



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 #4**

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

#### ***Sample Proclamation to Commemorate 2014 National Crime Victims' Rights Week***

##### **Introduction**

An important way to promote 2014 National Crime Victims' Rights Week (NCVRW) to the public is to seek proclamations related to the 2014 NCVRW theme, and to victims' rights and needs in your jurisdiction. This year's theme – *30 Years: Restoring the Balance of Justice* – honors the 30 years that Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funding has increased support and services for crime victims, as well as many other accomplishments that have strengthened victims' rights and services in the past three decades.

The Office for Victims of Crime 2014 NCVRW *Resource Guide* will include a sample proclamation. The information included in this CAP TIP offers you additional resources to draft and seek proclamations from state and community leaders. It is *very important* that you personalize your proclamation to reflect on the accomplishments and successes of *your* state and/or jurisdiction to provide a more "local angle."

##### **Proclamation Outreach**

###### ***Who can issue proclamations?***

There are a number of entities that can issue official proclamations for 2014 NCVRW:

- State level:
  - Governors
  - Attorneys General
  - Legislature (House/Assembly and Senate)
- Local level:
  - Boards of Supervisors
  - City Councils
  - City Mayors

Each of these entities receives many requests for proclamations, so it's important to make a strong case for proclaiming the week of April 6 – 12, 2014 to be (*state/ municipality/city*) Crime Victims' Rights Week.

It's a good idea to submit your request *as early as possible* and *with as many co-signatories as possible*, including:

- Crime victims and survivors
- Directors of system-based victim assistance programs
- Directors of community-based victim assistance programs
- Leadership within your criminal and juvenile justice systems (Chief of Police, County/Parish Sheriff, Prosecutor, Probation or Parole Director, Department of Corrections Director or Commissioner, etc.)

Here is sample language you can adapt for a letter or email request for a 2014 NCVRW proclamation:

Dear ( )::

National Crime Victims' Rights Week (NCVRW) is a time-honored tradition observed annually each April. Since 1981, when President Ronald Reagan declared the first NCVRW, crime victims and survivors and those who serve them join together in April to promote victims' rights and services, and efforts to prevent crime and work together to make our communities safer.

The theme of 2014 NCVRW is "30 Years: Restoring the Balance of Justice." This theme provides us with the opportunity to recognize the many accomplishments of the victim assistance field over the past three decades and, in particular, the success of the *Victims of Crime Act of 1984* in providing greatly needed funding and support to victim assistance and allied organizations.

We would be honored if you would issue a formal (*Governor's/Legislative/Attorney General's/Board of Supervisors/City Council/Mayoral*) proclamation to commemorate 2014 Crime Victims' Rights Week in our (*jurisdiction*). We have *enclosed/attached* sample language for your consideration in drafting a proclamation.

This year, (*your program*) received a Community Awareness Project award from the Office for Victims of Crime within the U.S. Department of Justice to increase public awareness about victims' rights and services in our (*jurisdiction*). Your proclamation is an important component of these efforts to educate crime victims, survivors and our community about resources for victim assistance and community safety.

We welcome the opportunity for you or a representative to present the proclamation at our NCVRW special event, scheduled for (*day/date/time/location*).

We appreciate your consideration of our request, and know that a (*Governor's/Legislative/Attorney General's/Board of Supervisors/City Council/Mayoral*) proclamation will enhance our efforts to promote National Crime Victims' Rights Week in April.

Sincerely,

(SIGNATORIES)

ENCLOSURE/ATTACHMENT: Sample Proclamation Language

## Personalizing the Sample Proclamation to *your* Jurisdiction

The sample proclamation at the end of this CAP TIP provides a fine “starting point” for you. However, it’s a good idea to personalize the language to your jurisdiction and include strategies that have been successful in the past, and/or are still needed today and in the future to help “restore the balance of justice.” For example:

### Successful Strategies to “Restore the Balance of Justice”

#### *Victims of Crime Act (VOCA)*

- VOCA funds are derived from Federal crimes and penalties, *not* taxpayer dollars.
- From 1985 to 2012, a total of \$18.9 billion in non-taxpayer money has been deposited in the VOCA Fund. The Office of Management and Budget projects that there will be \$11.431 billion in the Fund in Fiscal Year 2014.
- Every year, state VOCA victim assistance grants provide vital direct assistance that supports thousands of public and community-based agencies nationwide to assist more than 3.7 million victims of assault, robbery, gang violence, intoxicated drivers, fraud, elder abuse, domestic violence, child abuse and neglect, sexual assault and rape, stalking and surviving family members of homicide victims, among others.
- VOCA also supports victim assistance for those involved in the federal criminal justice system, including victims and survivors of terrorist acts.
- VOCA helps crime victims with financial assistance for medical and mental health care, lost wages, and funeral and burial costs.

*Additional background information about VOCA, Fund deposits and cap on obligations is available from the National Association of VOCA Assistance Administrators at <http://www.navaa.org/budget>.*

#### *Other Successful Strategies*

- Crime victims and survivors whose willingness to speak out about the impact of crime on victims and communities delivers the “power of the personal story” to people in America nationwide
- Partnerships among criminal and juvenile justice agencies and victim assistance programs enhance the enforcement of victims’ constitutional and statutory rights
- A national focus on research and evidence-based practices helps clarify “what works” in identifying and addressing the needs of crime victims and survivors
- A national focus on evidence-based practices determines the best approaches to offender supervision, treatment, rehabilitation, accountability and ultimately public safety
- Greater attention is being paid to address the needs of traditionally-underserved victims of crime, including (*identify “under-served victims” in your jurisdiction*)

#### **Recommended Strategies for the Future**

- Increase funding for victim assistance programs to meet the significant need for survivor services and support
- Continue research on the impact of crime on victims and communities
- State- and community-level needs assessments to identify victims’ most important needs, along with strategic planning to develop appropriate, collaborative responses to meet such needs
- Focus on victims’ legal rights that enhances their participation in criminal and civil justice processes
- Implement recommendations included in *Vision 21: Transforming Victim Services* published by OVC in 2013 (<http://ovc.ncjrs.gov/vision21/>)

## Sample Proclamation\*

*The following sample proclamation is provided in the standard proclamation format:*

- Whereas,** For the second time in nearly two decades, violent crime reported to police in America increased five percent between 2011 and 2012; **and**
- Whereas,** Only 44 percent of violent crimes were reported to police, and only eight percent of crime victims received assistance from victim service agencies; **and**
- Whereas,** victims and survivors of crime across America *need* and *deserve* support and assistance to help them cope with the short- and long-term consequences of crime; **and**
- Whereas,** National Crime Victims' Rights Week – April 6 to 12, 2014 – is an important time to have a national dialogue about strategies for “restoring the balance of justice;” **and**
- Whereas,** the *Victims of Crime Act of 1984* (VOCA) has resulted in a total of \$20.4 billion in *non-taxpayer money* derived from fines and fees from convicted Federal offenders to support crime victim services; **and**
- Whereas,** our national commitment to support critical services for crime victims through VOCA, the *Violence Against Women Act*, and other Federal funding; and our state's commitment to crime victim assistance through (*cite any state funding sources here*) have had a profound and positive impact on balancing the scales of justice for those harmed by crime; **and**
- Whereas,** “Restoring the balance of justice” requires a collective understanding of the devastating emotional, physical, financial, spiritual and social impact of crime on victims and survivors, and a national commitment to provide support and services to victims in need of help; **and**
- Whereas,** the impact of crime on victims resonates through our neighborhoods, schools, and communities and demands national attention to crime prevention, victim assistance and public safety; **and**
- Whereas,** Victims and survivors of crime can gain strength from the wide range of supportive services offered by over 10,000 community- and justice system-based programs, and the more than 32,000 Federal and state statutes that define and protect their rights; **therefore, be it**
- Resolved,** that (*individual or entity*) proclaims the week of April 6 to 12, 2014 to be (*city/county/parish/state*) Crime Victims' Rights Week, and honors crime victims and those who serve them during this week and throughout the year; **and be it further**
- Resolved,** that we join together during (*city/county/parish/state*) Crime Victims' Rights Week to recognize the significant accomplishments of our Nation's victim assistance field, and to recommit our collective energies to “restoring the balance of justice” in America and around the world; **and be it further**
- Resolved,** that a suitably prepared copy of this proclamation be presented to (*your organization*) on (*date*).

*\* The statistics included in this sample proclamation are derived from "Criminal Victimization, 2012" published by the Bureau of Justice Statistics in October 2013;  
<http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/cv12.pdf> .*

**For More Information**

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