



Minnesota
**Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Relatives**
Office

2024 Legislative Report

Activities report for the Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Relatives Office
Published February 2025



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS

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It is my privilege to present the 2024 Annual Report from the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives (MMIR) Office. The MMIR Office is housed within the Minnesota Department of Public Safety's Office of Justice Programs. This report reflects the tireless efforts, deep commitment and unwavering dedication of staff, advisors, law enforcement and Tribal partners who have worked diligently to address the epidemic of missing and murdered Indigenous relatives in our state.

As interim director, I am honored to continue the important work begun under the leadership of Director Juliet Rudie. Director Rudie built a strong foundation for this office, which was the first of its kind in the nation. She developed a staffing model and provided guidance to several others who aspire to create similar state-sponsored offices around the nation. Under her guidance, we started the Gaagige-Mikwendaagoziwag Reward Fund Group, partnered with DPS' Driver and Vehicle Services (DVS) division on creating MMIR specialty license plates, developed and placed regional missing persons search kits and coordinated several searches for missing relatives. In short, Director Rudie helped the MMIR Office make meaningful progress to amplify the voices of Indigenous communities in Minnesota and to foster critical partnerships that will help us take the next steps in combatting the root causes of MMIR.

I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude to all who contribute to this vital mission, especially the families and community members whose resilience and advocacy inspire us every day. I also want to recognize the unique contributions of our staff: Violence Prevention Coordinator Tawny Smith Savage, Intelligence Specialist Taylor Wencel, Victim Specialist Deanna Beaulieu and Communications Specialist Catriona Stuart. We remain steadfast in our commitment to honoring the lives of our Indigenous relatives, centering the voices of those most impacted and working towards systemic change.

As we look ahead, we recognize the work is far from over. This report serves as a reflection on what we have accomplished so far and a call to action for what remains. With your continued support and partnership, I am confident we will continue to make significant progress in addressing the mandates and achieving our goal to reduce and end violence against all Indigenous people in Minnesota.

Sincerely,

Ana Negrete
Interim Director
Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives Office

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Key achievements of 2024

The 2024 Annual Report of the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives (MMIR) Office highlights significant progress in addressing the epidemic of missing and murdered Indigenous relatives across Minnesota. This year's efforts centered on education as prevention, addressing specific risk factors and continued initiatives on building awareness throughout the state.

Key achievements:

- **Data and technology:** Development and implementation of a comprehensive case management system and data dashboard to enhance MMIR tracking, identify trends and allocate resources effectively. This is expected to launch in late 2025.
- **Community engagement:** Launch of seven digital billboards to raise awareness about long-term missing Indigenous relatives.
- **Search support:** Development and distribution of three search kits to enable Tribal communities and impacted families to conduct effective searches for the missing.
- **Healthy relationships:** Implemented the LIVE IT! curriculum, which educates Indigenous youth on healthy relationships and consent.
- **Violence prevention initiatives:** Launched Minnesota's first comprehensive training for Tribal advocates and emergency managers.
- **Technical assistance:** Collaborated with local, Tribal and federal law enforcement, as well as medical examiner's offices to provide case-specific guidance and trauma-informed support, highlighted by two successful cases in Ramsey County and Winnipeg, Canada.

As the MMIR Office looks to 2025, department goals include expanding awareness campaigns and media coverage, implementing the data dashboard, and continuing to build collaborations that bridge gaps between systems and communities. The progress outlined in this report reflects a collective effort to honor Indigenous relatives, support impacted families and create a safer, more equitable future for all.

SNAPSHOT OF ACTIVITIES

2024 at a glance

MMIR LICENSE PLATES



3,477

Number of plates sold

\$ 91,750

Revenue from plate sales

OFFICE CASELOAD



20

Active cases

28

Families supported

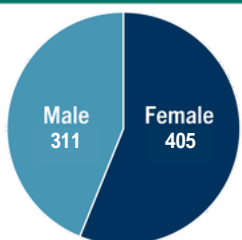
4

Case closed when victim found safe or located

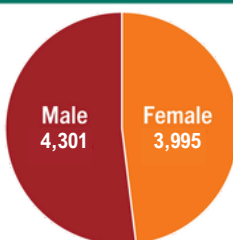
31

Documented office contacts

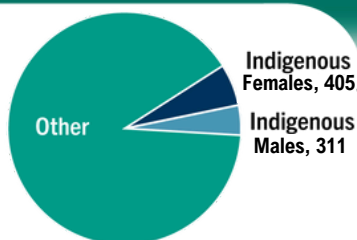
MISSING INDIGENOUS PERSONS



Total missing Indigenous persons 716

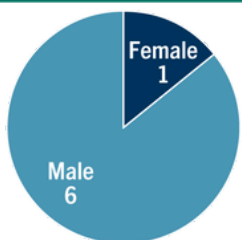


10% of all missing females in MN are Indigenous

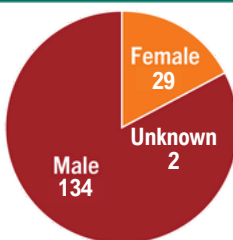


Indigenous persons account for 8.63% of total missing

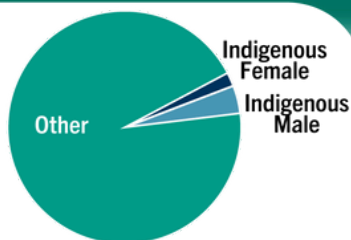
HOMICIDES OF INDIGENOUS PERSONS



Total homicides of Indigenous persons 7



Total All Homicides 165



Indigenous persons account for 4.24% of total homicides

TRAININGS



62

Trainings and outreach events

3,000+

Tribal, federal and local law enforcement, community and other partners

BACKGROUND

Wilder Report and founding of the MMIR Office

Although they make up 1.4 percent of Minnesota's population, Indigenous relatives account for 8.63 percent of the missing and 4.5 percent of the murdered population in the state. Further probing of data from DPS' Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA) shows that Indigenous women account for 10 percent of the missing females in the state. There has been much research devoted to understanding the root causes of this epidemic including historical trauma, colonization, racism, sexism and sexual objectification of Native American women and girls. Indigenous Minnesotans can be more vulnerable given the rates of other risk factors including poverty, homelessness, system involvement, domestic violence, human trafficking, substance use and mental health. As detailed in the Wilder Report, there is also evidence to show that Indigenous relatives have not always received an effective or just response when they have gone missing or died under suspicious circumstances.

Against this backdrop, the Minnesota Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW) Task Force and Wilder Research presented a report to the state legislature on reducing and ending violence against Indigenous relatives. The 2019 report was a result of extensive research, including reviewing published articles, summarizing laws and policies, accessing relevant data from state systems, interviewing experts and hearing public feedback. It generated 20 recommended mandates to effectively respond to the MMIR epidemic.

The legislature subsequently created the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives Office to follow through on those mandates and provide support and resources for affected families. Gov. Tim Walz signed into law the legislation to establish this first-in-the-nation office in 2021. In 2022, the MMIR Office again partnered with Wilder Research to examine emerging best practices in cases of missing and murdered Indigenous relatives and identify current contributing factors in Minnesota at the federal, state and Tribal levels.

[Read the Wilder Research report.](#)

IN THE COMMUNITY

Community engagement and awareness activities

Part of the fundamental work of the MMIR Office is to engage with communities across Minnesota to raise awareness about the epidemic of missing and murdered Indigenous relatives. The office does this through a combination of outreach, education and collaboration. These efforts aim to empower communities, support impacted families and address the systemic challenges that contribute to the crisis. From large-scale events to local initiatives, the MMIR Office is at the forefront of fostering dialogue and driving meaningful action across the state.

In 2024, the office spearheaded and participated in dozens of trainings and presentations, distributed literature at health fairs and community events. Office staff helped organize Minnesota's Missing and Murdered Indigenous Day of Remembrance on Feb. 14 in Minneapolis and supported a smaller event in Bemidji. They also supported numerous events across the state for the national Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons (MMIP) Awareness Day on May 5. The sustained presence of the MMIR Office in the community has built a new baseline of involvement and raised the general awareness of the MMIR epidemic. Each year, the office finds new, novel ways to engage Minnesota residents about the office's mission to reduce and end violence against all Indigenous persons in Minnesota.

Raised awareness of long-term missing persons cases by supporting statewide billboard presence



On July 8, 2024, Clear Channel Communications unveiled the first of seven digital billboards across Minnesota to as part of a zero-dollar contract to raise awareness of unsolved MMIR cases. These billboards publicized eight long-term missing cases to several hundred thousand drivers in Minneapolis, Burnsville, Shoreview, Mounds View, Maplewood and Columbus Township.

The new partnership was a direct result of leveraging ongoing community relationships. The connection to Clear Channel was brokered by Missing Children Minnesota Executive Director Teresa Lhotka, who participated in community searches for Neveah Kingbird, a then 15-year-old who had gone missing from the Bemidji area in 2021. The resulting collaboration was able to dramatically scale the reach of ongoing efforts to promote general awareness of MMIR and missing relatives in Minnesota and specifically helped spread the word about the following cases:

Melissa Burt	April Geyer
Leo Coleman Cortez	Nevaeh Kingbird
Mato Dow	Jeremy Jourdain
Melissa Eagle Shield	Kateri Mishow

Additional billboard support from Lamar Advertising helped to publicize Sheila St. Clair's case around Duluth, and Peter Martin's case along Interstate 35.

The zero-dollar contract with Clear Channel Communications is expected to be renewed in 2025. Going forward, billboards could include posting acute missing persons cases and announcing the availability of rewards for tips in eligible MMIR cases.

"I would love to bring her home," said Gloria Homstad, April Geyer's mother told the Pioneer Press. "I am 77 years old now and I would hope and pray that we can get some results before I leave this world."

Provided logistical planning and materials support to search efforts led by families and law enforcement looking for resolution and hope.

In response to requests from impacted families, the office began supporting those who wanted to conduct their own searches. Staff developed a model for a physical search kit, accompanied by search guidance that would help impacted families work with law enforcement to take action and conduct their own searches.

The office commissioned five search kits beginning in 2023. One remains with office staff. The others were placed in Mille Lacs, Red Lake and Fond du Lac. The last kit will be placed in Lower Sioux in 2025. The goal is to empower the community to be able to deploy these resources to support safer and more effective searches.

Early in 2024, the MMIR Office put these new procedures and protocols into action during an unplanned search for missing relative Peter Martin in Fond du Lac. Martin, then 31, was last seen on March 8. The local community, together with Tribal law enforcement and emergency management, organized an emergency search leveraging an MMIR search kit. The office provided secondary logistical support. Additional search efforts carried out simultaneously were supported by local law enforcement and the St. Louis County Rescue Squad. Community and law enforcement together have since searched over 1,000 acres surrounding Martin's home, but his case remains unresolved.

A smaller scale planned search for Jeremy Jourdain took place in Red Lake Nation and brought together families, community, Tribal nations, local Tribal police, first responders and victim services, as well as support from the Red Cross and Salvation Army. Jourdain's case has remained unsolved for over eight years. He was 17 at the time of his disappearance and should be 26 in 2025.

While the MMIR office recognizes its limited capacity to organize and lead community search efforts, staff remain focused on building a comprehensive set of protocols and best practices for impacted families and Tribal representatives to work effectively with

other local partners to conduct searches. A family support liaison has been added to these cases and the office hopes to support the Jourdain and Martin families and more than a dozen others through the Gaagige-Mikwindaagoziwag Reward Fund in 2025.

While each of these cases remains unresolved, the families and communities continue to seek answers and carry out searches. The MMIR Office acknowledges that what might be found in searching is painful to consider, but not searching or letting a family search without logistical guidance or emotional support is unimageable. The office must stand together in community and be a part of the solution.

Provided leadership and guidance to other MMIP offices nationwide

As the first office of its kind in the country, other states look to Minnesota to provide guidance, support and leadership to those working in the MMIR space. Staff helped plan a national convening in Phoenix, Ariz., in October. This convening was hosted by Arizona's governor and brought together state and federal coordinators to enhance collaboration, learn about efforts, challenges and successes, and provide solutions to collective challenges.

The MMIR Office presented on community searches in a presentation titled "MN MMIR Searches: Two Pathways Building Collaborations." This presentation pulled from staff experience in engaging with community and law enforcement partners to search for missing relatives. It included key takeaways and lessons learned as part of the engagement process.

The purpose of the convening is to bring national MMIP coordinators together to develop a comprehensive nationwide plan. This plan will be presented to Gov. Katie Hobbs in mid-2025 with a request to support a meeting with U.S. Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland. It is the intent of the planning team to continue to gather and expand invitations to include Tribal and grassroots organizations also addressing this crisis nationwide.

GAAGIGE-MIKWENDAAGOZIWAG REWARD FUND

DVS-funded rewards for tips in MMIR missing persons cases

The Gaagige-Mikwendaagoziwag Reward Fund Advisory Group was established during the 2022-2023 legislative session, and the advisory group held its first meeting in November 2023. This fund will offer rewards for information on cases assigned to the office and support additional efforts to raise awareness around MMIR.

In 2024 the advisory group developed and approved its charter. In consultation with experts from Crime Stoppers, the Bureau of Indian Affairs Missing and Murdered Unit and the Bemidji Police Department, they also established a foundational set of guidelines for the reward fund's operation. These guidelines are pending approval in 2025 including:

- Policies and practices on paying rewards in conjunction with law enforcement partners and Crime Stoppers.
- Determined that a maximum of \$10,000 per case will apply, with law enforcement input consideration necessary to define the impact of the tip on the case which will dictate the payout amount.
- Identified barriers to access for prospective tipsters including a payout process, the concern for anonymity, reporting concerns when paying anonymous tipsters and recognizing K-9 teams as a search tool.

Funds will be added to the Gaagige-Mikwendaagoziwag Reward Fund via public donations or from the sale of MMIR license plates through DVS. The license plates have been on sale since February 2024.

The reward fund currently contains \$91,749.92 from the sale of license plates in fiscal year 2024. This board will meet quarterly in 2025.

Current members:

Nicole Matthew- Board Chair
Selena Garza
Kim Mammedaty

Merlin Deegan
Rene Ann Goodrich
Caroline Palmer

ASSISTANCE FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT

Case-specific and systemic assistance for law enforcement

Law enforcement agencies are an essential partner in addressing the MMIR epidemic. To enhance investigative capabilities and foster collaboration, the office offers technical assistance to local, Tribal and federal law enforcement agencies. This support includes training, resource sharing, multi-disciplinary coordination and case-specific guidance designed to strengthen trauma-informed, culturally responsive approaches to MMIR-related investigations. By bridging gaps in communication and expertise, the office empowers law enforcement to better serve Indigenous communities and ensure that there is justice and empathy for impacted families.

In 2024 these efforts included the selection of a new case management system designed to make accessing MMIR data easier for law enforcement and the public, a focus on training on awareness of human trafficking and case-specific support which helped at least one person return home safely.

Case management and data dashboard: Building capacity for effective response

The implementation of a comprehensive case management system is a transformative step in strengthening the MMIR Office's ability to track, manage and respond to cases of missing and murdered Indigenous relatives. The case management system will empower the office to meet the complexities of our mission with efficiency and integrity by centralizing case data, enhancing inter-agency coordination, providing tools for data-driven insights and ensuring compassionate family support.

In 2024, the MMIR Office hit several significant milestones toward this goal including the selection and approval of a case management vendor and shepherding them through three rounds of IT leadership review. During the selection process, staff applied victimology and risk assessment to MMIR and human trafficking cases and identified hotspot areas within Minnesota to assess vulnerabilities.

After thorough review by Minnesota IT Services and other state partners, the office selected the Column case management system which incorporates the development of a publicly accessible data dashboard. Once fully implemented, the Column system will serve as a centralized platform that supports several goals:

- **Enhanced case tracking:** Improved documentation and visibility of cases from initial report to resolution.
- **Data-driven interventions:** Insight into patterns and hotspots to better allocate resources and prevent violence.
- **Stronger partnerships:** Increased trust and collaboration with law enforcement, social services and community organizations.
- **Support for victims' families:** A trauma-informed approach that prioritizes transparency and sensitivity to the needs of families and communities.

The office is now in the implementation planning phase of the process. Once implementation and configuration begin, it is expected to last three or four months. The intelligence specialist will work with the vendor to configure the MMIR requirements of the system. Staff will migrate information the office has to the case management system to streamline the work. Then comes the deployment phase focused on training, documentation and data migration.

Column should be fully operational by fall 2025.

As the MMIR Office continues its vital work, the adoption of a case management system will not only improve case outcomes but also uphold the values of justice, accountability and respect for Indigenous communities. By investing in this essential infrastructure, the office can make significant strides in addressing the MMIR crisis and honoring the lives of those who have been lost.

Technical assistance for local, federal and Tribal law enforcement agencies and medical examiner's offices

The MMIR Office has a dedicated intelligence specialist whose priority is to assist law enforcement agencies handling MMIR cases. This support ensures cases are handled with culturally sensitive and trauma-informed practices and long-term working relationships are established to help future cases connect with the right information and resources. Since April 2024, the intelligence specialist has provided technical assistance on 10 cases with two notable success stories, one in Ramsey County, the other in Winnipeg.

In Ramsey County, the intelligence specialist facilitated vital connections between the medical examiner's office and the family of a deceased Indigenous male who's only known address was a St. Paul homeless shelter. An investigator from the county medical examiner's office reached out to the MMIR Office for support with identifying next of kin for a relative who had been deceased for several weeks. The intelligence specialist was able to narrow down tribal affiliation and worked with the Oglala Sioux Tribe's enrollment office in Pine Ridge South Dakota to identify and notify next of kin. The Ramsey County investigator noted that the assistance saved his office weeks of work.

In June, Fergus Falls Police Department reached out about a woman who was temporarily being held in adult protective custody. She could not or would not tell authorities who she was, but they suspected she might be Indigenous and fleeing a trafficking situation. The intelligence specialist leveraged numerous resources and was able to locate her home at a Canadian Indigenous women's shelter. Staff toured the shelter earlier in the year after presenting at an MMIR conference in Winnipeg, Canada.

Tackling human trafficking on multiple fronts

Data cited in the Wilder Report shows Indigenous relatives are at a higher risk for human trafficking due to significant vulnerabilities that have impacted Indigenous people since colonization. Normalized violence further compounded the effect when family systems were disrupted by U.S. boarding schools and cultural means of healing were outlawed. The Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women's (MMIW) Task Force named human trafficking in several mandates, and the MMIR Office has continued to provide ongoing training and presentations.

- **Intervention and awareness:** Received an Office of Victim of Crimes grant to engage with adult trafficking survivors to create a culturally informed anti-trafficking message with an Indigenous artist. The message will be used on promotional material for ongoing MMIR trainings. Supplemental funding has also been granted for intervention and awareness work for victim/survivors 25 years and older.
- **Education for law enforcement:** Provided several trainings to various law enforcement partners throughout the state including the Tribal Safety Summit in 2024 and 2025.
- **Cross-border collaboration:** Conducted a joint presentation on the overlap of MMIR and human trafficking as part of the Cross-Border Collaborative Response initiative. Technical assistance was provided to the Winnipeg Police Department and the Winnipeg Empower Men Program, specifically focused on targeting buyers.

Minnesota Peace Office Standards and Training Board (POST Board) consultation

Juliet Rudie, who was serving as MMIR director at the time, consulted with the POST Board and Wilder Research to review the policy: "Response to Reports of Missing and Endangered Persons Model Policy." This model policy will include contacting the MMIR Office for assistance if the missing person is Indigenous as part of the investigation process. This addition may strengthen the relationship between respective law enforcement agencies and the MMIR Office, as well as providing an additional resource to impacted families that may be unaware of the support offered by the office.

MOVING UPSTREAM WITH VIOLENCE PREVENTION ACTIVITIES

Engaging impacted communities with prevention

Lead two large-scale conferences to enhance Tribal MMIR response



Together with the MMIR advisory council, the MMIR Office organized the state's first comprehensive two-day MMIR training session for Tribal advocates and emergency managers in September 2024. This training was open to a wide range of stakeholders including Tribal police officers, Tribal emergency managers, Tribal victim service providers, behavioral health providers, advocates, court personnel and more. It was a crucial step empowering Tribal leadership to increase their awareness and response to the MMIR crisis.

The training provided a foundational understanding of MMIR resources available on the Tribal, federal and state levels. It included a detailed introduction to the resources available, how and when to access them and, most importantly, forged working partnerships between Tribal law enforcement leaders and subject matter experts from other law enforcement agencies. This included:

- Training on missing persons case law in Minnesota.
- Procedures for accessing specialty search services (such as underwater searches).
- Current federal response to missing persons in Indian Country.
- Breakdown of Tribal Community Response Plans from regional MMIP coordinator for the Great Lakes region.
- Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA) resources to assist on cases.
- Victim support services from the Minnesota U.S. Attorney's Office.
- An additional training took place in Grand Portage in April after Grand Portage. Tribal leaders specifically asked the office to provide a MMIR focused training for their community.
- The “AMBER Alert Training and Technical Assistance Program: Amber Alert in Indian Country” pulled in national trainers from the National Criminal Justice Training Center of Fox Valley Technical College. The training focused on the federal, state and Tribal resources available when a child or adult goes missing. Other presenters included the BCA missing persons coordinator and Minnesota State AMBER Alert coordinator.
- Between these two scale efforts, The MMIR Office reached close to 125 Tribal law enforcement leaders and staff.

Focus on youth-specific training

In 2024, the violence prevention coordinator established a partnership with the Division of Indian Works to deliver the LIVE IT! curriculum to youth in Duluth. The curriculum is designed to be age-appropriate, culturally responsive and trauma-informed. It covers crucial topics such as values, healthy relationships, anatomy, intimate partner violence, trafficking and sexual exploitation. LIVE IT! is specifically designed for Indigenous youth ages 11 to 18. Each group begins with cultural teachings, medical terminology and definitions, and activities to promote healthy decision-making when it comes to sexual activity among youth. LIVE IT! appeals to American Indian youth by utilizing experiential learning. These experiences include bringing in elders to share Tribal knowledge and practices around sexuality. Storytelling and culturally-specific visuals are used in all information presented.

Prevention messaging with youth from Tribal communities not only benefits the next generation but has the added benefit of making visible the work of the MMIR Office within the broader community. Youth have been photographed in community wearing the MMIR bandanas and sweatshirts and had even requested to share the MMIR logo on an official conference shirt.

MMIR OFFICE ADVISORY COUNCIL

Bringing lived and professional experiences to the table

The 20-person MMIR Advisory Council is intended to offer vital guidance and expertise to address the complex and deeply rooted challenges of the MMIR epidemic. It is comprised of people who have lived experienced as victims, family members of victims and expert leaders pulled from other fields who have a shared vision to address the causes of MMIR in Minnesota. Its purpose, according to the 2023 charter, is to “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, MMIR cases to provide overall community and stakeholder perspective to the MMIR Office.”

In 2024, the council convened 19 times under the leadership of co-chairs Monte Fronk and Jessica Taylor. Together, Fronk and Taylor bring decades of public-sector experience and a deep personal connection to the MMIR. Their leadership was instrumental in fostering productive discussions and driving the council’s initiatives forward.

Throughout the year, the council engaged in fact-finding and education for board members and engaged with the following organizations:

- National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs)
- MMIW National Day of Awareness and Remembrance
- Minnesota Department of Health Safe Harbor Program
- ZeroAbuse Project of the Jacob Wetterling Resource Center (JWRC)
- MMIR Training for Advocates and Emergency Managers
- Violence Free Minnesota Homicide Report
- The Office of Higher Education (OHE) strangulation prevention campaign

The Advisory Council has become an important bridge between the MMIR Office and the broader Indigenous community, distilling community discussion and feedback into actionable insights. The collaboration has enabled the MMIR Office to adapt its strategies and resources to better serve impacted families.

During the course of 2024 for example, the Council helped surface the urgent need for increased resources and information on human trafficking. This discussion led directly to disseminating information about the BCA Human Trafficking tipline into the hands of Tribal urban office staff. They were also provided with information on how to request support from the MMIR Office to address suspected human trafficking. Information received by the MMIR Office is forwarded to the BCA, or staff provides callers with BCA's information directly since staff do not have the capacity to address this need.

The office also increased the number of engagement and outreach events focused on preventing and reducing the harms of trafficking, sexual exploitation, and violence for Indigenous women and children via ongoing collaboration with various partners like law enforcement, victim services, justice system teams and others.

Members

Monte Fronk (Co-Chair)	Jessica Taylor (Co-Chair)
Jacqueline Beaulieu	Lauren Matrious
Roberta Geiselhart	Naida Medicine Crow
Eileen Hudon	Scott Mueller
Fran Kingbird	Beth O'Keefe
Natasha Kingbird	Kristen O'Leary
Jacki Kozlowski	Teddi L. Wind
Brook LaFloe	Myah Wells
Anne LaFrinier-Ritchie	Dawn LaRoque
Gene Leatherman	
Jenna Lehti	

SERVICES FOR IMPACTED FAMILIES

Optimizing the intake experience for those in need

Implemented new victim specialist role

In 2024 the MMIR Office implemented a new victim specialist role to provide support services to families with an Indigenous relative who has gone missing or has been murdered. This role is responsible for the intake of new cases and develops trauma-informed plans which emphasize safety planning and stability goals. The victim specialist is the main point of contact for families seeking support from the MMIR Office. They are considered a resource broker for families and will provide referrals service providers when available, with special consideration for cultural norms and practices.

These duties were originally designated as family support liaison (FSL) duties and were spread equally across the team. Yet after feedback from impacted families highlighted a critical gap in communication with these important stakeholders, MMIR leadership reoriented an open role to address this gap.

This role was staffed in April of 2024 and is dedicated to bridging crucial gaps in supporting families within the MMIR Office. In July when a 12-year-old went missing on the light rail between St. Paul and Minneapolis, the victim specialist played a critical liaison role between the MMIR Office, the University of Minnesota Police Department, the BCA and the Metro Transit Police Department. Through their coordinated efforts, the child was found safely the following day at the Minneapolis Public Library.

Streamlined intake process to facilitate participations from families in crisis

The MMIR intake process is a critical step to gather information about the victim. It is also used for the office to acquire the necessary permission to allow access to law enforcement information on the family's behalf.

The victim services specialist gathered data and feedback from families around the intake of cases. An analysis found there were several barriers to entry including lack of transportation, literacy and access to a printer. In addition, some primary contacts are too bereaved or panic-stricken to fill out a form.

The victim services specialist undertook several changes to the form including making it available to impacted families as a PDF. Improving the intake process, especially the intake form will be an ongoing process for 2025.

PROPOSED OUTCOMES FOR 2025

Looking ahead

As the MMIR Office looks forward to 2025, staff remains committed to advancing the mission to address the epidemic of missing and murdered Indigenous relatives. This will happen by deepening partnerships with all government and non-government organizations involved in preventing victimization, investigating cases and supporting families and communities affected by trauma. The 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.

Below are the key outcomes the office aspires to achieve in the coming year.

- **Strategic planning:** After working under the guidance of the MMIW Task Force report of 2020 and the associated Strategic Plan, the office plans to re-evaluate priorities with a new strategic plan in 2025. This will refine long-term goals aligned with current staffing and fiscal realities while pushing the team to move forward together to make the most of limited resources. The MMIR Office will also strongly consider infusing the spirit of mandate 19 in all new initiatives and priorities. This calls upon the office to “Ensure that any initiatives, programs, and decisions related to the MMIW injustice are informed by Indigenous women and girls, especially those who have lived experiences with violence and exploitation.” To meet this commitment the MMIR Office will engage with the MMIR advisory board and the Tribal nations of Minnesota with the support of DPS’s new Tribal Relations Director Juliet Rudie.
- **Gaagige-Mikwendaagoziwag Reward Fund:** The MMIR Office will publicly launch and promote the reward fund. Throughout the year this will be supported by a robust media campaign, and the message will be amplified by the continuation of the Clear Channel billboard campaign.
- **Generating increased media coverage:** In the last several weeks of 2024, the MMIR Office welcomed its first dedicated communications specialist. Immediately the office was able to see increased coverage of planned initiatives and successes. Staff hope to build on those early successes and scale training efforts to include scalable, digital trainings.

- **Expanded billboard campaign:** Extend the Clear Channel Communications billboard initiative to highlight additional MMIR cases and continue raising public awareness about unsolved cases.
- **Data advocacy:** Continue to advocate for the free exchange of information on missing persons and human trafficking to ensure staff can build greater insights into trends across the state.
- **Second national convening:** Participate in the second national MMIP coordinators meeting in Alaska to finalize a coordinated national plan and advocate for further federal engagement in addressing MMIR issues.
- **Tribal MMIR training:** After overwhelmingly positive feedback following the 2024 trainings, plans are in the works for a similar training in 2025. The MMIR Office will host follow-up sessions with culturally-specific crisis response tools and best practices for addressing MMIR incidents.
- **Training for BIA agents:** Lead national training sessions for BIA agents on Human Trafficking in Indian Country in September 2025. We're also considering additional ongoing training for agents on this same topic.
- **POST Board implementation:** Implement the Response to Reports of Missing and Endangered Persons Model Policy to unify mandated responses.

As the MMIR Office embarks on these initiatives, leadership reaffirms its dedication to honoring Indigenous relatives and fostering healing and systemic change. With collective effort, staff will continue to build a safer and more equitable future for all.



Minnesota
**Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Relatives**
Office



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
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