



# Department of Justice



## Office of Justice Programs

EMBARGOED UNTIL 2 P.M. ET  
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### **Justice Department Honors Victim Advocate for Strengthening Victims' Rights in Texas**

WASHINGTON—The Department of Justice will recognize victim advocate Karen Kalergis with the National Crime Victim Service Award for strengthening crime victims' rights, during the National Crime Victims' Rights Service Awards ceremony Tuesday, April 21, in Washington, D.C.

Kalergis worked with Texas District and County Attorneys Association and system-based advocates to improve the process for notifying victims of their rights. She helped create the state crisis consortium connecting victim assistance with emergency management, and delivered statewide training on ways victim service providers can work together with first responders.

In 2012, Kalergis formed the "Advancing Victim Rights in Texas" working group and is a founding member and former president of the Texas Victim Services Association. When the Office for Victims of Crime launched State Victim Assistance Academies to educate and train victim assistance providers, victim advocates, criminal justice personnel and allied professionals who routinely support crime victims, Kalergis wrote the grant proposal that made Texas one of the first five states to create an academy.

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 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.*

(MORE)

## **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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