

Understanding the Crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous People and Taking Action

Presentation by the MMIWG2S
Alaska Working Group

Alaska State Legislature – House
Tribal Affairs Committee

April 8, 2025



MMIWG

About the MMIWG2S AK Working Group

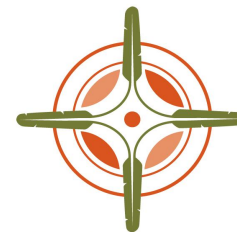
The MMIWG2S Alaska Working Group works in collaboration to share initiatives that impacts MMIWG2S/MMIP work, share and create strategies for change, and host healing centered community events. With partnership from statewide organizations, we leverage our collective resources and skills to analyze local, state, and federal policies, have a unified voice on advocacy, and create meaningful outfacing events for the community.



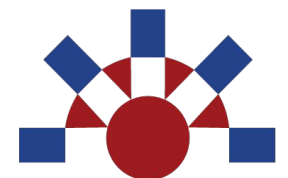
**NATIVE
MOVEMENT**



**DATA FOR
INDIGENOUS
JUSTICE**



—Alaska Native—
JUSTICE CENTER
Voices for Justice



**ALASKA
NATIVE
HERITAGE
CENTER**

MMIP/MMIWG2S Statistics

- **229 cases of MMIWG in Alaska** (149 missing/80 murdered) - “We are Calling to You” from Data for Indigenous Justice
- **Alaska had the 4th highest MMIP cases by state** – UIHI, 2018 Report
- **Anchorage had the 3rd highest MMIP cases by city**
- **Anchorage ranked in the top five cities** with the highest number of cases not in law enforcement data.
- **Murder is the third leading cause of death among American Indian/Alaska Native Women** (UIHI)
- While women and girls are the primary victims of violence and human trafficking among Native Americans, they are not alone. People of all ages are victims of these horrific crimes, including men, boys, infants, and the elderly. In fact, **82% of indigenous men are victims of violence in their lifetime** and Native children are more likely to experience trauma and abuse than their non-Native peers. When educating yourself about the struggles of Native Americans, it's important to recognize and remember *all* victims of these crimes. (CRS MMIP Research and Native Hope)



Data Tells A Story

- 80% of Alaska Native/American Indian (AN/AI) women will experience violence in their lifetimes - Rosay, 2016
- 55.6% of Alaska's sexual assault victims are AN/AI people - DPS 2018
- AN/AI people twice as likely to be victims of homicide - AJiC 2020
- Suicide rate 4x the national average for AI/AN and have increased by at least 20% according to the CDC
- 40% Incarceration Rate - Alaska Native men and women are more likely to be arrested than any other race in Alaska.
- Alaska Natives and American Indians (ANAI) represent around 19% of the state's population, yet statewide 60% of the children in foster care are AN/AI. (State of AK)
- An overwhelming number of sex offense cases reported in Alaska are not prosecuted – barely 50% were accepted for prosecution from 2018-2019. - ACJC 2020
- AI/AN suffer from one of the highest rates of victimization in the country. Cultural differences, remote locations, and challenging jurisdictional issues make serving Tribal communities complex. - National Institute of Justice
- Just over four in five American- Indian and Alaska-Native women (84.3 percent) have experienced violence in their lifetime and just over four in five American-Indian and Alaska-Native men (81.6 percent) have experienced violence in their lifetime. - Office for Victims of Crime & National Institute of Justice

Not Invisible Act Commission

“With each passing day, more and more American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) persons are victimized due to inadequate prevention and response to the MMIP and HT crisis.”

“The United States government’s failure to fulfill its trust responsibilities to Tribal nations, coupled with historic policies that sought to disconnect AI/AN people from their land, language, and culture, have given rise to a public health, public safety, and justice crisis in Tribal communities.”

Boarding Schools & MMIP

Destruction of identity, inward and outward

- Boarding schools were meant to destroy the way Native peoples not only see ourselves, but how society sees us as “less than”

Sexual Abuse as Institutional

- Levels of civilization of Alaska Native children (societal worth) made sexual abuse permissible, leading to a high percentage of abuse within these schools
- Boarding schools were also a means for resource extraction, which led to a large amount of sexual abuse of Native women

Lasting Effects

- According to several studies, the children of a parent who has been sexually abused are more likely to be the target for abuse, becoming a cycle that has become a cycle genetically embedded
- The factors of continued of negative societal identity and resource extraction within Native communities reveals how one of the many continued legacies of these institutions can be seen in the MMIWG crisis
- These factors can also explain why it has continued to be allowed by governmental entities which do not see Native peoples on the same level of personhood, leaving way for abuse to be unchecked.





Missing in Life Missing in Data Missing in Media

Missing in Life

**Mothers
Grandmothers
Daughters
Aunties
Fathers
Grandfathers
Uncles
Cousins
Relatives
Friends
Neighbors
Alaskans**





Remembering Those We Lost – And Taking Action

We are taking actions to remember our loved ones, keeping them close as we advocate for change.

- Heartbeat of the Drums
- Annual 5k Run for Justice
- Week of Action & MMIW Awareness Day - May 5th
- Self-Defense Class
- Building Resource Guides and Toolkits for our communities
- Awareness Rally

Missing in the Media

Our world revolves around media –

- Connects us
- Influences us
- Educates us

Media has become the way we get our news, share important information, connect with our friends and family.

- ALSO -

The media industry decides what to put out, deciding what the general public should see and shouldn't see.



*A content analysis regarding MMIWG revealed that more than **95% of the 934 articles reviewed were never covered by any national or international media.** [1]*

Taking Back the Message

In This Moment: A guide for addressing the missing and murdered Indigenous peoples crisis in media

Participating in podcasts and interviews with media to talk through MMIWG2S/MMIP

Meeting with media outlets and building relationships

Sharing out the media guide and calling out the media when necessary



Missing in the Data

The lack of tracking, quality data, and reporting means there is a scarce amount of available data for Tribes and Indigenous communities to advocate for and have access to resources.

“We owe it to these women and girls to fully identify the scope of the problem,” Lucchesi said. “What we found in our research was that in some cases law enforcement agencies didn’t even have records on file to consult, they were simply going off what they could remember of past cases. This is unacceptable.”



Creating Indigenous Data Systems

Data for Indigenous Justice was formed out of the need for ensuring our missing and murdered Indigenous people are being tracked.

Additionally, the information collected has given a more complete understanding of MMIP in Alaska.



*We Are
Calling To You*

Alaska's Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Womxn and Girls

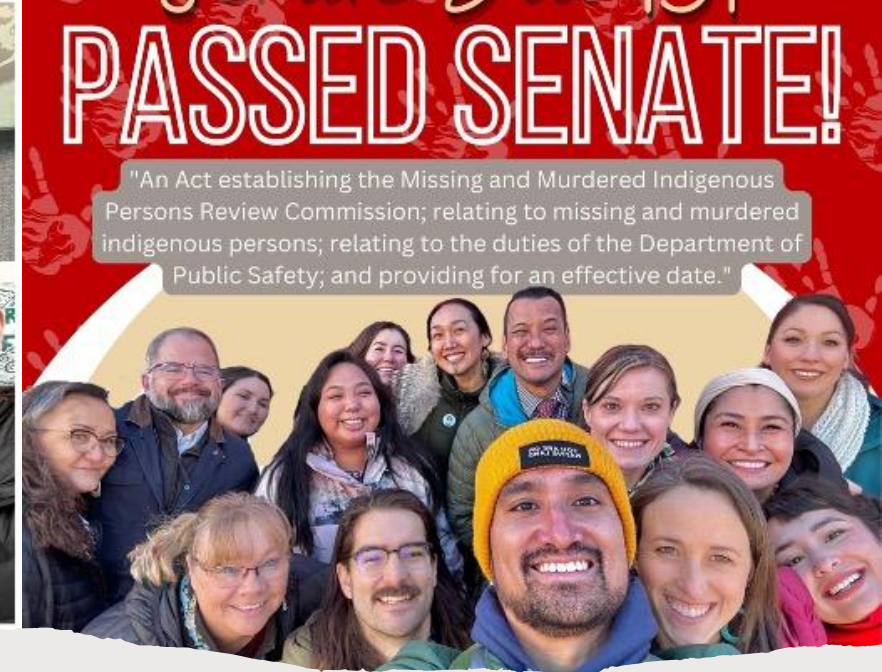
Changing the Data Systems and Collection

DIJ report outlined specific actions including:

- Called on DPS to track data and release information. (DPS is now sending out quarterly reports)
- Mandatory reporting to NAMUS (this provision was included in SB151 MMIP that passed in 2024)
- Updated Data fields: Missing Category (implemented at DPS)
- Centralized data systems (still working on)

*Alaska
Native/American
Indian people become
invisible in data sets*

*We have now gathered and reclaimed a
total of 229 cases of Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Womxn and Girls in Alaska.
149 as missing status.
80 as murdered.*



MMIWG2S/MMIP Successes

State Policies:

- Passage of SB151 - first MMIP Bill in Alaska
- Four designated MMIP Investigators at DPS
- One MMIP AAG at Dept of Law
- VPSO legislation and funding increased

Federal Policies:

- Passage of Savanna's Act
- Passage of Not Invisible Act
- VAWA Reauthorization

Gunalcheesh – Qu yana – Thank You

