



**U.S. Department of Justice**

Office of Justice Programs

*Office for Victims of Crime*

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Washington, D.C. 20531

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Dear Colleague:

For many years, victim service providers, justice professionals, and community volunteers have joined forces to promote justice and safety for all. This year, during the 21<sup>st</sup> commemoration of National Crime Victims' Rights Week, April 22 to 28, we have the opportunity to continue our efforts to shed light on the plight of crime victims and encourage community support to meet victims' needs.

This year's theme, "Victims' Rights: Reach for the Stars," exhorts us to set our sights high in providing comprehensive, quality services to victims of crime, holding offenders accountable for their actions, and engaging individuals and communities in crime prevention and public safety initiatives. Our discipline's longstanding history of strong and consistent advocacy for crime victims, often in the face of adversity, is something to both *celebrate* and *continue* not only during this special week, but in years to come.

Since the Crime Victims Fund was established, nearly \$4.5 billion has been collected for deposit from fines, penalties, and forfeited bail bonds paid by convicted federal offenders. These funds, *not* taxpayer dollars, are used to support federal, state, and local programs that provide essential services for over two million crime victims in a time of need. They establish training, technical assistance, and demonstration programs that benefit thousands of community- and system-based professionals who assist victims of crime, and provide services and technical assistance to victim advocates who serve Native Americans. They help give victims the voice they *need* and *deserve*.

During 2001 National Crime Victims' Rights Week, over 10,000 victim service and allied professional organizations will sponsor public education and community outreach efforts to focus attention on victims' rights, needs, and services. This Resource Guide, which was developed by the Victims' Assistance Legal Organization (VALOR) with support from the Office for Victims of Crime, is designed to help you plan commemorative activities in your community and state and to aid you in promoting victims' rights and services throughout the year.

Let us hope that others in our communities and across our nation will join us in our work to ensure the continued fair treatment of victims. The staff of the Office for Victims of Crime and I salute you for all you do.

Sincerely,

  
Kathryn M. Turman  
Director