

MISSING OR MURDERED INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

UNDERSTANDING THE ISSUE



Missing or Murdered Indigenous People (MMIP) is a crisis. Grassroots efforts on behalf of MMIP are working to increase awareness and understanding of the issue. This is also referred to as Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW), Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG), Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives (MMIR), or other names specific to a tribal community (such as Missing and Murdered Diné Relatives, MMDR, in the Navajo Nation); each acronym represents the generations of American Indians and Alaska Natives that have mourned missing and murdered loved ones. Working together can help bring healing and justice.

Violence Against American Indians and Alaska Natives

Violence fuels this MMIP crisis. More than four in five American Indians and Alaska Natives have experienced violence in their lifetimes. Some counties have rates of murder against American Indian and Alaska Native women that are over ten times the national average. The majority of American Indian and Alaska Native victims have experienced violence at the hands of at least one non-Native perpetrator in their lifetime.

Risk Factors

Certain risk factors put American Indians and Alaska Natives at a higher danger to go missing, be murdered, or experience violent crime, including human trafficking. These risk factors stem from the impacts of historical and intergenerational trauma such as—

- Domestic and sexual violence.
- High rates of adverse childhood experiences.
- Homelessness.
- Opioid and other substance abuse.

"This is not just an American Indian and Alaska Native issue; it is a people issue."

Ingrid Cumberlidge, Aleut and Tlingit
MMIP Coordinator
U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of
Alaska



Challenges

A [2022 Congressional Research Report](#) shares three main challenges to responding to MMIP—

1. Lack of culturally specific services.
2. Complicated jurisdictional overlaps.
3. Gaps in criminal justice data about MMIP.

Lack of culturally specific services - [More than 70 percent](#) of American Indians and Alaska Natives live in suburban and urban communities. [Federal funding](#) is available to increase culturally specific services and respond to MMIP including those areas where resources are limited. Across the United States, [tribal nonprofits](#) and [tribal coalitions](#) offer culturally relevant services to American Indian and Alaska Native building awareness of how to receive or request this assistance.

Complicated jurisdictional overlaps - Jurisdiction determines the role law enforcement agencies take in investigating a MMIP case. MMIP taskforces, including [Operation Lady Justice](#) the federal MMIP taskforce, are working to improve the response to MMIP across the country. Federal laws such as the [reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act](#) (March 2022) and [Savanna's Act](#) (October 2020) are changing law enforcement and justice protocols to respond specifically to the complex jurisdictional challenges of Indian Country.

Use NamUs (namus.nij.ojp.gov) to share updates, access information, and connect with criminal justice professionals about missing person cases.

Get Involved

- Access [Operation Lady Justice](#) MMIP educational resources.
- Apply for [federal funding](#) to support MMIP.
- Reach out to [tribal coalitions](#) and [tribal victim service providers](#).

Visit HTCBC.OVC.OJP.GOV/MMIP for more information.