



## U.S. Department of Justice

Office of Justice Programs

*Office for Victims of Crime*

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Washington, D.C. 20531

Dear Colleague,

It gives me great pleasure to present the 2015 National Crime Victims' Rights Week Resource Guide, developed by the Office for Victims of Crime in partnership with the National Center for Victims of Crime.

This year we emphasize our vision of reaching and supporting all victims with the theme *Engaging Communities. Empowering Victims*. As you have demonstrated through your own work, engaging community leaders, organizations, and local partners is critical to meeting victims where they are and empowering them throughout the healing process and as they become survivors.

We know that in order to help victims become survivors, we must first listen and learn in an effort to better understand what they need and how we can best serve them. By working with community leaders and organizations, we can leverage existing community resources to understand the needs of underserved victims and the impact of victimization. Engaging the entire community will enable us to reach more victims and expand their options for services.

Victim empowerment is a central tenant of our work. Victims should be given the information and assistance they need to make informed decisions about their own lives as they recover from crime. An important element in promoting victim empowerment is providing an atmosphere where victims are believed and supported by their community. In such an atmosphere, victims feel safer and are more apt to share that they have been victimized and reach out for assistance. Furthermore, when we engage communities in victim response, they are better prepared to believe victims when they come forward and provide support throughout their journey to healing.

The Office for Victims of Crime looks forward to working with you as you engage your communities and empower victims. These materials are provided to support and enhance your efforts to raise awareness, build new partnerships, and reach additional victims during National Crime Victims' Rights Week, April 19–25, and throughout the year. We are inspired by your commitment and appreciate all that you do to elevate victims' rights.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Joye E. Frost".

Joye E. Frost  
Director

Office for Victims of Crime