



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 #11

To Improve Public Awareness

Engaging Local and State Leaders in 2014 National Crime Victims' Rights Week Activities

Introduction

The participant survey from the 2014 Community Awareness Project webinar held on January 28th identified "Engaging Local and State Leaders in 2014 NCVRW Activities" as your top choice for a CAP TIP. Such engagement offers a unique opportunity to educate leaders in your jurisdiction about crime victims' rights and services *and* your specific organization or agency; and to proactively involve them in promoting victim/survivor issues during NCVRW and throughout the year.

When engaging your jurisdiction's leaders, it's very important to note that **your CAP award precludes you from engaging in ANY lobbying activities**. It's okay to provide them with educational and informational resources, but it's not okay to seek in any way to affect public policy or legislation!

It's also important to remember that elected and appointed officials tend to be *very busy people!* Therefore, it's helpful to make sure that you submit your requests for support and engagement **as soon as possible**, and that your invitation is brief, to the point and powerful so that it garners their attention and action.

Since all CAP recipients have received the CD/DVD with the 2014 NCVRW *Resource Guide* (which is also available online at <http://ovc.ncjrs.gov/ncvrw2014/index.html>), this CAP TIP will reference the resources you can use from the Guide to engage your jurisdiction's leaders.

Identifying Leaders in Your Jurisdiction

While there are obvious "leaders" in every jurisdiction, there are others that may not immediately come to mind, as well as staff who can facilitate your outreach to the actual leaders.

At every level of leadership, it's important to identify the leader's staff members whose responsibilities include crime victim assistance. These staff may be within divisions such as:

- Public/community safety
- Criminal/juvenile justice
- Crime prevention
- Crime victim assistance

It may be helpful to visit the websites of leaders whom you are seeking to engage to identify staff members who can facilitate your request for involvement, and learn about any initiatives they have sponsored that relate to crime victim assistance and/or "restoring the balance of justice." Any invitations you send to participate in NCVRW activities should ask "you or your staff" to join you, in the event that the dignitary is unavailable.

Who Are the "Leaders"?

While each state and jurisdiction may differ slightly, the leaders who are helpful to engage include the following:

- Governor
 - Governor/Executive Branch state criminal justice administration agency (SAA) (a SAA database searchable by state is available from the Bureau of Justice Assistance at <http://ojp.gov/saa/index.htm>)
- Lieutenant Governor
- Attorney General
 - Attorney General victim assistance programs (existing in most states)
- State legislators (i.e., Senate, Representatives, Assembly, etc.)
- County Board of Supervisors
- City Mayor
- City Council
- District/neighborhood commissions or other entities (many of which include a focus on community safety)
- Neighborhood watch groups

Creating a Strategy

Once you've identified the state and local leaders you'd like to engage, there are five key activities that form a strategy for your efforts:

1. Educate leaders
2. Give and seek recognition
3. Engage leaders in your special events
4. Social media outreach
5. Traditional media outreach

1. Educate Leaders

In your initial outreach by email, letter or telephone contact, take the opportunity to educate leaders about:

- Your program and the services you provide to crime victims and survivors

- Your designation as a **2014 NCVRW Community Awareness Project** (“one of 71 programs selected nationwide by the Office for Victims of Crime within the U.S. Department of Justice to promote public awareness of crime victims’ rights and services in conjunction with 2014 NCVRW, April 6 – 12”)
- The 2014 NCVRW theme – “30 Years: Restoring the Balance of Justice” – with direct application to the leader(s) to whom you are reaching out, i.e., identifying successes in victims’ rights and services over the past three decades in your city/county/state to which they contributed
- The *Victims of Crime Act*, its 30-year anniversary and impact on victim services nationwide and in your jurisdiction.

It’s helpful to include an agency/organization brochure, one-page fact sheet, or URL link to a description of your agency’s programs and services in your initial inquiry.

2. Give and Seek Recognition

Resource Guide Section 2, “Sample Proclamation”

Resource Guide Artwork, “Certificate of Appreciation”

Resource Guide Artwork, “Ribbon Cards”

Proclamations

A great public awareness activity is to seek and obtain proclamations that declare the week of April 6 – 12, 2014 to be “(state/county/city) Crime Victims’ Rights Week” with a “suitably prepared copy of the proclamation presented to (your organization).” You can adapt language from the sample proclamation included in Section 2 of the *Resource Guide*, or the sample proclamation included in 2014 CAP TIP #4.

In addition to obtaining a proclamation, you can ask your respective leaders to:

- Publicize the proclamation through their traditional and social media venues
- Take a photograph of the leader presenting the proclamation to you, which can be used to promote NCVRW and your special events through *your* traditional and social media venues
- Personally attend your NCVRW special event(s) to formally present the proclamation

Certificates of Appreciation

You can adapt the sample certificate of appreciation included in the *Resource Guide* to recognize any special initiatives or activities sponsored by your leader(s). It’s helpful to:

- Work with their staff or Public Information Officer on a strategy to promote this honor through media outreach
- Invite the leader to attend any special events during NCVRW to receive the award in person

Ribbon Cards

You can personalize the sample commemorative ribbon card from the *Resource Guide* to include contact information for your agency or organization. Then, arrange for in-person or snail mail delivery of a package of ribbon cards to the specific leader, with a brief one-page overview of NCVRW and your organization (see “Educate Leaders” above). Ask him/her to distribute the ribbon cards to their staff, with a request that they wear them during NCVRW.

3. Engage Leaders in Your Special Events

It's a good idea to "cast a wide net" on inviting leaders to your special events, regardless of the likelihood that they will attend. Again, in your invitation letter, specifically invite "you or your staff" so that the option to send a representative is clear. Review the "Educate Leaders" tips (above) to include basic information about your organization and 2014 NCVRW in your invitation.

You can include the following paragraph to encourage their "virtual involvement" if they are unable to attend in person:

"If you are unable to attend (*event*), we hope you can send a special greeting that recognizes 2014 National Crime Victims' Rights Week and (*your organization's*) efforts to promote awareness of crime victims' rights and needs. We will be pleased to read your greeting at our (*event*)."

When you receive official greetings from leaders who are unable to attend your events, consider printing their messages with their photograph on posters to display at your events. This helps demonstrate widespread state and local support for your efforts!

4. Social Media Outreach

RESOURCE GUIDE Artwork, Web and Email Banners

RESOURCE GUIDE Section 4, How to Create a Social Media Campaign

RESOURCE GUIDE Section 4, Social Media Status Updates

A simple request that can result in widespread awareness of 2014 NCVRW is asking your leaders to join you in promoting NCVRW through social media. If they have a public information officer or media staff, they will be your point-of-contact for such a request.

For example, you can ask them to:

- Include the NCVRW web banner on their websites during the month of April, with URL linkages to any of their crime victim-related initiatives *and* your organization
- Provide the NCVRW email banner to their respective staff members to include in all emails they send out during the week of April 6 – 12, 2014
- Inform you of their NCVRW-related activities that you can include in social media updates, for example:
 - Links on your social media sites to official NCVRW proclamations
 - Descriptions of their public support for your organization and NCVRW:
 - "(*Title/leader*) identifies crime victim services as a priority for (*jurisdiction*); please visit (*URL link*) for more information."
 - "(*Title/leader*) recognizes victim assistance efforts of (*your organization*); join us to celebrate National Crime Victims' Rights Week, (*URL link*)."
 - Links on your website and social media sites that include any "official" leadership recognition of 2014 NCVRW (and hopefully *your organization!*)

5. Traditional Media Outreach

RESOURCE GUIDE Section 4, "Communicating Your Message"

All of the suggested outreach strategies to leaders described above can contribute to your traditional media outreach prior to and during NCVRW. You can use any portion of official proclamations, official greetings to your organization, or social media messages from your leaders in *your own NCVRW media relations*, for example:

- Include quotations from leaders in any speeches or presentations you give during NCVRW
- Quote the leader and any personal accolades to your organization in your press release that describes your NCVRW activities and any special events
- Highlighting the leader's efforts that improve victims' rights and services in opinion/editorial columns, letters-to-the-editor, or any media interviews you conduct in conjunction with NCVRW

It's also a good idea to ask your state and local leaders to recognize 2014 NCVRW *on their own* through press releases and personal interviews. You can provide them with basic facts about NCVRW, the theme, the Crime Victims' Fund and its 30-year impact on our field, and your activities as a CAP recipient, and suggest that they use these facts in their personal NCVRW outreach.

For More Information

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