



# Department of Justice



## Office of Justice Programs

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### **JUSTICE DEPARTMENT HONORS CONSUMER PROTECTION ADVOCATE WITH CRIME VICTIMS SERVICE AWARD**

WASHINGTON – The Justice Department today presented Eva Velasquez, President and CEO of the Identity Theft Resource Center, with the Crime Victims Service Award at the annual National Crime Victims’ Service Awards ceremony in Washington, D.C. This award honors extraordinary individuals and programs that provide services to victims of crime.

“Ms. Velasquez has dedicated more than 20 years to protecting consumers, serving victims of identity theft—including children—and educating the public about the dangers of fraud and other forms of privacy invasion,” said Attorney General William P. Barr. “Identity theft accounts for billions of dollars in consumer losses every year, leaving victims to suffer both financially and emotionally and forcing them to spend many hours trying to reclaim their credit and sense of personal integrity. Few people understand the toll this insidious crime takes better than Ms. Velasquez, and few have done more to put victims on the road to recovery.”

Velasquez educates the public about identity theft, privacy, scams and fraud, especially fraud affecting children in foster care, who are particularly vulnerable because many people have access to their Social Security numbers and birth certificates. The Identity Theft Resource Center has provided assistance to more than 100,000 victims of identity theft. Under her leadership, the center has partnered with cyber-security company Symantec and Promises2Kids, a nonprofit organization dedicated to serving foster children, to launch FAST—Fostering A Secure Tomorrow. As a public educator and in testimony before Congress, she has articulated the challenges faced by foster youth victims of identity theft, translating traditional victim statistics into stories that help government officials, thought leaders and consumers understand the severity of this issue.

“Under the direction of Ms. Velasquez, the Identity Theft Resource Center is seen as a prime resource for victims, including the most vulnerable of victims—children,” said Office of Justice Programs Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General Matt M. Dummermuth. “The work she has done on their behalf is truly impressive, and she deserves extra recognition for her outstanding advocacy for youth in the foster care system.”

The Department’s Office for Victims of Crime, a component of OJP, leads communities across the country in observing National Crime Victims’ Rights Week and hosts an annual award ceremony. 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 7-13, with the theme "Honoring Our Past. Creating Hope for the Future."

The Office of Justice Programs, directed by Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General Matt M. Dummermuth, provides federal leadership, grants and resources to improve the nation's capacity to prevent and reduce crime, assist victims and enhance the rule of law by strengthening the criminal justice system. More information about OJP and its components can be found at [www.ojp.gov](http://www.ojp.gov).

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