



Department of Justice

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DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE COMMEMORATES NATIONAL CRIME VICTIMS' RIGHTS WEEK

WASHINGTON – The Department of Justice will join communities nationwide in observing National Crime Victims' Rights Week, celebrating victims' rights, protections and services throughout the week. This year's observance takes place April 19-25 and features the theme, "Seek Justice | Ensure Victims' Rights | Inspire Hope."

"Every year, millions of Americans suffer the shock and trauma of criminal victimization, affecting their well-being and sense of security and dignity," said Attorney General William P. Barr. "To these victims, we affirm our unwavering commitment to supporting them in their hour of need. We also commend the thousands of victim advocates and public safety professionals who labor tirelessly to secure victims' rights and support survivors."

"While we have made tremendous progress driving down crime and violence across the country, far too many Americans continue to suffer the pain and loss of criminal victimization," said Katharine T. Sullivan, Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General of the Office of Justice Programs. "This week, we stand by these survivors and their families, and we pledge our ongoing support to the countless men and women who serve them with such extraordinary skill and compassion."

Ronald Reagan proclaimed the first Victims' Rights Week in 1981, putting crime victims' rights, needs, and concerns in a prominent spot on the American agenda. He also established the President's Task Force on Victims of Crime, which laid the groundwork for a national network of services and legal safeguards for crime victims. President Trump and his administration have implemented historic levels of support for victim assistance and victim compensation.

Some 3.3 million Americans age 12 and older were victims of violent crime in 2018, according to the National Crime Victimization Survey. The Office for Victims of Crime (OVC), part of the Justice Department's Office of Justice Programs, supports more than 7,000 local victim assistance programs and victim compensation programs in every state and U.S. territory. Funds for these programs come from the Crime Victims Fund, which is made up of federal criminal fines, penalties and bond forfeitures.

During National Crime Victims' Rights Week, victim advocacy organizations, community groups and state, local and tribal agencies traditionally host rallies, candlelight vigils, and other events to raise awareness of victims' rights and services. This year, many communities are organizing virtual gatherings and online public awareness campaigns.

This year's commemoration began yesterday, 25 years to the day when a truck bomb

exploded in front of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, taking the lives of 168 people, including 19 children, as well as injuring hundreds of others. The mass murder remains the worst act of domestic terrorism in our nation's history and led to the establishment of the Antiterrorism Emergency Reserve, which is administered by OVC, and has been used to provide direct services to hundreds of victims of mass violence and terrorism.

“Crime victims deserve to know that they have the encouragement and support of the American people,” said OVC Director Jessica E. Hart. “I hope that citizens throughout the nation will take the opportunity this week to remember all victims of crime and their heroic stories of survival. I encourage everyone to also find meaningful ways to express their appreciation to the many committed and compassionate service providers across the country who work tirelessly supporting these survivors.”

This year, the annual National Crime Victims' Service Awards Ceremony will be postponed until a time when we can honor this year's award recipients in person. During the ceremony, OVC will present awards recognizing individuals and organizations from across the nation for their outstanding service on behalf of crime victims. The awardees will be selected from public nominations in 11 categories, including federal service, special courage, public policy, and victim services. Visit www.ovc.gov/gallery to learn more about past recipients.

For more information on how to create your own public campaigns to raise awareness about crime victims' rights online and at events throughout the year, please visit: <https://ovc.ncjrs.gov/ncvrv2020/overview.html>.

The year 2020 marks the 150th anniversary of the Department of Justice. Learn more about the history of our agency at www.Justice.gov/Celebrating150Years.

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