

2007 National Crime Victims' Rights Week Community Awareness Projects

April 22 - 28, 2007

Victims' Rights: Every Victim. Every Time.

If you have difficulty reading this message, an archived copy is available for NCVRW CAP subgrantees at <http://lists.navaa.org/lists/info/ncvrw>

This is the first in a series of periodic messages to assist in the planning and implementation of NCVRW Community Awareness Projects. Please feel free to send your individual questions or requests for assistance to Anne Seymour at anneseey@atlantech.net.

CAP TIPS

(To Improve Public awareness)

by Anne Seymour

Building a Comprehensive Media List

Introduction

Effective community outreach and public awareness rely significantly on strong, diverse media contacts. While many CAP recipients may have good relationships and ongoing contacts with local news media, others may need a bit of quick work to create a current and comprehensive media list. NCVRW provides an excellent opportunity to create an electronic news media roster that can be regularly updated, and shared by all CAP Planning Committee members.

Who Are "the Media"?

Traditional print and broadcast venues have expanded in recent years, due to the Internet (web sites, blogs, etc.) and increasingly specialized media that focus on specific issues. When considering the development or enhancement of a news media roster, it's helpful to first think about the types of news media that can help with NCVRW outreach, as well as victim-related activities throughout the year. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Daily newspapers.
- Weekly newspapers, including:
 - Shoppers.
 - City Guides.
 - Giveaways.
- Radio:
 - News.
 - Talk and call-in shows.
 - Specialized formats (such as Farm Reports in rural regions).
- Network television.
- Cable television.
- Local magazines and journals.
- Specialized publications (such as Chambers of Commerce, women's and civic organizations, labor unions, etc.).
- Internet-based venues:
 - Internet broadcasts.
 - Internet news forums.
 - Weblogs.

The Format and Content

The best format that promotes easy entry of media outlets and capacity to regularly update is software such as EXCEL (a Microsoft product) or similar spreadsheet software. Media outlets can be organized into categories, such as print; broadcast; web-based; and specialized venues.

The media information that is most useful includes:

- Name of media outlet.
- Specific contact for reporter(s) who covers issues related to crime and victimization and/or public safety.
- Mailing address.
- Telephone number.
- Fax number.
- Email address.
- Web site URL.

You may want to collect multiple contact information for certain media outlets. For example, a newspaper or radio station will probably have different contacts for news, letters to the editor, community announcements, etc.

How to Assemble a Comprehensive Media Directory

First and foremost, the development of a media directory should have three key goals:

1. Obtain existing media contact information from local CAP Planning Committee members.
2. Develop a collaborative Directory that all members will have access to in the future for their own, as well as collective, uses throughout the year.
3. Include plans for periodically updating the media directory (for example, every six months) and providing updated information to all local CAP Planning Committee members.

There are a number of ways to develop not only a comprehensive media directory, but also the names and contact information for specific reporters who tend to address issues such as crime, victimization and community safety. These include the following:

- Ask all local CAP Planning Committee members to contribute specific names and contact information for reporters, editors, news directors and producers with whom they have dealt with in the past (with a clearly-stated goal of sharing (and updating) all media contacts that are developed for the CAP Project).
- Assign members and/or volunteers to watch specific newscasts; listen to radio programming; read newspapers and other print venues; and log on-line to web-based media outlets in your community for a one-week time period. Ask them to:
 - Document any/all reporting and reports that relate to public safety, public health, crime or victimization.
 - Identify topics that are addressed.
 - Identify the names of specific reporters or on-air “talent” that cover these issues.
 - If time permits, send a quick note or email to the reporter or “talent” that compliments him or her on the specific news coverage that was documented (this tip facilitates an important “personal connection” to media professionals).
- Once you have a list of the names of media professionals who cover such issues, identify a Planning Committee member or volunteer who can match the name identified with the specific news medium and document contact information (see “Yahoo News Directory” below). This is a great project for a volunteer, intern or college student looking for a one-time public service project!
- Identify a Planning Committee member or volunteer who can input all media contact information into a spreadsheet for easy dissemination of NCVRW-related media information.

One of the best resources to build a good media list is available from Yahoo at http://dir.yahoo.com/News_and_Media/. The Yahoo News Directory offers information about national, regional, state and local news media by geography; news format; and category of media. It also includes a "subject" listing that includes topics relevant to crime victim assistance such as:

- College and university.
- Crime.
- Cultures and groups.
- Disabilities.
- Health.
- Law.
- News for Kids.

In each category, the Yahoo News Directory lists various media by state and includes the website URL for each. This requires further effort to identify the specific contact information for each medium; different media have specific key contacts, for example:

- Broadcast and cable television (news directors, reporters, producers).
- Radio (news directors, public service directors, reporters, and hosts of specific programs).
- Newspapers (editors and reporters).
- Web-based media (news directors, reporters and bloggers).

Keeping It Current

Once your Planning Committee has developed a comprehensive media directory, make sure to plan for periodic updates of the contact information, as news reporters tend to move onto other journalism positions with regularity. Again, this is an excellent project for a volunteer or intern.

For More Information

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