



# Department of Justice



## Office of Justice Programs

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### **JUSTICE DEPARTMENT HONORS TUCSON LAWYER FOR TRANSFORMING VICTIM SERVICES IN INDIAN COUNTRY**

WASHINGTON – The Justice Department today presented Hallie Bongar White, a Tucson, Arizona, attorney, with the Ronald Wilson Reagan Public Policy Award during the annual National Crime Victims’ Service Awards ceremony in Washington, D.C. This honor is awarded to individuals whose leadership, vision and innovation have led to significant changes in public policy and practice that benefit crime victims.

“Ms. Bongar White is clearly a woman with a mission—to make justice a reality for American Indian and Alaska Native crime victims,” said Attorney General William P. Barr. “A survivor of violent crime herself, she has given sexual assault victims in remote areas of Indian country access to critical legal and medical services that can bring them the support and the protection they need. We applaud her tireless and inspiring efforts.”

As Executive Director of the Southwest Center for Law and Policy, Ms. Bongar White has been instrumental in delivering services to Native American victims. In collaboration with the International Association of Forensic Nurses, she created SAFESTAR, a program that provides emergency sexual assault first-aid and collects forensic evidence. She developed the National Tribal Trial College Certificate, an intensive online program that allows graduates to assist victims in tribal court hearings related to domestic violence protection orders and other matters. Ms. Bongar White also created a Victim Rights Legal Advocacy Academy and has helped dozens of tribes draft criminal justice codes, while she has also authored national protocols for tribal prosecutors and law enforcement officers on sexual assault.

“Research suggests that more than half of all native women have experienced sexual or physical violence at the hands of an intimate partner, and too often that violence takes a fatal toll. But Ms. Bongar White is working to change that,” said Office of Justice Programs Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General Matt M. Dummermuth. “Few people have played a greater role in transforming victim services in Indian country.”

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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