



CAP TIPS is 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 annesey@atlantech.net

CAP TIP #5

To Improve Public Awareness

Working with Public Libraries to Promote 2013 National Crime Victims' Rights Week and Victims' Rights and Services

Introduction and Overview

Many people in America – including crime victims and survivors – use local libraries as a source for information, education and free space to hold meetings. Libraries provide many valuable public services to adults and children, and can be important partners in promoting 2013 National Crime Victims' Rights Week (NCVRW) during April.

"The State of America's Libraries, 2011" includes the results of a national survey published by the American Library Association (ALA), which found extensive use of libraries across the nation:

- Sixty-five percent of respondents had visited the library in the past year (including 72 percent of female respondents and 58 percent of male respondents).
- Fifty-eight percent of survey respondents had a library card.
- Thirty-one percent of adults – and 38 percent of senior citizens – rank the library at the top of their list of tax-supported services.
- Ninety-one percent place great value in the library's provision of information for school and work.

The survey is available at <http://www.ala.org/news/mediapresscenter/americaslibraries>.

Your local libraries can be excellent partner in promoting your 2013 NCVRW activities, and providing critical information about victim assistance and community safety throughout the year.

Getting Started

Review Your Library's Mission Statement and Goals

Most libraries' mission and goals promote greater access to information and education. For example, the mission statement of the Chicago Public Library is:

We welcome and support all people in their enjoyment of reading and pursuit of lifelong learning.

Working together, we strive to provide equal access to information, ideas and knowledge through books, programs and other resources.

We believe in the freedom to read, to learn, to discover.

If you are familiar with your local libraries' guiding statements, it can help you frame a discussion with library personnel about how to promote crime victim assistance, crime prevention and public safety during NCVRW and throughout the year.

Identify Your Library's Public Services

Most libraries sponsor a variety of public services that provide information and education to their users. When you become aware of these services, it's easy to link your NCVRW activities to these services; for example:

- **Public displays:** Most libraries have public displays and bulletin boards to promote community activities. You can ask your library staff if you can secure space on its public display area during the week of April 21-27, and use the many components and camera-ready artwork in the 2013 NCVRW Resource Guide published by the Office for Victims of Crime to design your display.
- **Inter-library loan:** The National Criminal Justice Reference Service includes thousands of documents about victim assistance, crime prevention and public safety. NCJRS sponsors an inter-library loan program that loans its documents to many entities, including public libraries. You can educate your library staff about the NCJRS inter-library loan program and how to access this service at <https://www.ncjrs.gov/Libill.html>. Within your organization, you may also have books and other resources that you can make available on a "loan basis" to your library.
- **Bookmobiles:** This service is an important venue for library outreach to community members who may not be able to visit a physical library site, i.e., people who live in highly urban or rural areas, elderly populations and people with disabilities, etc. You can provide your library bookmobile with information about your organization and NCVRW; free bookmarks (using the camera-ready artwork in the 2013 NCVRW *Resource Guide*); and the NCVRW theme poster.
- **Meeting rooms:** Most libraries offer free meeting space to the public. You can review guidelines for such programs at your library, and consider sponsoring a NCVRW event at your local library.

Review Your Library's Website

A review of a dozen library websites identified programs and services that most libraries sponsor. You can review websites of libraries in your jurisdiction, and develop activities that are a good fit with their existing services to promote NCVRW. For example:

LIBRARY WEBSITE CONTENT AREAS	SUGGESTIONS FOR PROMOTING NCVRW
Library services	See above for ideas to promote 2013 NCVRW activities that link to your library's ongoing services
Events calendar	Sponsor a community awareness/education event at your library that promotes victims' right and assistance and community safety
Targeted populations (adults, teens, children)	Develop learning courses and activities that match the clientele of your library's target populations. For example, resources for child safety activities are available free from the General Services Administration at http://kids.usa.gov/health-and-safety/safety/index.shtml ; and resources for teen dating violence are available free from http://www.loveisrespect.org/ .
Recommendations on "what to read"	Provide your library with a "recommended reading list" that addresses victim assistance and community safety
Databases on community organizations	Make sure your organization is included in your library's electronic database!

Internet Access at Libraries

A major concern of the victim assistance field is that while many of our resources about victims' rights and services are available mainly in electronic format, many victims and survivors lack internet access at home. Libraries are often the main source for internet access for these populations. Published in 2010, "Opportunity for All: How the American Public Benefits from Internet Access at U.S. Libraries" (available at <http://www.gatesfoundation.org/learning/Pages/us-libraries-report-opportunity-for-all.aspx>), found that:

- Almost all public library branches offer visitors free access to computers and the Internet.
- Forty-five percent of the 169 visitors to public libraries connected to the Internet using a library computer or wireless network during their visit.
- Forty-four percent of people in households living below the Federal poverty line use public library computers and Internet access.
- Library patrons use library computers to help others in their community. An estimated 48 million people reported using library computer and Internet access to help their friends, family, coworkers, and even strangers with a wide range of problems.
- More than 26 million people used public library computers to get government or legal information or to access government services.
- The key reported use of library computers included searches for information about:
 - Health and wellness (37%)
 - Government and legal services (34 %)
 - Community engagement (33%)

To promote Internet access to victim assistance and community safety services prior to and during 2013 NCVRW, you can:

- Ask libraries to feature the NCVRW screen saver (which is included in the *OVC Resource Guide's* CD/DVD) on its public access computers from April 21-27, 2013.
- Print copies of the “National Information and Referral Resources for Crime Victim/Survivor Assistance” resource roster and have them readily available at your library’s computer stations.
- Provide a stack of bookmarks that include web URLs for national victim assistance organizations (using the camera-ready artwork in the NCVRW Resource Guide) at each computer station.

You can also provide local libraries with Internet access to information about *state-specific* crime victims’ rights and services. The following example highlights information specific to New York:

- Information about crime victims’ rights and services in New York can be accessed at <http://www.ovs.ny.gov/HelpforCrimeVictims/HelpFAQ.aspx>.
- A brochure that describes “The Rights of Crime Victims in New York State,” published by the New York State Office of Victim Services, is available at <http://www.ovs.ny.gov/Files/OVS%20Rights%20of%20CV%20booklet%20-%202011.pdf>.
- Crime victims and survivors can locate crime victim services in New York by county or zip code at <http://www.ovs.ny.gov/HelpforCrimeVictims/LocateaProgram.aspx>.
- Information about the New York Crime Victim Compensation Program, which provides financial assistance to victims of violent crime who report crimes (see website to additional eligibility information) is available at <http://www.ovs.ny.gov/Services/VictimCompensation.aspx>.

Raise Awareness of National Libraries/Reference Services with Victim- and Public Safety-related Information and Resources

Your local libraries may not be aware of the myriad free resources that are readily available through libraries and reference services sponsored by the Federal government and national nonprofit organizations. A one-page roster of “National Information and Referral Resources for Crime Victim/Survivor Assistance” is available in both Word and PDF formats under “Other Materials” on the NCVRW CAP Subgrantees Only page (<http://www.navaa.org/cap/subs>). You can make this roster available to your local library via email:

“National Crime Victims’ Rights Week is scheduled for April 21 – 27, 2013. There are many excellent, free online resources that can educate your patrons about crime victim assistance, crime prevention and public safety.

I am attaching a roster that features web URL links for libraries and reference services sponsored by our Federal government and national nonprofit organizations. I hope you will join us during National Crime Victims’ Rights Week and throughout the year in promoting crime victims’ rights and services and community safety by making these resources available to your library patrons.

Thank you very much.

ATTACHMENT: National Information and Referral Resources for Crime Victim/Survivor Assistance

National Library Week

Local libraries will also be commemorating National Library Week in April, which is scheduled for April 14 – 20, 2013. The American Library Association (ALA) will provide resources to commemorate this week at <http://www.ala.org/conferenceevents/celebrationweeks/natlibraryweek>, and you can use the contents of this CAP TIP to consider strategies to partner with libraries in April.

For More Information

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