



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](mailto:annesey@atlantech.net)

## **CAP TIP #2**

### ***To Improve Public Awareness***

#### **Tips to Promote the 2014 NCVRW Theme: *30 Years: Restoring the Balance of Justice***

##### **Introduction**

The theme for 2014 National Crime Victims' Rights Week (NCVRW) – ***30 Years: Restoring the Balance of Justice*** – offers Community Awareness Projects (CAPs) an opportunity to reflect on the many accomplishments of America's victim assistance field over the past three decades, especially the powerful and profound impact of the passage of the 1984 *Victims of Crime Act (VOCA)* and its funding that supports myriad victim services and allied justice agencies that assist crime victims and survivors. The theme also encourages NCVRW Community Awareness Projects to examine effective, evidence-based strategies that can improve the delivery of victim services and implementation of victims' rights that can contribute to a "balance of justice" for crime victims today and in the future.

The 2014 NCVRW *Resource Guide* published by the Office for Victims of Crime, U.S. Department of Justice (OVC) features tips to promote the 2014 theme (all NCVRW CAP applicants should receive an abbreviated paper-based version of the *Resource Guide* in the mail).

As you begin planning, the resources in this CAP TIP can help you promote the 2014 NCVRW theme, and develop victim outreach, community and public awareness and training/education strategies that can contribute to "restoring the balance of justice" to crime victims and those who serve them.

##### **A National Historical Perspective**

Throughout the history of the crime victim assistance field, OVC and leaders from the field have examined strategies that help "balance the scales of justice" and identify and address challenges to victim justice. There are four key projects that can provide you with a national historical perspective on efforts across the history of our field to "restore the balance of justice" to crime victims and communities across America:

1. The landmark *President's Task Force on Victims of Crime Final Report* published in 1982 examined the status of victims' rights and services 32 years ago, and included over 60 recommendations for improvement. You can read or download this 115 page *Final Report* from the NCVRW CAP Subgrantees Only website (<http://cap.navaa.org/subs>).
2. Earlier this year (2013), OVC published *Vision 21: Transforming Victim Services* to "expand the vision and impact of the crime victim assistance field by designing a philosophical and strategic framework to transform the response to victims of crime in this country." The *Vision 21* framework includes many proven strategies to "restore the balance of justice" and can be accessed at <http://ovc.ncjrs.gov/vision21/>.
3. The *OVC Oral History Project* interviewed over 60 pioneers in the victim assistance field to document an historical perspective of our field since its inception in 1972. Among the questions asked of the interviewees that are relevant to the 2014 NCVRW theme are:
  - In your pioneering area(s) of victim assistance, what was the greatest challenge you and your colleagues faced in effecting change?
  - What were the secrets, tactics and strategies you employed that were successful?
  - What were the failures?
  - What vision do you have for the future of our field?

The OVC Oral History Project website includes:

- Videotaped interviews of these pioneers
- Written transcripts of all interviews
- An excellent "History of the Crime Victims' Movement in the United States"
- "A Retrospective of the 1982 President's Task Force on Victims of Crime" that emerged from a group interview in 2002 of all surviving members of the Task Force

The OVC Oral History website can be accessed at <http://vroh.uakron.edu/index.php>.

4. OVC's *2013 Report to the Nation* summarizes recent contributions of VOCA and the Crime Victims Fund. The *Report* includes statistical exhibits and stories that highlight how VOCA and the Crime Victims Fund is helping specific victim populations. The *Report* can be accessed by going to <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/pubs/reporttonation2013/index.html>.

### **VOCA and the Crime Victims Fund**

Since the 2014 NCVRW theme is designed to celebrate the 30 year anniversary of the passage of the *Victims of Crime Act* that established the Crime Victims Fund, some basic information about VOCA and the Fund can help you better understand its intent and impact on our field:

- An OVC Fact Sheet, "Crime Victims' Fund," provides information about how VOCA supports crime victim services, including crime victim compensation programs (<http://www.ovc.gov/pubs/crimevictimsfundfs/index.html>).

- Extensive resources about challenges to VOCA funding have been made available by the National Association of VOCA Assistance Administrators (NAVAA), including the following:
  - Declines in VOCA funding matrix (NAVAA)
  - Impact of Funding Cuts for Domestic Violence Programs (*Campaign for Funding to End Domestic and Sexual Violence*)
  - Impact of Funding Cuts on Sexual Assault Services (*National Alliance to End Sexual Violence*)
  - Impact of Federal Cuts for Criminal Justice Programs (*National Criminal Justice Association*)
 These informational resources can be accessed at [www.navaa.org](http://www.navaa.org).
  
- Each state has a VOCA victim assistance administrative agency and a state crime victim compensation program that receives VOCA funds to help victims. Contact the agency in your state for specific information on how VOCA is helping in your state. A directory of VOCA assistance administrative agencies is available at <http://www.navaa.org/statedirectory.html> and for state crime victim compensation programs at <http://www.nacvcb.org/index.asp?sid=5>.

### **Developing a Local Perspective on “Restoring the Balance of Justice”**

*Every state or jurisdiction is unique in terms of its strategies for “restoring the balance of justice.”*

*And the concept of “restoring the balance of justice” is also unique to every victim-serving profession within a jurisdiction!*

As such, it’s important to personalize the 2014 NCVRW theme to *your* state or community.

Consider for a moment the range of agencies, organizations, individuals and professionals who assist victims of crime; for example:

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|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crime victims and survivors</li> <li>• Community-based victim assistance organizations</li> <li>• Social service organizations</li> <li>• Law enforcement</li> <li>• Pre-trial and courts</li> <li>• Prosecutors</li> <li>• Community corrections</li> <li>• Institutional corrections</li> <li>• Appellate-level agencies</li> <li>• Juvenile justice agencies and organizations</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mental health</li> <li>• Public/medical health</li> <li>• Schools</li> <li>• Social services</li> <li>• Colleges/universities</li> <li>• Multi-faith communities</li> <li>• Department of Defense</li> <li>• Organizations that assist traditionally-underserved populations</li> <li>• Private sector/businesses</li> <li>• Others</li> </ul> |
|---|---|

It’s a good idea to conduct proactive outreach to these important constituents, and engage them in “defining the 2014 NCVRW theme” in a manner that personalizes it to your jurisdiction.

**Here are two recommended approaches:**

1. Conduct direct outreach to crime victims and survivors that solicits their input, *based upon their personal experiences*.

The “sample worksheet to obtain input on the 2014 theme” included at the end of this CAP TIP can be adapted to conduct direct outreach to crime victims and survivors. You can ask victim advocates and allied professionals involved with your planning committee to email or “snail mail” survivors to seek their opinions about strategies that can “restore the balance of justice” to survivors, based upon their personal experiences as victims of crime. Here’s some sample language you can use:

Dear Friends:

National Crime Victims’ Rights Week (NCVRW) is scheduled for April 6 - 12, 2014. The theme for this year’s commemoration is “30 Years: Restoring the Balance of Justice.”

In order for us to be able to promote this theme during 2014 NCVRW, it’s important for us to hear first-hand from crime victims and survivors. Based upon your personal experiences, what do you think are *effective tactics* that can help “restore the balance of justice” to crime victims, survivors and communities; and what are *any challenges* we need to overcome to “restore the balance of justice”?

I am enclosing a response form where you can answer these two important questions. We’d like to use the responses we receive from crime victims and survivors to help articulate the 2014 theme in a way that personalizes it to *our community*. Your responses are confidential, and you will not be identified in any way as the source of the response.

Please return this form to me by (*means of return*) no later than (*day/date/year*). I appreciate your consideration of this important request, and thank you in advance for contributing to our promotion of 2014 National Crime Victims’ Rights Week.

ATTACHMENT: Response Form

You can ask a volunteer or intern to compile the responses you receive into a centralized database for use in promoting NCVRW (see “How to Use the Theme Input You Receive” below).

2. Develop a brief online survey that solicits input on the theme of “restoring the balance of justice” (consider using free survey software such as *Survey Monkey* at [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com)). You can include a “demographic” check list (see above) about the profession of respondents, and provide a brief overview of why you are soliciting input and information about submitting the survey, for example:

National Crime Victims’ Rights Week is scheduled for April 6 to 12, 2014. The theme for 2014 is ‘30 Years: Restoring the Balance of Justice.’

It’s important for our *community/state* to be able to define effective strategies that ‘balance the scales of justice’ for crime victims, communities and our Nation as a whole. We’d like you to take a few minutes to

complete our online survey that will help us personalize the 2014 NCVRW theme to our *community/state*.

Please complete and return this survey by (*at least one month in advance of NCVRW*) so we can ensure that your input is included in our NCVRW victim/survivor outreach and public awareness activities.

Examples of survey topics relevant to “restoring the balance of justice” include (but are not limited to, as *you should develop topics that are specific to your jurisdiction*) the following:

- Ensure that crime victims are aware of their constitutional and statutory rights
- Promote victim participation in justice processes, including the rights to be heard, to be informed, and to reasonable protection
- Support programs and strategies that promote victim safety and protection
- Always balance the rights of those accused and/or convicted of crimes with the rights of victims and witnesses
- Provide advocacy and support to victims who engage with the criminal or juvenile justice systems
- Encourage victims and survivors to report crimes
- Encourage victims and survivors (reporting and non-reporting) to seek supportive services in their communities
- Ensure that justice- and community-based victim services are culturally competent
- Encourage collaboration among public, private, non-governmental and cross-jurisdictional agencies (geographic, as well as local/state/federal) agencies to create comprehensive victim services across systems and jurisdictions
- Create partnerships among crime prevention, justice, victim assistance, mental health and substance use/abuse professionals (*among others*) to encourage seamless delivery of victim assistance services
- Educate the news media to improve sensitivity in coverage of crime and victimization
- Educate the public about the often devastating impact of crime on victims and communities
- Other (*provide space for survey respondents to provide open-ended input*)

Your survey can also ask respondents to rate the importance of effectively responding to and balancing the scales of justice for victims of emerging categories of crime and victimization, such as:

- Mass violence and victimization
- Technology-related crimes (identity theft, child pornography, stalking, etc.)
- Bullying
- Crimes against the elderly
- Crimes against LGBTQI persons
- Hate crimes
- Human trafficking
- Other issues (*provide space for survey respondents to provide open-ended input*)

### **How to Use the NCVRW Theme Input You Receive**

Once you’ve framed your perspective of the 2014 NCVRW theme, you can use the input you’ve received that is *specific to your community* in a variety of ways, such as:

- Traditional media outreach (i.e., press releases, public service announcements, opinion/editorial columns, media interviews, etc.)

- Social media outreach (i.e., through Facebook, brief Twitter feeds, Pinterest postings, podcasts, etc.)
- Public presentations (i.e. featuring specific quotations on presentation slides about challenges to and strategies for “restoring the balance of justice” from survivors, advocates, justice professionals and others)
- On posters (i.e., using specific quotations on posters that publicize NCVRW activities, and at your actual NCVRW events)

## 2014 NCVRW Training and Education Programs

Since many NCVRW CAP recipients sponsor awareness events, it’s a good idea to link these activities to the 2014 NCVRW theme.

### Suggested “Icebreakers”

Below are three “icebreakers” that can help you promote the 2014 NCVRW theme:

#### 1. *Offenders’ Rights vs. Crime Victims’ Rights*

It’s always interesting to challenge people to consider the rights of alleged and convicted offenders, versus the rights of victims and survivors of crime. The icebreaker questions to pose are:

- What are rights of alleged and convicted defendants that are *absolutely guaranteed* by law?

**ANSWER:** Included in the 6<sup>TH</sup> Amendment to the U.S. Constitution are rights to:

- A speedy and public trial by an impartial jury
- Be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation
- Be confronted with witnesses against him (*or her*)
- Have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his/(her) favor
- Have assistance of counsel for defense

- What are rights of crime victims and survivors that are *absolutely guaranteed* by law?

**ANSWER:** *Victims of crime lack Federal constitutional rights*, although efforts to secure a Federal constitutional amendment for victims’ rights have resulted in the passage of victims’ rights constitutional amendments in 33 states (for more information, visit the National Victims’ Constitutional Amendment Project [NVCAP] at <http://nvcap.org/>).

The “**ULTIMATE ANSWER**” to this icebreaker is that “victims of crime lack constitutional protections that are afforded to alleged and convicted defendants.”

#### 2. *What Does the “Balance of Justice” Mean?*

This quick, simply icebreaker simply asks audiences to consider “what does the ‘balance of justice’ mean” to:

- Crime victims, survivors and their families?
- Alleged and convicted defendants and adjudicated youth?
- Communities and neighborhoods?
- Justice, victim assistance and allied professionals?

Participant responses can provide a foundation to address the full scope, nuances and personal perspectives of “balance of justice” for NCVRW events.

### 3. “Is This True Today?”

The 1982 President’s Task Force on Victims of Crime *Final Report* (see “A National Historical Perspective,” above) featured over 40 “sidebar” quotations from actual crime victims about their experiences as survivors and with the justice system. NAVAA has compiled over 40 of these quotations into a PowerPoint presentation entitled “Is This True Today?”

Any or all of these slides can be used to encourage discussions about the extent to which victims’ concerns and issues *over 30 years ago* have been adequately addressed by our justice systems and victim services in 2014.

You can download the “Is This True Today?” presentation at the NCVRW CAP Subgrantees Only website (<http://cap.navaa.org/subs>). There is also a worksheet you can use for participants to rate the progress made since 1982.



### Artwork to Visually Depict the 2014 NCVRW Theme

“Theme artwork” will be provided in the 2014 NCVRW *Resource Guide* published by OVC. In the meantime, it’s easy and fun to find artwork that visually depicts the 2014 NCVRW theme.

You can start by entering “Clipart, Justice” and “Clipart, Challenges” into *any* Internet search engine, and you’ll find a broad array of free clipart from which to choose.

Another great (and *free*) resource is the “clipart” provided within Microsoft software (go to “insert” and then “clipart” within your Microsoft program); for example, **there are over 80 clips for “justice”**.....



### For More Information

Please contact National Crime Victims’ Rights Week Community Awareness Project Consultant Anne Seymour via email at [annesey@atlantech.net](mailto:annesey@atlantech.net); or by telephone at 202.547.1732.

**SAMPLE WORK SHEET TO OBTAIN INPUT  
ON THE 2014 NCVRW THEME**

From your unique personal and/or professional perspective,  
please identify *three effective strategies* for “restoring the balance of justice,”  
and *three challenges* to “restoring the balance of justice.”

<p style="text-align: center;">THREE EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR “RESTORING THE BALANCE OF JUSTICE”</p> 	<p style="text-align: center;">THREE CHALLENGES TO “RESTORING THE BALANCE OF JUSTICE”</p> 
<p>1.</p>          <p>2.</p>          <p>3.</p>	<p>1.</p>          <p>2.</p>          <p>3.</p>