

Your local library is likely to have extensive reference resources to help you develop or enhance a directory of broadcast, print, and web-based media for your jurisdiction. In addition, you can find general and specialized media according to region and state at: http://dir.yahoo.com/News_and_Media/By_Region/.

The NCVRW letterhead should be utilized to print all correspondence with the news media. You can add a list of co-sponsoring organizations or partners in eight-point type on the left side of the letterhead.

SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

Once victim service providers and allied professionals have completed their plans to commemorate 2004 NCVRW, it is helpful to send a general press release to local print, broadcast, and web-based media highlighting key activities they will sponsor. The sample press release, which includes a national perspective, an explanation of the theme, and a quotation from the Director of the Office for Victims of Crime, can be easily personalized to state and local jurisdictions.

SAMPLE BROADCAST PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

One of the best ways to promote victims' rights and services is through the broadcasting of public service announcements (PSAs). The three sample broadcast PSAs included in this Guide can be utilized for either radio or television stations. Each PSA should be personalized to include contact information for local victim services. Any relevant data that will localize the PSA by accurately reflecting crime and victimization in the area in which the PSAs are broadcast should be added prior to dissemination. Victim advocates should contact local radio and television stations at least six weeks prior to NCVRW and ask to speak to the public service director. The director can provide guidelines about whether the station accepts PSAs and the preferred format. While some stations simply accept PSA scripts that are read by on-air personalities, others ask that the scripts be read by a representative from the organization that submits them. Be sure to understand and follow any guidelines that radio and television stations provide.

SAMPLE OPINION/EDITORIAL COLUMN

Opinion/editorial columns can describe the effect of crime and victimization on individuals and communities, and help people in your jurisdiction understand the range of rights and services available to assist victims. The sample opinion/editorial column should be personalized and expanded to reflect information pertinent to the community in which it will be published, such as current crime statistics, personal victims' vignettes, information about victims' rights and services, and shared values relevant to victim assistance in your community. The column can also be edited and submitted to local radio and television stations as an actuality, which is a 60-second statement of opinion that is usually read on air by the author. Victim service providers should consider submitting the opinion/editorial column or actuality from a local NCVRW Planning Committee or coalition.

Sample Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
(Date)

CONTACT: (Name/Title/Agency)
(A/C-Telephone)

“Victims’ Rights: America’s Values” **America Commemorates the 24th Anniversary of** **National Crime Victims’ Rights Week**

(City/State) – During the week of April 18th through the 24th, 2004, crime victims and survivors, victim service providers, criminal and juvenile justice and allied professionals, and community volunteers will join together across America to commemorate the 24th anniversary of National Crime Victims’ Rights Week. This year’s theme, “Victims’ Rights: America’s Values,” helps us recognize that when we *value* equal rights for all Americans, safety and protection for those who have been victimized, and justice for *all*, we *value* crime victims’ rights and services.

This year also marks the 20th anniversary of the Crime Victims Fund established by the *Victims of Crime Act of 1984 (VOCA)* which, over the past two decades, has provided over \$5.5 billion for victim assistance programs that offer a wide range of services to crime victims, and victim compensation that helps victims cope with the financial impact of crime. VOCA is *not* derived from taxpayers’ dollars but, rather, from Federal criminal fines, forfeited appearance bonds, and special assessments on Federal convictions. Here in (community/state), VOCA funds are utilized to (*describe the wide range of VOCA-funded services, including victim compensation*).

Since 1972, the victim assistance field has worked to ensure that crime victims are treated with compassion and respect; that they are informed of their rights and involved in justice processes as *more than just witnesses*; and that they are aware of victim assistance and compensation programs that can help them cope with the aftermath of crime. Over 30,000 laws have been passed at the Federal, state and local levels that promote victims’ rights and services, including constitutional amendments in 33 states (*including yours, if applicable*). And today, there are over 10,000 organizations that provide help and hope to victims of crime in our community, and throughout our criminal and juvenile justice systems.

According to (*spokesperson*), America’s shared values relevant to victim assistance include equality, safety and justice for *all* people in our nation.

“As Albert Einstein said, ‘Try not to become a person of success, but rather try to become a person of *value*,’” (*spokesperson*) said. “In America today, a ‘person of value’ is

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aware of the threat of violence and victimization, and is prepared and willing to respond to its impact on individuals and communities by offering to provide a kind word, support, or assistance in accessing victim services to crime victims and survivors.”

Here in *(city/county/state)*, a number of activities have been planned to recognize victims of crime and those who serve them during 2004 National Crime Victims' Rights Week. Included are: *(cite examples of special events, and attach any relevant summaries to this press release)*.

John W. Gillis, Director of the Office for Victims of Crime within the U.S. Department of Justice, encourages *all* people in America who share the core value of equal justice for all Americans to join in the commemoration of 2004 National Crime Victims' Rights Week.

“Nobody asks to be victimized by violence and, when a crime occurs, victims need to be aware that they have rights within our justice system and many services to help them cope with the victimization,” Gillis explained. “When we are *informed* and *aware* of victims' rights and services, we are committed to shared values of justice for all, and assistance and support for our family members, friends, co-workers and neighbors who are hurt by crime.”

“The Crime Victims Fund that is administered by OVC has, for 20 years, had a significant impact on providing quality victim services and assistance to victims to help them understand their rights and access available services. During 2004 National Crime Victims' Rights Week and throughout the year, I ask that we all support the vital work of victim service providers and justice professionals in our communities and nation that offer help and hope to victims and survivors of crime,” he concluded.

Members of our community are encouraged to join together during 2004 National Crime Victims' Rights Week, and honor not *only* victims of crime, but also those who bring honor to victims on a daily basis. For additional information about 2004 National Crime Victims' Rights Week, please contact *(name)*, *(title)*, at *(agency/organization)* at *(area code/telephone number)*, or visit *(name of agency's)* web site at *(web site address)*.

END

Type your press release *double-spaced* on the *sample letterhead* included in this Resource Guide. If your press release is more than one page, type “–more–” in the bottom right corner of the front page, and *paper clip* the second page to the first page. Add the title and date of the press release, plus “Page Two” in the top left corner of the second page.

Sample Public Service Announcements

: 60 SECONDS

The impact of crime and victimization in America affects not only its victims and survivors, but their families, friends, co-workers, neighbors and our communities and nation as a whole. *Most of us* know someone who has been victimized or have ourselves been hurt by crime, and *most of us* are in a position to help crime victims.

April 18th through the 24th is National Crime Victims' Rights Week. During this special week, the theme "Victims' Rights: America's Values" helps us recognize that when we *value* equal rights for all Americans, safety and protection for those who have been victimized, and justice for all, we *value* crime victims' rights and services. This week and throughout the year, *(city/county/state)* programs that help victims recover in the aftermath of crime and seek justice are committed to turning our shared values into effective victims' rights and victim assistance, ensuring that crime victims will be treated with dignity and respect; that they will receive help in securing their rights under law; and that assistance will be provided that offers them support and services.

If you or someone you know is a victim of crime, please call *(name of agency)* at *(area code/telephone number)* for information and assistance, or visit our web site at *(web site address)*.

: 30 SECONDS

April 18th through the 24th is National Crime Victims' Rights Week, a time for our community and nation to reflect on the needs and rights of victims of crime. If you or someone you know has been victimized, our *(community/state)* offers programs to help you cope with the financial, emotional and physical losses, and to help you understand your rights under the law. Or if you would like to volunteer to help victims of crime, many rewarding opportunities are available.

Get help or help out. Please call *(name of agency)* at *(area code/telephone number)* for information and assistance or to volunteer for victims, or visit our web site at *(web site address)*.

: 15 SECONDS

If you or someone you know has been hurt by crime, we provide a wide range of services to help you cope with financial, emotional and physical losses. Please call *(name of agency)* at *(area code/telephone number)* for more information and assistance, or visit our web site at *(web site address)*.

Sample Opinion/Editorial Column

“Victims’ Rights: America’s Values”

“But *I’ll* never be a victim of crime! Crime is something that happens to *someone else*. Crime is certainly a societal problem, but not one that *affects me* personally.”

If these statements were only true! The reality is that *most* people in America will be a victim of or witness to a crime in their lifetime. The threat and impact of terrorism have had a profound affect on Americans’ feelings of safety and security. The reality and threat of being a victim of violence is, indeed, *personal*.

April 18 to 24 marks the 24th commemoration of National Crime Victims’ Rights Week. For seven days, victim service providers, justice professionals and others seek to promote greater public awareness about a serious problem that affects our nation and its people 365 days a year. For one week, we share the opportunity to have a serious national dialogue about victims of crime and the impact on us as individuals, communities and a nation as a whole.

The economic impact of crime in America is devastating in itself, resulting in significant damage to victims’ abilities to focus, function and work. The psychological impact may be more difficult to measure but is no less devastating. Many victims *never* report crime because of trauma and fear. For those who *do* report crimes, we have much work to do to validate the harm they have endured, their voices and concerns, and their statutory rights as victims. And the physical impact results in people whose lives are irrevocably changed – the robbery victim who is left a paraplegic, the family whose breadwinner is murdered, left to its own devices to survive, the battered woman who hides her bruises in hopes of hiding her chronic suffering, and the child abuse victims who listen closely to the threats of their abusers and *never* disclose their victimization.

Victims and survivors of crime have simple, basic needs. They need to feel safe in reporting the crimes committed against them. They need consistent implementation of their core rights to information and notification, protection, participation, and restitution. And they need to be assured that *they* are not responsible for what happened, and that the persons who hurt them will be held accountable and brought to justice.

When we take time to identify and meet the needs of victims and survivors of crime, we commit to our shared values for justice in America:

- When you value our right to live in peace in our homes, neighborhoods and communities, *you value victims’ rights and services*.
- When you value our children and their hopes for a life of opportunity that is free from violence, *you value victims’ rights and services*.
- When you value justice for *all* people who live in America, *you value victims’ rights and services*.

Provide a two-to-three sentence description of the author’s (or collaborators’) title, agency, and relevant role at the end of this opinion/editorial column.