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Gurbir S. Grewal
 Attorney General



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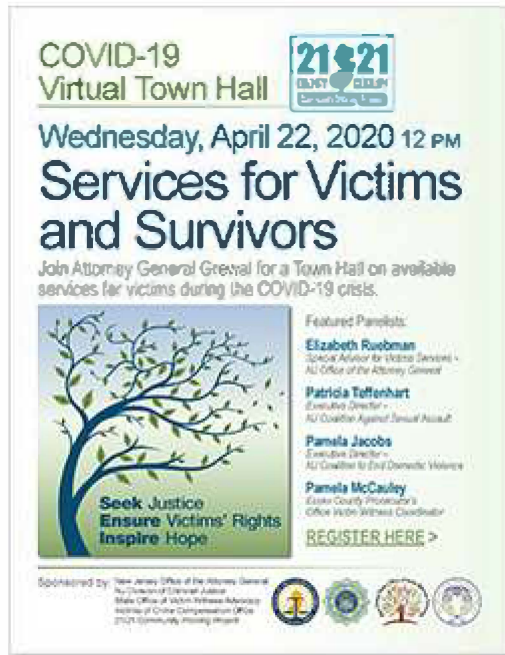
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AG Grewal Announces Series of Virtual Town Hall Meetings to Maintain Community Engagement During Crisis, Help Victims

During Pandemic, AG's "21/21 Project" Employing Technology to Continue Law Enforcement-Community Connection, Enable New Jersey Residents to Ask Questions



[Register Here](#)

TRENTON – As the COVID-19 pandemic continues and social distancing measures remain in effect, Attorney General Gurbir S. Grewal announced today a series of four upcoming Virtual Town Hall Meetings that, despite the public health crisis, will provide an opportunity for continued community engagement with law enforcement.

The Attorney General’s 21 County, 21st Century Community Policing Project, “21/21” for short, is designed to sustain a continuum of public engagement with law enforcement in every county. Each of the planned Virtual Town Hall Meetings will focus on important COVID-19 topics, such as law enforcement’s response to the pandemic, fraud detection strategies, and access to recovery and addiction services. The virtual sessions will include participation by Attorney General Grewal, County Prosecutors and

various subject matter experts. The sessions will also provide an opportunity for members of the public to ask questions and receive answers.

The first of the Virtual Town Hall Meetings is scheduled for Wednesday, April 22, at 12 p.m. The session will focus on the availability of services for victims and survivors during the COVID-19 pandemic. Attorney General Grewal will be joined by Office of the Attorney General Special Advisor for Victims Services, Elizabeth Ruebman, Executive Director of the NJ Coalition Against Sexual Assault, Patricia Teffenhart, and Executive Director of the NJ Coalition to End Domestic Violence, Pamela Jacobs. The panelists will share useful information about a broad array of resources available to victims, and how to best connect with those resources during this difficult time.

Anyone wishing to participate in Wednesday's virtual event can do so by [registering here](#).

"We will not allow the very necessary social distancing measures we have in place right now to hinder our community engagement efforts, or keep us from helping victims by either assisting them directly or connecting them with the resources they need," said Attorney General Grewal. "We want people to understand that if they're in crisis or being victimized, help is available now. Victims should not assume that access to services is restricted because of social distancing, or that people are too consumed with COVID-related issues to help them."

Depending on their circumstances, survivors and victims of community violence and crime may need a broad array of services including emergency housing, medical care, legal assistance, mental health counseling, help navigating the criminal justice system, help finding employment and other assistance. While the COVID-19 pandemic has necessarily caused the suspension of certain "walk-in" functions, important victim services remain just a phone call, text message or e-mail away. Victim hotlines are still operating, County Prosecutors' Offices are fully operational, police agencies are still responding to 911 calls and making arrests, and abuse victims can still enter police departments and file Temporary Restraining Orders.

"Our message to victims throughout the state is basic but vital: Please do not suffer in silence. We are in the midst of a pandemic, but that does not mean you can't get help," said Attorney General Grewal. "We recognize full well that the need for victim services doesn't ebb in the face of a crisis like COVID-19. In fact, the pandemic and its requirement that people stay at home may be triggering an even greater need for certain kinds of assistance. Regrettably, home is not always the safest place to be for everyone."

Announced in April 2018, the Attorney General's "21/21 Project" was conceived as a way to promote stronger police-community relations by bringing together law enforcement and community stakeholders in every county for face-to-face town hall meetings, roundtable discussions and other outreach events.

With social distancing measures in place and non-essential travel discouraged, however, such public gatherings are not possible.

In the midst of the pandemic, the planned Virtual Town Hall Meetings are both a way to maintain law enforcement-community engagement, and a means of addressing key COVID-related issues and public questions in real time.

In addition to Wednesday's session, Attorney General Grewal will host Law Enforcement's Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic on Thursday, April 30, at 4 p.m. He will be joined that day by Colonel Patrick J. Callahan, Superintendent of the New Jersey State Police, Chief Chris Leusner, Chief of the Middle Township Police Department and President of the New Jersey State Association of Chiefs of Police, and Pat Colligan, President of the Police Benevolent Association. Those wishing to participate in the April 30 Town Hall session can [register here](#).

The Recovery and Addiction Services and Fraud Virtual Town Hall sessions will be held in early May, with scheduling and registration details to be announced in the near future.

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