

Multi-Jurisdictional Approach to the MMIP Crisis



House Tribal Affairs Committee
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Tami Truett Jerue
Executive Director
Alaska Native Women's Resource Center

Introducing Tami



Tami Truett Jerue, citizen of the Anvik Tribe. As Executive Director of the Alaska Native Women's Resource Center (AKNWRC) Tami brought 40 years of direct services experience to this journey, beginning with the formation of AKNWRC in 2016. Tami joined a group of Alaska Native women passionate about ending interpersonal violence across Alaska, Tami and the now Board of Directors, believe interpersonal violence is a result of colonization and has no place in native culture. Ms. Jerue has testified before Congress and the United Nations bringing attention to the disproportionate rates of violence experienced by Alaska Native women and the lack of resources faced by tribes. Under Tami's management, the AKNWRC has become a voice for Alaska Native issues, particularly affecting women, children and families, telling truths to promote understanding, building partnerships, and most importantly supporting Alaska Native tribes as they tackle the complex issues of interpersonal violence.

Ms. Jerue, has a Bachelor's degree in Social Work and master's work in Community Psychology. She worked for over 28 years for the Anvik Tribal Council in Tribal Administration, Indian Child Protection, Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault (DV/SA) and Counseling/Advocacy. She is married to Carl Jerue, Jr. of Anvik sharing 4 beautiful children and 6 grandchildren.



About AKNWRC

Since 2015, the Alaska Native Women's Resource Center has been dedicated to strengthening local, tribal government's responses through community organizing efforts advocating for the safety of women and children in their communities and homes, especially against domestic and sexual abuse and violence.

AKNWRC board members are Alaska Native women raised in Alaska Native Villages and have over 141 years of combined experience governments, nonprofit management, domestic violence and sexual assault advocacy, and other social service experience.

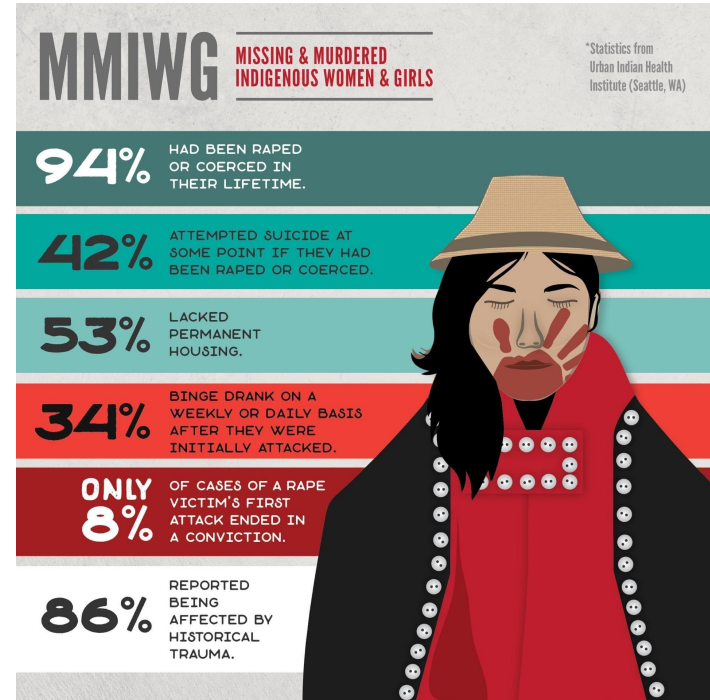
Our Mission

The Alaska Native Women's Resource Center envisions our Tribal women, communities and families free from violence, healing the trauma and utilizing the wisdom of our ancestors to create effective community/Tribal responses to domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, trafficking, sexual assault, and related injustices.



Introduction to MMIP

Indigenous communities have been experiencing some of the highest rates of domestic violence, sexual assault, human/sex trafficking, and MMIWG/MMIP in the country. We know this to be true from even the limited data we have from tribal, state and federal databases.



What is being done to address the MMIP Crisis?

In order to end the decades long violence perpetrated on Alaska Native and American Indians, all entities must come together to stop the violence and be coordinated - local, tribal, state, and federal, including all organization and business - there is a trust responsibility to ensure every citizen is protected and cared for.

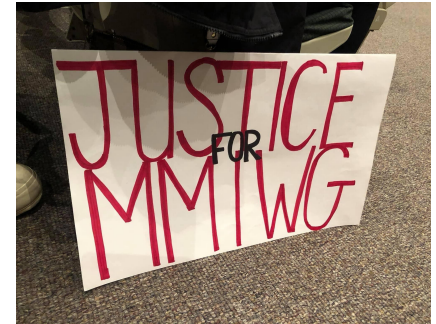
Today, we are going to address a few of the actions that have been taking place - but understand, this is just the beginning and YOU ALL have a part in ending this violence NOW.



Not Invisible Act Commission

The Commission is a multi-agency effort to enhance protections and basic guidelines to engage, coordinate, and consult with tribal governments, survivors, families, and experts who best understand the needs of tribal communities to lead Federal efforts to ensure indigenous people don't continue to go missing by developing strategies to address the crisis by developing:

- Administrative changes to identify, report, and respond effectively to cases of missing persons, murder, and human trafficking of Indians within Indian lands;
- Best practices for Tribal, federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies to follow in combating violent crime against Indians within Indian lands, including missing persons, murder, and human trafficking; and
- Guidance on how to address any gaps in services for Indian victims of violent crime.



Not Invisible Act Commission

The NIA Commission held 7 field hearings, 8 full commission meetings, and a combined total of 119 sub committee meetings from 6 sub committees.

A final report was released in November 2023. Some of the highlights include:

- Thanking the survivors, and impacted family and communities of missing and murdered Indigenous persons and human trafficking of indigenous peoples.
- Common Themes from the Field Hearings
- Key Findings
- Recommendations



Common Themes From Field Hearings

Funding: Reliable, consistent base funding for Tribes to battle MMIP and HT is critical.

Accountability: Communities need clarity about the extent and the limit of the authority and responsibility of law enforcement, medical examiners and coroners (ME/Cs), and funeral homes. These entities must be held accountable to quality, committed work, and in the absence of such work, negligence and egregious violations of human rights and dignity must be addressed.

Returning Jurisdiction to Sovereigns: PL-280 and other abdications of criminal jurisdiction to the states have had a disastrous effect on the quality and quantity of LE for Tribal communities. Tribes must regain their equal and rightful status as sovereigns, especially around LE, criminal justice, and public safety.

Alaska requires focused solutions: The 229 tribes in Alaska are ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse nations, occupying a vast area of about 365 million acres, much of which is inaccessible by road and lacks basic infrastructure. Prior to the 2022 Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) reauthorization, Alaska Native Villages were in a legal no-man's land as to Tribal law enforcement authority. The public safety situation in Alaska is dire and requires tailored solutions that recognize the unique legal framework, exceptionally high victimization rates, and historic exclusion of Alaska Tribal justice systems from federal funding.

Common Themes From Field Hearings

Data and coordination: Federal, state, local and Tribal law enforcement agencies (LEAs) must coordinate in reporting, investigations, and sharing data. Jurisdictional boundaries and responsibilities must be clarified and understood.

Communication: Authorities at all levels must improve communications with family members, who are too often left in the dark for days, weeks, or months about the investigation. Tragically, a case may be declared “cold” without a family receiving any information about the investigation.

Victim and family support: Victims and families need support from the beginning to the end. This includes information on how processes work, where to go for help, counseling, and connections to other services.

Law enforcement shortages: There are serious shortages and high turnover of Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and Tribal LEOs, who choose state or federal departments for better pay, retirement, and perhaps less stress. Up to date, relevant training, wellness support, pay equity, and benefits can remedy this.

Common Themes From Field Hearings

Media: There are endless examples of non-Indian victims and missing persons who receive immediate and widespread media coverage. For the AI/AN victim or missing person, this is the job of the family or advocacy groups. Indigenous missing persons must and should receive the attention and focus that others have.

Addressing vulnerabilities: Human traffickers prey on the vulnerable, often people who are young, homeless or in foster care, dealing with addiction, mental illness, or just depression, anxiety, and loneliness. There must be outreach and help to interrupt this pattern.

Trauma and resilience: The impact of the MMIP and HT crisis on AI/AN communities is intergenerational, a terrible legacy handed down in families. But there is also a deep resilience, an ability to survive, carry on, and even heal, especially with the help of cultural and spiritual practices.

Partnerships & Actions At Every Level

- Local, Tribal, State, Federal & International -

MUST Happen To End the Crisis of MMIP



Gunalcheesh - Quyana - Thank You

Questions?

