The Importance of Celebrating SAAM

- Broaden community awareness by making news and starting positive conversations about Sikhs;
- Create a dialogue between Sikhs and their government officials to address concerns; and
- Help Sikhs demonstrate their faith and reduce misconceptions through public events.

How to Take Action

Sangats have used SAAM as a way to raise awareness about Sikhs in their local communities. Here are some examples of how volunteers have recognized and celebrated SAAM:

- Distribute literature and materials about Sikhs in schools, libraries, community centers, police departments, or other public spaces. [Poster: Who Are The Sikhs | Brochures: The Sikhs];
- Conduct Sikh Awareness Presentations with schools, government offices, law enforcement, or even private employers;
- Encourage school officials to disseminate anti-bullying and educational resources;
- Honor a Sikh that has made important contributions to the local community; or
- Host interfaith events such as a gurdwara open house.

*Please continue to follow local COVID-19 guidance and public health and safety rules and regulations before organizing an in-person SAAM event.

If you would like to discuss ways you can celebrate SAA, please contact community@sikhcoalition.org. If you would like printed copies of resources, please fill out the resource form on our website.

Understanding SAAM Government Recognitions

There is no difference between a proclamation, resolution, or citation. They are each an official government recognition that celebrates or acknowledges an important event or community.

While your state, school board, county, or city may have declared SAAM in the past, the recognition needs to be repeated every year, as this is an opportunity to create new relationships with policy makers who influence our lives.
How to GET a SAAM Recognition

1. Identify a government office (Governor, state legislator, city council, county board, or school board member) and find their contact information at https://www.usa.gov/elected-officials.

2. Send a short message, including the draft proclamation language to their office. Below is a sample draft email; see further below for draft proclamation language (in blue).

   Dear ____,

   I am a resident of [city/county/school district] and am writing on behalf of the local Sikh community in this area. As you may know, April is Sikh Awareness and Appreciation Month across the United States. We are interested in working with you to introduce a proclamation to raise awareness about Sikhs.

   [You may include information about your local Sikh community here].

   To assist you, I am providing draft language for a proclamation below. Please do not hesitate to contact me at [email/phone].

   Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to hearing from you.

   Respectfully,

   [Your name]

3. Make sure to follow up in one week if you have not heard back from their office. It may help to follow up with a phone call, after bumping your email.

4. Once a recognition is issued, take pictures of the resolution/proclamation and any community events where it is presented. Share your success and pictures to media@sikhcoalition.org so that we can highlight them on our social media channels!

Draft Proclamation Language:

Sikh Awareness and Appreciation Month (April)

WHEREAS: Sikhs have been living in the United States for more than 120 years, and during the early 20th century, thousands of Sikh Americans worked on farms, in lumber mills and mines, and on the Western Pacific Railroad lines; and
WHEREAS: Sikhism is the fifth-largest religion in the world and today, there are more than 25 million Sikhs worldwide and an estimated 500,000 Sikh Americans; and

WHEREAS: Sikh Americans pursue diverse professions, and make rich contributions to the social, cultural, and economic vibrancy of the United States, including service as members of the United States Armed Forces and significant contributions to our great nation in agriculture, information technology, small businesses, the hotel industry, trucking, medicine, and technology; and

WHEREAS: Sikh Americans distinguished themselves by fostering respect among all people through faith and service; and

WHEREAS: April 15, 2022, marks the one-year anniversary of the devastating act of deadly violence at the FedEx facility in Indianapolis, and we honor the eight individuals who were murdered, (including four Sikhs) those who were injured, and numerous lives that were forever impacted;

WHEREAS: This year also marks the ten-year anniversary of the August 5, 2012, mass shooting at the Sikh Temple of Wisconsin, wherein a neo-Nazi gunman murdered six Sikh Americans and permanently injured several more at a gurdwara (Sikh house of worship) in Oak Creek, Wisconsin.

WHEREAS: [Jurisdiction] is committed to educating citizens about the world’s religions, the value of religious diversity, tolerance grounded in First Amendment principles, a culture of mutual understanding, and the diminution of violence; and

WHEREAS: Today, the [Jurisdiction] seeks to further the diversity of its community and afford all residents the opportunity to better understand, recognize, and appreciate the rich history and shared experiences of Sikh Americans.

NOW, THEREFORE, I [Name of Official], [Title] on this XX day of [Month] 2022, do hereby proclaim the month of April 2022 to be SIKH AWARENESS AND APPRECIATION MONTH.