



# Department of Justice



## Office of Justice Programs

EMBARGOED UNTIL 2 P.M. ET  
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### **Justice Department Honors Calif. Mother for Her Tremendous Impact on the Lives of Victims in Her Community**

WASHINGTON—The Department of Justice will recognize victim advocate LaWanda Hawkins with the Volunteer for Victims Award, for her tireless efforts to reduce the number of unsolved homicides and assist victims' families, during the National Crime Victims' Rights Service Awards ceremony Tuesday, April 21, in Washington, D.C.

Hawkins, who has never accepted compensation for her work with victims, served the families of homicide victims for over 18 years following the murder of her only child, Reggie, at the age of 19. To date, her son's murderer has not been identified or brought to trial. She founded Justice for Murdered Children, a nonprofit agency dedicated to reducing the number of homicides and unsolved homicides, assisting families who have lost loved ones to homicide and improving law enforcement's responsiveness to victims' families. She has raised awareness for homicide victims and gun violence through a billboard campaign, and the Los Angeles Unified School District calls upon Hawkins to speak to students about gun violence, grief and healing.

Hawkins currently participates on the Los Angeles City Mayor's Crisis Response Team, a group of community civilian volunteers responding to traumatic incidents with immediate on-scene crisis intervention, attending to survival and comfort needs, serving as a liaison between the victim and emergency personnel, and providing referrals to victims and their families who have experienced death, serious injury, violent crime or other traumatic incidents.

At the April 21 ceremony the Justice Department will also recognize 11 other individuals and programs for their outstanding efforts on behalf of crime victims. Descriptions of the honorees are available at the Office for Victims of Crime's Gallery: <https://ovcnvrv.ncjrs.gov/Awards/AwardGallery/gallerysearch.html>.

The Justice Department's Office for Victims of Crime leads communities across the country in observing National Crime Victims' Rights Week and hosts an award ceremony each year. President Reagan proclaimed the first Victims' Rights Week in 1981, calling for greater sensitivity to the rights and needs of victims. This year's observance takes place April 19-25, with the theme *Engaging Communities. Empowering Victims.*

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## **About the Office of Justice Programs (OJP)**

The Office of Justice Programs (OJP), headed by Assistant Attorney General Karol V. Mason, provides federal leadership in developing the nation's capacity to prevent and control crime, administer justice and assist victims. OJP has six components: the Bureau of Justice Assistance; the Bureau of Justice Statistics; the National Institute of Justice; the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; the Office for Victims of Crime and the Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering and Tracking. More information about OJP can be found at [www.ojp.gov](http://www.ojp.gov).

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