

NATIONAL CRIME VICTIMS' RIGHTS WEEK (NCVRW)

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WHAT IS NCVRW?

In the year 2022, the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics reported an astounding 6.6 million violent victimizations of people aged 12 and older, and approximately only 42% victimizations were reported to the police (DMCityView). These statistics are the exact reason for why National Crime Victims' Rights Week (NCVRW) is recognized every year in Iowa and across the nation. One week in April may seem small, but it touches the lives of countless individuals (victims, survivors, or even those showing support) by providing communities with the opportunity to show their unwavering assistance, raise awareness of Crime Victims' Rights, and promote helpful services and resources. This week is also an important time for recognizing the progress of Crime Victims' Rights, reflecting on how far they have come, and learning how NCVRW was initiated.

According to Voice for Victims, the 1970s paved the way for the Victims' Rights Movement when it was observed that the "scales of justice tipped heavily in favor of the accused while victims were treated with disinterest." In response, the Reagan Administration conducted a study on violent crime, and the results alerted the U.S. Attorney General by revealing

that such victims were being poorly treated by the criminal justice system. This outcome sparked another study researching how this treatment could be improved, and shortly after, in April of 1982, President Ronald Reagan “led the nation into a new era in the treatment of victims” (Voice for Victims). He issued Executive Order 12360 which instituted the President’s Task Force on Victims of Crime and outlined three main functions: (1) “conduct a review of national, state and local policies and programs affecting victims of crime”; (2) “work with the Cabinet Council on Legal Policy”; (3) “advise the President and Attorney General with respect to actions which can be undertaken to improve our efforts to assist and protect victims of crime” (Reagan Library).

After the Executive Order was implemented, the Task Force members were quickly educated on victims’ rights (or rather the lack thereof) and the unavailability of services and resources. As a result, in December 1982, the Task Force presented President Ronald Reagan with a report consisting of 68 recommendations, including suggestions to provide federal funding to assist agencies with victims of crime and implementing training programs in the criminal justice system to improve the treatment of victims (Voice for Victims). One of the most notable propositions stated that both state and federal laws should be passed in order to “protect all citizens and...recognize society’s interest in assisting the innocent to recover from victimization” (Voice for Victims). The Office for Victims of Crime (O.V.C.) was born from these recommendations and has overseen organizing National Crime Victims’ Rights Week since 1988. The O.V.C., through the Crime Victims Fund, can provide continuous aid to victims across the country and support them in their recovery (NationalToday).

The O.V.C.’s involvement in NCVRW enables communities to raise awareness of crime victims’ rights by spreading the word through events and community-based activities. Perhaps the best example of this in the state of

Iowa is DMACC's unparalleled ability to engage all community members (not just students, faculty, and staff) in the support of victims and survivors. In fact, Dr. Samantha O'Hara, the Criminal Justice Program Chair on the DMACC Ankeny Campus, stated, "We are a community first and foremost at DMACC, and as a community, it's crucial that we listen to victims and support them throughout the criminal justice process and beyond. By providing a variety of educational and awareness-building opportunities, our goal is to help everyone feel more connected to available resources and services" (DMCityView). This goes well with this year's NCVRW theme of KINSHIP, which is the very heart of crime victims' rights and drives connections by allowing everyone involved to recognize that the healing of victims and survivors can and should be done **together** as a **community**.

Join the DMACC community during National Crime Victims' Rights Week to show YOUR support of crime victims and survivors.

More information about activities for each campus can be found here:

<https://www.dmacc.edu/events-calendar/crime.html>

Works Cited

- “DMACC to Host Free Educational and Awareness-Focused Activities in Support of 2024 National Crime Victims’ Rights Week.” *DMCITYVIEW*, 26 Mar. 2024, www.dmcityview.com/just-released/2024/03/26/dmacc-to-host-free-educational-and-awareness-focused-activities-in-support-of-2024-national-crime-victims-rights-week/. Accessed 18 Mar. 2025.
- “History of Victims’ Rights Movement.” *Arizona Voice for Crime Victims*, voiceforvictims.org/history-of-the-victims-rights-movement. Accessed 18 Mar. 2025.
- “Executive Order 12360 -- President’s Task Force on Victims of Crime.” *Ronald Reagan*, www.reaganlibrary.gov/archives/speech/executive-order-12360-presidents-task-force-victims-crime. Accessed 18 Mar. 2025.
- “National Crime Victims’ Rights Week.” *National Today*, 4 Dec. 2024, nationaltoday.com/national-crime-victims-rights-week/. Accessed 18 Mar. 2025.