



Update on the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women & Relatives Task Force



Interim Indian Affairs Committee & Legislative Health and Human
Services Committee
October 1, 2021

Secretary Lynn Trujillo
General Counsel Stephanie Salazar



MMIWR Task Force Timeline

- 2019 – House Bill 278 was passed and signed by the Governor.
- 2020 – MMIWR Task Force published a final report in December 2020.
- Jan. 2021 – Initiated partnership with Harvard University Native American Program.
- March 2021 – Senator Shendo committed \$57,600 of junior bill money to IAD for the MMIWR task force for expenditure in FY21 and FY22.
- May 2021 – Passage of Executive Order 2021-013.
- July 2021 – Tribal data collection was completed & final report issued.
- August 2021 – First MMIWR task force meeting.
- **Jan. 2022 – State Response Plan Final Draft due.**



New Mexico Indian Affairs Department

Outcomes of House Bill 278 (2019)

- The MMIWR Task Force worked hard to meet the requirements of House Bill 278 to:
 - “determine the scope of the problem, identify barriers, create partnerships to improve reporting of and investigation of missing and murdered Indigenous women and relatives.
- A final report & additional resources were developed by the task force and were published in December 2020. While a final report was issued, the task force’s work continues.





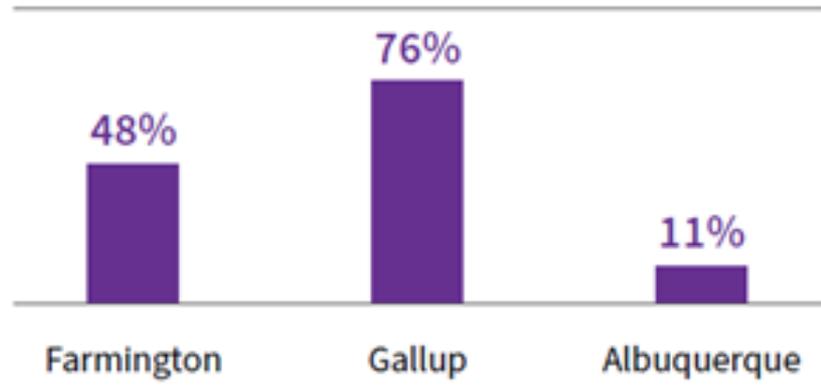
Data Findings

- In Farmington, there were 73 missing persons reported between 2014-2019, 34 of those cases involved a Native American, with **66% of the cases represent Native American missing females.**
- In Gallup, out of 675 missing person cases, *53% were women*, and Native Americans comprise **76% of ALL missing persons**. Gallup police department data indicates that from 2014-2019 *87% of all homicide cases were Native Americans.*
- Between 2014-2019, **Albuquerque reported 660 Native American missing persons, 287 of those cases are Native American women**, representing 43% of all Native American missing persons and **373 of the cases represent missing Native American males.**

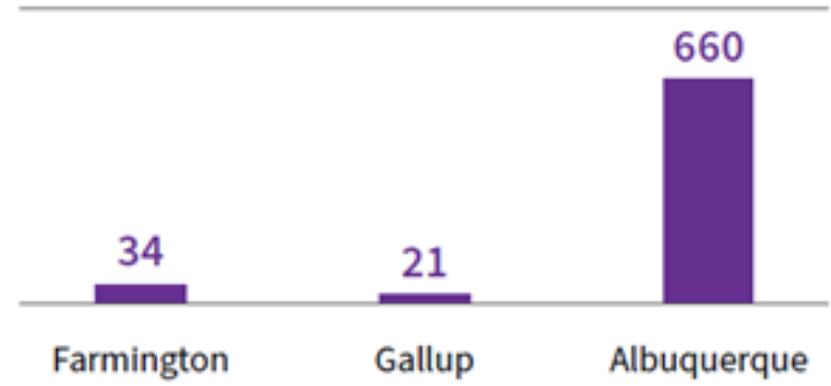


Data Findings

Percentage of Native American Missing People among all Cases (Year 2014 - 2019)



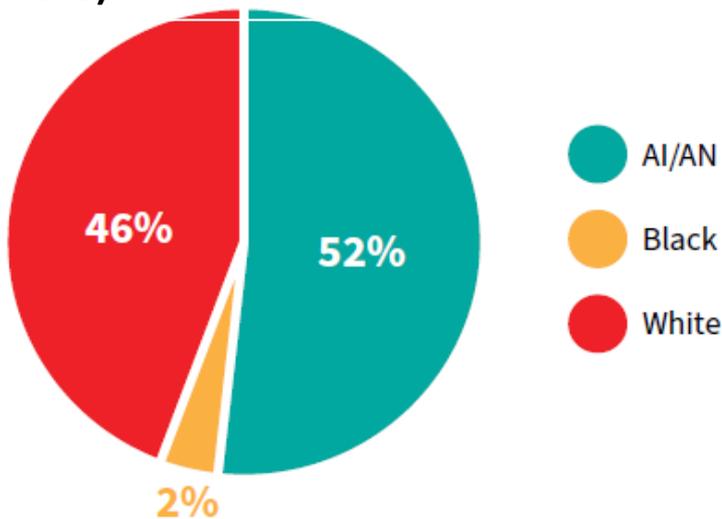
Native American Missing People (Year 2014 - 2019)





Data Findings

Missing Persons by Race in Two NM Counties* (Years 2014-2019)



- Among missing persons in these two counties, female missing persons were younger than male missing persons.
- In addition, Native American missing persons were younger than all other racial and ethnic groups.
- Data from the two counties show that half of all missing Native American women are younger than 27 years of age.

*The two counties are San Juan County and McKinley County



Additional Findings

- Law enforcement needs more support to increase data-gathering capacity across law enforcement agencies.
- More law enforcement agreements are needed (cross-commission and one-way commissions).
- Rural areas of the state and border towns need more support services including access to shelters, and safe housing.
- Tribal justice systems need access to more state resources such as training, and technical support.
- Increase resources to strengthen community response efforts.



2021 Legislative Session Outcomes

- IAD introduced legislation to establish a permanent MMIWR Task Force in January 2021.
- Although the legislation failed, the Indian Affairs Department received an appropriation for MMIWR work during the 2021 Legislative Session of \$57,000.
- In Spring 2021, the Indian Affairs Department partnered with the Nation Building II program at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government.
- Through this partnership, a MMIWR Community Toolkit framework was established, and an executive order was drafted.



Executive Order 2021-013

Task Force Directives

“The Task Force, through the subcommittees, shall **develop a MMIWR State Response Plan** that will advise the Executive Branch on initiatives, programs, and policy changes that will support implementation of Task Force report recommendations.

The Task Force shall **evaluate policies and explore legislation** that can be presented to the appropriate interim legislative committees and introduced during the 2022 Legislative Session to improve the state's efforts surrounding prevention and response to MMIWR incidents.

The Task Force shall develop a framework for the State Response Plan and present proposed legislation to the appropriate legislative interim committees and the Governor as soon as possible.”



Goals and Objectives

1. Develop a State Response Plan for how 2021 MMIWR Final Report recommendations should be implemented.
 - ✓ Legislation
 - ✓ Department Policies/Collaboration/MOUs
 - ✓ Staffing/Budget
2. Develop a long-term plan for MMIWR work in state government.
3. Continue collecting data from law enforcement agencies for 2020 missing persons data, homicide data, accidental deaths.



MMIWR Task Force Updates

- Education/Outreach Project Coordinator was hired to assist the task force to assist with meetings, media requests, and community education.
- IAD is working to bring on a Strategic Planner/Facilitator to assist with the final development of the State Response Plan.
- IAD partnered with UNM School of Law – Southwest Indian Law Clinic to conduct research for the task force.
- Monthly task force meetings and subcommittee meetings will continue to be held until the State Response Plan is complete. The public is welcome to attend.



Task Force Opportunities

The following opportunities have been presented to the task force and will be considered for inclusion in the final State Response Plan:

- **Second Judicial District Attorney's Office** is establishing a cold case unit to look at MMIWR cases.
- **Urban Indian Health Institute** is interested in providing New Mexico Law Enforcement with training on reporting incidents MMIWR accurately to improve data collection.



Task Force Opportunities Continued

- **University of Nebraska Omaha** would like to submit a joint application to the National Institute of Justice grant to collect data on MMIWR incidents in NM and create a framework for future data collection in the state.
- **University of New Mexico Gallup Campus** is seeking to assist the task force by supporting a project that focuses on MMIWR/criminal justice.



Legislative Proposals

The legislative proposals listed here are under consideration by the task force to be included in the final State Response Plan.

These proposals still need to be reviewed and considered by the partnering state agencies and the Governor's office.

The task force is also working on non-legislative proposals that do not require legislation to implement.

All proposals will be included in the final State Response Plan after they have been fully considered by the task force and presented to the implementing agencies.



Legislative Proposals Continued

- Establish a permanent MMIWR office/position to monitor Indigenous missing persons cases, educate communities, and focus on prevention.
- NM Missing Persons Day – Establishing a day that models “Missing in Arizona Day.” On this day, families are encouraged to meet with investigators to make a missing persons report or provide up-to-date information on a relative's case and submit DNA samples.
- Establish a state-led cold case task force to review missing persons cases.



Next Steps

- Continue developing legislative proposals with input from experts, stakeholders, and community members.
- Present updates to the Interim Indian Affairs Committee on October 18, 2021.
- Work with interested legislators and the Governor's office on legislation for the 2022 Legislative Session.
- Host a community outreach and education event in the Fall 2021.
- Finalize and present the final State Response Plan to the Governor, Tribal Leaders, Cabinet Secretaries, and Legislators.



New Mexico *Indian Affairs Department*

Thank you!

We welcome your feedback and participation in future task force meetings.

Please contact:

Stephanie Salazar

(505) 690-4079

Stephanie.Salazar@state.nm.us