

Suggested Events To Promote *New Directions*

The overall goal of *New Directions* is that each of its recommendations be reviewed, and where appropriate, implemented into communities across the Nation to ensure comprehensive and consistent rights and services for crime victims on the Federal, State, Tribal, and local levels. An important goal of *New Directions* is to provide the opportunity for key stakeholders in victims' rights and services to review its recommendations and, where appropriate and relevant, plan and implement initiatives based upon the recommendations to promote consistent and collaborative victims' rights and services.

This section of the *Implementation Guide* provides readers with three suggested strategies to bring key players throughout all justice systems, allied professions, State and local leaders, crime victims, and community members together to: assess current levels of crime victims' rights and services; identify important crime victim concerns; and establish priorities for implementing the field's recommendations contained in *New Directions*. These strategies include:

- Launching a *New Directions* State or Community Task Force
- Sponsoring a *New Directions* Community Forum
- Conducting a Plenary Session on *New Directions* at a Training Venue

Step-by-step instructions are given for each strategy, including suggestions regarding: planning the event; who should be invited; publicizing the event; and suggested agenda topics. Throughout this *Implementation Guide*, many additional resource tools are provided that will assist efforts in planning and conducting these suggested events.

Launching A *New Directions* State or Community Task Force

Establishing a *New Directions* Task Force:

The formation of a *New Directions* State or Community Task Force can be a highly effective and efficient tool to review the current status of a state or community in its provision of victims' rights and services. The information provided about task force development is offered as one vehicle to help bring key stakeholders together to begin to review current program services and victims' rights, and to compare them with the recommendations found within *New Directions*. In addition, these resources may be appropriate for implementation by individual agency- and discipline-specific organizations or professional groups.

New Directions Task Force Goals

The following sample goals for a *New Directions* Task Force provide a framework to begin addressing *New Directions*' five global challenges for responding to victims of crime well into the next century:

- Identify and assess local, State, and regional governmental and nonprofit agencies and programs that currently provide services or support to crime victims to identify gaps in services.
- Assess the comprehensiveness of victims' rights laws to determine the need for additional legislation or enhancement of current laws.
- Evaluate and address compliance with victims' rights laws on State, Tribal, or local levels and within specific agencies.
- Identify current funding opportunities and future funding possibilities.
- Identify and assess all available victim assistance-related training programs, including continuing education opportunities, e.g., victim assistance standards and training programs, police academies, colleges and universities, professional associations and organizations, discipline-specific training conferences, etc.
- Identify and determine appropriate replication of promising victim assistance practices and strategies highlighted in *New Directions*.

Task Force Membership

A *New Directions* Task Force should include a variety of participants who can bring insight, expertise, and change into their respective agencies, disciplines, or communities. When inviting persons to serve on the Task Force, consideration should be given to including a representative mix of the same professional discipline from local, county, State, and Federal levels. Representatives from Tribal and military communities should be involved where appropriate. In addition, consideration should be given to diversity by gender, culture, and geography. Suggestions for task force members include:

- Prosecutors
- Law enforcement officials
- Prosecution-based victim assistance staff
- Probation and parole officials
- Judges
- Court administrators

- Elected State and county officials (Attorney General, State legislator, representative of the Governor, mayor, county commissioner, etc.)
- School board officials (State or county superintendent, principal, PTA president, etc.)
- Higher education representatives (chair of criminology department, law school professor, university public safety official, etc.)
- Nonprofit community assistance programs representatives (domestic violence shelters and programs, adult and child sexual assault rape crisis centers, child advocacy centers, MADD, etc.)
- State or local victim compensation program representative(s)
- State Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) administrators
- Legal community
- State and county government agency representatives (Departments of Public Health, Mental Health, Health and Human Services, Aging, Social Security Administration, and Indian Health Services, etc.)
- Health care representatives (doctors, nurses, hospital administrators, medical examiners, insurance company representatives, hospital social workers, etc.)
- Mental health representatives (psychiatrists, psychologists, licensed clinical social workers, etc.)
- Business leaders (executive officers or owners of corporations or independently owned businesses, bank presidents, presidents of local business-related civic clubs, such as the Lion's Club, Rotarians, etc.)
- Religious and faith community representatives (including members from a variety of denominations)
- Chairpersons of current statewide victim or public safety-issue committees and task forces
- Citizen/community action groups (neighborhood/community crime prevention programs, TRIAD, American Association of Retired Persons, etc.)
- Media representatives (crime reporters, newspaper editors, and radio and television station general managers, etc.)
- Other professional associations representatives (State and county bar, health, mental health care, and educational associations, etc.)

New Directions Task Force Organizational Structure

One of the most effective methods to organize a *New Directions* Task Force is to create issue-specific subcommittees to review particular topics and to present their findings and recommendations to the larger Task Force for consideration or adoption. Subcommittee formation allows Task Force members to select issues related to their area of expertise so that substantial contributions can be made in a short period of time. Proposed *New Directions* Task Force subcommittees may include:

Public Awareness and Education Committee: Devises strategies to increase the public's awareness of issues facing crime victims, their rights to services and information, and how to publicize existing programs and services that assist and support victims.

Legislative Committee: Tracks State and Federal statutes pertaining to crime victims to alert interested parties of changes that may affect mandated programs and services and reviews the need to introduce new legislation or to modify existing laws based upon *New Directions* recommendations. (For suggested legislative strategies, please refer to the *Global Strategies for Implementation* section of this Guide.)

Implementation Committee: Devises strategies to implement proposed *New Directions* Task Force goals and recommendations.

Victim Assistance Committee: Tracks emerging trends in the delivery of services to crime victims; reviews current victim assistance programs to identify gaps in service; and develops and implements service programs to meet new or emerging victim assistance needs. (For suggested victim service strategies, please refer to the *Global Strategies for Implementation* section of this Guide.)

Training Committee: Identifies and reviews current victim assistance training programs and curricula, and develops strategies to establish or enhance training and educational opportunities.

Compliance Committee: Reviews mechanisms established to ensure compliance with State, Tribal, and Federal victims' rights laws, and where less than adequate, develops strategies to help increase compliance.

- Allied criminal justice professionals
- Governmental agencies with mandates to provide victim assistance services
- Nonprofits and other community-based programs that provide direct services to crime victims
- Chairs of current statewide victim or public safety-issue committees and task forces
- Participants at victim- and justice-related State, Tribal, and local conferences

Releasing Findings of the *New Directions* Task Force

In addition to creating plans of actions, a *New Directions* Task Force can release final findings and recommendations to members of the criminal and juvenile justice community, public policymakers, and the community to help increase awareness about the devastating financial and emotional impact of crime on victims. *New Directions* Task Force members can release their findings in the form of an Executive Summary or a news media press release. Below is a list of suggested community or State representatives that should be provided with information about the final findings of the *New Directions* Task Force:

- Local, State, and regional print and broadcast media
- Local and State elected officials
- Professional associations
- State and local bar associations

Sponsoring a *New Directions* Community Forum

Timing of the release of *New Directions* Task Force findings and recommendations is a critical element that should be explored by organizers of the Task Force so that the findings are well received by both the public and the media. Task Force members may wish to consider releasing their findings and recommendations to coincide with the schedule of one or more victim-related weeks held throughout the year. For example, the release of *New Directions* Task Force findings and recommendations can be released during National Crime Victims' Rights Week in April or during Domestic Violence Awareness Month in October. A Commemorative Calendar with other possible victim/crime-related days, weeks, and months can be found at the end of this section.

Historically, community forums have been used to bring together a variety of individuals who share a common interest, issue, or concern. For instance, a community forum using *New Directions* as its planning guide is one way a community can improve communications among its citizens and city, county, State, Tribal, and military leaders about individual and community crime and victimization. The success of a community forum depends upon collaborative sponsorship that reflects the interests of all key stakeholders in justice. A cross-agency planning committee also will ensure that the workload is shared to implement the *New Directions* Community Forum. Consider teaming with other allied victim service professionals, business leaders, nonprofit advocacy groups, and other interested community partners to host the forum.

The following planning steps address logistical issues that should be considered when planning a *New Directions* Community Forum.

✓ Step One: Incorporating *New Directions* into the Community Forum

- Review the *New Directions from the Field: Victims' Rights and Services for the 21st Century Report, Implementation Guide*, and its companion *New Directions* videotape to determine an appropriate community agenda and central theme for discussion/presentation during the forum.
- Once a central theme has been identified, consideration should be given to the replication and distribution of appropriate resources found in this *Implementation Guide* to increase public awareness of the forum's chosen issue or concern. For example, if the forum is being held to review local law enforcement's response to crime victims, it would be appropriate to copy and distribute the law enforcement pocket cards found in the *Camera-Ready Resources* section or the law enforcement-specific recommendations found in the *Master List of New Directions Recommendations* section to all forum attendees.

✓ Step Two: Determining the Format

All formats should allow for questions from the audience either during or at the conclusion of the presentation.

A sample *New Directions* Community Forum might include:

- **Moderated Panel Presentations:** A panel discussion by community officials, victim service program

providers, and crime victims about the community's concerns relevant to crime and victimization, and how *New Directions'* five global challenges might be incorporated into existing programs and services to improve the community's overall response to crime victims. (A listing of the five global challenges can be found in the *Global Strategies for Implementation* section of this *Guide*, along with suggested strategies for action.)

- **New Directions Task Force Panel:**
A panel discussion by members of community or statewide *New Directions* Task Forces to release findings for community implementation of *New Directions* recommendations.

- **New Directions Videotape Review:**
A screening of the 18-minute companion videotape to the *New Directions* publication, incorporating "stop" and "start" points during the viewing to allow for panel and audience discussion of key points, and how its contents can be applied to enhance the community's awareness of victim-related issues. (*Suggested key questions for the videotape discussion can be found in the New Directions Videotape discussion guide.*)

Note: When selecting a moderator for any of the suggested *New Directions* Community Forum formats, consideration should be given to selecting someone who is both knowledgeable about victim rights and services, and is comfortable speaking in front of large audiences. Suggested moderators could include: a crime victim, justice system officials, elected officials, or a chairperson of a victim-related task force or advisory group.

✓ Step Three: Who Should Be Invited?

Community Forum attendees might include:

- Crime victims and victim service professionals.
- Elected local officials.
- Representatives of local print and broadcast media.
- Representatives of the criminal justice continuum, i.e., law enforcement, prosecutorial, judicial, corrections, and court administrative representatives.
- Citizen action civic groups.
- Educators and academia.
- Medical and mental health practitioners.
- Religious and spiritual leaders.
- Representatives from the business community.
- Representatives of philanthropic groups.

New Directions Community Forum organizers also may wish to consider additional methods to increase participation among community members who may wish to attend. These additional methods may include:

- Providing onsite, live participation via the Internet.
- Partnering with a local radio talk show to air the forum and allow for viewer listening call-in response.
- Asking a local cable access channel to air the forum live and allow for viewer call-in response.
- Linking multiple sites together utilizing compressed video or other satellite technologies.

✓ **Step Four: Selecting a Location to Hold the Community Forum**

An appropriate location to convene the Community Forum might include a:

- School or hospital auditorium.
- Municipal or county courthouse.
- Local church or synagogue.
- Public library.
- Courtroom.
- Civic auditorium.

✓ **Step Five: Selecting a Date for the Community Forum**

Consideration should be given to holding the Community Forum in conjunction with a national public safety and victim awareness commemorative event to increase media attention and garner public support. Sponsors can join local advocacy organizations in a celebration of a victim/criminal justice-related commemorative event. For example, consider co-hosting the forum with local victim assistance programs during National Crime Victims' Rights Week or local domestic violence programs and shelters during Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Commemorative weeks and months for 2000 include:

Samples of Some National Crime-Related Commemorative Events

April

National Child Abuse Prevention Month
National Sexual Assault Awareness Month
National Crime Victims' Rights Week

May

National Law Day
National Correctional Officers Week
National SAFE KIDS Week
National Police Week
National Missing Children's Day

August

National Night Out

October

Crime Prevention Month
Domestic Violence Awareness Month
American's Safe Schools Week
Annual Week Without Violence
National Red Ribbon Week

November

Ninth Annual Speak Out

December

National Drunk and Drugged Driving Awareness Month

✓ Step Six: Concluding the *New Directions* Community Forum

When organizing the *New Directions* Community Forum, consideration should be given to the forum's conclusion, including:

- Who will make closing remarks indicating the conclusion of the forum? (Suggested speakers might include the moderator, a criminal justice official, or elected official.)
- Will there be a process to continue the study of ongoing concerns or issues, and/or the implementation of solutions made by panel members or members of the general audience to address specific issues or concerns discussed during the forum? Which person or agency will be assigned this responsibility?
- How can the sponsors challenge the participants to take individual and collective action to improve victims' rights and services?
- How will followup information be shared with the group in the future?
- Who will thank panel and audience members for their participation?

Conducting a *New Directions* Plenary Session

This *Implementation Guide* provides several tools for creating a dynamic conference plenary session to introduce *New Directions* to a wide variety of audiences. For example, in the *Getting the Word Out About New Directions* section of the *Guide*, a sample speech and companion talking points are provided to help speakers prepare a *New Directions* oral presentation. In the section entitled *Camera-Ready Resources*, corresponding overhead transparencies can be found to visually augment the speech; these overheads can be used as a group or as individual visual aids to emphasize specific topics for the presentation. Included in this *Guide* is an 18-minute *New Directions* videotape, which also serves as a valuable tool to build audience interest in *New Directions*. To further stimulate discussion about issues highlighted in the video, a companion video discussion guide has been developed and is enclosed in this *Guide*.

Organization of Plenary Session

New Directions presents a comprehensive communitywide response to crime victims. A *New Directions* plenary session brings all key stakeholders to the table to discuss a community's current response to victims' rights and services. *New Directions* serves as a template for program assessment, planning, and implementation. A panel of speakers can provide a diverse and interesting response to the many recommendations presented in *New Directions*. One of the most powerful ways of presenting a plenary session about *New Directions* is to invite a representative from each justice agency in the community to sit on the panel. Each panelist can provide a brief overview of the most important recommendations in *New Directions*. Crime victims and community victim service providers also should be represented on the panel to ensure that the voices of victims are strongly heard!

Suggested Speakers

Panel Moderator: Consider a justice system official, elected official, or a chairperson of a victim-related task force or advisory group to serve as the moderator.

Five or Six Panelists: Consider justice system officials and allied professionals, victim service providers, and crime victims for panelists.

Sample Agenda for Plenary Session

- Opening Presentation: Introduce panel and topic. The *New Directions* sample speech, talking points, and overhead transparencies contained in this *Guide* provide moderators with the resources they need to plan and conduct the plenary session.
- Play *New Directions* Videotape (*Refer to the videotape discussion guide for an overview of the video and pertinent discussion points and questions.*)
- Ask each panel member to offer a brief reaction to the video and discuss the key recommendations contained in *New Directions* that affect his or her work/profession/community. **Note:** It is important to provide speakers with a copy of their pertinent section/chapter of *New Directions* in advance in order for the speaker to select salient points and recommendations to focus the discussion. Be sure to limit each speaker to no more than 10 minutes.

- Another interesting way to present the plenary session is to have panelists react to each of the five global challenges presented in *New Directions*. In other words, introduce the first global challenge and then ask the panelists to respond. This provides for a more lively panel presentation because each panelist has several opportunities to react, rather than just one opportunity. (An overview of the five global challenges can be found in two sections of this Guide: *Global Strategies for Implementation and Camera-Ready Resources, Overheads*.)

Audience Interaction: Be sure to save time for questions from the audience. The moderator should ask the members of the panel to repeat the question for clarification.

Recording the Session: Many insightful ideas and critical issues can be raised in this type of plenary session that can assist future planning, implementation, and advocacy efforts. It is important to record the session for future reference by the use of videotape, audiotape, or written transcription. When employing any type of recording device it is critical to provide advance notice to all speakers and to receive written approval for the use of such equipment. In addition, at the beginning of the session, audience members should be informed if the session will be recorded.

Closing: In closing, challenge the audience to take action in their community/profession/agency to begin to implement the vision and recommendations of *New Directions*.