

The Virgin Islands Consortium

U.S. Attorney's Office in VI Joins Justice Department in Observance of National Crime Victims' Rights Week

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United States Attorney Gretchen C.F. Shappert is joining the U.S. Department of Justice in observance of National Crime Victims' Rights Week, April 19-25, 2020.

"Here in the U.S. Virgin Islands, prosecutors and staff recognize our continuing obligation to support and defend the victims of crime in the federal courts," Shappert said. "It is imperative that the voices of victims are heard and that the rights of victims are acknowledged and defended. Advocacy on behalf of victims helps to ensure justice for all."

President Ronald Reagan proclaimed the first Victims' Rights Week in 1981, placing crime victims' rights, needs and concerns as a focal point on the American agenda. President Reagan also established the President's Task Force on Victims of Crime, which laid the foundation for a national network of services and legal safeguards to support crime victims. Since 1981, National Crime Victims' Rights Week (NCVRW) has challenged the Nation to confront and remove barriers to achieving justice for all victims of crime.

The scope of the problem is significant. 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, 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

Each year in April, the Department of Justice and U.S. Attorneys' offices observe NCVRW by taking time to honor victims of crime and those who advocate on their behalf. In addition, the Justice Department and U.S. Attorneys' offices organize events to honor the victims and advocates, as well as bring awareness to services available to victims of crime. This year's observance takes place April 19-25, with the theme: Seek Justice | Ensure Victims' Rights | Inspire Hope.

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/ncvrw2020/overview.html>.