

Ideas For Special Events

Each year, communities throughout the country develop a variety of creative ways to commemorate National Crime Victims' Rights Week.

From festivals to educational forums, art displays to tree plantings, marches to memorials to media outreach, diverse groups with a variety of experiences, knowledge, and skills create their own traditions to honor, engage, and advocate for victims. In anticipation of NCVRW, your organization can reach out to other local groups and coordinate events that honor crime victims and raise awareness of victims' issues within the community.

To support these efforts, the Office for Victims of Crime, in conjunction with the National Association of VOCA Assistance Administrators, offers funding assistance through its Community Awareness Projects initiative. Each year, funds are awarded to help communities create their own projects based on criteria including collaboration, innovation, community impact, media involvement, and experience with victims' issues. Over the past 15 years, the NCVRW Community Awareness Project has supported more than 1,100 community projects to raise public awareness about victims' rights and services. Within many of these communities, traditional NCVRW events were enhanced by collaborative partnerships .

As you plan your 2023 activities, be inspired by last year's projects and look for ways to honor the history of victim services and create hope for our future initiatives. (See <https://navaa.org/community-awareness-project> and join the NCVRW subscription list to receive information about 2023 funding opportunities.)

Advertising Campaigns

The Delaware Victims' Rights Task Force held at least one outside resource fair in each county during NCVRW. Outreach included promotional materials, 5K races, recognition events and survivors sharing their stories live online.

The Western Judicial Circuit District Attorney's Office in Georgia held two events, one in person and one online, with the centerpiece featuring victims and survivors of crime sharing their stories. Each event was supported by promotional campaigns that included newspaper and radio advertisements and Facebook ads. These efforts were supplemented by outreach efforts on Twitter and Facebook accounts and the email lists of supporting organizations.

St. Louis Circuit Attorney's Victim Services distributed magnets, cups, flyers, resource cards, and victims' rights information on the first weekday of NCVRW on the steps of City Hall. They also hosted a weeklong scavenger hunt to engage the public through education of victims' rights and services and promoted community involvement by encouraging participants to visit different neighborhoods through scavenger hunt stops. Each stop incorporated a photo opportunity with a NCVRW display.

The Fort Wayne, Indiana, Police Department's program enhanced the general public's awareness of victims' rights and services through ad campaigns using two digital billboards in Allen County, buses, custom coffee sleeves, local newspapers, an email blast through Fort Wayne Newspapers' 30,000 subscribers, printed materials, pizza boxes and business invoices, and T-shirts. They also hosted a candlelight vigil and portrait walls displaying images of homicide victims.

The Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department implemented a multi-pronged advertising approach, in English and Spanish, to raise awareness of NCVRW, victims' rights and locally available resources. The effort included placing advertising panels and rack cards in bus shelters, targeted ads through Facebook and Instagram, and public service announcements on the digital marquees of casinos.



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Battered Families Services Inc. in New Mexico held eight different activities during NCVRW, including radio announcements, a theater ad for two weeks in April, and bus/transit rack cards with a QR code linking users to information about victims' rights, contact information, and resource information. In addition, an information booth was set up at five key locations to reach community members.

The North Dakota Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation Victims Services used a mass media advertising campaign to inform victims and the general public of the importance of NCVRW and share contact information for resources. Multiple large market radio stations promoted NCVRW with 15- or 30-second commercials multiple times a day; posts and advertisements ran on Facebook and other social media platforms; and email blasts were sent daily.

The Oregon Department of Justice Crime Victim and Survivor Services Division project centered on a poster communicating an important message to victims and survivors that was displayed in the public areas of 192 victim and survivor service agencies throughout the state. In addition, the project designed and electronically distributed language identification cards to all victim and survivor service agencies across the state to be printed and displayed at access points like front desks and entryways. The card allows survivors to easily identify their language needs and reminds agencies of their obligation to provide language access.

The South Carolina Department of Probation, Parole and Pardon Services program included small bottles of hand sanitizer displayed on counters in 60 restaurants, bakeries, pharmacies, YMCA locations, town halls, hair salons, grocery stores, and other businesses in 20 counties. Additionally, information cards were placed in grocery bags and boxes at food bank facilities in 10 counties.

The Child First Advocacy Center in Vermont printed information about victim resources on reusable grocery bags in an effort to reach a diverse range of people.

Multiple agencies within Brown County, Wisconsin, led by the Family Services of Northeast Wisconsin Sexual Assault Center, came together to showcase support for victims of crime within the community. Each agency conducted community outreach throughout the year through radio and television ads.

Art Displays, Video Screenings, and Cultural Events Award and Recognition Ceremonies

The Elmore County, Idaho, Domestic Violence Council hosted an art display that used silhouette cutouts to bring awareness to the effects the crime had on the survivors and the rights that the victim was denied and/or honored. That was augmented with a social media campaign and the distribution of magnets about local and national victim services by local businesses, offices, and service providers.

The Clothesline Project in Mississippi displayed shirts decorated by people affected by violence on a clothesline to be viewed by others as testimony to the problem of violence.

The Wynona's House Child Advocacy Center in New Jersey raised community awareness for victims' rights, access to services, and equity for victims through billboard ads, a poster campaign, an art project, and a gallery show. They also conducted two workshops on the Japanese art of Kintsugi, which consists of repairing and rebuilding broken pieces of ceramics with gold to be used in parallel with the journey experienced by crime victims. Following the workshops, the artwork was displayed at the ArtFront Gallery for a public exhibition at which information and resources for victim services were provided.

Community Awareness and Engagement Events Walks, Runs, Fairs, and Rallies

The YWCA Central Alabama promoted awareness and encouraged cooperation among community organizations through an awareness campaign that included a town hall, interactive virtual workshops, webinars, panel discussions, and participation in health fairs and community resource fairs. The YWCA leveraged its footprint in Jefferson, Blount, and St. Clair counties to launch a community awareness campaign for NCVRW.

The Sonoma County, California, Victim Services Division hosted a community fair and a virtual event to outline services available to victims. The workshops focused on serving victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse/trauma, elder abuse, identity theft, and hate crimes.

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The Kindred Kids Child Advocacy Center in Colorado used a 5K run/walk along a river as the foundation for a public awareness outreach campaign to increase general knowledge of the rights of victims and the services available to them. There was a proclamation and a ceremony at the beginning of the event to honor those that have been lost to violent crimes.

The Center for Family Justice Inc. of Connecticut organized a rotating exhibition and speaker panel event on themes that covered victim blaming and bystander effect. They hosted a speaker panel that addressed different types of victimization and a resource fair where visitors could engage with various organizations about their missions, services, and how they provide support to the community.

Credible Messengers of Florida hosted a “Love Up, Guns Down” community engagement event at the New Life Church in Pine Hills, an area just west of downtown Orlando. Pine Hills is a community of over 66,000 residents.

The Office of the Attorney General of Guam held a weeklong virtual fitness challenge to promote a fun and healthy way to engage with the community and to bring awareness to victims’ rights and resources. Educational information and materials, tote bags, victims’ rights cards, and resource directories were distributed to attendees at each event and during food truck fairs.

Legal Aid Society of Metropolitan Family Services in Chicago, the coordinating body of the Communities Partnering 4 Peace, focused on community efforts to provide violence reduction, intervention and prevention services for high-risk populations in communities with the greatest incidents of gun violence. The LAS’ Justice Corps implemented a series of educational workshops and community events and disseminated informational materials to increase residents’ awareness of victims’ rights and resources. The LAS’ Justice Corps also hosted a Light in the Night event wherein the community reclaimed public spaces as safe gathering spaces.

Southwestern Community College in Iowa conducted a victim awareness day with guest speakers, lunch, and several breakout rooms that included different movies/documentaries focused on crime victim awareness. Each movie was followed by a panel discussion. There were also Light in the Night walks and candlelight vigils in honor of victims of crime, as well as a 5K run/walk in which participants and attendees were greeted with music and food.

The Kentucky Office of the Attorney General hosted the second annual Victims’ Rights Awareness Day at Kentucky’s state Capitol during NCVRW. The Survivors Council helped design, develop, and host the event, which centered on a walk around the Capitol and victim services resource fair intended to bring awareness to the public and important stakeholders. The awareness walk included a survivor advocate, a victim service provider, and the Kentucky attorney general.

The Hope and Justice Project in Maine promoted the Color ME 5K Run/Walk for Hope on April 30, 2022. This public awareness event aimed to strengthen the rights of victims and survivors of domestic abuse in Maine by educating the communities of rural Aroostook County. The effort included a community resource fair where local organizations highlighted their services.

The Maryland Crime Victims’ Resource Center Inc. hosted a 5K walk in honor of survivors and victims of crimes. MCVRC increased community awareness of victims’ rights and resources while encouraging and boosting community engagement with local police and other advocacy organizations. The walk had dedications focusing on three major areas. Mile 1’s theme was “Pertinent Facts,” Mile 2’s was “Heroes for Victims,” and Mile 3’s theme was “Why We Fight Spotlights.” These focus areas allowed guests to honor survivors and victims by remembering heroes who fight for victims’ rights.

Centerboard’s We Rise Program in Massachusetts hosted four in-person events during NCVRW aimed at enhancing the public’s awareness of rights and services for victims of crime. The events were done in partnership with local community health centers, the Massachusetts Office for Victim Assistance, Rape Crisis Center, domestic violence providers, and mental health providers. The evening culminated in a candle-lighting ceremony.



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Equality Michigan Department of Victim Services hosted three community resource fairs at its community site locations in Detroit, Grand Rapids, and Bay City. These sites serve the LGBTQ and HIV+ communities, families, allies, and victims of crime. There was a video booth at each event where participants could make short videos with a 2022 NCVRW logo prop.

The Western Twin Cities Crime Awareness and Healing Campaign in Minnesota provided information about types of crimes, victims' rights, local resources for support, and confidential help for victims. The campaign produced and disseminated educational posters to professionals in the fields of OB/GYN, dentistry, substance abuse, and beauty services that explain signs of violence, intake/interview strategies to address possible victimization, and person-centered approaches to offering resources for help.

Citilookout in Ohio hosted a NCVRW walk and expo titled "Walk for Victims' Rights, Access and Equity." It was promoted on billboards for a month prior to the event. Other media segments followed in radio, social media, and newspapers a week prior to NCVRW. There were speakers, musical and dance performances, community partner tributes, and a "bubble blow" in honor of crime victims, survivors, and their families.

San Juan Bautista School of Medicine - Puerto Rico Health Justice Center commemorated National Crime Victims' Rights Week with a public event at Montehiedra Shopping Mall. A dozen agencies and community-based organizations participated in the one-day activity, with display tables with information and resources for victims of crime and professionals who offer services. An updated directory of services for victims was developed and distributed. The activity program included short sessions with testimonies, orientations, and keynotes by professionals and experts about available services.

The Rosebud Sioux Tribe Health Administration held two 5K walk/runs during April at the Rosebud Sioux Tribe Fairground in Rosebud, South Dakota. The event was preceded by a monthlong social media, radio, and print advertisement campaign. A Lakota prayer was said before the walk/run began.

The Alamo Area Rape Crisis Center in Texas had an awareness campaign that featured stories and affirmations from victims and survivors, along with information on victims' rights and the services and support available in the region to promote healing. Children and youth are deeply impacted by crime, and through their artwork, they shared their feelings of pain and hope with the community. The RCC also hosted an online session that included a "Know Your Rights" presentation and question-and-answer session that empowered participants to advocate for themselves and for each other. An online panel discussion addressed the barriers that marginalized and underserved communities have faced in accessing services. RCC also hosted an in-person community resource fair and candlelight vigil.

In partnership with Mariposa House and Healthy Families, Dove House Advocacy Services in Washington conducted an outreach and educational program for residents of Jefferson and Clallam counties who are at-risk for or are victims/survivors of crime. The program distributed rack cards, street banners, keychain flashlights and credit card sleeves and each partner agency hosted a presentation.

The YWCA of Sweetwater County, Wyoming, held a 5K/10K race, "Run with the Badges," and ran a NCVRW advertising campaign to inform the public about victims' rights. Booths were available after the race/walk offering more information about services for crime victims. Following the race, recognition awards were given to outstanding victim service providers in the community.

Vigils and Memorial Ceremonies

Victims For Justice in Anchorage, Alaska, used social media, earned media, and paid media to build awareness about NCVRW and the role of victim advocacy in the state. Events included a live-streamed tree ceremony to honor victims of violent crimes, a virtual panel addressing media and crime victims, a victim service award event, and the production of a video focusing on Indigenous Alaskans.

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The Victims Witness Services for Coconino County in Arizona worked in partnership with Utah Navajo Health Systems Inc. to host a traditional Navajo blessing and invocation for healing and commemoration of those lost to violence, a local/region-specific resource fair with representatives from agencies talking about services and resources available in each area, and a panel of survivors sharing experiences as victims of crime and their path to healing.

The Network for Victim Recovery of DC (NVRDC) hosted a community vigil and open house to commemorate the victims of violence in the District in the prior year and to highlight the growing number of resources for victims of crime. Throughout the event, NVRDC disseminated brochures about crime victims' rights and services available in the District and NCVRW-themed outreach items. NVRDC also used public service announcements and mailed outreach postcards throughout communities identified as having the highest instances of crime in the District of Columbia.

Isaih and Bertha Germany Ministries in Arkansas hosted Be A Light! During the event, survivors of human trafficking, domestic abuse, street violence, school bullying, and other violence shared personal stories of their journeys. The ministry planted a "Survivor's Tree" and unveiled a plaque to be a living and lasting memorial to all victims of crime.

The New Orleans Police Department held a candlelight peace vigil and a victim outreach and resource fair at police headquarters. The fair included a ceremony honoring families struggling to negotiate the criminal justice system after being victimized. The program featured a vocalist, a local high school choir, a jazz band, and a liturgical dance presentation.

Lincoln County, Nebraska, focused on tree plantings honoring crime victims and handed out plaques recognizing law enforcement and attorneys for their response and support of crime victims. Crime victims and service providers were present at the tree-planting to speak and hand out stress-release items and printed materials about all types of crime and the services available.

The Downstate Coalition organized the annual New York Crime Victims Candlelight Vigil with the assistance of the Bronx District Attorney's Office and other co-sponsors to kick off NCVRW. This vigil had both in-person and virtual attendees. The live stream gave the Downstate Coalition the opportunity to reach a wider audience. The vigil was a remembrance for those lost to crime and a celebration to all who have survived crime victimization.

Ponca Tribal Victim Services in Oklahoma collaborated with Survivor Resource Network to host a Light the Night memorial for crime victims at Ponca Lake. The event started with a cultural prayer by the chair of the Ponca Tribe, Oliver Littlecook. Throughout this memorial, there was native drumming and singing sacred Ponca songs. Participants were given a lighted lantern to honor crime victims. As the program finished, sacred songs were drummed to allow the participants to dance and heal from their trauma.

The 7th Judicial District Attorney General's Office in Tennessee organized a victims' services fair followed by a candlelight vigil. During the victims' services fair, providers distributed information about available resources. A candlelight vigil was held with speakers from partner agencies in and outside of the criminal justice system along with a testimonial from a crime victim and survivor to introduce a variety of supportive voices.

A purple candlelight vigil was held by the Rockingham County, Virginia, Victim Witness Program in honor of NCVRW. The event promoted community resources for all past, present, and potential victims of crime in Rockingham County by fostering community relationships and creating an open dialogue to discuss available reporting resources through a collaborated coordinated community response.



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Youth and College Engagement

Arise, in Lawrence County, Pennsylvania, partnered with local social service providers to host an all-day awareness celebration in conjunction with a resource fair that allowed people to attend, receive information, and ask questions. Two public presentations on victims' rights, including trauma-informed community response to victims, were hosted in conjunction with the Lawrence County District Attorney's Office. Two campus awareness presentations were held at Westminster College.

Family Service of Rhode Island partnered with SoJourney House and the local The Silent Witness Project chapter to update project silhouettes for mass unveiling at the Victims' Grove Ceremony and placement at five local colleges/universities. The program began with the Providence Police Department Honor Guard presenting the colors, followed by the arrival of the Providence Mounted Command on horseback and a local high school choir singing the National Anthem. There was a short speaking program and a moment of silence. The honorees laid a donated wreath in NCVRW colors in memory of all victims of crime. Honorees were given engraved plaques in appreciation of their service and were offered the opportunity to make short acceptance speeches.

The Issachar K Tigre Foundation-Victims United Inc. Partners for Peace project provided high school Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps Cadets with education on crime and crime prevention and accessing services. Students produced innovative approaches to raise awareness and created a brochure to educate and guide peers and the public. Students also worked collaboratively to write a poem and create a video of their perspectives to further efforts to raise public awareness of crimes, victims' rights, and victims' resources in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Combinations

Destined To Win Ministries in North Carolina conducted activities focused on victims of all types of crime, including the distribution of event calendars, flyers, posters, and display banners; newspaper ads; a Facebook Live broadcast; and a candlelight vigil for victims/survivors and their families during which they could share their stories. There was also a drive-through resource fair.

The Utah Office for Victims of Crime events included "Shine the Light on Victims of Crime," during which people showed support to victims of crime by placing lawn signs, posters, and light bulbs at their homes, offices, and other locations throughout their communities; "Paint One Blue Nail to Stand for Victims' Rights," in which participants painted one blue fingernail and engaged their communities by creating videos /pictures statewide; and a social media PSA contest and hashtag campaign. In collaboration with the Salt Lake City Mayor's Office, shelters and other various agencies, they hosted walk and resource fair at a local park to support victims of crime, a motorcycle ride and a candlelight vigil along with a jingle dance (healing/prayer dance) and a blessing from a tribal elder, as well as Kintsugi art (Japanese art of putting broken pottery pieces back together with gold).

The YWCA Wheeling held various screenings of the NCVRW video and the "Reality at a Glance-Crime Victims" video. Advocates at each screening location discussed victims' rights and available services. At the end of each screening, attendees were invited to participate in discussions with advocates and the victims that helped write the scripts. The YWCA Wheeling held a poster contest for elementary, middle school and high school students at 10 different schools.

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