

—2023—  
**ACTIVITIES REPORT**

FOR THE  
**MISSING AND MURDERED  
INDIGENOUS RELATIVES  
OFFICE**



Minnesota  
Missing and Murdered  
Indigenous Relatives



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY  
OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS







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# Letter from MMIR Office Director Juliet Rudie



While the Minnesota Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives (MMIR) Office has existed since 2021, this past year was the first time our team was fully staffed and able to begin work in earnest. What we've learned is that resiliency is a core concept behind every action we take.

MMIR Office team members have adapted to the unique circumstances of the growth of a new office. Through it all, they have unequivocally flourished at the challenge of employing all 20 mandates outlined in the 2019 Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women's Task Force Report.

The 2023 MMIR Office team consisted of community planner Ana Negrete, violence prevention coordinator Tawny Smith Savage, intelligence specialist Kayley Sansom and public information officer Amber Schindeldecker.

Together, we have accomplished much in the past year with grace and efficiency. You will read in detail about many of these actions in the following activities report. Below is a short list of their accomplishments:

- Support and guide families during law enforcement investigations.
- Help develop and distribute missing person's materials.
- Developed a communication plan and webpage.
- Creation of the MMIR Advisory Council and the Gaagige-Mikwendagoziwag Reward Account Advisory Board.
- Formation of the Community Led Search Program.

I am humbled by this team's dedication to overcoming barriers, promoting diversity, equity and inclusion, and establishing a foundation through which we can work to reduce and end violence against Indigenous people in Minnesota.

My greatest desire is to provide hope to the families of missing and murdered Indigenous relatives. We consider it a tremendous privilege to be a voice for those who have been invisible for far too long. Going into 2024, we remain committed to bringing awareness to MMIR injustices through a holistic community restorative justice process.

The dedicated work of the MMIR team is the genesis of the development and implementation of systemic and transformative change that will foster safety, racial equity, healing, civil and human rights of Indigenous peoples and communities in Minnesota. We encourage you to join us on this journey of healing.

Wopida,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Juliet Rudie". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Juliet Rudie  
Director, MMIR Office

# At-A-Glance Operations

## Family Support Liaisons

The MMIR Office provides case support to families during a law enforcement investigation where an Indigenous person is either missing or has suddenly or unexpectedly died (including overdose or suicide).

This is an assessment and referral-based service, where office staff work on behalf of victims, survivors and their relatives. This includes connecting them with resources and guiding them through any processes to acquire desired services with special consideration for Indigenous cultural norms and practices.

Family members are not required to be enrolled with a federally-recognized Tribe in order to request and receive case support services from our office.

Our case support services include:

- Emotional support.
- Creating and distributing missing persons flyers.
- Resources and referrals to service providers.
- Communication with law enforcement during an investigation.
- Information on victimization and prevention.
- Assistance with the Crime Victims' Reimbursement application.
- Information and guidance on the criminal justice process.
- Assistance with safety planning.
- Assistance in systems navigating.

Case support is provided by two family support liaisons (FSLs), who offer information about the different options available to relatives and support their decision making. Our FSLs are committed to maintaining the highest possible levels of confidentiality while supporting those with missing or murdered Indigenous relatives. Services can be provided virtually or in-person, depending on the type of help requested and FSL availability.

For missing persons cases, our office requires that a report is made to law enforcement before we provide services. If you are hesitant to make a report, or have questions about how to make a report, you can call our office at 651-201-7344 for further guidance.

## Caseload

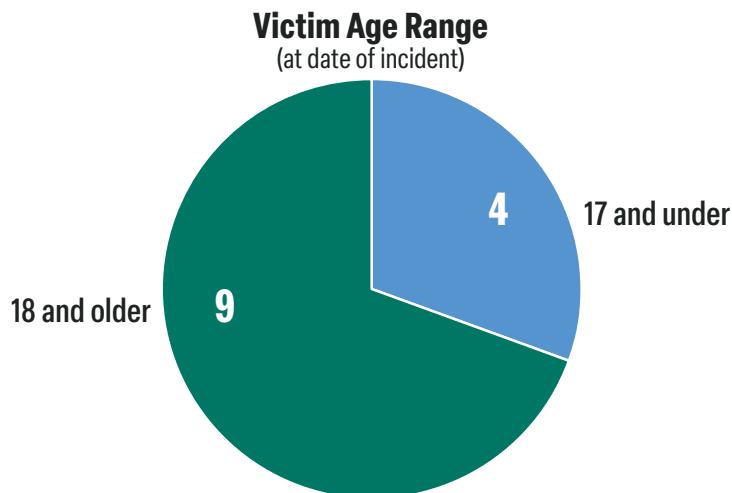
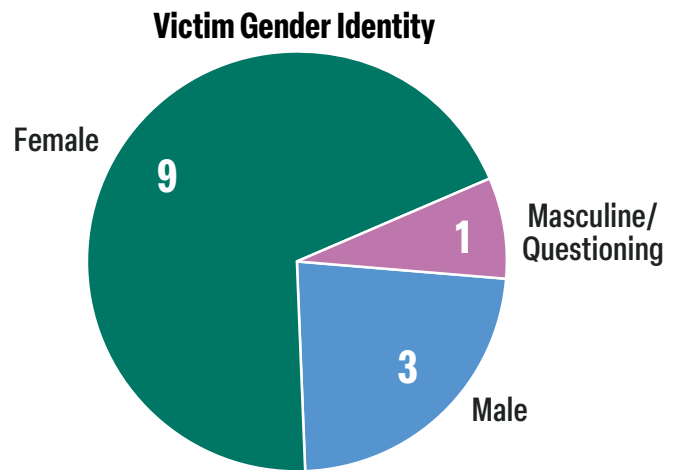
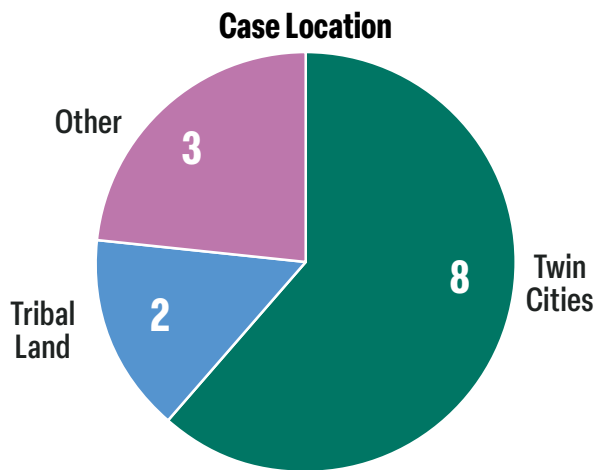
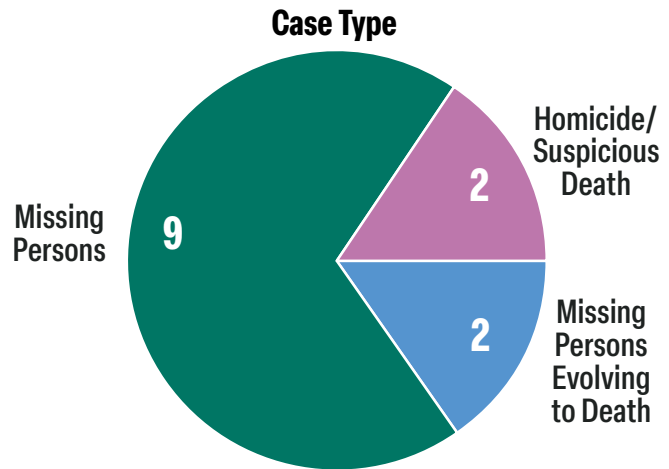
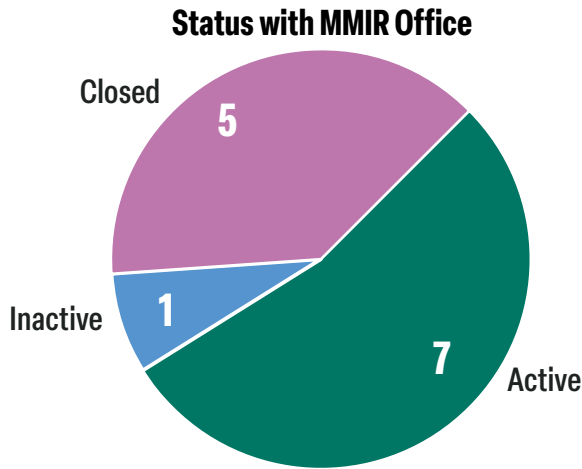
The cases our office provides services for include:

- Emergency situations, in which the subject has been missing for a few hours and is potentially endangered.
- Active investigations, in which law enforcement has continual probative leads and information on the case even if the subject has been missing or deceased for several months or years.
- Cold cases, in which law enforcement has exhausted all probative investigative leads available and all victims/witnesses have been interviewed with any suspects being excluded, leaving the case unresolved.



# At-A-Glance Operations

## 2023 Supportive Services for Cases Total Count: 13

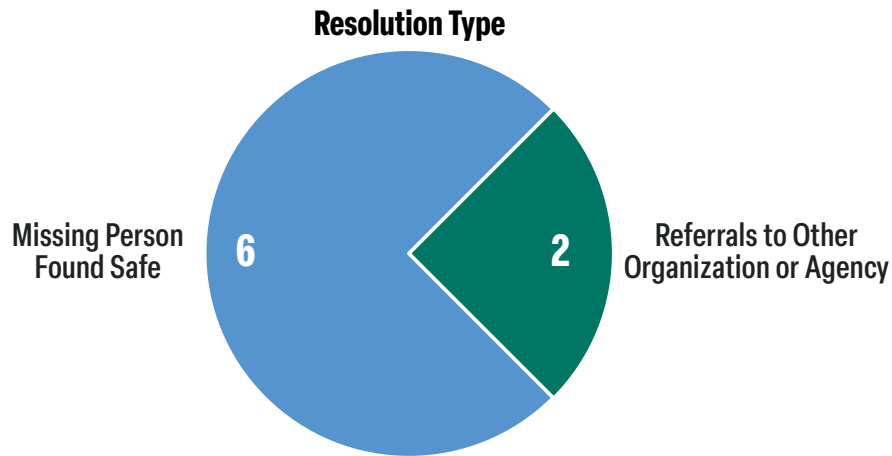


The MMIR Office also tracks our involvement on cases where services were not provided. This is due to the service request being outside of our scope or capacity, or because it was a missing persons case where the missing person was found prior to the delivery of any services.



# At-A-Glance Operations

## Cases in Which no Services Were Provided Total Count: 8



The combination of both cases in which services were and were not provided, represents the total caseload for the MMIR Office. The caseload from 2023, which includes cases that the office took on in previous years, was 23.

Our office has three possible reasons to close cases for which we provide services:

1. The MMIR Office has completed providing services to the family.
2. Inactivity due to lack or minimal contact from the family or point of contact.
3. The family has requested the MMIR Office halt services and no longer wish to pursue case support.

The MMIR Office's current case closure rate is 56.6 percent, with the majority of case closures from this year due to completion of services as well as missing people being found safe.

## Standard Operating Procedures and Policies

Utilizing best practices and existing policies as models, an office-wide standard operating procedure (SOP) was developed and implemented for adherence from all MMIR Office staff. The SOP was completed end of October 2023 when, after approval from the director, it was then provided for review to the Office of Justice Programs (OJP) executive director.

The SOP focuses on seven areas, with the intention of being a living document that can be amended and expanded as needed. The seven areas in the SOP are:

- Contacts procedure (phone, email, social media).
- Requests to MMIR Office assigned public information officer.
- Data privacy.
- Conflicts of interest.
- Review and maintenance of policies and procedures.
- Case support for families (service policy).
- Technical assistance for law enforcement (service policy).

A service policy specifically on case reviews will be added to the SOP once the office hires a case review coordinator. The coordinator will write the procedures for this service and conduct the case reviews.

# Intelligence Specialist Activities

## 2023 MMIR Statewide Statistics

### Homicides and Non-Negligent Manslaughter

According to the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA) Crime Data Explorer, there have been six reported Indigenous victims of homicide or non-negligent manslaughter in 2023, which accounts for 4.41 percent of all reported homicides or non-negligent manslaughters in Minnesota.

Eighty-three percent of these Indigenous victims were reported as male, with the majority in the age range of 25-34. Of the known offenders who committed this violence against Indigenous victims, 46.15 percent were reported as Indigenous. It is worth noting that 23 percent of offenders did not have an identified race reported, so it is unknown what a complete breakdown would look like of those who are responsible for these homicides and non-negligent manslaughters.

Only two of the six homicides or non-negligent manslaughters were reported as domestic violence, with both the offenders and victims reported as male. However, these two fatal domestic violent incidents made up 7.41 percent of all incidents from 2023.

### Missing Persons

According to the 2023 BCA Missing Person Clearinghouse Report, 8.7 percent of all people reported missing into the federal law enforcement database National Criminal Information Center (NCIC) were Indigenous, with 59.3 percent of all missing Indigenous people reported as female. Ten-and-a-half percent of all reported missing women in 2023 were Indigenous.

- Fifty-six percent of missing Indigenous people were reported as female.
- Fifty-six percent of missing Indigenous people were 17 or younger. Sixty percent of those missing youth were female.
- Thirty-three percent of all missing Indigenous people were reported from law enforcement agencies within the higher population counties of Hennepin and Ramsey. Fifty-eight percent of cases out of those counties involved youth.
- Fourteen percent of all missing Indigenous people were reported by Tribal law enforcement with 74 percent of Tribal cases being youths.

In 2023, a missing Indigenous person was most likely to be female, under the age of 17, and to go missing outside of Tribal jurisdiction.



# Intelligence Specialist Activities

## Data Dashboard Project

In accordance with Minnesota State Statute 299A.85, subd. 4(6), the MMIR office is mandated to “track and collect Minnesota data on missing and murdered Indigenous women, children, and relatives and provide statistics upon public or legislative inquiry.”

The 2020 MMIW Task Force Report developed by Wilder Research provided 20 recommended mandates to effectively respond to MMIR. Mandate 5 (pg. 122) of the report states that “The [MMIR] office...should produce...[a] dashboard that will pull in data from state data systems to provide an overview of the [MMIR] injustice, to track how the issue changes over time, and to see how the [MMIR] statistics change relative to various programs, initiatives, and systemic changes.”

The subsequently developed MMIWR Taskforce Strategic Plan breaks down the MMIW Task Force Report’s mandates into goals and objectives for the MMIR office in a three-year time frame. The following objectives are regarding the MMIR dashboard (Goal 5, objectives 5a and 5b, pg. 21):

- Identify key tasks and resources needed to create an [MMIR] data dashboard in year three.
- Develop a work plan for development and implementation of the [MMIR] dashboard.

The dashboard will be publicly available and utilized by our office to analyze MMIR data for trends, patterns, and geo-spatial hot spots. It would provide data-driven strategies for the MMIR Office to develop targeted recommendations and deployment of resources and services where they are needed most.

Information collected for the dashboard would be statistical, non-identifying summary data that the MMIR Office would coalesce from multiple systems, including law enforcement, public health, child welfare, victim services, education, housing and more to provide a comprehensive view of MMIR. Datasets would include topics like:

- The total count of missing and murdered Indigenous victims.
- Human trafficking statistics.
- Incarceration/arrest/conviction rates.
- Poverty rates.
- Housing accessibility.
- Education levels.
- Foster care and out-of-home placements.
- Mental and physical health, and more.

The dashboard would be a centralized place to see a combination of upstream data as well as specific MMIR statistics. It will also provide statistical information on the MMIR office’s services and resources provided, based on internal data, to include:

- Total counts of cases the office worked.
- Locations our services were provided.
- Agencies the MMIR Office collaborated with.
- Timelines on efficiency of the provision of services and resources.

Additionally, the office is creating several assessment and performance measurement tools to utilize during operations to facilitate and determine efficacy of the work. This would include exit interview evaluation from families who received services, as well as standardized feedback from law enforcement agencies and victim service providers with whom we collaborate.



# Intelligence Specialist Activities

The MMIR Office has identified resources it needs to begin development of the dashboard project. They include:

- Funding for software products, vendors, consultants and fees that may occur annually regarding maintenance, updates and access to the final product.
- Data identification requirements and parameters.
- Data collection plan and infrastructure.
- Data quality measures.
- Request for Proposal for vendors to provide development and implementation services to the MMIR Office.
- Data sharing agreements with the following:
  - 11 Tribal Nations in Minnesota (at their discretion and desire).
  - Minnesota Department of Health.
  - Minnesota Department of Human Services.
  - Minnesota Department of Administration.
  - Minnesota Department of Education.
  - Minnesota Sheriff’s Association.
  - Minnesota County Attorneys Association.
  - Minnesota Coroners and Medical Examiners Association.
  - Minnesota Judicial Branch.
  - Bureau of Indian Affairs.
  - Indian Health Services.
  - Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Data sharing agreements would allow MMIR Office staff access to relevant information for complete and timely tracking, collection and analysis of relevant data. This would allow consistent updates to the dashboard, information provided in presentations and trainings, as well as the ability to discover and monitor trends or profiles.

# MMIR Office Advisory Council

## Charter

The Minnesota State Advisory Council on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives Charter was developed and finalized in June 2023. The charter outlines the objectives and scope of activities for the advisory council to include, “advise, consult with, and make recommendations to the MMIR Office, the Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety and Tribal Liaison to increase awareness of MMIR issues, specific MMIR cases and to provide overall community and stakeholder perspective to the MMIR Office.”

The MMIR Office recruited a 20-person advisory council to represent agency stakeholders, survivors and families impacted by MMIR injustice. The MMIR Advisory Council had their first meeting in August of 2023 and started with a charter to assist in guiding the council effectively address issues related to MMIR. The charter provides a framework for advisement, consultation and receiving feedback from individuals with specific skill, knowledge and perspective to guide the office.

## Members

MMIR Advisory Council members include people who have lived experienced as victims, family members of victims and community leaders that have a shared vision to address the crisis of MMIR in Minnesota.

The electronic version of this report contains links to nearly all of the biographies of the MMIR Advisory Council members listed below.

### Monte Fronk (Chair)

Jacqueline Beaulieu

Roberta Geiselhart

Eileen Hudon

Fran Kingbird

Natasha Kingbird

Jacki Kozlowski

Brook LaFloe

Anne LaFrinier-Ritchie

Gene Leatherman

Jenna Lehti

Lauren Matrious

Season Means

Naida Medicine Crow

Scott Mueller

Beth O’Keefe

Kristen O’Leary

Jessica Taylor

Myah Wells

Teddi L. Wind



# MMIR Office Advisory Council

## Advisory Council Highlights

MMIR Advisory Council members have brought a wealth of knowledge and expertise to the work of the MMIR Office. The council met five times in 2023 and recently completed a survey to explore priority initiatives and projects in the year ahead. Some of those topics include:



MMIR CASE MAPPING.



DEVELOPMENT OF PROTOCOLS FOR MMIR CASES.



IMPROVED RESPONSE OF MMIR CASES.



MMIR TRENDS.



ESTABLISHING AN MMIR DATABASE.



UPLIFTING AND HEALING MMIR SURVIVORS.



COLLABORATING WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENTS.



PREVENTION EDUCATION TRAINING FOR STAKEHOLDERS.



COORDINATING WITH FEDERAL PARTNERS.



CONTINUED FUNDING FOR THE MMIR OFFICE.



# Wilder Research Report on MMIR in Minnesota

## General Overview

Our MMIR office partnered with Wilder Research in 2022 to conduct a comprehensive, year-long study that examined emerging best practices in cases of missing and murdered Indigenous people, and identified current issues in Minnesota at the federal, state and Tribal levels.

Although they make up less than 1 percent of the population, Indigenous women, girls and Two-Spirit people account for 8 percent of all murder victims in Minnesota. Research shows that Indigenous relatives don't always receive an effective or just response from the system when they have gone missing or died under suspicious circumstances. The MMIR Office is trying to change that, ensuring every person gets same swift and effective response regardless of their race or other characteristics.

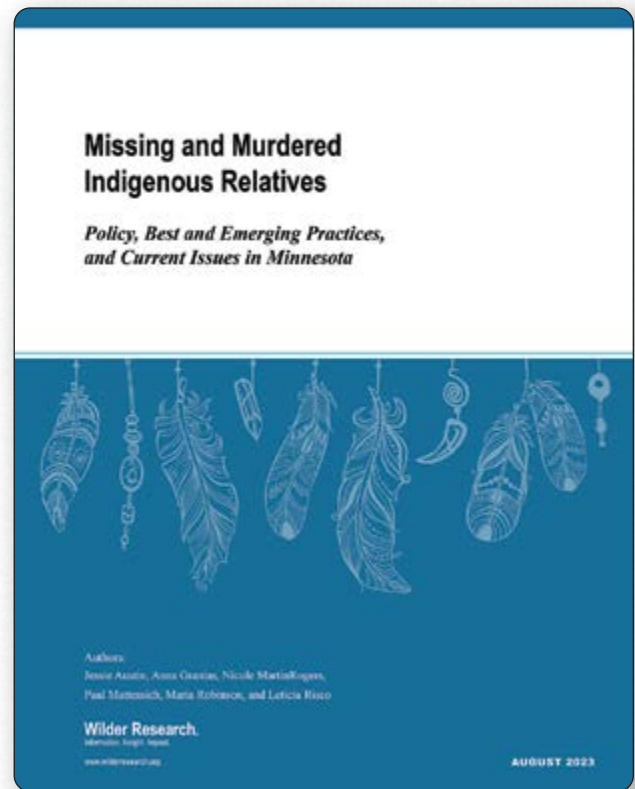
The Wilder Research report helps the MMIR Office prioritize where to focus our efforts as we facilitate and implement the recommendations from the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women Task Force report. The report calls on Minnesota to improve the training of law enforcement and other officials to increase the knowledge and use of best practices in investigating missing persons and suspicious deaths cases.

“Over time, Indigenous communities have come to expect unfair treatment, and therefore, they often mistrust law enforcement and experience strained or poor communication during the investigation of their loved one’s case,” Wilder Research Researcher Nicole MartinRogers said. “This report provides guidance for the MMIR office, law enforcement and related systems about key steps we can take in Minnesota right now to address this injustice.”

The MMIR Office will continue to build its partnerships with all government and non-government organizations involved in preventing victimization, investigating cases and supporting families and communities affected by trauma. Through those partnerships with law enforcement, the community and affected families, the MMIR Office will ensure everyone involved takes immediate action when an Indigenous person is missing. This means encouraging Indigenous people to file missing persons reports, along with appropriate and immediate follow-up by law enforcement.

The MMIR Office team will continue to partner with state agencies, law enforcement, victim service providers and the media in the years to come to incorporate these recommendations with the end goal of responding to MMIR cases swiftly and effectively.

[Read the Wilder Research report.](#) priorities for the MMIR Office.



# Wilder Research Report on MMIR in Minnesota

## Report Roadmap

The report, which was [released to the public in October](#), also provided the MMIR Office team with a roadmap to putting an end to the epidemic of violence.

### MMIR Issues A Report Roadmap

#### pg 34 **Communication and alert systems**

The effectiveness of Minnesota's AMBER Alert system is impacted by community distrust and lack of awareness of alert criteria among law enforcement and the public. There are opportunities to bolster Minnesota's alert system for missing and endangered adults.

#### pg 48 **Death investigation**

Improved communication with families can help navigate cultural considerations for autopsies and address concerns over the official cause or manner of death. Death investigation and autopsy decision-making should be standardized across jurisdictions.

#### pg 72 **Data issues**

There are concerns about the quality and completeness of data related to the MMIR injustice, particularly related to participation in data systems among Tribes and law enforcement, and tracking and documenting race, ethnicity, and Tribal affiliation data.

#### pg 94 **Prevention**

Bolstering protective factors such as cultural and community connections, increasing access to healthy relationships education, improving law enforcement and social service system responses to domestic violence and trafficking cases, and supporting Indigenous restorative justice practices can reduce the incidence of MMIR.

#### **Reporting and initial investigation of missing person cases**

pg 15

Inconsistent use of investigative best practices, community distrust, biases against vulnerable populations, and staffing challenges contribute to delays, de-prioritization, and inadequate investigation of missing person cases.

#### **Review and investigation of unresolved ("cold") cases**

pg 41

Many factors make it difficult for law enforcement to maintain momentum on long-term unresolved cases. Having a statewide expert review panel re-examine cases with fresh eyes may help identify new leads.

#### **Jurisdiction issues and government-to-government collaboration**

pg 59

Tribal Nations and communities navigate a complex web of jurisdictional issues, and their sovereignty to exercise criminal authority has been eroded over time. Cross-jurisdictional and inter-governmental relationship building, communication, and collaboration are needed.

#### **Victim and family services**

pg 79

There is a need for victim-centered, survivor-informed, trauma-informed, and culturally-responsive services and flexible financial supports. Consistent, compassionate communication with families is needed to reconcile families' needs and investigative priorities.

#### **Media reporting**

pg 115

Historically, MMIR cases have received less media attention than their White counterparts. Media should adopt a survivor-centered approach to create a positive character profile of victims, and law enforcement should utilize mainstream and social media tools to spread awareness of missing persons.



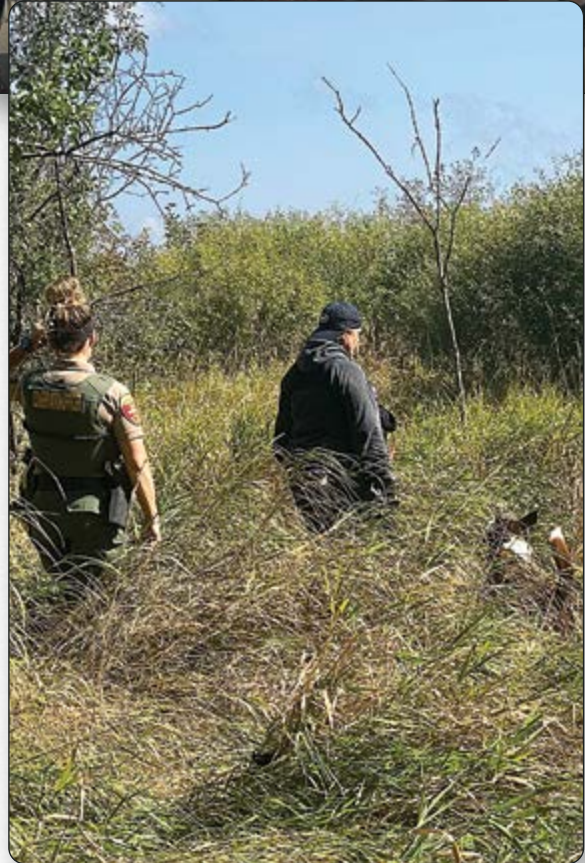
# Community Planning Activities

## Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives Awareness Day

Gov. Tim Walz declared May 5 as Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives Awareness Day in Minnesota.

The MMIR Office was honored to publicly unveil our logo during the event in St. Paul as groups observed the day in other cities across Minnesota. State lawmakers and Lt. Gov. Peggy Flanagan addressed the crowd who gathered between teepees that adorned the State Capitol grounds.

Together, hundreds of people raised their voices about the growing MMIR epidemic, as leaders urged community members to join the mission to reduce and end violence against Indigenous relatives in Minnesota.



## Community Search for Nevaeh Kingbird

The community led search for missing Minnesota teen Nevaeh Kingbird was conducted on Sept. 25-26, one month ahead of the two-year anniversary of her disappearance. While the effort did not result in any immediate answers for the family or community, valuable insight was obtained on the need for ongoing collaboration across impacted stakeholders. As the MMIR Office continues to develop roles and responsibilities of the office and its staff, we acknowledge the responsibility to assist families in supporting searches for missing relatives. We are committed to ongoing development of protocol and engagement related to supporting search efforts while exploring opportunities to empower communities to develop regional resources for more efficient and culturally appropriate response to cases. During this search the MMIR Office facilitated meeting coordination, logistics responsibilities, and communication coordination including our communications team. This multi-jurisdictional team included the Bemidji Police Department as lead incident command, along with support from the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Department of Natural Resources, local Tribal partners, emergency management, Minnesota Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster and a host of other community volunteers totaling more than 140 participants on each day.

# Community Planning Activities

## Community Led Searches

In 2023, the MMIR Office staff attended five additional searches within Minnesota. Two searches were in the Mille Lacs area, led by law enforcement and supported by the family. The other three searches were in and around the Bemidji area and led primarily by the family. From these experiences the MMIR Office has been able to witness and document the struggles of the community to bring loved one's home while also learning about police and community resources that have clear gaps and limitations when it comes to searching for long-term missing relatives. As a direct result of MMIR's participation in these community searches, MMIR Office staff collaborated with the Mille Lacs Tribal Police Department to develop a community search kit.

## Search Kits

Five search kits were developed and will ultimately be hosted by various communities in effort to put tools and equipment in the hands of those who need them most. The MMIR Office will place the five kits strategically, in geographic areas where they can be easily shared by various law enforcement partners, as well as community members. Each kit will contain the tools and equipment listed below as well as two sets of guidance to support the primary user. The "Blue Path" will provide guidance for law enforcement-led, community-supported searches, while the "Green Path" will provide guidance for community-led, law enforcement-supported searches. Each pathway includes support and technical assistance from the MMIR staff, as well as a list of community resources that may support search efforts. It is our continued hope that providing these resources will build stronger collaboration between families and law enforcement departments, as well as increase engagement with community-based resources to resolve cases in a timely manner.

## Community Search Kit Content

All items will be stored in two plastic, wheeled totes (33.5" x 35.3" x 19.7" in size) for easy transport.

Kit Items	Quantity	Dispersed/Retained
GPS Map 66SR by Garmin	10	Marked with asset tag, retained with kit.
Two-way radios	10	Market with asset tag, retained with kit.
High visibility safety vest	100	Retained with kit.
Walking/trekking sticks	10	Retained with kit.
Whistles with lanyard	150	Dispersed to searchers, not retained.
Emergency blankets	40	Retained with kit, dispersed as needed.
Insect repellent	5	Dispersed to searchers, not retained.
Hand warmers	90 pairs	Dispersed to searchers, not retained.
Surveyor flags	100	Retained with kit, dispersed as needed.
First aid kits	4	Retained with kit, dispersed as needed.
Lip balm	100	Dispersed to searches, not retained.
Rain poncho	100	Dispersed to searchers as needed, not retained.



# Gaagige-Mikwendaagoziwag Reward Account

## Meaning of the Reward Account

Gaagige-Mikwendaagoziwag means “They will be remembered forever” in Ojibwe, which is one of the languages spoken by Indigenous people who live within the borders of Minnesota. The name is fitting for an account that aims to keep the memories of those relatives alive or bring them home. The MMIR Office will administer the account and oversee its advisory group

The Gaagige-Mikwendaagoziwag Reward Account was created by the Minnesota Legislature this year to support local investigations and community-based efforts to put a stop to the growing epidemic of missing and murdered Indigenous people.

The main purpose of the [Gaagige-Mikwendaagoziwag Reward Account Advisory Group](#) is to pay a reward to any person who provides relevant information relating to a missing and murdered Indigenous relative investigation as well as funding awareness campaigns, support search kit maintenance and support community search efforts.

## Advisory Group Tasks

- Develop standard policy and practice on paying rewards in conjunction with law enforcement partners and crime stoppers related to MMIR cases.
- Minimize barriers and obstacles identified by stakeholders including families of those impacted, anonymous tipsters, law enforcement partners and others who utilize funding.
- Develop a payment range standard related to MMIR cases.
- Develop policy, procedure and practice of accepting donations and maintaining fund availability long term.
- Review, assess and approve funding requests as appropriate in a timely manner.

## Members

Nicole Matthews serves as our chairwoman. Council members also include:

- Merlin Deegan
- Rene Ann Goodrich
- Ana Negrete
- Selena Garza
- Caroline Palmer

The board has one vacant seat which will be filled by a representative from a Tribal, state or local organization that provides legal services to Indigenous women and girls.

## Advisory Group Highlights

The Gaagige-Mikwendaagoziwag Reward Fund Advisory Group convened its first meeting on Nov. 9, 2023. The members will meet monthly. In the first six months this board hopes to complete the following tasks:

- Establish case eligibility criteria and request process to access funds.
- Ongoing consultation with Crime Stoppers and Missing and Murder Unit’s Tip Program staff.
- Develop a reward fund payout level system.
- Discuss ineligibility factors for tipsters involved in the crime.
- Explore payment options for tipsters who request anonymity.
- Discuss fund availability for awareness campaigns, searches and related tools and equipment.



# Violence Prevention Coordinator Activities



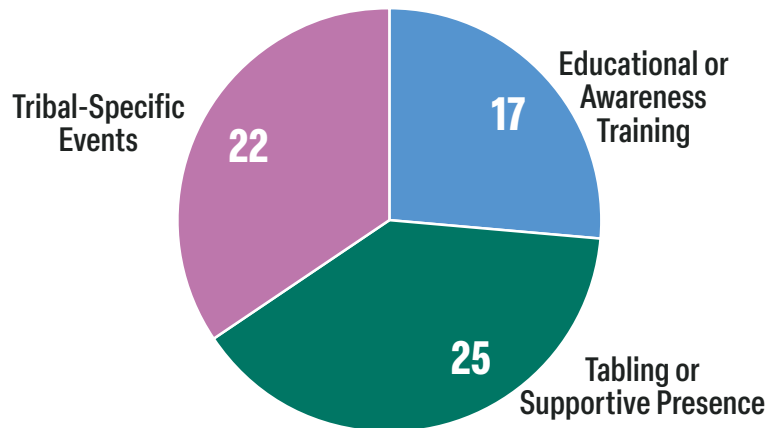
## Prevention Efforts

Over the past year, the MMIR Office staff networked with agencies statewide and reached out to Tribal nations and Indigenous grassroots groups. The intent was to introduce our office and listen to the perspective and needs of Tribal communities. Our staff made new contacts and worked to maintain existing relationships to continue to strategically build momentum and respond to individuals, families and communities. The violence prevention coordinator attended events, participated in online meetings and sought out professional associations to build a network of resources.

## Educational and Awareness Efforts

MMIR Office staff attended 43 events in 2023 to raise awareness of the office and our work, as well as provide educational trainings to professionals. The MMIR Office prioritizes our relationships with the eleven sovereign Tribal nations and Indigenous-led community organizations, while also focusing on reaching out and educating non-Indigenous service providers and criminal justice professionals whose work intersects with MMIR and the underlying risk factors.

## Types of Educational and Awareness Engagements Total Count: 64



# Violence Prevention Coordinator Activities

## “What to Do When a Loved One Goes Missing” in Red Lake

In July 2023, the MMIR Office staff offered magnets with information about “What to do When a Loved One goes Missing” at the annual Red Lake Community Health Day sponsored by Red Lake Comprehensive Health Services. The event reaches 600-700 individuals from the Red Lake community. The event was located at the Giminjimendaamin Ezhichigeyang Wellness Center in Redby. There were many good conversations about the new MMIR Office and brochures provided to families about ways to contact the office for resources.



The MMIR Office traveled to Fond du Lac Reservation to attend the Mino-bimaadziwin annual health fair held at the Otter Creek Event Center at the Black Bear Casino Resort. Many elders attended the event, as well as families and health professionals. Many people shared their support for the office and provided stories of their own relatives who have gone missing. Resources and cards were given to everyone, as well as promotional items that supported health and wellness.

## Substance Use Disorder Summit in Carlton

The American Indian Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Summit sponsored by the Minnesota Department of Human Services provided a gathering of many programs that intersect with the substance use intervention and prevention. The sessions included participation from Tribal chairs, other elected officials and many program staff. During the MMIR session, the staff facilitated conversations about solutions from participants and compiled notes to provide systemic focus and recommendations. The following recommendations and improvements were highlighted based on feedback during the summit:

- Cross-systems data collection, tracking, and analysis.
- Cross-systems response coordination.
- Cross-systems training, education and awareness.

# Violence Prevention Coordinator Activities



The feedback from the SUD Summit will be of a larger strategic plan that will shape policy and legislative efforts aimed to improve outcomes for American Indians in Minnesota impacted by substance use disorder.

## OJP Conference on Crime and Victimization

The MMIR staff presented at the 35th annual OJP Conference on Crime and Victimization. The conference is a multi-disciplinary conference for victim advocates, law enforcement officers, prosecutors and other criminal justice professionals. The objectives for the presentation were to provide an overview of MMIW injustice in Minnesota, share information about online resources, review recommendations and MMIW Task Force mandates, and provide an update on work happening in the MMIR Office. The staff facilitated conversation and offered the participants an overview of the crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous people in Minnesota. This session was instrumental in networking with victim services providers across the state.



# Communications, Education and Outreach

## Web Stats

When the MMIR Office began its work in 2023, it was clear that people needed a central location to find information about the office's unique activities. That's why we created a sub-page on the DPS website dedicated to the [MMIR Office](#).

The MMIR Office official web page went live in July with its own home page and seven sub-pages. From its inception until the end of the year, the MMIR Office pages recorded just under 8,000 views from 2,500 total users.

The MMIR Office web pages also saw an increase in visitors during the community search for Nevaeh Kingbird at the end of September, with 244 visits on Sept. 25 alone.

## Social Media Stats



17 POSTS



14 POSTS



6 POSTS



YouTube

1 HIGHLIGHT VIDEO

Which lives on the  
DPS YouTube page.

## Media Coverage

In 2023, the MMIR Office interacted with local, state, Tribal and nationwide media outlets to highlight its initiatives, answering 40 media inquiries with interviews or statements. Whether it was unveiling its office logo, or co-leading the community search for missing Indigenous teen Nevaeh Kingbird, MMIR was at the forefront of hundreds of news headlines.

Public awareness and outreach is a key component to reducing the injustices and violence against Indigenous people in Minnesota. We look forward to amplifying our work even further in the year to come.



MMIR Office Director Rudie stands with Nevaeh Kingbird's mother during a news conference in Bemidji in September.

# Communications, Education and Outreach

## Unveiling Our Logo



### Minnesota Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives Office

The MMIR Office unveiled its official logo ahead of the May 5 National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives. Director Rudie and our passionate staff worked with an Indigenous marketing and creative design agency Big Spirit Inc. to create a thoughtful, striking logo that represents the people the office serves.

The goal was to have the logo recognize the growing epidemic of missing and murdered Indigenous people. This image brings a renewed awareness to the crisis affecting Indigenous people across Minnesota while evoking a sense of hope for a better and brighter future without violence, poverty, racism and injustice.

The main element of this logo features an Indigenous person accompanied by a powerful image that many people associate with the movement to end violence against Indigenous people.

The recognizable red handprint is placed over the mouth of the person in the logo to symbolize the awareness of voices that were not heard for generations and to provide families a way to call for justice today.

The MMIR Office also wanted to incorporate various shades of teal because of its importance in the culture of many Indigenous peoples, as well as the color for sexual assault awareness, a violence that Indigenous people experience at high proportions.

Finally, the Indigenous person sits in front of a red circle representing the sun, which signifies a new day and new beginnings for Indigenous people everywhere.

## National Night Out



The annual National Night Out campaign in August is a great way to promote partnerships within our communities. MMIR Office staff were honored to appear at an event in Mille Lacs. Being visible throughout the state is a priority for this office as Indigenous people have been invisible for far too long.

# Communications, Education and Outreach

## Minnesota State Fair

The MMIR Office team suited up in logo wear, shorts and sneakers to join crowds at the Great Minnesota Get-Together. People dropped by the DPS booth to learn more about the growing epidemic of missing and murdered Indigenous relatives, and discover how the office works to pair families with resources and services. Staff members were also surprised when Lt. Gov. Peggy Flanagan and her daughter visited us.



## Indigenous Peoples' Weekend MMIW Basketball Expo

In October, the MMIR Office was pleased to be featured sponsor for the Indigenous People's Weekend Basketball Expo at Harding High School. In addition to staffing the table at the event, all of the basketball jerseys featured the office's logo.





# About Us



## Vision

Reduce and end violence against all Indigenous people in Minnesota.

## Mission

The development and implementation of systemic legislative and transformative social justice policies paired with the application of sufficient resources, programs, and services that will foster safety, equity, healing, civil and human rights of Indigenous peoples and communities in Minnesota.

## History

In 2019, the Minnesota Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW) Task Force and Wilder Research [\*provided a report to the state legislature.\*](#)

The report included mandates aimed at reducing and ending violence against Indigenous women, girls and two-spirit people. As a result, the legislature created the MMIR Office to provide support and resources for affected Indigenous families and communities.

Gov. Tim Walz signed into law the legislation to establish the first-in-the-nation MMIR Office in 2021. Staff are housed in the OJP division of DPS and will work to implement the recommendations of the MMIW Task Force.

[\*See the statute establishing the MMIR Office.\*](#)



# About Us

## Reporting Requirements

[Minnesota State Statute 299A.85, Subd. 6](#) requires the MMIR Office to:

“...report on measurable outcomes achieved to meet its statutory duties, along with specific objectives and outcome measures proposed for the following year. The report must include data and statistics on missing and murdered Indigenous women, children, and Two-Spirit relatives in Minnesota, including names, dates of disappearance, and dates of death, to the extent the data is publicly available. The report must also identify and describe the work of any reward advisory group and itemize the expenditures of the Gaagige-Mikwendaagoziwag reward account, if any. The office must submit the report by January 15 each year to the chairs and ranking minority members of the legislative committees with primary jurisdiction over public safety.”

## Looking Ahead

As the MMIR Office team embarks on this important work in earnest, we recognize the need for an update to the strategic plan. As of this report’s publishing, team members have started the initial strategic planning objectives for the coming years. Other proposed 2024 objectives and outcome measures include:

- Developing an annual communications plan, which includes an updated vision and mission statement, and will lead to an updated strategic plan which more accurately reflects the roles and responsibilities of the MMIR Office for 2024 and beyond.
- Engaging with impacted parties to support a collaborative response to addressing homelessness, substance use disorder and human trafficking as primary risk factors for MMIR.
- Developing, implementing and coordinating culturally responsive MMIR prevention and awareness programming focused on youth, based on the best practice that this work is trauma informed.
- Supporting the work of the MMIR office Advisory Council by assisting with the development of MMIR specific initiatives and projects.
- Expanding response to individuals, families and communities impacted by MMIR by hiring a full-time Victim Specialist.











Minnesota  
Missing and Murdered  
Indigenous Relatives



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY  
OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS