

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Readers' letters and comments are often the most read sections of newspapers and news websites. They are great tools for building awareness about NCVRW. By writing a letter to the editor, you can link NCVRW or one of your organization's programs to a current local, state, or national issue by showing why readers should care about the rights and concerns of crime victims. Ideally, you would cite a reliable recent study, quote statistics about the crime or issue, or stress the need for more research about crimes that are often hidden or underreported.

Consider asking local law enforcement agencies or other organizations to partner with you, or encourage them to write their own letters to highlight the needs of crime victims and how the public can help. Letters that are endorsed by multiple community groups will receive more attention. When you submit your letter to the editor, include your contact information so the newspaper can reach you if it decides to print your letter. If the newspaper does

not publish your letter, consider submitting it to a local organization that publishes a newsletter, post it on your website, or share it on social media.

Five Elements of an Attention-Grabbing Letter

- Respond to an article or commentary recently published. Begin your letter by citing this article.
- Keep it brief—no more than 250 to 300 words.
- Include a call to action.
- Use verified facts and reference the original sources.
- Include information on where people can learn more about the issue.



Sample Letter to the Editor

Domestic Violence Victims Need Housing Options

Domestic violence not only causes emotional and physical harm to victims, but it is also a major cause of homelessness. Domestic violence victims face barriers to safe housing due to a number of factors that may include financial instability, discrimination, or unique safety or confidentiality needs.

Housing programs—temporary, transitional, and permanent—can provide vital services for survivors and are often a key component in helping them find safety and stability. We at *[insert organization name]* hope to use the 2022 **National Crime Victims' Rights Week** to bring attention to the lack of accessible and affordable housing options for survivors.

Housing stability is critical to ensuring the safety and well-being of domestic violence survivors and their children. *[Insert local data and/or supportive articles.]* Shelters play an important role in breaking the link between domestic violence and homelessness, but they often cannot accommodate demand and are generally not intended for stays longer than a few months. In *[insert county]*, there are just *[insert number]* beds at emergency and transitional shelters for domestic violence survivors (*[insert source]*). Elsewhere across the country, there may be even less availability.

To truly respond to this public health crisis, we need to build longer-term housing solutions. Rental or utilities payment assistance, and help with related expenses such as security deposits and relocation costs, are a start. But we must do more. We need trauma-informed programs and meaningful partnerships between domestic violence programs, other victim service organizations, homeless shelters and housing providers, housing authorities, and community groups, particularly those serving marginalized communities. And we need programs that empower victims by offering them wraparound, victim-centered services.

Locally, *[insert at least two local support organizations/services]* are available to help with this growing need. We must expand access for victims of domestic violence and increase options so that they can choose what works best for them as they take back control of their lives. To get involved, *[insert call to action: connect with organization at phone, email, website or reach out to local law enforcement agency/other organization]*.

For those in need of anonymous, 24/7, confidential help, please call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 800-799-7233 (SAFE) or 800-787-3224 (TTY). To learn more about the intersection of domestic violence and homelessness, visit the Domestic Violence and Housing Technical Assistance Consortium [website](#).



RIGHTS, ACCESS, EQUITY, for all victims
Help crime survivors find their justice.