

Twenty creative ideas that tie into this year's theme— "Victims' Rights: Dare to Dream"— are offered to stimulate your thinking. These suggestions can be implemented "as is," or tailored to fit the particular needs or style of your organization, agency or jurisdiction. It is important to involve as many individuals and organizations in your community as possible in your National Crime Victims' Rights Week public awareness activities and commemorative events.

PLEASE NOTE:

FREE MULTICOLOR PUBLIC EDUCATION POSTER

POSTER: The Office for Victims of Crime is pleased to announce that it is offering a graphically designed, multicolor, 24 x 34 inch poster to enhance your public education efforts during National

Crime Victims' Rights Week and throughout the year. In addition to this Resource Guide, OVC will send you one poster in January, 2000. To receive a limited number of additional copies of the poster, please contact the Office for Victims of Crime Resource Center at 1-800-627-6872.



Twenty Tips for Community Outreach

The following twenty tips are designed to highlight this year's theme—"Dare to Dream"—and can also commemorate the 20th anniversary of National Crime Victims' Rights Week. Many of the concepts presented here have been successfully sponsored in past years by state and local victim service organizations and coalitions.

Each of these ideas should be tailored to fit the specific needs of the sponsoring agency, coordinating committee, or community. The ultimate key to success is to involve as many different individuals and organizations—from the criminal and juvenile justice systems, victim services, and the community—in planning and implementing your 2000 National Crime Victims' Rights Week activities.

1. To commemorate the 20th anniversary of NCVRW, review the most significant accomplishments for victims' rights and services in your state since 1980. For each year, designate one major success that highlights the fact that "dreams can come true" for victims' rights and services. Print up a **summary of "20 dreams that came true"**—"the dream, the reality"—in your state since 1980, utilizing the camera-ready artwork in this *Resource Guide*
2. At any of your public awareness and community outreach events, ask participants to consider ways in which they are "**doing your community justice**" by helping victims, working with at-risk youth, promoting safety in our homes and schools, etc. Participants' answers can be recorded on cards that can be displayed on a bulletin board or shared with others in a public forum.
3. Coordination is key to any NCVRW initiative. In eastern Missouri, a **Regional Planning Committee** is formed each year, comprised of all victim-related organizations (both system- and community-based) and allied professionals who come together months in advance of April to coordinate each group's individual activities, as well as to organize one or two "united front"-type commemorative events. The many materials in this *Resource Guide* can be utilized by your Planning Committee to coordinate and implement successful events.

4. In 1998, the Office of Attorney General Betty Montgomery in Ohio published a handsome “**calendar of events**” **handbook** that highlighted NCVRW commemorative activities sponsored throughout the state, including a brief description of events, logistics, and personal contacts for additional information. This is an excellent coordination document and can also be utilized to alert local and state media to victim and community outreach efforts.
5. Consider initiatives that highlight **victims’ rights across state borders**. For example, in 1999, Parents of Murdered Children held a march and memorial service on the Chain of Rocks Bridge across the Mississippi River, linking Missouri and Illinois. The bridge was the site of a murder of two sisters several years ago. Proclamations from both Illinois and Missouri were read at this moving event.
6. Identify **a special site** that can be used for NCVRW commemorative events not only in 2000, but in the future as well. In 1999 in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, the NCVRW Coordinating Committee started the week’s events in a park that had been named after a police officer who was killed in the line of duty, located next to a police station. Key leaders in criminal and juvenile justice addressed the crowd, emphasizing what they have done in the past, and plan to do in the future, for victims and the community to promote safety. The Coordinating Committee plans to have offenders help with the maintenance of flower gardens and build a gazebo to focus on Cedar Rapids’ commitment to community justice principles. Trees have been planted to honor victims, and a walkway made of bricks that memorialize homicide victims is in the planning stages.
7. Brainstorm ways to incorporate victim assistance and victim services into allied professions, such as justice, corrections, education and mental health. In 1999, the California Youth Authority (CYA) published a **Technical Assistance Bulletin** during NCVRW entitled “Workplace Violence for Correctional Personnel.” It covers types of workplace violence; warning signs of danger; prevention strategies; safety planning; and victim assistance and other referral resources. The Bulletin was distributed to CYA employees, as well as to other state correctional agencies for training and staff development. The “bulletin” concept could be incorporated for topics such as school safety, the mental health needs of victims (for mental health professionals), and cycle of violence (for a wide variety of audiences).

8. In urban communities, your Coordinating Committee can contact the managers of tall buildings with lots of windows. During NCVRW, **lights can be left on all night in offices** to spell out “VICTIMS’ RIGHTS” or a short theme. A press release can alert the news media to a “kickoff” event the first night the lights are turned on. (Submitted by the St. Louis NCVRW Coordinating Committee).
9. Coalition and agency **web sites** offer excellent opportunities for victim and community outreach not only during NCVRW, but also throughout the year. A calendar of events, photographs and video footage of prior NCVRW events, and list serves that keep coordinating committee members updated of key activities are but a few examples of how to utilize web sites for NCVRW. The Missouri Victim Assistance Network (MOVA) site < <http://www.mova.missouri.org/> > , averages 800 visits a day and provides information and referrals to supportive services for crime victims, as well as opportunities for professional development, training, and technical assistance for victim service providers.
10. Create a **crime victims advocacy tree**. Provide victims, advocates, allied professionals, and community members with card stock imprinted with this year’s commemorative artwork and theme, “Dare to Dream.” Ask each individual to write down his or her “dream” for victims’ rights and services or community safety. Tie the cards with colorful ribbons onto a tree near the courthouse, city hall, or a victim services organization.
11. Sponsor an **essay contest** for elementary, junior high, and/or high school students based upon the theme “Dare to Dream.” Ask students to submit essays that describe their “dream” for: safety in our homes, safety in our schools, and/or safety in our community. Create a panel of esteemed judges that include representatives from the criminal and juvenile justice systems, victim services, and community leaders. Sponsor an award ceremony during NCVRW that honors the winning submissions.
12. One of the most effective ways to promote victims’ voices is through **Victim Impact Panels**, which can be sponsored at a variety of forums (such as community outreach sessions, schools, civic organizations, and institutional or community corrections settings). Ask victim participants to address this year’s theme—“Dare to Dream”—by discussing their dreams and vision for an America where victims’ rights and services meet the needs of *all* people who are hurt by crime.

13. At public gatherings, lead participants in a “**moment of silence**” to honor victims, followed by a song or poetry reading that symbolizes the hopes and dreams of crime victims and those who serve them for justice and individual/community safety.
14. Ask local domestic violence organizations/shelters or children’s advocacy organizations to provide **artwork from children who have been victims of or witnesses to violence**. Then sponsor a display at a public forum (such as the library, mall, or courthouse) that includes educational information about the impact of violence on children, utilizing this year’s theme to emphasize the importance of a shared dream for safety in our homes, schools, and communities.
15. **Lapel buttons** commemorating NCVRW in Ohio were designed and produced by inmates of the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction. In addition, the Department published a **book of poetry** written by victims and survivors, as well as a **calendar** that depicts the Department’s vision and programs for restorative justice that addresses the interests and needs of crime victims, offenders, and the community. Both of these creative ideas lend a visual voice to victims and communities hurt by crime, and offer offenders the opportunity to perform community service that helps crime victims and those who serve them.
16. Utilize the **camera-ready artwork** in this *Resource Guide* to create bulletin boards, bumper stickers, bookmarks, grocery bags, and other visual depictions of dreams and visions for victim services and justice for all. Ask local printers or correctional work programs to donate printing services.
17. Sponsor a **discussion group** for victims, service providers and concerned citizens that addresses how victims and service providers who have “dared to dream” of victim justice have had a positive impact on your community.
18. Solicit a meeting with your local newspaper’s editorial board, focusing on how victims’ rights and services have made your community a safer and better place to live. Ask victims who have had a positive influence on public policy or community safety to accompany you. Provide editorial board members with this year’s theme, along with supportive resources from this year’s *Resource Guide*, and encourage them to write an

editorial about the importance of victims' rights and services, and the contributions they have made to your community.

19. In many states, **flags are lowered at half-mast** in commemoration of National Crime Victims' Rights Week. You can request this important public service by writing a letter to your mayor or city council, county or parish board of supervisors, or governor, coordinating one day during 2000 NCVRW during which all flags will be lowered to half-mast to honor people who have been hurt by crime.
20. Invite adult and youth **choral groups** to perform at commemorative events, providing them with this year's theme to select songs that reflect the power of dreams and visions for equal justice for all.