



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 #6

To Improve Public Awareness

Sample Proclamation to Commemorate 2017 National Crime Victims' Rights Week

Introduction

An important way to promote 2017 National Crime Victims' Rights Week (NCVRW) to crime victims, survivors and the public is to seek proclamations related to the 2017 NCVRW theme, and to victims' rights and needs in your jurisdiction. This year's theme – "Strength. Resilience. Justice." – addresses three core tenets of the crime victim assistance field, as well as three attributes that help survivors reconstruct their lives in the aftermath of crime.

The Office for Victims of Crime 2017 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, including a sample proclamation. 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 2017 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 2-8, 2017 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 2017 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 2017 NCVRW, scheduled for April 2-8 is "*Strength. Resilience. Justice.*" It addresses three core tenets of the crime victim assistance field, as well as three attributes that help survivors reconstruct their lives in the aftermath of crime.

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 2017 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*)

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 promote strength, resilience and justice for victims, survivors and communities across America.

Successful Strategies Related to “Strength”

- Assess each victim/survivor to identify their most important needs and then try and meet those needs.
- Provide strengths-based resources to victims that promote survivor autonomy and help them understand and cope with the range of the impact of crime on them.
- Ensure that services are accessible and available to victims, regardless of the type of crime or where they reside.
- Provide comprehensive services that are victim-centered and trauma-informed.
- Offer victim/survivor services that are culturally-competent.
- Encourage community voluntarism to support vital victim assistance services.

Successful Strategies Related to “Resilience”

- Promote victim autonomy and decision-making
- 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
- Recognize through actions and words that every victim is unique, every case is unique, and every crime is unique.
- Offer support groups that promote self-help for victims and survivors
- Offer all victims voices and choices.
- 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

Successful Strategies Related to “Justice”

- Ask each victim, “What does ‘justice’ mean to you?” – and then work to help him or her achieve this.
- Work to ensure that victims are aware of their rights, and that they receive assistance to implement them in accordance with law.
- Assist all victims, whether or not they report the crime.
- Encourage collaboration among public, private, non-governmental and cross-jurisdictional agencies (geographic, as well as local/state/tribal/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 the seamless delivery of victim assistance services.
- Focus on evidence-based victim services that are proven effective in helping victims cope in the aftermath of criminal victimization (see www.crimesolutions.gov).

- Honor victims and survivors in all we do – in our work, in our community, and in our systems of justice.

Sample Proclamation*

This sample proclamation is provided in the standard proclamation format.

- Whereas,** between 2015 and the first half of 2016, violent crime in America increased 5.3 percent; **and**
- Whereas,** 55 percent of serious violent victimizations and only 35 percent of property victimizations were reported to police in 2015; **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 2 to 8, 2017 – is an important time to join together across our state and Nation to celebrate the theme of “Strength. Resilience. Justice.” **and**
- Whereas,** we provide strength to victims, survivors and communities by offering services and support that are accessible, culturally-competent, victim-centered and trauma-informed; **and**
- Whereas,** we promote victim/survivor resilience by offering victims voices, choices, and options for assistance and support; **and**
- Whereas,** we recognize as individuals, communities and a Nation that justice isn’t served until crime victims are; **and**
- Whereas,** victims and survivors of crime can receive a wide range of supportive services offered by over 30,000 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 2 to 8, 2017 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 2017;
- <https://www.fbi.gov/news/stories/preliminary-crime-stats-for-2016-released>
- “Criminal Victimization, 2015,” published by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, <https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/cv15.pdf>

For More Information

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