Passaic County Prosecutor Camelia M. Valdes announces that the Passaic County Prosecutor’s Office (PCPO) has received funding from the National Association of VOCA Assistance Administrators (NAVAA) through a grant from the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) to promote community awareness of crime victims’ rights and services during the 2020 National Crime Victims’ Rights Week.

NAVAA is a non-profit organization that represents the 56 state agencies that distribute money from the federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Crime Victims Fund to more than 4,000 direct victim assistance service providers. The money in the Crime Victims Fund comes from fines collected from offenders convicted of federal crimes and not from U.S. taxpayers.

The PCPO will use this funding to collaborate with the Paterson Police Department as part of a Community Awareness Project during National Crime Victims’ Rights Week (NCVRW), an annual observance that will take place April 19-25, 2020. Paterson Police Officers will wear buttons and display car magnets about National Crime Victims’ Rights Week, as well as distribute palm cards providing information about crime victims’ rights and highlighting PCPO’s new mobile app to connect victims with resources.

In addition, funding will be used to promote and support the PCPO’s Annual Candlelight Vigil. “The support from NAVAA and OVC for our 2020 National Crime Victims’ Rights Week activities will help us continue to help crime victims,” said Prosecutor Valdes. “Members of our community are encouraged to help promote justice through service to crime victims by attending
our 23rd Annual Candlelight Vigil for Victims of Crime on April 26, 2020 at Passaic County Community College (3:00 pm - 5:00 pm) and by supporting victim assistance programs on a daily basis.”

First designated by President Ronald Reagan in 1981, National Crime Victims’ Rights Week (NCVRW) increases general public awareness of, and knowledge about the wide range of rights and services available to people who have been victimized by crime. The theme for this year’s observance is “Seek Justice, Ensure Victims’ Rights, and Inspire Hope.”

Since 2004, the NCVRW Community Awareness Project has provided financial and technical assistance to more than 977 community projects that promote victim and public awareness activities, and innovative approaches to victim outreach and public education about victims’ rights and services during National Crime Victims’ Rights Week. The PCPO was one of the 109 selected for funding from the 262 applications that were submitted nationwide.

For additional information about 2020 National Crime Victims’ Rights Week activities or about victims’ rights and services in Passaic County, please contact Joan Nixon, Coordinator of PCPO’s Office of Victim Witness Advocacy, 973-881-4887 or visit our website at pcponj.org. For information about national efforts to promote 2020 National Crime Victims’ Rights Week, please visit the Office for Victims of Crime website at www.ovc.gov.