s proclamations.

- Once you find out that a proclamation has been approved, please contact the Government Affairs Coordinator at advocacy@pancan.org with that information.

Step 3: Collect Proclamations & Send Press Releases

- It is up to your committee if you’ll have one volunteer complete the entire process from the request to the submission to press release, or if you’ll break up the process into smaller pieces and assign them to different volunteers with different strengths. For example, the Media Representative should be responsible for the media outreach components, if you have one in your affiliate. No matter how you do it, be sure to tap into the affiliate as a whole (if you have an affiliate), and incorporate as many of the core roles into the process as is possible.
Most offices will mail you the proclamation, but you can also generally make arrangements to pick it up in person. Some will even let your affiliate read a statement or speech at one of their official meetings or sessions. We can help you with these – just e-mail advocacy@pancan.org for template speeches.

Send the signed proclamation to the Government Affairs Office:

Pancreatic Cancer Action Network, Government Affairs Office
1050 Connecticut Ave, NW
10th Floor
Washington, DC 20036

Step 4: Follow Up & Archive

1. Consider inviting the elected official who sponsored your proclamation to attend, or even read the proclamation at, your next affiliate event. If you would like to extend such an invitation to your sponsor (or to any elected official), you must e-mail our Grassroots Advocacy Manager, Kate Geyer, at kgeyer@pancan.org for legal approval prior to sending any kind of formal or informal invitation. We encourage you to invite these elected officials to your events, and to encourage them to take a larger role in supporting pancreatic cancer awareness – but the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has jurisdiction over these invitations, so our Government Affairs staff will have to “clear” any invitation you may want to extend, before you extend it. Following this rule is critical to ensuring that our organization is following the rules of the IRS – protecting our non-profit status.

2. Send a follow-up letter to your proclamation sponsor thanking them for their assistance and support. Not only does this reflect well on your Affiliate or committee, and on the Pancreatic Cancer Action Network as a whole, but it can also help to build a more solid relationship with the elected official for future advocacy efforts.

3. Write a Letter to the Editor* to your local papers to let those in your community know about the Pancreatic Cancer Action Network’s awareness efforts and the 2009 proclamation you just received.

4. Send a Press Release* to your local media outlets, encouraging them to report on the actions of your state or local elected official – helping to ensure that awareness is perpetuated by the passage of the proclamation you just received.

5. It is, finally, your responsibility to send any news or newsletter articles or published photos or video to us at advocacy@pancan.org or the mailing address above for archiving as soon as you see them appear in print, on the web, or on television. This is exciting for you and for us, and we want to record every piece of publicity you earn!

Additional Note
Your proclamations will be issued as 2009 proclamations by your sponsor, and will be “good” to use until the end of 2009. The deadline for ALL 2009 proclamations to be mailed to our D.C. office for archiving is December 31st, 2009, although we’d prefer that you mail them in as you receive them.

The 2010 Proclamation Toolkit will be available in February of 2010 by e-mailing the Government Affairs Office.

History of the Federal Proclamation
The Pancreatic Cancer Action Network began its efforts to dedicate the month of November to Pancreatic Cancer Awareness in 1999. In 2002, Bob Hammen, a Pancreatic Cancer Action Network advocate in York, PA took the idea of a congressional resolution to his local congressman, Rep. Todd Platts (R-PA), who has championed the annual resolution ever since and was joined by Rep. Elijah Cummings (D-MD) in 2007. Also in 2007, Senators Hillary Clinton (D-NY) and Gordon Smith (R-OR) introduced the first U.S. Senate resolution. In 2008, Senator Clinton joined Senators Bob Casey (D-PA) and Allen Spector (R-PA) in introducing a special resolution honoring Dr. Randy Pausch.

With the introduction of the National Plan to Advance Pancreatic Cancer Research in 2008, it became clear that our federal advocacy efforts had progressed to a point where it became most advantageous to transition to a state and local government-focused proclamation effort – which you are now a part of. We thank you for participating in this national effort to raise the awareness of elected officials and communities across the country – we could never have made it this far without you.

* - If your affiliate has a Media Representative, you should work closely with this person before sending out your Press Release or Letter to the Editor. They can provide helpful insight with regard to our organization’s guide for working with the media. If you don’t have a Media Representative, please contact us at 202-772-1875 or advocacy@pancan.org for further instructions.