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NEWS

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NATIONAL CENTER FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME LAUNCHES LAW ENFORCEMENT OUTREACH CAMPAIGN

Arlington, VA -The National Center for Victims of Crime, the nation's leading resource and advocacy organization for crime victims, today announced its *Last Step in First Response* initiative, a nationwide outreach campaign encouraging law enforcement professionals to put victims immediately in touch with the support and services they may need.

"As first-line responders, police officers and sheriffs are in a unique position to ensure that every crime victim has a place to turn in the aftermath of crime," said Susan Herman, executive director of the National Center for Victims of Crime. "The goal of this campaign is to help law enforcement help victims."

Each year, more than 28 million Americans are victimized by crime. "The emotional, financial, and legal impact of crime can be devastating," said Herman. "When crime strikes, most people are unprepared and simply unaware of where to go for assistance." The National Center operates the nation's most comprehensive information and referral program linking victims anywhere in the country with high quality, local services.

The National Center is distributing outreach materials--*small information cards designed to fit easily into a patrol car's glove compartment or on counter tops in police departments*--for law enforcement professionals to give directly to victims of crime. Victims are encouraged to call the National Center's Victim Services Helpline at 1-800-FYI-CALL to:

- Find the best available local services
- Understand the impact of the crime
- Access victim compensation
- Formulate safety plans
- Learn their legal rights and options

-more-

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Victims can also visit the National Center's website at www.ncvc.org for in-depth information on a wide range of victim issues.

To build awareness about the ***Last Step in First Response*** initiative, the National Center has launched a major advertising campaign that will be featured in law enforcement journals, including *Police Chief* and *Sheriff* magazines. "Ultimately, this campaign is about partnering with the law enforcement community to help victims of crime rebuild their lives," said Herman.

For additional information about the ***Last Step in First Response*** campaign, please contact Lara Murray at 703/276-2880, ext. 138, or lmurray@ncvc.org or visit the National Center on-line at www.ncvc.org.

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The National Center for Victims of Crime is dedicated to forging a national commitment to help victims of crime rebuild their lives. The National Center's toll-free helpline, 1-800-FYI-CALL, offers practical information on appropriate community resources for crime victims, as well as supportive counseling and skilled advocacy in the criminal justice and social service systems.

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