



JB Pritzker, Governor  
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## PRESS RELEASE

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## IL Department on Aging celebrates Older Americans Month *Department encourages older adults across the state to “Connect, Create, Contribute”*

**Springfield, IL** – May is Older Americans Month in Illinois and the state’s Department on Aging (IDoA) is encouraging its more than 2.7 million older adults to “Connect, Create, and Contribute” in their communities. That’s the theme of this year’s recognition, which emphasizes the importance of engaging in activities that promote learning, health, and personal enrichment.

“You are never too old - or too young - to participate in activities that *Connect, Create and Contribute* to the enrichment your physical, mental, and emotional well-being,” said Paula Basta, Director of IDoA. “I encourage our older adults to take advantage of resources and social programs throughout their communities - get out and play a key role in the vitality of our neighborhoods, networks, and lives!”

Governor JB Pritzker has issued a proclamation, recognizing the contributions that older Americans have had on Illinois’ history.

“Older Illinoisans have shaped our state’s rich history, and it’s our obligation to ensure they have to the tools to live healthy lives and connect, create, and contribute in their communities,” said Gov. JB Pritzker. “Whether its quality health care, home care or community-based services, my administration is committed to the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of every Illinoisan. I’m proud to proclaim May as Older Americans Month in the state of Illinois.”

When Older Americans Month was established by President John F. Kennedy and members of the National Council of Senior Citizens in 1963, there were only 17 million Americans 65 years of age and older, about a third of older Americans lived in poverty, and there were few programs to meet their needs. Today, 56 years later in Illinois, people 85 years of age and older is the fastest growing segment of the older population, and by 2030, individuals 65 years of age and older will increase to represent almost 25% of Illinois’s population.

Throughout the month of May, the Department on Aging encourages members of the Aging Network and local communities to raise awareness of programs and services available for seniors at ceremonies, events, fairs, and other activities throughout the state.

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Respect for yesterday. Support for today. Planning for tomorrow.  
[www.illinois.gov/aging](http://www.illinois.gov/aging)

The Illinois Department on Aging does not discriminate in admission to programs or treatment of employment in programs or activities in compliance with appropriate State and Federal statutes. If you feel you have been discriminated against, call the Senior Helpline at 1-800-252-8966; 1-888-206-1327 (TTY)

For more information about programs and services to assist older adults in Illinois, their families and caregivers, log on to the department website at: <http://www.illinois.gov/aging/> or call the Department on Aging at 1-800-252-8966 (hearing impaired call 1-888-206-1327).

The text of the Governor's proclamation is below:

**WHEREAS**, the State of Illinois is home to more than two and a half million residents aged 60 years or older who richly contribute to our communities; and,

**WHEREAS**, older adults are members of our communities entitled to dignified, independent lives free from fears, myths, and misconceptions about aging; and,

**WHEREAS**, each community in the United States must strive to recognize, understand, and address the evolving needs of older adults, and support their caregivers; and,

**WHEREAS**, the State of Illinois is committed to supporting older adults as they take charge of their health, explore new opportunities and activities, and focus on independence; and,

**WHEREAS**, the State of Illinois can provide opportunities to enrich the lives of individuals of all ages by involving older adults in the redefinition of aging in our communities, promoting home- and community-based services that support independent living, encouraging older adults to speak up for themselves and others, and providing opportunities for older adults to share their experiences; and,

**WHEREAS**, older adults in our state deserve to be recognized for the contributions they have made and will continue to make to the culture, economy, and character of our community and our nation; and,

**WHEREAS**, this year's Older Americans Month theme, "Engage at Every Age", emphasizes that you are never too old or too young to take part in activities that can enrich your physical, mental, and emotional well-being. It also celebrates the many ways in which older adults make a difference in our communities;

**THEREFORE**, I, JB Pritzker, Governor of the State of Illinois, do hereby proclaim May 2019 as **OLDER AMERICANS MONTH** in Illinois, and encourage all older adults to connect, create, and contribute to their communities across the State of Illinois.

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