



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 #5**

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

#### **Sample Proclamation to Commemorate 2016 National Crime Victims' Rights Week**

##### **Introduction**

An important way to promote 2016 National Crime Victims' Rights Week (NCVRW) to crime victims, survivors and the public is to seek proclamations related to the 2016 NCVRW theme, and to victims' rights and needs in your jurisdiction. This year's theme – "*Serving Victims. Building Trust. Restoring Hope.*" – reflects the need to provide comprehensive, quality victim/survivor services that are safe and respectful of victims' autonomy, and that offer them help and hope for the future.

The Office for Victims of Crime 2016 NCVRW Resource Guide (which should be available online in February 2016) 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 2016 NCVRW:

- State level:
  - Governors
  - Attorneys General
  - Legislature (House/Assembly and Senate)
- Local level:
  - Boards of Supervisors/Parish Commissioners

- 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 10-16, 2016 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 (Chiefs 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 2016 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 2016 NCVRW is "*Serving Victims. Building Trust. Restoring Hope.*" This theme reflects the need to provide comprehensive, quality victim/survivor services that are safe and respectful of victims' autonomy, and that offer crime survivors help and hope for the future.

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 2016 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 that can enhance 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)*

## 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 “engage communities” and “empower victims.” For example:

### Successful Strategies to “Serve Victims”

- Recognize the significant impact of crime on individuals, families, neighborhoods, schools, communities and the economy
- Identify the fact that “everyone *is* or *knows* a victim of crime”
- Encourage community members, victims and survivors to report crimes
- Ensure that services are available to both reporting and non-reporting crime victims and survivors
- Promote cross-agency collaboration among criminal and juvenile justice agencies that can “fill gaps” in victim service delivery and the effective implementation of victims’ statutory rights
- Providing meaningful opportunities for voluntarism that benefits crime victims and survivors
- Identify victim populations in your jurisdiction that remain un-served or under-served, and commit to improve services to them

### Successful Strategies to “Build Trust”

- Promote victim autonomy and decision-making
- Promote victim participation in justice processes, including the rights to be heard, to be informed, and to reasonable protection
- Support programs and strategies that are confidential, and that enhance victim safety and protection
- Always balance the rights of those accused and/or convicted/adjudicated of crimes or juvenile offenses 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 (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 service
- 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

### Successful Strategies to “Restore Hope”

- Provide opportunities for victims and survivors to share “the power of their personal story” with communities to demonstrate the personal impact of crime; and personal strategies that have helped victims reconstruct their lives in the aftermath of crime

- Always seek to provide victim assistance services that are victim-centered, trauma-informed and tailored to the individual survivor
- Consider the nearly 25-year history of the victim assistance field in America, and the remarkable accomplishments that have continued to provide help and hope to crime survivors
- Focus on evidence-based victim services that are proven effective in helping victims cope in the aftermath of criminal victimization (see [www.crimesolutions.gov](http://www.crimesolutions.gov))

### Sample Proclamation\*

*This sample proclamation is provided in the standard proclamation format.*

- Whereas,** between 2014 and 2015 violent crime in America increased 1.7 percent;  
**and**
- Whereas,** less than half of violent victimizations (46 percent) and only 37 percent of property victimizations were reported to police in 2014; **and**
- Whereas,** victims and survivors of crime across America *need* and *deserve* consistent access to support and assistance that can help them cope with the short- and long-term consequences of crime; **and**
- Whereas,** National Crime Victims’ Rights Week – April 10 to 16, 2016 – is an important time to join together to focus on a collective theme of “Serving Victims, Building Trust and Restoring Hope;” **and**
- Whereas,** “Serving Victims” requires collaboration that provides quality, comprehensive services to both reporting and non-reporting victims and survivors of crime; **and**
- Whereas,** “Building Trust” equates to treating victims with dignity and respect, and providing them with support that enhances their autonomy and personal safety; **and**
- Whereas,** “Restoring Hope” reflects our collective commitment to provide ongoing help to survivors that promotes personal hope and healing; **and**
- Whereas,** Victims and survivors of crime can receive a wide range of supportive services offered by over 10,000 community- and justice system-based programs, and exercise their rights as defined by more than 32,000 Federal and state laws; **therefore, be it**
- Resolved,** that (*individual or entity*) proclaims the week of April 10 to 16, 2016 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 a suitably prepared copy of this proclamation be presented to (*your organization*) on (*date*).

\* *The statistics included in this Sample Proclamation are derived from:*

- *“2015 January – June Preliminary Semiannual Crime Report, ‘Crime in the United States’,” published in the Uniform Crime Reports by the Federal Bureau of Investigation in January 2016;*

<https://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s/2015/preliminary-semiannual-uniform-crime-report-januaryjune-2015/home>.

- *“Criminal Victimization 2014,” published by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice in August 2015: <http://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&iid=5366>*

### **For More Information**

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