

This is the third in a series of periodic messages to assist in the planning and implementation of NCVRW Community Awareness Projects. CAP TIPS are also posted on the subgrantee page of the NCVRW CAP web site, <http://cap.navaa.org/subs>. Please feel free to send your individual questions or requests for assistance to Anne Seymour at annesey@atlantech.net.

CAP TIPS #3

To Improve Public Awareness

Engaging Criminal and Juvenile Justice Officials and Agencies

Introduction

The 2008 NCVRW theme, "Justice for Victims. Justice for All." eloquently relates the importance of having *all* representatives and agencies within the criminal and juvenile justice systems involved in ensuring that *both* parties in each case seek and receive justice. Criminal and juvenile justice officials have a stake in implementing victims' rights and creating a seamless delivery of services. NCVRW is a time when you can state your appreciation of criminal and juvenile justice officials and, at the same time, remind them of the value of victims as witnesses to the justice systems; the importance of crime victims' rights in ensuring true "justice for all;" and the overall benefits of victim satisfaction with the criminal and juvenile justice processes.

Tips for Identifying Criminal and Juvenile Justice Leaders in Your Jurisdiction

You probably have already established relationships with many criminal and juvenile justice professionals in your jurisdiction. NCVRW provides an opportunity to strengthen existing relationships *and* establish new ones.

Criminal and juvenile justice leaders who should be with you at the NCVRW table include: law enforcement officers, prosecutors, judges, defense attorneys, court administrators, probation and parole officers, corrections officials, Attorneys General, and system-based victim/witness advocates. It's important to also remember that most facets of the criminal justice system have local, state and federal jurisdiction – and it's helpful to include *all three facets* in your NCVRW activities.

The best way to find criminal and juvenile justice leaders in your jurisdiction is by brainstorming with respected colleagues. Chances are that you know who understands the importance of victims' rights...and who doesn't! While you certainly want to have justice officials who are dedicated to victims' rights involved in NCVRW activities, this is a time when you can also include people who may not understand the importance of victims' rights. Consider it a wonderful opportunity to educate and increase victim sensitivity!

Justice for victims requires the attention of *all* segments of justice processes. Your NCVRW activities can help justice officials realize the important role they have in incorporating justice for victims into justice for all.

You can use the following online directories to find justice officials in your jurisdiction and state:

- *Law enforcement officers.* You can search an online directory of city, county, and state law enforcement organizations throughout the United States at: http://officer.com/links/Agency_Search/United_States/index.html. The online directory also provides links to federal and military law enforcement organizations at: http://officer.com/links/Agency_Search/Federal/index.html. If you are unable to find your local law enforcement organization through the online directory, you can look in the blue pages of your local phone book.
- *Prosecutors.* You can search for local and state prosecutors through an online directory at: <http://www.eatoncounty.org/prosecutor/proslist.htm>. You can search online for federal prosecutors and prosecutor associations at: <http://www.eatoncounty.org/prosecutor/PA-Misc.htm#Associations>.
- *Judges.* The American Judges Association provides links to state courts at: <http://aja.ncsc.dni.us/htdocs/affiliates&links.htm>. Choose the link to your state's judicial Web site. From there, you should find a directory listing of your state's local and state courts. In some cases, judges, substitute judges, and chief magistrates are all listed.
- *Defense attorneys.* The National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers offers an online directory of defense lawyers and is searchable by the attorney's name, city, or state: <http://www.nacdl.org/publicdirectory.nsf/Directory>. The results listing describes if the attorney is a public defender, member of the military, or new lawyer.
- *Court administrators.* The National Association for Court Management provides a directory of each state's court association at: http://www.nacmnet.org/StateAssocPresi_web.pdf. It also provides links to states that have court association information online: <http://www.nacmnet.org/stateassoc.html>.
- *Probation and parole officers.* The American Probation and Parole Association provides links to state probation and parole agencies at: http://www.appa-net.org/resources/links/category_03.html. Affiliate organizations (including some local probation and parole associations) can be found at: http://www.appa-net.org/resources/links/category_01.html.
- *Corrections officials.* The American Correctional Association (ACA) provides an online directory of state adult correctional institutions at: <http://www.aca.org/research/stateadult/results.asp?union=AND&viewby=50&startrec=1>. ACA's list of federal institutions can be found at: <http://www.aca.org/research/federal/results.asp?union=AND&viewby=50&startrec=1>. ACA's list of state juvenile facilities can be found at: <http://www.aca.org/research/statejuv/results.asp?union=AND&viewby=50&startrec=1>. From these directories, you can click on your state's site and, from there, find a listing of local institutions.
- *Attorneys General.* Attorneys General in 48 states have designated offices for victim services. You can obtain contact information for your state Attorney General through

the National Association of Attorneys General (NAAG) at www.naag.org, and seek to identify victim assistance staff.

- *System-based victim/witness advocates or counselors.* The Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) provides an online directory of victim service providers throughout the country at: <http://ovc.ncjrs.gov/findvictimservices/>. You can search by geographic area, type of services provided, and whether the services are provided through a system-based agency or community-based organization. Statewide coalitions, tribal organizations, and military service providers are also included in the directory.

Tips for Engaging Criminal and Juvenile Justice Officials and Agencies in NCVRW Activities and Throughout the Year

Crime victims, more than anyone, want to ensure that justice is served by holding the perpetrator of the crime accountable for his or her actions. Crime victims do not want innocent people held accountable for something they did not do or be treated disrespectfully throughout justice processes. The theme “Justice for Victims. Justice for All.” provides a platform for justice officials to discuss defendants’ and victims’ rights and how to successfully implement these rights throughout the justice system.

Every justice official has a stake in how victims are treated during justice processes. As a victim advocate, it is important for you to relate how providing victims with their rights will help cases move through justice processes. NCVRW provides a great opportunity for justice officials to publicly come together to show support for the rights of victims—the people at the very heart and soul of the justice system itself.

Following are some tips for engaging criminal and juvenile justice officials, including some examples of previous Community Awareness Project activities:

- Hold a roundtable meeting of criminal and juvenile justice officials, community-based victim advocates, and victims/survivors. Have participants discuss what “justice for victims” means to each person. Identify any gaps in procedure or services and brainstorm ways to close those gaps. Highlight procedures and services that are working well. Participants’ responses can then be used in speeches, opinion/editorial columns, or other NCVRW materials. If you aren’t able to convene a roundtable, you can create a form that is sent via mail, fax, or email to ask criminal and juvenile justice officials how they believe justice for victims leads to justice for all.
- Host events that involve multiple or all parts of the justice system to illustrate how justice for victims inspires justice for all. You can coordinate a “moment of silence” in honor of crime victims throughout the criminal or juvenile justice system (in Ohio, the entire prison system and parole offices have observed a moment of silence during previous NCVRWs).
- Have fun. Even though victimization issues are serious, it’s okay to make some of your NCVRW activities fun. Candlelight vigils and memorial services should remain solemn events, of course. But other activities can incorporate light-hearted aspects. A goal of NCVRW activities is community outreach and education. The criminal and juvenile justice systems are intimidating, full of language, jargon, and procedures that are confusing to the average citizen. And the idea of being a victim of crime is downright frightening to most people. Let’s face it: probably everyone in the victim assistance field has met someone who sheepishly and quickly changed the

conversation when you discussed what you do for a living. NCVRW can honor the difficult struggles crime victims face, but can also incorporate fun to honor the resilience of the human spirit. In 2004, the Dallas County Community Supervision and Corrections Department set up a Safety Fair at a local mall. Local victim advocacy groups distributed brochures about their services and programs, entertainment was provided on the mall stage, and numerous local law enforcement and fire departments displayed their police cars, motorcycles, DWI mobile units, emergency mobile equipment outside of the mall. Costumed volunteers, including McGruff the Crime-fighting Dog, used donated cameras to take pictures of children standing by any police or fire vehicle they chose.

- Get offenders involved. In 2004, the Arizona Department of Corrections sponsored programs focused on victims' issues before and during NCVRW. Inmates participated in a poster contest and the winning poster was copied and displayed at all state prisons. The focus on victims' rights made such an impact on the inmates that they raised over \$18,000 for the non-profit organization Arizona Coalition of Victim Services. Likewise, juvenile offenders can get involved and fulfill community service hours by posting NCVRW products throughout the community or pinning ribbons to NCVRW ribbon cards.
- Say “thank you” and recognize exemplary achievements that benefit victims and survivors of crime. In Mariposa, California, 100 certificates of appreciation were given to many of the local criminal justice agency professionals, including those in the sheriff's department, the victim witness program, the district attorney's office, the domestic violence response team, and the probation department. You can use the sample “certificate of appreciation” included in OVC's 2008 NCVRW Resource Guide.
- Invite the media and ensure criminal and juvenile justice partners are praised in front of the press. In Chelan and Douglas Counties, Washington, collaborating agencies held a "Pig Out in the Park" event in a large park adjacent to the courthouse. Law enforcement and fire officials cooked hamburgers and hot dogs for the approximately 3,000 attendees. Thirty-five nonprofit victim service programs staffed booths, and first responder vehicles gave tours to attendees. Local victim survivors spoke about their experiences from a central stage, where the local high school jazz band and other talents also provided entertainment. Local English and Spanish media covered the event, including live coverage, pre- and post-event newspaper articles, and an article 30 days after the event to reemphasize the local services and resources available for crime victims.
- Don't count criminal and juvenile justice officials out even if they aren't involved this year. You can still conduct outreach and education to justice officials who aren't interested in supporting NCVRW. You can ask survivors to write about “what justice means to me” (either anonymous or signed), print the responses on brightly colored paper, and distribute the papers to justice officials. In 2003, members of the Survivors of Crime Council in Vermont wrote their experiences as victims of crime and placed the responses on legislators' seats on the opening day of the legislative session. The Survivors of Crime Council stressed the simplicity, cost-effectiveness, and high impact of this project.

For More Information

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