I "In a good way" is a reference to the project to the project name and also the traditional teaching to do things with a good heart, good intention and goodwill as one moves through this world, in their relationships, and in their responsibilities to one another.
The artist, Tawny Snow, is a Yurok Tribal member who resides in Humboldt County, CA. Her roots to Humboldt County stem from her mother who is also a Yurok Tribal member and Karuk descendant. Her father is a member of the Lac du Flambeau Tribe and descendant of the tribes Bad River and Saint Croix.

Tawny has been working on and off for the Yurok Tribe since she was 18 years old all the while pursuing her educational goals. In 2014, she graduated from Humboldt State University with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration and an emphasis in Accounting. She currently works for the Yurok Tribe Fiscal Department as an Accountant.

Her free time is where her love for art flourishes from creating her own pieces to visiting art museums/galleries to be in awe of other’s work of art. She usually creates art for herself or as gifts but occasionally will submit a piece of art for contests if she truly feels the purpose or cause for the art to be showcased. Her art medium ranges from acrylic paints, markers, charcoal, and pen drawings to graphic design.

I originally created parts of this artwork as a submission for the logo contest, To’ Kee Skuy’ Soo Ney-Wo-Chek’ had at the start of their program. Unfortunately, after losing two uncles less than a year apart from each other, I wasn’t fully inspired to finish the piece before the contest end date. The piece sat in my computer in hopes I would one day finish it for something else. I am beyond grateful my piece got picked for this year’s report as I felt it was a better medium than for a logo. The piece is meant to represent fragments of what Missing and Murdered Indigenous People are to the native community and mainly to Yurok People. The abalone represents the local story of the Abalone Woman and Dentalium Man. I chose the friendship design from traditional basketry to represent clouds in the sky to indicate friends and family have an unbroken bond, regardless, if they are alive or in the spirit world. I wanted the woman in the sky with the basket cap on to be the piece’s main focal point. She is meant to represent a missing or murdered woman who while gone is always looking down from the spirit world at those who are still trying to find her or find justice for her murder.
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In our final year, it is most important to our team to center ourselves in our values and world knowledge, and build out the proposed MMIP interventions “in a good way[1]” as stated by our project name. In Years One and Two, we collected data across a variety of metrics to demonstrate the scope and severity of the systemic failure to protect Indigenous bodies. This failure stems from an unwillingness to consult with tribal nations on this issue in previous decades even as the numbers of our missing and murdered relatives continued to grow and their cases went unsolved. We see and live with the agony of those failures.

This report will tell the story of Emmilee Risling, her family and ancestors, friends, and companions. Those who will remember her will do so for many reasons, including the gift she gives us: a gift that demands that we as tribal nations stand up and develop the practices WE need to stop our relatives from being taken. Decades of inaction and at times even ineptitude have resulted in far too many families never knowing what happened to their missing or murdered loved one. There are those on this project team who know Emmilee personally, who are even connected by blood, and we cannot and will not look away. We each know if she was the one here and we were among the MMIP, she would NEVER look away. It is not about numbers, data, statistics; it is about family, village and our responsibility to each other.

As you read this final report, you will see Emmilee and you will see us, our values, and those teachings that require us to stand up as the women who have always been charged to develop the practices. Women, as the ones who must set the rules for keeping the home and family safe, charged to do so by the ancestors “in a good way.” You will also see the men, our camp leaders and protectors, sometimes both; they will not stand for this as we go forward. We put our minds, prayers, and sovereign strength to prevention and to helping survivors as they heal upon their return home. To do so, we build up our infrastructure and our interventions, relying on our thousands of years in this place to repel the aftermath of those who came here to hurt and to extract, without regard for place or persons, from the land and from our bodies. This must end.

Based on these practices, we propose a system and provide corresponding tools and templates to intervene in the MMIP epidemic and invite other tribes to do the same. We share these teachings even as there are those who still seek out our bodies for harm, do not listen to us, nor respect our ways. We begin with the story of our Emmilee Risling and the lessons therein as shaped by our shared worldviews. In this “good way,” we shall build from the place up rather than the top down.
In the Yurok language, To’ Kee Skuy’ Soo Ney-Wo-Chek’ means “I will see you again in a good way” and in that spirit, the work has continued into Year Three. As we discuss Year Three, we would like to briefly revisit the journey this project has taken over the previous two years. The goals, the recommendations, and the vision in continuing to move the work in addressing the impact of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and two spirit people (MMIWG2) to Year Three’s more inclusive missing and murdered Indigenous women and people (MMIP).

When the Year One of the report was published in July 2020, six months of that year and the entire year of Year Two occurred during the pandemic. This impacted the ways in which the project addressed not only how the data was collected but also how the data itself was impacted.

YEAR ONE

Year One focused on the Native people in Northern California (San Francisco Bay area, Sacramento up to the Oregon Border). The project focused on relationship building with these communities to effectively implement the comprehensive quantitative and qualitative data collection to establish the scope and severity of MMIWG2 in Northern California. The qualitative design included interview-based templates administered to MMIWG2 families and survivors and this was paired with a quantitative analysis of the data.

An important highlight of this report, offered a discussion of the contextual considerations of Northern California’s designation as a PL 280² (Anon, n.d.c.) jurisdiction and how the legislative frameworks are addressing or in some cases, not addressing, MMIWG2. The report addressed the systemic inequities, jurisdictional complexities and social stigmas that are intertwined inexplicably as survivors and families shared their first-hand experiences throughout the report. This report covered over 150 documented MMIWG2 cases in Northern California.

The literature review from Year One effectively discussed the roles of systemic inequities in the areas of law enforcement and the judicial system. Ultimately, these systemic shortcomings resulted in the disempowerment of the MMIG2 families and survivors, further exacerbating the culture of abuse that pervades this area leading to the targeting Indigenous women, girls, two spirits in the areas of violence, trafficking, and murder.

In effectively identifying the gaps in services and needs for additional areas for support, the report also offered recommendations in eight categories: data collection, interagency coordination, investigatory resources, law enforcement and justice system accountability, legislative considerations, support services, protective factors, and community strength building.
While Year One had focused on relationship building required for the data collection phase, Year Two focused on the data driven recommendations that resulted in the eight categories highlighted from the Year One report.

Five new areas were prioritized for Year Two: foster care and violence against youth, mental health impacts, intergenerational trauma, culturally informed ideas of justice and healing, and family and survivor centered justice and healing.

Updates in data collection led to more inclusion of victims of all genders (cisgenders, straight men and boys) leading to murdering and missing Indigenous people (MMIP). Follow-up on Year One families that were featured in case reports also found the stark reality that little or no progress had occurred in the year since the 2020 report. Legislative policy and/or task efforts were also analyzed to determine the gaps of what is being done and what more is needed and follow up with recommendations in narrowing these gaps for both law enforcement and judicial agencies working with and supporting families and survivors of MMIWG2 and MMIP.

The recommendations from Year Two for effective policy development and intervention included the strong recommendation that any policy development include the voices of tribal leaders as well as family and survivors and the grassroots advocates. Additionally, the inclusion of an explicit PL 280 supplement or draft of a PL 280 specific legislation and funding for each. Finally, advocating for a public health preventive approach for MMIWG2 and MMIP policies.

The second recommendation from Year Two encompassed law enforcement and victim services. These include actionable solutions that can assist in intervention in these matters in real time i.e., access to training, briefings, special journal issues, Department of Justice (DOJ) resources, old case prioritization, establishing missing, murdered, and unidentified persons (MMUP’s) protocols and the inclusion and engagement of Victim Service Systems and Community Based Advocates.

In leaving Year Two, the resounding echo was the plea for the importance of open communication with families and to engage with the families respectively and collaboratively. The hope is for this to bring the sensitivity and empathic understanding for all those involved in these cases to understand beyond the stark data of when our loved ones go missing but to also understand that as families and survivors, there are cultural practices and ideologies that are employed to assist in maneuvering this unknown journey ourselves.

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2 "Public Law 83-280 (commonly referred to as Public Law 280 or PL 280) was a transfer of legal authority (jurisdiction) from the federal government to state governments which significantly changed the division of legal authority among tribal, federal, and state governments. Consequently, Public Law 280 presents a series of important issues and concerns for Indian country crime victims and for those involved in assisting these crime victims.”
“Emmilee was brilliant, she really is… she was on the path. She could have had anything, right? She’s quite a brilliant person.” — Judy Risling, mother

“I'm Emmilee's father. That's number one. And that happened about 32 years ago... I live in McKinleyville, which is in the home that Emmilee grew up in and lived in as she went through grammar school and high school and stuff... So there's a lot of memories in this home.”
— Gary Risling, father

“Everyone wants her home, everyone who my sister touched, misses her, and wants to see her back with her children.” — Mary Risling, sister (Bull, 2022)

“Emmilee is brilliant beyond compare… I think Emmilee had a tough exterior, but I also think she was a really sensitive and gentle soul at her core.” - Kendall Allen, MMIP Program Manager, cousin

“One summer my aunt and uncle asked if I would babysit my little cousin Emmilee since they both had work and I needed money for gas. She was 6, maybe 7, and while I didn't love having to show up at 8:30 every single morning during summer vacation, she was always excited that she got to spend the day with her "cool cousin." We watched a lot of friends; she was slightly too young to get most of the jokes but she laughed alongside me like she did. We played a lot with my makeup, we did each other's hair and she loved to pick out outfits for me to wear. We'd walk to the park together for picnic lunches. She liked to make daisy chains. We spent a lot of time talking about all the things we could dream into being: a store that had skirts made entirely of licorice, a restaurant where everyone would sing along to music like in a musical, aquariums where you could swim with the jellyfish. Many years later, when I had my own daughter, Emmi would offer to babysit, and she would tell my daughter stories about us, like we'd had a summer of crazy adventures, not just short walks to the park but epic day-long journeys, fantastical tales that she said reminded her of how magical life could be.” – Prof. Cutcha Risling Baldy, in Greenson (2022), cousin

“She had the most amazing smile, she just sparkled…. When I went away for college, it was because I had seen her do it that I knew I could too. She was hands-down the coolest girl I knew in high school, very well-liked and a natural student leader. When we reconnected during my dissertation, she was my right hand. Emmilee helped me reach those I would not have otherwise. She facilitated insight after insight, shared teaching after teaching with me and was ultimately my dearest confidant.”
— Dr. Blythe K. George, report co-author, friend
“Brilliant” is the word that comes up time and again when stories of Emmilee Risling are shared. Emmilee or “Emmi” as her loved ones called her, is a mother of two children, the much-loved older sister of Mary Risling and eldest daughter of Gary and Judy Risling. When she was in high school, she wanted to be a lawyer and that dream carried her to the University of Oregon where she graduated with a degree in political science in 2014. Becoming a mother in 2012 was a deeply meaningful turning point for her, and she came back home to raise her son in her home community. For work, she chose service—as a Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) case worker, she helped other Native women like herself navigate complicated institutions and get back on their feet after domestic violence, incarceration, and substance use disorders to raise their children.

Even still, “brilliant” would be an understatement. In the photos shared by her family and friends, her shining smile radiates across time. For those lucky enough to hear her sing either in ceremony or to her favorite reggaeton, these memories are held close. Yet, no words and no photos can capture the light and love Emmilee radiated in the lives of her family, friends and in her community. Nor can they capture the darkness and emptiness left in the wake of her absence.

Our project was in its third and final year when Emmilee Risling went missing in mid-October 2022. She was last seen on the Pecwan Bridge on the Yurok Reservation, in what is potentially one of the most remote regions in the lower-48 states. Emmilee had frequented the reservation for the last several months as a Yurok descendent and enrolled Hoopa tribal member with thick ties spanning both Yurok and the neighboring Hoopa Valley reservations. Yet often, she made the 2-hour long trek back to the coast where she had grown up in McKinleyville and her parents and children still lived.

In this report, we bring our analysis to the level of micro-, focusing on the lessons learned in real-time from this ongoing case, to the macro-, with a discussion of the key protocols and best practices that should be adopted by tribes, law enforcement and justice system agencies. This “Tribal Community Response Plan” or TCRP includes specific guidance from before someone goes missing or is murdered, to when a report is taken that someone has gone missing and/or foul play is suspected, through to a long-term missing person or a murder case. We are indebted to Emmilee’s family for their willingness to share so openly the details of her life and her disappearance even as it is painful to do so and a constant reminder of her absence. We, as a project team, share their belief that the only way to find answers and ultimately closure for her family and families like them is to keep shining a light on these cases, keeping their names on people’s lips and in the back of people’s minds so that one day, maybe information will come to light that will bring our loved ones home. As our project names says, we pray we see them again in a “good way”, and we make this prayer for Emmilee and for each of the missing or murdered Indigenous women, girls, two-spirit and male relatives who have been taken from us.
I just want to say that this person has had a position where she did nothing but help the Tribal Community and offer support to other Native men and women like myself. I sat in Emmilee’s office countless times crying while she told me that I was going to be OK and helped me get through whatever I needed help getting through so I could be a better Mom. This person is not evil, this person needs help.

For those of us that know the REAL her.. we’re worried sick about her. She hasn’t been seen or heard from in a while now. There was just a community search for her. Her family is worried sick about her. There’s many things going on with her right now. It's a fight to try to get her the help that she desperately needs. For those of us that know and love her, your negative comments and jokes about drugs aren't funny. For those of you who she didn’t grow up around or interact with, you have no idea who she is when she’s at herself.

This person clearly has mental health issues. In no way am I downplaying what she did or how disrespectful the act was. But this shows exactly what is wrong in this country. People think throwing someone who obviously needs serious mental intervention in jail will somehow mitigate the issue. It will neither help her, nor the community she will return to once she gets out.

I remember her as a beautiful young lady, singing her family's ceremony songs in the dance house. When she sang a certain song it would literally make me cry. This breaks my heart so bad, because this is totally not her. Em, please please get the help that you need. She was in the valley for MONTHS, people were concerned for her and her welfare, but she wasn't considered a risk to herself or others. People were worried she was going to drown in the river. This might be a blessing in disguise, love you Em.
In these social media comments, acquaintances, close friends and community members described Emmilee as a woman who impacted many in her professional, personal and ceremonial roles. These comments were in response to Emmilee’s arrest for arson approximately one month before she went missing. In each, the author alludes to the shift from the kind-hearted, generous and culturally-grounded mother who worked for tribal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) services to a woman whose addled eyes and shorn hair looked almost unrecognizable even to those closest to her, and juxtaposed strongly with the outpouring of love and concern featured in each comment.

Before someone goes missing or is murdered, we must ask ourselves: how many times could they have been made safe? How many chances were there to intervene? As in many cases, there were key turning points in the days, weeks, months and even years before Emmilee went missing whereby perhaps outcomes could have been different had she had access to better resources, more available support, and a host of other considerations.

For those who knew Emmilee, her changing behaviors and eventual struggles with methamphetamine addiction and co-occurring mental health conditions began slowly at first and then escalated to almost breakneck speeds by the time of her disappearance. In 2018, she was working full-time and taking care of her son in her own home, seeing her family and friends daily. Yet, by 2019, a new relationship brought domestic violence into her household, and brought her increasingly within proximity to meth, first recreational use but becoming more habitual and in turn, bringing further violence, impulsivity and erratic behavior into the lives of her son and parents. In the words of her father, Gary:

*I tried to have her look at reality and see what reality is and as an example of that, her relationships and the abuse that she subject herself to by trying to maintain some of these relationships with the people that would abuse her, spousal abuse, just literally beat her up.*

Emmilee’s story involving Domestic Violence/Intimate Partner Violence (DV/IPV) resonates with a key theme from our Years One and Two Reports where DV/IPV was found to be frequently associated with MMIP cases. Similar to national data, DV/IPV is a common circumstance in missing and murdered cases (Wilson et al., 2022). Although not the case for Emmilee, in previous years we observed a strong association between witnessing DV/IPV between caregivers as a child and experiencing it in adulthood. Some research indicates that as many as 44% of AI/AN adults have witnessed DV/IPV on more than one occasion during childhood (Brockie et al., 2018; Elm et al., 2021). This suggests that intervening to address DV/IPV may be a key factor for reducing MMIP rates as this could help reduce the risk of the next generation being in the future.
For Emmilee, the implications of the violence went well beyond physical injuries. According to her mother Judy:

*Being in abusive relationships, when you've been in 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, every, almost every relationship that Emmilee had was toxic. And when people are calling you names, when they're beating you up, they're telling you you're not worthy. You're not good enough. I think after a while, you start to internalize that and believe it. And I think that that could have been really instrumental in Emmilee's situation…. even in her worst relationship toward the end there, it was almost like he had a mind control on her because even when he was incarcerated, she was still going there to visit him and [he was] incarcerated, sometimes for beating her up. And then maybe you self-medicate with substances, or you're doing it with that person to try to keep that person.*

The causal role of DV/IPV is not what we seek to highlight with these quotes; rather, we emphasize the impact of relationship violence on behavioral health and one’s sense of safety. Emmilee’s family members described “living through hell” alongside Emmilee as the relationship violence spewed outwards from the intimate relationship onto her son, parents and other family members. Ultimately, Emmilee’s son would be removed from her care and placed with her mother.

In Year 2, we highlighted how losing custody of one’s children was a key turning point in the lives of some mothers who ultimately go missing. This was the case for Emmilee too, even as her parents welcomed the chance to keep their grandchildren safe, especially after the birth of Emmilee’s second child, a beautiful baby girl. In one of the last photos taken of Emmilee, she is seen beaming with pride holding her daughter, and as time goes by, the resemblance between the two is uncanny.

Even with the joy that new life brought into their lives, the Risling family also describes this pregnancy and subsequent postpartum period as a turning point in the time before Emmilee went missing. “Postpartum psychosis” was one of the conditions identified potentially affecting Emmilee in the months before her disappearance. Symptoms of this mental health state included delusions, hallucinations and/or disorganized speech or behavior. Other risk factors associated with this underdiagnosed disorder according to the DSM-IV-TR (American Psychiatric Association, 2000) include bipolar disorder, schizophrenia or schizoaffective disorder (Anon, 2009b). Unlike postpartum depression, postpartum psychosis is a severe mental disorder and the severity of the symptoms mandates pharmacological treatment and in some cases, hospitalization. For Emmilee, this diagnosis compounded her preexisting conditions of borderline personality disorder and potentially a schizophrenic diagnosis on top of a co-occurring methamphetamine substance use disorder.
At a certain point, the domestic violence and mental health conditions described above combined became “just got too heavy for her to carry. Too big of a burden” in the words of her mother Judy. As recounted by her cousin, Prof. Cutcha Risling Baldy, noted Indigenous scholar:

She struggled with mental illness and...there was no way to help her, how often we tried to intervene, the moments we watched as she was passed from agency to agency, how often it was recommended that she be hospitalized or kept in a facility. (Baldy, 2022)

Yet, no matter how many times Emmilee interacted with law enforcement after screaming, raging and talking to herself in public, frequently naked and at times wet from wading through creeks, she was never offered access to mental health services beyond cursory interventions at best, and plain "dumping3" at worst. This was a direct reflection of the contemporary use of the criminal justice system as a tool for mental health provision, especially in marginalized communities and/or those areas with few other mental health resources. Ultimately Emmilee was unwell; she needed mental health treatment. Yet, she was Indigenous and lived in a rural area that suffers from an acute mental health crisis in a country that thoroughly undervalues and rarely adequately invests in mental health services—at large for any population, let alone its most marginalized.

Similar to our previous two reports, here, we underscored mental health challenges as a primary risk factor in shaping the MMIP crisis. Without such care, we use the criminal justice system to address what is at its heart the culmination of generations of historical, intergenerational and contemporary traumas that directly stem from the settler colonial project. As we explained then and reaffirm now, it is through the conquest of bodies of Indigenous women like Emmilee that this nation and state were established, and in present day, violence against these bodies continues to reaffirm the safety of others (Razack 2011, 2014, 2015). In Emmilee’s case, this manifested in a lack of treatment for her co-occurring mental health conditions coupled with chronic criminal justice contact without access to coordinated services to address complex underlying conditions.

When someone is a harm to themselves or others, they should be served through a quality and culturally-responsive mental health care system. For Emmilee and others like her, the need for services frequently outpaced available options and they were getting arrested instead of receiving treatment:

Well, I think they picked her up many times on a 51504 (Anon. n.d.a.) but most of the time they would say that she didn't meet the qualifications for 5150. She knew what day it was. She knew who the president was. She knew all these things she could, and [they were] never taking into account that, you're naked

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3 “Dumping” refers to the practice of dropping a person off at a location other than their residence, a mental health facility, a jail facility, police department, or other secure location. In Canada, dumping has contributed to a number of deaths as a result of freezing and inclement weather, and as a result, this practice is generally discouraged (Razack 2014).

4 “5150 is the number of the section of the Welfare and Institutions Code, which allows a person with a mental challenge to be involuntarily detained for a 72-hour psychiatric hospitalization. A person on a 5150 can be held in the psychiatric hospital against their will for up to 72 hours. This does not mean that they will necessarily be held the entire 72 hours; it means that psychiatric hospitals have the legal right to do so if determined to be necessary.”
going down a street. You are a danger to yourself. Then even when she got to a facility, they would just maybe not even keep her overnight and just give her a prescription and let her out. Just reading on our hospitals, they’re overrun with 5150s. They don’t have the capability to handle those cases. With the mental health help in our area, probably statewide, there was no way that we could have Emmilee committed without a very long process. There was no way for us to get immediate help for her.”

Her father Gary recounts another example where the chance for treatment could have been extended but was not:

Emmilee was picked up one time and they didn't have any room in jail, so they just took her to the emergency ward and had somebody do a little watch on her and of course, when COVID came, you had to stay there longer and get clearances before they do anything with you. But Emmilee, she just got up in her hospital gown, walked out and found a vehicle that you could start up and drove off with that pick up, took off.

And you know what came out of that is the Arcata police started investigating and everything, the guy got his pickup back. She’s just parked along the road somewhere. Got his pickup back. He didn't want to press any charges. There’s no criminal charges.

According to Yurok Tribal Prosecutor Rosemary Deck, this cycle of mental health crises resulting in arrests and/or 5150 designations with few to no supports was not exclusive to the case of Emmilee but rather endemic to the rural criminal justice system:

\textit{Drunk or intoxicated in public or resisting arrest....when I when I see those are the only charges, that indicates to me this person is likely undergoing a mental health crisis or has a concurrent diagnosis because there's no trespass, there's no vandalism, there's no assault, there's no threat. It's literally just "you're acting strange, and then you resisted when they tried to arrest you for acting strange." That was one example of how we were essentially criminalizing these quality of life crimes. So you're mentally ill and you have a concurrent diagnosis of substance use disorder and you don't have a home... So of course you're on the street. Then an officer encounters you and says, “oh, you’re acting erratic.” Well, now you’re acting even more erratic when I try to put handcuffs on you. So now I've charged you with these two things because I don’t have any other tools available to me other than effectuating an arrest.}

Rather than punitive charges, Prosecutor Deck advocates for more holistic means:

\textit{Instead of having someone processed through the criminal justice system, booked, taken to jail, where they're not going to be restored to competency, where they're not going to detox, where they're not going to get services. Instead, that is}
an indication that it is time to have some intervention, whether that's calling a social worker or a mental health clinician.

There is a difference between people who are out there committing crimes maliciously, and those who are displaying symptoms of something else going on. Police only have limited tools and so they're using these charging mechanisms as their tool to address this issue, just to incapacitate the person and get them off the street. But that's not going to treat their mental health issue, their behavioral health issue, or their substance abuse issue.

Ideally, getting arrested would not be the process by which mental health treatment was administered. In rural areas, however, the dearth of mental health services combined with a lack of most resources across the board produces a context in which access to treatment is infrequent at best. In the words of Prosecutor Deck,

The other problem that we're having is that when police do a 5150, someone, the officer, is making an adjudication that the person is a danger to themselves or others and they take them to an emergency psychiatric facility to be restored to competency. At least in Humboldt County, there is a very troubling and concerning pattern of people being told “Oh well they used drugs in the last 72 hours. So even though they're having psychosis and are incompetent right now, well, we can't have them here. They used drugs in the last 72 hours,” and so they end up getting released from the psychiatric facility. How that works in practice is that the Yurok Tribal Police will take someone from the Klamath Town site an hour into Eureka, away from their home, away from their resources because they are in mental health crisis, put them in a 5150 with the psychiatric facility Sempervirens, but then we find out that 2 hours after the police left to go back to Klamath, this person was just released onto the street because they have a concurrent diagnosis [of substance use disorder] and they're not being held to be restored to competency because of the use of drugs. And now you have someone who's incompetent and had used drugs in the middle of a city that's not where they live, an hour away from where they were just taken. This is where MMIP intersects with these issues, because we're putting vulnerable people in vulnerable circumstances.

Emmilee was one such person who churned between arrest, holds, and back to vulnerable circumstances. As described by Yurok Tribal Police Chief Gregory O’Rourke:

Our local psychiatric facility was always too full to house her. But it was quite clear during Emmilee’s bail hearing a couple weeks before her disappearance that she was suffering from mental health issues. The court actually imposed a requirement that she, pursuant to being released, have a mental health assessment. And supervised release was like, “Okay, see you later, Emmilee, come back for your mental health assessment on your own, in the future on some date…” That is a real issue. That is essentially what's happening is, our
police might take someone all the way to Sempervirens if they’re suspected of being 5150 and Sempervirens will just release them the next day in Eureka with no mechanism to get back.

The last time Emmilee was arrested, her family and friends hoped that despite the criminal charges, they finally had access to the help she needed: Even though she had been charged with arson, Emmilee’s lack of a criminal history led to the decision to release her, dependent on her checking into treatment of her own volition:

When she went to jail, we thought that was our golden ticket to get help for her. We’d already talked, as Gary said to the DA’s office and were working kind of behind the scenes to get her some help. And then, they just let her go.

Going further, Judy explained:

Emmilee was still capable of talking her way out of those situations. She was still coherent enough, but towards the end she was not, and before they released her from jail, they did a mental health assessment. And that person...he almost kept her, but decided to let her go. The judge had talked about putting an ankle bracelet on her if they were to let her go, and that didn't happen either. I think you know, the jail was overcrowded, they just, they didn't care. They just looked the other way, I think…

One of the problems for the Judge was that Emmilee didn't have any criminal history so that played in her favor to be able to leave. But even in the courtroom, Emily was distressed. And obviously talking to herself and things, it was obvious that she had mental health issues and that just, it was totally ignored…

Emmilee’s cousin Kendall echoed this description of this pivotal hearing from her role as family member coupled with MMIP Program Manager:

I thought once she got in front of that judge that they were gonna see for themselves “this person is unwell and she needs help,” and it didn't happen. And I just thought too, when they said, because I think it was the same day when they said they were releasing her, I just thought “she's never going to go back there, she's never going to come back in.” And when they said that she needed to come back in, I forget how long it was, a week or so when she was supposed to be remanded back. And I just thought, “yeah she's not coming back. There's no way.

In many ways, holding Emmilee in custody was easier said than done. In California, following years of significant criminal justice reform, nonviolent offenders are rarely held in custody prior to trial, and this was particularly true during the COVID-19 pandemic when nonviolent offenders were almost universally discharged to keep jails populations to a minimum. Ultimately, despite mentions of an ankle bracelet to track
her location at all times, “that didn’t come to fruition, and then it was just a matter of days before she disappeared,” Judy concluded.

After Emmilee was released, no aftercare was provided by the court nor jail to facilitate her access to mental health services. She had no car, no money, and no resources, yet she was released from the jail on her own recognizance. Emmilee desperately needed treatment for her co-occurring conditions or “comorbidities” of borderline personality disorder, methamphetamine addiction and postpartum psychosis. No such facility exists in the region and the only mental health facility that does, Sempervirens, had routinely admitted her only to discharge her within hours, never keeping her overnight for observation nor treatment. Emmilee would next be seen in Hoopa when she was picked up by a tribal police officer on the reservation.

Rather than take Emmilee to jail per the conditions of the bench warrant that had been issued since missing her most recent court date, the decision was made to take Emmilee where she requested to go elsewhere on the reservation, as had been the case in other instances previously. This practice of "dumping", whereby individuals are picked up by law enforcement and taken to a location other than the police station and/or jail for booking, further compounds the lack of proper mental health treatment in the region. Although officer discretion has its proponents (Goldstein 1963, Patch & Arrigo 1999, Wortley 2003), in this case the pattern of chronic police interaction without tangible interventions was a contextual consideration to Emmilee’s life in the months leading up to her disappearance. In the words of her sister, Mary:

“The amount of times my sister has been picked up over the years by the (Humboldt County) sheriff, it’s like, ‘Let’s get her in trouble, but let’s not help her.’ When police officers have a certain number of run-ins with a person, and they go missing…they have this stigma over who this person was, or who they thought she was.”

Emmilee’s cousin Cutcha paints an even harsher picture of this cycling of "dumping" and its contributing role to her baby cousin’s mental health over time:

Really what I saw from police officers was that they were mostly annoyed by her. They were not concerned with her. They were not thinking like, “oh, she’s somebody’s family member or that she’s a mother to two young children or that something is really wrong in their mind.” “She’s a drug addict. She’s like somebody who’s off the deep end…and in their mind, potentially abandoned by her family because her family would constantly call and be like, “can you go pick her up? Can you go?” Or they would call her family and they go “OK, well, where do we come get her?” A lot of the times they started to do this thing where they would pick her up and then they go, “Well, if we take you to Sempervirens, if we take you to this place, we have to file paperwork and we have to do work. And we have to pay for it. We have to drive you out there and the whole time you’re going to be screaming at us or crying or like. And so I’m not going to do it. So where do you want to go?”
As the case of Emmilee Risling shows, there are several points at which an individual could be made safe before they go missing and/or are targeted for violence. Domestic violence, substance use disorders, other chronic mental health conditions—each are direct byproducts of cumulative traumas that span generations and live in the DNA of Indigenous peoples as a result of their ancestral legacies (Pember 2015, Zannas & West 2014). It should be no surprise that in the absence of adequate mental health treatment, individuals cope through a variety of ways, whether it is through addictive drug use patterns, recreating toxic relationship patterns, or a host of other trauma responses (Olff, Langeland, Gersons, 2005a, 2005b, Randall & Haskell, 2013).

Before someone is taken, we underscore the following:

1) Access to mental health services without the need to be criminally charged or sentenced

2) Adequate mental health provision for all, and especially those who are a harm to themselves or others, with an emphasis on dual diagnosis facilities capable of handling comorbidities like complex post-traumatic stress disorder (C-PTSD) and substance use disorder (SUD).
charged and/or sentenced.

2) Adequate mental health provision for all, and especially those who are a harm to themselves or others, with an emphasis on dual diagnosis facilities capable of handling comorbidities like complex post-traumatic stress disorder (C-PTSD) and substance use disorder (SUD).

3) Better collaboration across mental health, social services, tribal bodies, and law-enforcement and justice system agencies.
   a. When individuals are chronically incarcerated for nuisance crimes most often associated with mental health crises (Brockie, Elm, Walls, 2018, Elm 2020, Mead et al. 2017, Pullmann 2009), they need to be holistically treated rather than relying solely on the criminal justice system to address what is inherently a mental health epidemic in our nation, and in the MMIP crisis in particular.
   b. To accomplish this, we advocate for the establishment of a multidisciplinary team or “MDT” on MMIP that includes stakeholders from a variety of agencies in a specific region as defined by tribal leaders (Connell et al. 2021, Moran 2021, Weyand & McPherson 2021). More information on MDT’s and relevant stakeholders can be found in Protocol I.

“IF ANYONE HAS SEEN MY COUSIN EMMILEE”: THE MOMENT WHEN PEOPLE STARTED TO WONDER

Emmilee’s disappearance has been profiled by the AP News, Al Jazeera, all of the local and regional news outlets, and her name has been read by eyes and said by lips as far away as Taiwan, the Middle East, Europe and across the nation. In the narrative that follows, we reconstruct her disappearance as well as the days after she was feared missing that eventually became weeks and ultimately months, shifting her case into a “long-term missing persons case.” Drawing from firsthand accounts, press coverage, and in-depth interviews with the key stakeholders on the task force assembled to respond to her disappearance, we describe the key turning points and lessons therein across the life span of this ongoing case.

It was the middle of October 2021 and depending on who you ask, Emmilee was last seen at different places on the Yurok and Hoopa Valley reservations. No matter how far she roamed or how many times she churned between the coast and the reservation, Emmilee was in constant contact with someone in her family, an expansive one that spanned all three tribes with cousins in each reservation community. By Sunday, October 16, 2021, her relatives who lived downriver and had been keeping an eye out for her safety sounded the alarm on a community Facebook page. This page was typically used to keep community members up-to-date on recent happenings, fire notifications, barter and supply sharing, etc. and this post stood out against the requests for firewood and canning supplies:

*If anyone has seen my lil cousin Emmilee Risling please let me know. She is NOT in her right mind. Her family is worried and she was last seen a few days ago headed down river (possibly thinking she was going to walk to Klamath) on foot.*
As anyone who knew the area could attest, there was no way to get to Klamath from Highway 169. The “end of the road” was just that—rocky and rutted pavement turning into gravel and private property; the only way to get to Klamath was by boat or perhaps cutting through old logging roads up over the mountain. But being mid-October, the weather was getting wetter and colder; the first storm of the season was only days away. It just didn’t make sense that someone would think they could get from Pecwan to Klamath, let alone by foot.

It’s hard to know where Emmilee was last seen and who was the last person to see her. Different reports have her placed in the back of a police officer’s car on the Hoopa Valley reservation, then dropped off near Weitchpec by her own request. The last time she was physically seen, she was wet and naked, found sleeping in an acquaintance’s home. They offered her clothing and she said she was headed to Klamath. Others thought they had seen her walking on the Martin’s Ferry bridge and others still swore they had seen her naked on the Pecwan bridge. This last location and vivid imagery has been seared into the minds of those searching for her and has been described as potentially the last time she was seen, on or near Monday, October 10. By Sunday, October 16, her family was worried they had not heard from her in days and they officially sounded the alarm.

FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF KENDALL ALLEN, MMIP PROJECT MANAGER:

I thought that she was going to pop up on Day One or Two of her being missing, that someone was going to say “I found her, she’s there, this and that.” It wasn’t until her parents were echoing those same concerns that she was missing, then I’m like “okay, then she really is missing-missing, something’s wrong.” I think that they had to confirm it before it felt real to me because they were always in contact with her because they were always trying to come up and get her, get her help.

FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF DR. BLYTHE GEORGE:

I had been thinking about Emmilee for weeks, ever since her arrest for arson. After the initial shock of seeing her face in the news wore off, I took solace that even though she was facing charges, now perhaps she could get the help she needed. I knew that she had a supportive family that had been bending over backwards to help her and I was just ready for her to come back to us. Hoping even to have the chance to razz her for her short hair and wild antics in the time since we’d last seen each other, once she had sobered up and snapped out of it, “so-to-speak.”
Somehow the algorithm knew I would want to see the post from downriver, a mix I expect of its knowledge of our many mutual ties despite her deactivated account coupled with my own habit of searching her very unique name from time to time to see if she had come back to social media.

When I saw the post asking if anyone knew where she was, it did not immediately register as dire. Yet, by that next morning, it was abundantly clear that no one knew where Emmilee was and this was highly unusual. Even though she had not been living with her immediate family on the coast for some time, someone always knew where she was, and this was especially true with a family as big as hers; it was almost impossible to really hide even on the reservation because she had a cousin on every road, mountain, and village.

So by Thursday morning, when her cousin and my colleague MMIP project manager Kendall Allen called me to discuss some project business, she closed the call with a hushed admission: “you know, they haven’t been able to find Emmilee, Emmilee is missing they’re saying.” Truthfully I have been in some kind of hopeful denial that maybe although out of touch, perhaps she had just been staying somewhere without Wi-Fi access, or perhaps under the influence to the degree that she had just forgotten to tell someone her location. But by this time, my heart was starting to race because I realized that everyone had looked everywhere and if Kendall was bringing it to me during our call, it meant that no one had been able to find her and the prospect of her disappearance became all too real. We reached out to the Sovereign Bodies Institute as well as our counterparts with the Hoopa Valley Tribe’s MMIW program to coordinate a response for ongoing search efforts. Missing persons flyers were popping up and in the coming days, her face would be shared thousands of times on social media. By this point, no one had seen nor heard from Emmilee in at least a week or more, she had never gone that long without being in touch, and her family knew something was wrong.

FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF CHIEF GREGORY O’ROURKE, YUROK TRIBAL POLICE:
The law enforcement professional [or] scholar would say that you need...an objective lens and whatnot, but that’s the difference between a municipal or standard state law enforcement agency and a tribal police agency because we are so intricately tied with our community or should be, I encourage my officers to be so. And so, with this case and with Emmilee, and because I knew Emmilee, she babysits my daughters. She's been in my home, we fed her, I entrusted the safety of my children to her. And so with this one, I have no shame or reservation whatsoever in saying that my personal attachment definitely has motivated me to be able to tell my officers to go above and beyond, not because of me, but because it's the right thing to do. But that's the difference between us as a tribal police agency and let’s say the Sheriff's office or a city PD: I want my officers to feel that impact in the community. I want them to feel sad and feel bad and let that motivate them to do their job.
I was upfront from the very beginning with the department and I recall telling them that “I don’t think this is going to end in a good way, and when it does end, we’re going to get called to the carpet for our actions. So I want us to go above and beyond because it’s the right thing to do.” And again, I’ll use those terms, “the right thing to do,” but that’s what I told my officers. And I asked each and every one of them: “As an individual, when this is done, will you be able to live with yourself with the choices that you made and how you handled this case?” And I think that had an impact because my officers were asking if they could, if I would authorize them to go above and beyond to do something more, to go off reservation, to follow the lead, to continue extra follow ups, to jump on the boat and do a search effort, even though we weren’t focusing on search efforts. So I think it had an impact on my officers[, these ties to the case.]

From the perspective of Sheriff William Honsal, Humbolt County Sheriff’s Department:
This is a tragic situation with Emmilee and our heart goes out. I’ve worked with [her father] Gary for many years as part of the Tribal Council and it’s hard to see her family really hurt over this whole missing persons case and it’s tough.

As a project team, we offer these first-person accounts as they describe the first days of the case to demonstrate how the ties between the person on the missing person flyer and those tasked with finding them are often overlapping and dense, especially in the small, tight-knit and kin-based communities that characterize tribal reservations and the rural areas that surround them. There were days when coming to work felt almost impossible because of the sheer weight of the cognitive dissonance of seeing the name of someone you love used in the same sentence as your ongoing MMIP work. All of a sudden, all the protocols you are designing, although desperately needed and beyond prescient, now feel too little, too late, and not nearly soon enough.

But that is the reality of MMIP in this country: we are just now getting a grasp on the scope and severity of the crisis, and those responsible for intervening in it are often wondering “how?” rather than articulating and enacting targeted and specific responses. In many ways, they need our help as tribal collaborators do so and we broker this knowledge with this project. As we do so, we must front stage the experience of families navigating this issue in real time as well as the law enforcement and justice system professionals who walked alongside them.

INITIAL LAW ENFORCEMENT RESPONSE & SEARCH EFFORTS

As is often the case, there was significant confusion as to where the family should go to report Emmilee missing. Was she missing from where her parents and children lived on the coast and, or from the reservation community where she’s been staying and was last seen? How did reservation boundaries factor into who would look for her? In Emmilee’s case, her family went to the Humboldt County Sheriff to report her missing.
We must acknowledge that in their personal experience, they wanted to file a missing persons report much sooner than they were able to, encountering the “24 hour myth” as they did so. In the general public and even amongst law enforcement, there is the perception that someone has to be missing for at least 24 hours before they can be declared “missing” and formal search efforts can begin. However, if foul play or personal harm is suspected, there is no minimum time required whatsoever in filing a case (Adcock 2021, Moran 2021). This is especially true in the case of minors < 21, the elderly, and the mentally ill like Emmilee. For more protocols on each of these scenarios, see included Guide for Developing Law Enforcement Agency Guidelines for Missing and Murdered Persons Cases located before the conclusion of this paper, the first of our four guides. Unfortunately, Emmilee’s family faced this myth early on and were delayed in their attempts to file a missing persons report.

Once they were able to do so, they filed the missing persons report with the County who in turn delegated search and investigation efforts to the Yurok Tribal Police (YTP) department in light of Emmilee’s disappearance on the Yurok tribal reservation. Sheriff Honsal recounts this sequence of events as well as the decisions that led up to it:

> From the very beginning, while Emmilee was still in custody, I know that the family was working with the District Attorney's Office to try and keep her into custody because she has. She has a mental illness. Obviously, she was addicted to drugs, and there were a lot of issues with her that they were trying to keep her in custody. And the DA was doing their best. And a judge ordered her released against the advice of the family and the DA. And so when she was ordered released, we’re bound to release this person and so we had to release her.

> And she went back. What I understand is she went back to Hoopa and then shortly thereafter, she was reported missing. She was last seen on Yurok tribal land, and they took the lead on the missing persons investigation. And so Greg O’Rourke and his team took the lead and we assisted them as well as Hoopa Tribal Police.

> And ever since, we felt very comfortable in having him be the primary jurisdiction and he wanted to be the primary jurisdiction. And so obviously we work well together and we are in open communication and so that’s why it was good for [Chief O’Rourke with Yurok Tribal Police (YTP) to take the lead and for our resources to be shared for this case].

Chief O’Rourke echoes this sequence of events, adding why nuance as to when they were alerted to her disappearance and the subsequent constraints placed on the search for her in the days immediately following:

> To summarize it, in my department, YTP had heard word that Emmilee was down on our jurisdiction at the end of 169, at Pecwan, very specifically on Pecwan.
bridge. She was nude on the bridge on foot and the school bus passed her. One of the students on the bus was one of my officer's kids and so when he got home, he was like “Hey dad, guess what we saw?” And my officer knew immediately who it was. And so that’s a benefit of working within a community. So the next day, that was on a Monday, on Tuesday and Wednesday, my officer was down river searching for Emmilee to try to locate her, to be able to get her help, but we were unable to locate her and we haven’t seen her.

It was about two, three weeks later when we actually did receive a missing person's report. So we took that initial report, and from there, it just really kind of been a whirlwind of activity as we were trying to do the follow up and try to locate Emmilee. One of the biggest obstacles that we faced was just the geography and the area, the area where she was last seen at. We can't confirm where she was last seen, but down at the end of the road, there’s [only] two direct lines of egress and ingress. And so there’s that dirt road that goes up to Ah’pah’ [village] and then the river, and there’s a large spans of land in between...We couldn't confirm exactly where she was on that line, and we couldn't confirm an exact last location except on Pecwan bridge.

As described in a Yurok tribal press release, both the Yurok and Hoopa Valley Tribal Councils coordinated efforts through their respective tribal police departments and Offices of Emergency Services for the search for Emmilee, who was an enrolled member of the Hoopa Valley Tribe. A task force met daily to coordinate these efforts in the first weeks following her disappearance, including a $20,000 reward offered by the Hoopa Valley Tribe for information leading to Risling's safe return.

In the time immediately following the initial report, local news outlet, the Redheaded Blackbelt, described their efforts:

The Yurok Police Department as well as members of the Tribe’s Forestry and Roads Departments have already spent multiple days actively searching for the missing mother. With the aim of returning Emilee to her loved ones, the Hoopa Valley Tribal Police Department and the Hoopa Office of Emergency Services have also implemented a series of actions, such as conducting searches and performing numerous extra patrols, while following up leads submitted by residents. (Kemp 2021b)

Even with this flurry of activity, there were still key points in the timeline where additional steps were needed, in particular making sure Emmilee was entered into all relevant missing persons databases so that all surrounding jurisdictions could be on the lookout for her. As described by Prosecutor Deck, such entry is two-fold and can be facilitated by tribal partners as their law enforcement counterparts lead search efforts:

[We] had Emmilee listed on the databases so the Humboldt County Sheriff’s Office had reported her missing, but she had not been listed on the Department of Justice [DOJ] for California’s missing persons website with her photo. So that is something I learned in real time as that was happening was that I needed to
contact the DOJ website and have them actually upload it and so then we learned that lesson. And so now every other time we’ve had someone missing, I know the first thing I need to do is call the law enforcement agency that declared that person missing and tell them we need to take this extra step to get this published to a public facing database. So that is one lesson that I learned in real time.

The second thing was listing Emmilee on the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs). NamUs (Anon, n.d.b.) is important because that is a national database, not just California. It includes her tribal affiliation so people could look up Hoopa and have Emmilee come up. And the reason that's important to do that is if she had ended up in another state, just having her listed on the California database wouldn't really be sufficient. And so we created a NamUs account, entered her into NamUs, made sure it had all of her identifiers and photos. That was also a lesson learned and now that is immediately what we do when someone goes missing. So we've adopted that as a protocol to follow and almost just expect that the law enforcement agency doesn't realize that she's not published online so we always do that.

Making sure that the law enforcement agency taking the report enters the corresponding details in both places is essential because these data systems do not speak to one another. Therefore, as one enters someone into their state’s database, they must do so for the national database as well. Furthermore, you may be limiting the scope of search unintentionally by not including the missing persons report into interstate databases such as NamUs. In some cases, there are additional databases based on the characteristics of the missing person, and more information on these databases can be found below and in the included Guide for Developing Law Enforcement Agency Guidelines for Missing and Murdered Persons Cases. Prosecutor Deck goes on to describe the need for these parallel efforts:

That was the Department of Justice (DOJ) process, not the NamUs process. So it's the California DOJ missing persons database. That is what I needed to do the secondary call for. For NamUs, you also have to go and add it in yourself. I guess maybe some law enforcement think that by declaring someone missing it automatically gets added to NamUs, but that's not the case, but the one specifically where you have to take that second step and email them is the California Department of Justice, like the Attorney General's missing persons list….They do not talk to each other.

Beyond taking the report and entering it into the relevant databases, there are also alerts that can be activated in the event that someone is missing and/or foul play is
suspected. Tribes and counties in PL 280 states need to make sure they have processes in place for the immediate activation of such alerts before someone goes missing. These alerts include:

- Amber Alert: confirmed abduction of a child (Moran 2021, Walters & Blasing 2021)
- Ashanti Alert: missing adult between the ages of 18 and 64 where there is a proven mental or physical disability; or the missing person’s physical safety may be endangered; or an abduction or kidnapping is suspected (OLJ 2020)
- Silver Alert: missing senior citizens without Alzheimer’s disease, dementia or other mental disability (these include found person reports) (Section 8594.10, California Government Code)
- Blue Alert: a law enforcement officer that has been injured, killed, or is missing and/or abducted (Blue Alert Foundation 2021)

In addition, in California, with the help of the California Highway Patrol, one can have a “missing and unidentified persons alert” issued so that all law enforcement agencies and emergency services receive notification to be on the lookout for the missing person. This final alert system is relatively unknown and as such, no alert was issued for Emmilee at the time of her disappearance or in the days that followed because she did not meet any of the other criteria for the existing alert systems despite her mental health conditions and other risk factors at the time of her disappearance.

In Emmilee’s case, the steps taken immediately following her disappearance were guided by a multi-agency task force that had representatives from the Yurok Tribal Council, Yurok Police Department, Hoopa Tribal Council, Hoopa Tribal Police and Humboldt County Sheriff’s Office as well as those from this project, the Office of Emergency Services, and the Information Services Department to provide comprehensive and wide-ranging support on the case and early search efforts. This task force met daily for the first 30 days following her disappearance, and transitioned to meetings timed around case developments and/or ongoing search efforts.

Kendall Allen sat on these task force meetings, helping look for her cousin in her formal capacity as MMIP Program Manager just as she managed her own emotions around the disappearance:

*I didn’t think that within this project someone would actively go missing. Because even now, like even before that, within a year or so ago, there’s been people missing within my community and it does really feel like nobody’s doing anything about it and that’s disheartening.*

*But I didn’t actually think that there would be a case where I’m sitting on a task force and we were going to actively search for that person… And then let alone somebody that is related to me, somebody that I know, somebody who is close in age to me…I didn’t think it would be anything like that. Like nothing I don’t*
think could’ve prepared me to be where we’re at right now. And it’s like it’s too soon to even share her story because it’s not done yet. But at the same time, it just makes me think one, this whole thing one could have been avoided, and two, it can happen to anybody. Anybody can be at the mercy of MMIP. Like you can be educated. You can be experienced, worldly, vocal, because she wasn’t one to just sit silently in the background. You could be all of those things and this could still happen to you. You could still fall to this.

We thank her for candor with regards to this connection as such ties may be alarmingly frequent in MMIP interventions as cousins look for cousins in the tight-knit, kin-based nature of tribal communities.

Forming such a task force should be one of the first steps that any agency responsible for the search of a missing person should take, and is a fundamental recommendation of this project team, as well as the state and federal resources on MMIP (Connell et al. 2021, Weyand & McPherson 2021). Having key stakeholders in constant contact and communication is vital to the early days of any investigation when time is a factor and any delay can limit law enforcement response and/or search efforts.

Even with such coordination on the part of all key stakeholders, out of respect to the experiences of Emmilee’s family, we must acknowledge that at times, they felt the early days of the investigation into her disappearance and subsequent weeks were characterized by “bickering, fighting, and rudeness” between law enforcement partners and in dealings with the family. They also felt that despite collaborative efforts at the task force level, ongoing search efforts in real-time felt as though “no one was sharing anything.” In the words of Emmilee’s father, Gary: “if goal is to find them, come together and share info.” Gary Risling spoke from a place of particular expertise: after decades in emergency services, leading multiple incident commands and countless hours of relevant trainings, he knew very well the different ways a search for a missing person could be conducted. He could not advocate more strongly for more collaboration and better communication based on his firsthand experience over the course of his daughter’s missing persons investigation coupled with his rich knowledge as a former fire chief and tribal chairman. We echo his calls for collaboration even as we hold space for the hard work and hundreds of cumulative hours spent looking for Emmilee by all stakeholders on the task force.

**LESSONS LEARNED**

- 24 hour myth
- Task force + incident command
- Data entry
- Alert systems in place
- Communication and initiative as top two priorities across task force members + interfacing with family
The initial response to Emmilee’s disappearance provides several key takeaways. First, we cannot underscore enough the need to dispel the 24-hour myth when it comes to reporting someone missing—if a family suspects that their loved one is in need of help, that they are missing, and/or foul play is suspected, there should be no reason that a report is not immediately taken by the relevant jurisdiction. It is true that most missing persons cases are resolved expeditiously and individuals are confirmed safe, and as such, some might feel this is extraneous effort without a specific time period having passed. But if it was your loved one, you would want the chance to file a report promptly, at minimum. In our Tribal Community Response template and corresponding protocols, we outline the key components and scenarios for which all law enforcement agencies should craft their own corresponding protocols in the event that a family approaches them with a report to file.

When a report is taken, there needs to be several parallel and concurrent mechanisms that go into place. More information on these protocols can be found in the next section, but briefly this would include the assembly of a task force with stakeholders from all relevant jurisdictions having a voice at the table. At the same time, those attending must uphold expectations associated with confidentiality of an open case and the sensitive material shared therein; this is in addition to the ongoing MMIP work group and/or round tables that oversee this matter above and beyond any active case(s). This task force will serve as the collaborative unit by which incident command, search efforts, and investigative coordination will flow. As decisions are made in unison across different law enforcement and emergency service agencies, efficiency and collaboration are prioritized from the earliest moments of such cases. Going further, we echo recommendations for “liaison officers” who coordinate on-the-ground with stakeholders and community members to facilitate the transfer of vital case updates, especially to families and loved ones like those featured in this case profile. Such communication makes significant inroads to making sure all families, victims and survivors feel informed and cared for at their potentially worst moments.

In addition to such collaboration, within the first 24 hours following a report, all available information should be entered into the following databases:

- **The National Crime Information Center (NCIC):** All missing persons should be entered into this database, yet it is mandatory for all missing persons under the age of 21, as a result of Suzanne’s Law. The missing person's basic information should be entered upon reporting and then reviewed again 90 days later, closing the report if the person was found, and if not, reviewed again every year after (Myers, 2021). All data entry into NCIC must be done by the reporting law enforcement agency.

- **The National Missing and Unidentified Person System (NamUs):** This is a “national information clearinghouse and resource center for missing, unidentified, and unclaimed person cases across the United States. All NamUs resources are provided at no cost to law enforcement, medical examiners, coroners, allied forensic professionals, and family members of
missing persons” (Moran 2021: 141). These resources range from investigation support, training, and forensic services—including family DNA collection kits provided at no cost. Unlike NCIC, families can also report to NamUs. That said, reports submitted by families or advocates will not be displayed in NamUs without confirmation from the responding law enforcement agency. In some family experiences, this confirmation process can take over a year; there simply is no excuse for this, and agencies must begin to be proactive in responding to these requests.

- The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC): Co-founded by John Walsh in 1984 after the abduction of his son, NCMEC provides resources for missing persons investigations involving victims under the age of 20. Reports must be initiated by law enforcement or any person responsible for the child’s welfare (Clark, 2021).
  - Special attention should be paid to minor children missing from foster care or group homes. In the January 2021 special issue of the Department of Justice’s Journal of Federal Law and Practice, John Clark, the President and CEO of NCMEC, explained that “the vast majority of missing children are endangered runaways, many of whom are missing from foster care or group homes and represent some of the most vulnerable children in this country.” In these instances, a report should be made to each of these databases in the first 24 hours every time, no exceptions.

In July 2021, we received a report of a missing child out of Crescent City, CA. Out of respect to her confidentiality as a minor, we do not include her name nor the specific details of her case. We do, however, wish to highlight this case for the multiple lessons we learned over the course of the nine-month search.

A missing person report was filed with the Crescent City Police Department in July 2021 that this minor was missing. Since she had run away in the past and was suspected to have run away again to another county, no Amber Alert was initiated for her return. Additionally, the information associated with her case was not entered into NamUs nor NCIC so the search for the minor was limited to the police department of record as well as the jurisdiction where she was suspected to be living. The following spring when relatives of the young girl renewed their search via social media, the Yurok Tribe’s Office of the Prosecutor entered her case information into the relevant databases. Support services from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) was initiated through collaboration with the Crescent City Police Department. The FBI issued an Endangered Missing Advisory and authorities started an interstate search for the girl and the person with whom she was traveling with. She was located in another state and was returned.
home nine months after her disappearance. Through To’ Kee Skuy’ Soo Ney-Wo-Chek’, the Yurok Tribe, helped facilitate family reunification.

With this case, we underscore the need for timely reporting to the relevant databases; reaching out to state and federal agencies such as the FBI who may be able to assist with search efforts as appropriate; and tenacity throughout the search. If it were not for the efforts of the loved ones who continued looking for this child, she may have not come home “in a good way”. Thankfully this was the case and we offer this example for the lessons therein.

Without such data entry, these databases are limited in their capabilities and law enforcement greatly hinders the enormous potential of these technological tools. Entering reports may seem like administrative tasks but they are key nonetheless as the ability of databases like NCIC and NamUs to cross reference and match entries hinges on a fundamental commitment to data entry compliance at all levels of law enforcement and the justice system. Further, agencies like NCMEC have additional resources--such as volunteer search teams of retired law enforcement--to deploy upon request and support local agencies in working as quickly and efficiently as possible.

**TRANSITIONING TO A LONG-TERM MISSING PERSON’S INVESTIGATION**

*He wears her socks. Actually, he came over to our house and we had some of the socks that we were like “oh, we have these socks. We don’t know if they were yours?” And he was like “they’re not mine, they’re my mom’s. But I wear them even though they’re too small. So I can be with her.” He’s trying to be like, really, really strong. He’s only 10 and he tries to be such a strong little dude for everybody.*  
- Prof. Cutcha Risling-Baldy, cousin of Emmilee

*My brother looks at me and he goes, “I don’t know what to tell my grandkids when they say ‘where’s my mother?’ And I want to be able to tell them. I want to know before I die where my daughter is. I want to know what happened to her.”*  
– Lois Risling, aunt of Emmilee and sister of Gary Risling

*I spent a lot of time doing that. I spent a lot of time researching, taking a look at this stuff for mental state, about drug use and what that causes and everything. That’s what I’m doing now. I’ve been retired for the last four or five years, and my life living through hell with Emmilee and stuff has been nothing like I imagined it.*

*I’m a person that would like to go hunting, go fishing, and work on my Indian regalia. And those things are full time jobs…Hunting, it can give you peace of*
mind out there. But really what I'm hunting for is woodpeckers… to put on regalia. And I'm out there gathering all the time… [but now] to put this stuff together and work on it, you get little or no time and the stress. It's almost a killer because it affects your health.

And I've had a lot of health issues. But you just keep beating away on the darn thing, which includes the last great big search that went on for Emmilee with the dogs and stuff. I couldn't participate in that because I came down with a real bad case of vertigo. I asked the doctor what causes that? She said being under a lot of stress can cause that. So I certainly had my share of that.

Trying to look at this picture [of Emmilee], that's where I've been spending a lot of my time. I'm thinking how in the heck can we do it? Finding Emmilee? Really there's another step for closure, but most of that it's for her children. And one of the things that I've been doing is collecting all these news articles. Making copies, putting folders together and in the folder, it's actually big envelopes, mailing envelopes, I've taken original copies of the publications and stuff and put them in there. So when her kids grow up, they've got something.  

Gary Risling, father of Emmilee

You know [the MMIP crisis] is there, but once it becomes personal, it's a whole other take on that and of course you realize you're not alone. There are so many people in the same situation and it gives you a whole different take on those type of things, a whole different take… I live on [a road] where we used to call it the “Homeless Highway.” People would travel down to go camp out at the river and things and a lot of people with mental health issues. And now, I tend to look at them differently. What was their life prior to ending up where they are? You know that? Down the road or yelling at me as I drive by or these [kinds of] things? So I think it just gives you a totally different perspective on everything.  

Judy Risling, mother of Emmilee

Everyone talks about how the first 24, 48 hours are so vital in any case and so time keeps going on. And then we're saying we're only forming this emergency task force for the 30 days. It's just like, disheartening. I remember the last day that we were in this meeting because I was just “well, does this end here?”  

Kendall Allen, cousin of Emmilee

At this point in the narrative, we pause to sit in the absence of Emmilee Risling. As of this report's writing in mid-2022, we are no closer to knowing where she is than we were in the first few days after her disappearance. Reflected in the quotes above, we see the different ways that Emmilee’s family members have navigated the ever present absence of her in their lives. Parents, now grandparents raising the children left behind, quite literally having their worlds turned upside down; a vertigo of mind and body, with
daily lives drastically different than anyone imagined even a few short years previously. Now, we live in the open-ended and vast limbo of her absence. In the words of Emmilee’s mother, Judy: “when you have a missing child, it is all consuming.” We pause to recognize this liminal space, a space colored by constant wondering, prayers to the void hoping for some way to at least bring an ending to the never-ending questions, no matter what that could really mean.

Yet, that is not the nature of a long-term missing persons investigation, as Emmilee’s became approximately one month after her disappearance. While there is no hard-or-fast rule as to when to make this distinction, long-term missing persons investigations are generally characterized by cases in which no further information has come to light to move the investigation forward, like the absence of remains, which leaves the missing person as missing indefinitely. The suspicion of foul play can vary in such cases and in the case of Emmilee, it would depend on who you asked whether that foul play was a factor in her disappearance. Those law enforcement agencies responsible for the case have indicated that there has been no evidence of foul play but they encourage anyone with further information to come forward and they are poised to act immediately when they do so. In the meantime, the case remains active and open, and offers significant lessons for the intervening in long-term missing persons cases.

**ONGOING SEARCH EFFORTS & INVESTIGATIONS**

Like many cases, the first days and even weeks after Emmilee’s disappearance were fast-paced and guided by developing considerations, and we must recognize that hindsight lends perspective that those navigating matters in real-time do not have the luxury of. We recount key points in the timeline for the lessons they offer stakeholders of all kinds and thank all those interviewed for their candor and openness in digging deep into the lessons this case offers.

From the perspective of Yurok Tribal Police Chief Gregory O’Rourke, his ties to Emmilee and her family were constantly informed by his expertise as a member of law enforcement for decades. He describes the arc of the case with an emphasis on department capacity and ongoing case developments:

*We weren’t able to initiate a full search and rescue operation with the Sheriff’s office, especially due to the time that had lapsed [since she was last seen and the report was filed]. I spoke with my officers and I spoke with the tribe and advised them that I don’t have the capacity or even the training to conduct both search operations and investigation operations. So I elected to have my officers focus on the investigation. What I told our council is that we will follow up and investigate every tip that comes in and check the validity of it. In the meantime, the tribe decided to launch its own search efforts. And we assisted as much as we can with that, but yet we didn’t oversee it as a law enforcement search justs*
because we didn't have the training and we weren't going to assume the liability of the safety of the searchers.
So it ended up being an, all pretty much a voluntary basis. At that point as different tips and as different leads were developed and came in, my officer working with the Sheriff's office tried to run them down and follow up as best as we can. And what I can say right now is we're stymied. There are really no new leads coming in and I can also say that there is no indicator of foul play, not ruling out foul play, but there's no indicator of it.

Like Chief O’Rourke, Prosecutor Rosemary Deck and Sheriff Honsal echoed the need to prioritize multiple considerations over the course of a long-term missing person’s investigation, specifically active search efforts, logistical capacity and the need to recognize key points in any case’s trajectory to expand and contract resources accordingly. Prosecutor Deck articulates the different ongoing facets of Emmilee’s case after the initial task force transition to a long-term missing person’s investigation:

Unfortunately, that initial task force did not yield any search results. They weren't able to find anything…the tribal police, the lead investigating agency on that case, they were operating with no actionable leads, which meant the tips that they were having come in were third, fourth, fifth level hearsay from the community, with an anonymous tips, and those aren't actionable for warrants.

However, there have been occasions where the MMIW advocacy group [affiliated with this project] has assisted by getting the written permission of a property owner so that there could be a consensual search.

Sheriff Honsal also describes the difficulties of Emmilee’s case and others where tangible evidence is scarce and those tips that do come in fall short of evidentiary standards:

We've done several searches, we followed up on leads that came up. And what we find is some of the issues that come up is there's a lot of people talking about the case. There's a lot of people that say they know what happened to her, but very few people want to come on the record and say what they know and what they saw. It's always, “Oh I heard it from someone?” “So who said?” “So-and-so” and there was never any solid evidence to know exactly what happened to her, as far as some of the speculation of her being killed or that she's dead somewhere, and from what I understand is we do have one credible report that says, the witnesses said that she was last seen essentially on tribal land, saying that she wanted to walk to a location along the Klamath River that was not accessible by road and so to get there, she would have to get a boat, and then she wasn’t seen from since that time.

In the months following her disappearance, the To’ Kee Skuy’ Soo Ney-wo-chek’ project team helped connect her family to support services, and brokered permission to search
properties in the area where Emmilee was last seen. The project facilitated multiple searches by securing permission from private property owners to search locations where Emmilee was rumored to have been buried. In addition, the project helped manage connections between the family, the John Francis Foundation, and agency partners while coordinating resources for search support. As this work shows, tribal MMIP programs can be vital partners in facilitating cases in real-time.

In the most recent search for Emmilee, Sheriff Honsal reflects on next steps:

We continue to work. There's actually another search being coordinated right now and on one of the pieces of property that someone said that she was last seen. And so we are going to use some hopefully some canines called in from the Office of Emergency services to try and locate Emmilee.

This most recent and largest search for Emmilee was facilitated by the John Francis Foundation on behalf of Emmilee’s family in collaboration with county and tribal law enforcement:

The John Francis Foundation, a not for profit organization that helps with search and rescue came out at the end of April and did a search with cadaver dogs and search and rescue dogs. And that was through California’s Office of Emergency Services in conjunction with the John Francis Foundation and the Humboldt County Sheriff’s Office and CARDA [California Rescue Dog Association].

–Prosecutor Deck

Law enforcement managed and coordinated the search itself, [with] Honsal [saying] the foundation helped secure the search dogs and volunteers, put them up in hotels and fed them. ‘This is not something we’d normally do but we do really want to do everything possible to find her,’ Honsal said. (Greenson, 2022)

The search was profiled by local news outlet the Northcoast Journal who followed the search over the course of several days:

20 volunteers, two search dogs, boats, all-terrain vehicles and personnel from three law enforcement agencies conducted the largest search to date for Emmilee Risling, scouring miles of rugged, remote landscape along the Klamath River near Pecwan. (Greenson, 2022)

Despite such expansive efforts, there were no developments found during the search, but hope remains for future searches in summer months when river levels lower. Even still, one must acknowledge the significant emotional, mental and even physical toll that such searches can take on those left behind searching for answers in the absence of their loved one.

As we stated in our Year 2 report, long-term missing person investigations “are disproportionately represented amongst cold cases in the nation and comprise a
majority of MMIWG2 and MMIP cases” (Year 2: 114) The shift from an “acute” investigation to a long-term missing case can be devastating for families. As such, we urged law enforcement and [victim service providers to] work together to update families before, during, and after transitions to answer questions, to hear concerns, and to foster transparency. (Stewart et al. 2021: 37). No matter the need to pivot for the long-term, this…transition must ensure that the family of the missing person is not left behind. This is far from the case at present” (Year 2: 116)

Drawn from Year 2 and expanded with the in-depth narrative of the Emmilee Risling case that structures our final report, we echo the following lesson:

*For investigating long-term missing persons cases, law enforcement agencies and the justice system alike must hold space for the “ambiguous loss” (Stewart et al. 2021), “cruel limbo” (Moran 2021) and “forgotten victims” (Adcock 2021) that the families must carry in the wake of their loved one’s disappearance. The best way to honor these families and bring cold cases to a closed status is to form a dedicated cold case unit to perform a variety of tasks on an ongoing and rolling basis.*

Efforts to establish a cold case unit were serendipitously near simultaneous to Emmilee’s disappearance, demonstrating how her long-term missing person’s case was only one of many in the far northern county of Humboldt. Humboldt County Sheriff describes the efficacy of Cold Case Units:

*We have about 50 plus cold cases where we have missing persons that we believe that have been murdered, are homicide victims. And we also have homicides that are unsolved for the last 60 years. And so it’s been a goal of mine to actually publish those on our website and to launch a cold case unit. So I have a retired detective and a retired Lieutenant that are working these cold cases now and it’s actually been very beneficial. We’ve actually closed out a couple cases and where they’ve been cleared, because the suspect that we know did it is deceased but it’s shed some light on a lot of cases and we’ve created an avenue for people to report things that they weren’t comfortable reporting 20-30 years ago, and so we have generated a lot of leads and a lot of possible avenues to clear up some of these cold cases. So I’m very happy about that.*

More information on Cold Case Units can be found in the Tribal Community Response Plan template but one thing is clear: in light of the “Cold Case epidemic” in this nation (Adcock 2021), it is the responsibility of every law enforcement agency to think critically about how they will go about clearing cold cases in their jurisdiction. They must take steps to first inventory and then assess the open cases across a variety of criteria (see included Guide for Developing Law Enforcement Agency Guidelines for Missing and Murdered Persons Cases), as Sheriff Honsal describes above. Tribes can be a vital resource in this process as a source of “qualified volunteers” to staff these Cold Case
The need for firsthand information and/or other evidence that can meet the legal burden of proof remains an ongoing obstacle for Emmilee’s case and many others like it. Family frustration is understandable as they are often given information from community members that seems relevant to Emmilee’s case but rarely meets the standard by which law enforcement and justice system agencies must hold evidence.

In light of this constraint, tribal bodies themselves can help with investigative capacities through a variety of means primarily through anonymous tip lines coupled with their own investigative resources. For example, if Tribe has its own investigator, they can work with community members who may be reluctant to talk to law enforcement directly and work upwards through the chain of evidence until they find information that law enforcement can move on. The importance of tips in cases such as this cannot be understated but as Sheriff Honsal describes, such information must meet specific expectations:

> *At this point in time, we don't have any credible evidence that a crime has occurred, [but] I've told [all key stakeholders]...that as soon as we have credible information that a crime has occurred and there's probable cause to say that a crime has occurred, we will write search forms. We will do whatever we can to try and obtain evidence to take someone into custody. To do whatever it takes to recover Emmilee, we're poised [to do so]. But we need to have that probable cause in order for search warrants to go on properties to seize evidence and those kinds of things. So that's where the case is right now....*

> *Oftentimes, with murders or people coming up missing, this doesn't happen in broad daylight or around a whole lot of people and so again, it takes people moving forward that are witnesses or that want it on the record to provide their statements about what they know and what they see, no matter how minor. So we can help solve crimes like this. And I just urge people to again, come forward, contact a trusted law enforcement official so we can get as much information as possible to help solve these cases.*

Even as Sheriff Honsal invites those with information on open MMIP cases to come forward, we must remind law enforcement agencies that such communication is a two-way street. For some in Emmilee’s family, they did not feel as though law enforcement were receptive to such information coming to light:

> *Units without diverting law enforcement resources from other active cases (Adcock 2021).*
And what we noticed is that when people would come forward with tips or with their insight into things they knew, it was primarily the Sheriff’s Office that would say that person is unreliable because they are on drugs or they are a known offender or whatever it is, and so they would dismiss the tip and I think an advocate would be able to come in and be like ‘you're not allowed to dismiss this person who's coming forward just because of your bias against them or whatever. You need to follow up on everything or I'm going to follow up on it.’” Because we were getting tips that they were saying are unreliable sources, “I'm not following up with them.”

As we profiled in our Year One and Two reports, there is a long history of mistrust between tribal peoples and law-enforcement agencies, and rightly so. There was a time when in Yurok country specifically where the police were those who “goes and gets people” and in present day, this legacy creates tension and often a lack of trust between police and those they help keep safe. Tribes are a vital partner in helping to build the relationship between community members and law enforcement agencies and can broker this relationship in a variety of ways. In addition, they can offer resources to augment such investigations in real-time.

In this case specifically, we advocate for the use of anonymous tip lines whereby those seeking to relay information about a case, but are hesitant to be in touch with law enforcement directly, can provide the necessary information anonymously. In turn, such tips can be investigated by the tribe’s investigator until they result in an actionable lead for law enforcement. In our third year, we established a tip line for this effort and are currently working on funding for the corresponding investigator capacity.

IN 2022, TO’ KEE SKUY’ SOO NEY-WO-CHEK’ INSTITUTED AN ANONYMOUS TIP LINE FOR INFORMATION REGARDING ONGOING MMIP CASES:

1-(833)-YRK-MMIP OR 1-(833)-975-6647

ANYONE WITH INFORMATION REGARDING THE EMMILEE RISLING CASE OR ANY OF THE CASES FEATURED IN YEARS ONE AND TWO CAN BE SUBMITTED ANONYMOUSLY TO THE TIP LINE WITHOUT THE NEED TO INTERACT DIRECTLY WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT. BY OFFERING THIS TIP LINE, WE TAKEAWAY SOME OF THE HESITANCY TO COME FORWARD WITH INFORMATION BY PROVIDING ANONYMITY AND VENUE FOR TIP DISCLOSURE.
In her efforts to build the Yurok Tribe’s Office of the Prosecutor, Prosecutor Deck has spearheaded efforts to secure a tribal investigator for MMIP cases:

*I'll be the first to admit, we are learning in real time. This is something that I'm building from the ground up...We only know what we know at the time.... One of the next things I'm hoping to do is to hire an investigator who is law enforcement certified but works for my office and not the police so that I can independently direct them to go and investigate certain leads where they won't be as restricted as the police are. Sometimes sending a plainclothes investigator will get you much more information than sending a uniformed police officer.*

Despite deep passion and resilient enthusiasm, Prosecutor Deck’s task is a tall order—much like the rest of Emmilee’s case and others, there are few to no pre-existing protocols in place for guiding MMIP investigations. The novelty of designing such tools is inherently in tension with their need well before someone goes missing or is murdered.

Nonetheless, even these growing pains provide key lessons for MMIP intervention. In May 2022, the Yurok Tribe contracted with noted Missoula Police Detective Guy Baker, the lead investigator for the Jermain Charlo case out of Missoula, MT, since its first days. He brought this expertise to bear on Emmilee’s case and those like it in the region:

*We had Detective Guy Baker from the Missoula Police Department, who is also a FBI Task Force member, come and do some training. Met with Chief O’Rourke and I for several hours on Sunday and then he provided me with some implementation plans for a Tribal Community Response Plan, media communications, [and] victim services, which I found extremely helpful.*

*Then he also trained me on what I should be looking for in an investigator because I’m continuing to learn, continuing to try protocols to see if they work and if they work, memorialize them so that we have them available at our fingertips the next time something happens. But again, I’ll be the first person to admit: I am building something and there are at least a couple times a week where I think, “Man, I wish we had known this six months ago.” But it’s all part of the process of building something brand new that didn’t exist before. I think we can’t spend too much time being upset that we’re learning and that we didn’t know everything at the beginning. So that’s essentially what we’ve been doing for Emmilee’s case.*

*We took Detective Baker out to the Pecwan Bridge where she was last seen. He spent a lot of time looking around the area, getting the lay of the land, asking some very good probing questions: do you have any ideas on this case? How we should approach this or who we could talk to about this? He put us in touch with a lot of resources and I appreciated that he was so interested in seeing the area that she went missing from because he can glean so much just from how high the bridge is off the river, and have a different perspective from the officers who work that beat all the time and aren’t seeing it for the first time. Fresh eyes are always worth something, it’s a fresh perspective.*
The strain and heavy lifting associated with active MMIP investigations that run parallel to relevant protocol and policy design cannot be understated, but that is the reality of most MMIP interventions at present, for this case and many others in Yurok Country and across the state and nation. Even still, leaning into this work, designing the tools to collect tips and investigate accordingly, and in so doing, bring fresh eyes to even cold cases, answers directly many of the recommendations we made in our Year 2 report. We applaud ongoing efforts to do so and welcome other tribes to do the same.

**VICTIM SERVICES FOR THOSE LEFT BEHIND**

As we featured in our Year 2 report:

*Victim service providers (VSPs) are on the front lines of the [MMIP] crisis, yet their efforts often go unheralded despite the many ways they advocate for victims and survivors on a daily basis. ...[they] are the linchpin between law enforcement, the justice system, and families and survivors. No matter where a crime occurs or who is ultimately responsible for investigation and prosecution, a direct line of communication should be established with every family for key case updates, the sharing of leads as possible, and other case information. For many, that point of contact is often Victims Service Providers (VSPs)]. Ideally, VSPs make sure that the reporting party in a missing persons case is kept informed as to all case updates and information as it is deemed shareable by law enforcement. They can also advocate on behalf of families and survivors when too much time has passed without any information on their loved one’s case, and make sure that survivors and families know when all court appearances, trial dates, and sentencing is scheduled, should they choose to attend. (Year 2, pg. 117)*

Victim services can be either systems-based or community-based, and both options come with respective advantages and disadvantages. In the scope of Emmilee’s case, her family received services from tribal community-based VSPs such as this project, To’Kee Skuy’ Soo’ Ney-Wo-Chek’: I Will See You Again in a Good Way, the Hoopa Valley Tribe’s Office of Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault/MMIWG Prevention Program, and the Sovereign Bodies Institute. Yet, as there has been no evidence of foul play and therefore no evidence that a crime has occurred, neither Emmilee nor her family are eligible for systems-based victim services as provided by the Humboldt County District Attorney’s office. We welcomed the chance to have these key stakeholders weigh in on this case and protocols more generally but were unsuccessful in securing a time to meet despite months of correspondence requesting a meeting. We thank everyone who made time for reflecting on this vital case and the many lessons therein as they intimately inform the protocols and Tribal Community Response Plan template offered by this report.
I wish we could do more for Emmilee. I wish at this point we had something to tell her family. That is something that I continually feel for her family, that they haven't had any resolution to this. But all we can do is keep working as hard as we can to build our capacity to get those answers for the family.

-Rosemary Deck, Yurok Tribe Prosecutor

Prosecutor Deck echoes the sentiment of anyone affiliated with a long-term missing person’s investigation—whether you are law enforcement, a member the justice system, a tribal service provider, a prosecutor, or even a researcher on such a project such as this—without closure, there is nothing else we can do but sit in the absence left by the loss of a loved one with their family and everyone else left behind. Yet as we do so, we must ask the hard questions that will one day bring the answers for which so many search.

In the context of this case, we highlight the following lessons. First, the need to keep the search going. As seasons change, opportunities offer themselves, as information comes to light, as people are increasingly willing to talk—these are key moments in the lifespan of any case and that includes MMIP investigations, especially those cases who may have gone cold over time. Going further, at such junctures, we should also take the chance to debrief and establish what went well, what did not work, and what could be done differently for a better response in the inevitable case if this happens again? We also advocate for the high prioritization of cold case clearance as well as the inventory and management structures necessary to keep such records in living condition so that fresh eyes can revisit them and perhaps see connections not previously made.

Additionally, we urge tribes to allocate resources for their own MMIP tip lines and investigative capacities so that in the already resource-strapped and often rural jurisdictions in which their members go missing, they can augment the resources available for the investigation into their disappearance and/or murder. Further, we advocate for the expansion of victims-service provision across-the-board. Tribal, systems-based, and community-based options—no matter how en vogue MMIP has been in recent months, there’s still not nearly enough support for the survivors of MMIP, the victims, nor the families left behind. Criteria such as the suspicion of foul play and/or evidence that a crime occurred can sometimes be too high of a bar to meet when someone vanishes into thin air at the end of the road into wilderness. Yet, does
that mean services are any less needed? In the course of this project, we might argue that these are some of the instances where services are most needed because of the sheer crushing weight of the unknown when someone disappears like Emmilee did.

Sadly, Emmilee was not and will not be the first nor last to disappear under such obscure circumstances. By diving deep into the specifics of her case, we glean lessons from decisions made in real time. These decisions are fresh, having barely had the benefit of hindsight, instead representing sensitive pressure points in a wound not yet closed. But with the grace, compassion, and candor of key stakeholders in the moments, days, and weeks following Emmilee’s disappearance, we leverage such lessons for effective MMIP policies and procedures on the part of tribes and their law enforcement and justice system agency partners. In the next section, we offer tools and resources for using data to address the MMIP problem as another point of intervention.
For many years, experts across Indian Country have fought to addressing the Missing and Murdered Indigenous People (MMIP) problem. Resources, tools, and templates contained in this MMIP Toolkit are considered promising and best practices. A practical, user-friendly approach was used to develop the contents of the MMIP Toolkit.

GOALS

The goals of this MMIP Toolkit are to share data-related resources, tools, and templates with tribal communities with the intention to support current efforts in addressing the MMIP problem. This MMIP Toolkit is aimed to enhance the work of others and contribute to collective knowledge.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives for the toolkit are to:

- Provide an overview of the “State of Data” including the sociopolitical context in which the use of MMIP-related data is currently exists

- Demonstrate how data can be used to understand and address the MMIP problem - including reaching goals and objectives defined by tribal governments and communities.

- Offer practical resources for various target audiences including tribal communities, tribal leaders, administrators, evaluators, planners, scientists, and advocates

- Contribute to existing collective knowledge about tackling the MMIP problem

One fundamental objective of this MMIP Toolkit is to make a meaningful and unique contribution to Indian Country for the purposes of addressing MMIP. This MMIP Toolkit will enhance the many existing resources that are currently available.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This MMIP Toolkit consists of promising and best practices. Some of the activities shared in the toolkit require extensive tribal resources and capacity to implement and maintain. Yet, many tribes experience barriers to engagement in some activities described in this MMIP Toolkit. To balance out this challenge, practical examples are also offered in recognition that some communities have few resources at this time.

Many tribes may not currently have the capacity to engage in all activities presented in this toolkit; yet these tools and resources can help plan for the future.

RATIONALE & STRUCTURE OF TOOLKIT

This *MMIP Toolkit* is organized into four distinct modules. Each is strategically structured to:

- Present targeted information in a clear and concise manner while recognizing the enormity of the problem such as MMIP

- Maximize user understanding by centering foundational concepts from which more detailed knowledge can expand – including how and why examples provided make sense

- Allow users to “pick and choose” modules to their needs while forgoing other modules that may be less aligned with current prioritized

- Deliver adaptable tools to match myriad priorities that exist across tribal communities while considering that there are a range of ways that communities adapt tools – such as scaling ‘from local to national’ and tailoring from ‘national to local’

- Assist in planning, implementation, operational supports, and governance efforts
OVERVIEW OF MODULES

MODULE 1

STATE OF THE DATA
Sociopolitical context in which tribal data currently exists with a focus on MMIP-related data

MODULE 2

PURPOSE AS THE FOUNDATION
Establishing a clear core purpose is the foundation for meaningful data use

MODULE 3

PATHWAY TO DATA TYPE
Based on your purpose, questions are asked to find out the data type you need

MODULE 4

DATA USE AND LIMITATIONS
Trustworthy data for targeted results

TOOLKIT APPENDIX

Data Points for Tailoring Tools
Data Sets & Locations
Key Considerations
Tools to Access Government Data
MODULE COMPONENTS

In addition to providing an overview of substantive topics, modules contain:

- KEY CONSIDERATIONS
- TIPS
- RECOMMENDATIONS
- NOVEL ADDITIONS

**ONE-PAGERS**

Most simply, a one-pager is a condensed strategic communication tools and educational resource about a specific topic area. Offering someone one page of information is an opportunity to quickly transmit information. Even if the receiver simply scans the page, they could grasp the main ideas that you want to communicate to them. The structure of a one-pager often includes bullet points. More information about the strategic use of one-pagers is discussed in Module 3.

**BRIEFS**

A brief is like a one-pager in that it helps educate individuals about a certain topic area. The difference between the one-pager and the brief is that the brief is longer, contains more detail, and overall, it is written out using full sentences and paragraphs. Briefs are used when it is expected that the reader has time to fully engage with the document. More information about the strategic use of briefs is discussed in Module 3.

One-pagers and briefs have multiple purposes. They are modifiable tools and provide the toolkit user with statistical data points and other MMIP-related information.
Sociopolitical forces constantly reinforce power structures that control resources. Like other valuable tribal resources, data are vulnerable to outsider control through exertion of power. Infrastructure to support data governance is needed if sovereignty is to be honored. Indeed, elected tribal leaders continue to call for access to federal data so that they can make informed decisions, set priorities, and monitor and provide oversight of those who currently control this vital tribal resource.

WHAT DATA IS OUT THERE?
Although not a new problem within Indian Country, thanks to tireless advocates we are in a time of collective effort and invigorated energy as we tackle the Murdered and Missing Indigenous People (MMIP) problem. While we work in the present, it is also important that we do our best to reflect and work toward preventing disappearance and violence for the next generation. One way to support this is through the use of data.

Currently, Indigenous social scientists are working diligently to understand how to best prevent MMIP. Unfortunately, there is not a way to take scientific shortcuts without compromising ethics and quality of information. Scientists must “start where the data is at” to lay a strong foundation from which we can build contemporary knowledge upon. This foundation building stage can include strengthening fundamental data infrastructure, accessing existing data sets, and collecting new information that is specifically for analytical purposes. This module primarily focuses on a case example to show how even when we know what data exists and where it is located, accessing it can be a different story altogether.

Contemporary Indigenous knowledge - through data analysis - may reveal detailed nuances that can have practical applications and inform interventions. However, often this does not happen according to the timeline we would prefer. This is especially true for addressing the MMIP problem because of difficulties accessing data and the lack of much needed data infrastructure.
**Federal Policy and Data Systems**

There are several federal laws in place that direct agencies and guide scientists about data collection and use - specifically involving American Indians and Alaska Natives (AIANs). Here we highlight one current example of how tribal communities are affected when agencies fail to live up to their trust responsibility – particularly in context of addressing MMIP through use of data.

Many warriors fought for the permanent reauthorization of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act which was signed in 2010 as part of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA). Similar to state, county and city health departments, it was through the ACA that Congress determined that Tribal Epidemiology Centers (TECs) would have public health authority (PHA) status. This opened an unprecedented opportunity for Indian Country to gain more control over data and its use through access to Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) data.

Unfortunately, after 12 years since the passage of ACA, there is unwillingness of some federal agencies to share vital information with TECs despite their PHA status. Without this data access TECs are withheld from fully engaging in preventing Indigenous people from becoming missing or dying by homicide.

With cooperation from federal agencies and sufficient public health infrastructure, TECs can stand poised to support tribally-led strategic efforts in addressing the MMIP problem.

**Case Example: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**

After more than a decade, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) still does not comply with the ACA. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has yet to build pathways for the transfer of data to TECs for their use. From this point alone, it would be difficult for CDC to defend that their failure to act represents blatant and unequivocal institutional racism and disregard for tribal sovereignty.

“As long as tribes are denied the right to control their own resources, they will remain locked in poverty and dependence. But if tribes are given the dignity they deserve, they will have the opportunity to unleash the tremendous wealth of Indian nations.” – Regan (2014, Forbes Magazine)
The CDC’s resistance resulted in a Congressional request to the Government Accountability Office (GAO) that they investigate failures of Agencies. In March of 2022, GAO released Tribal Epidemiology Centers: HHS Actions Needed to Enhance Data Access.

Highlights from the GAO Report

Tribal Epidemiology Centers: HHS Actions Needed to Enhance Data Access

To provide public health support, Congress established tribal epidemiology centers and authorized their access to data collected by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

Recommendations for Executive Action

The Secretary of HHS should develop a policy clarifying the HHS data (including monitoring systems, delivery systems, and other protected health information) that are to be made available to TECs as required by federal law.

The Director of CDC should develop written guidance for TECs on how to request data. Such guidance should include information on data potentially available to TECs, how to request data, agency contacts, criteria the agency will use to review such requests, and time frames for receiving an agency response to data requests.

The Director of CDC should develop and document agency procedures on reviewing TEC requests for and making data available to TECs. These procedures should include a description of data potentially available to TECs, agency contacts, criteria for reviewing TEC data requests, and time frames for responding to TEC requests.

Following the release of the Tribal Epidemiology Centers: HHS Actions Needed to Enhance Data Access Report, the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs hosted an oversight hearing. However, CDC did not show up to provide direct testimony to the Committee. Instead, a representative from HHS testified on their behalf. These actions demonstrate CDC’s ongoing disregard of the needs of tribal nations. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have yet to provide meaningful rationale for their 12-year delay.
“The Tribal Health Data Improvement Act aims to ensure Tribal Nations are equipped with public health data to better operate public health programs and improve health outcomes within their communities. It works to clarify the Federal role in collection and availability of health data with respect to Indian Tribes. Moreover, this legislation identifies ways to improve the collection and calculation of health statistics with respect to Indian Tribes, such as requiring the Secretary to release all applicable public health data on Tribal Epidemiology Centers within 180 days of enactment and requiring the CDC to expand and improve their assistance to states with respect to sharing data with Tribal entities.”

We will watch intently to see if this is fully implemented.

Specifically related to the problem of MMIP, CDC houses critical data needed if TECs and tribes want to engage in robust ability to conduct surveillance. This includes data on homicide and the circumstances surrounding homicide such as sex, age, relationship to perpetrator, history of intimate partner violence, and toxicology reports. Moreover, homicide data is not the only relevant information that is housed at CDC. Extensive information about other types of violence and risk factors for victimization and perpetration are housed at CDC.

In sum, data are a resource that do not exist in a vacuum. Tribal epidemiology centers have had the authority to access data for life-saving purposes for more than a decade. Tribes and TECs need these data to engage in informed decision making and self-governance and optimize systems to improve Indigenous health and wellness.

“[T]he federal government as a whole needs more firm direction as to what the trust responsibility is, and that it is an obligation to be carried out by every federal agency exercising authority affecting Indian interests... There is a sense that some federal agencies are often doing the “bare minimum” through insincere or non-existent consultations to comply with existing Executive and Secretarial Orders associated with the United States trust obligations.” - National Commission on Trust Administration and Reform (2013).
A brief reminder in closing is that it is important to situate this case study within the larger context of historical traumas and wrongs, breaking of treaties, and other atrocities experienced by American Indians and Alaska Natives. Historic efforts of harm by the federal government seem to have transformed into contemporary neglect, failure to act, and denial of data access for tribal nations. The result is continued early mortality.
Across people’s diverse education and employment experiences, it’s probably safe to say that everyone at some point has asked themselves: ‘What is the purpose of this?’ or ‘Why are we doing this?’ In this module, we propose some similar questions to help you identify your core purpose and the goals and objectives that flow from that. This is the foundation for engaging in later modules which cover what data you need, how you it can be gathered, and how it can be used for different purposes.

This module will help you understand the importance of clarifying your core purpose when engaging in MMIP-related work. This module is designed to help move you toward solidifying a clear core purpose; however, it is not necessary to finalize this as prerequisite to moving through the modules in this toolkit.

Having a clear core purpose will help maximize the utility of this MMIP Toolkit and for strategically addressing the MMIP problem.

**CONCEPT OF PURPOSE**

To begin the process of understanding the relevance of having a core purpose, we start with broad descriptors then share examples of how these ideas apply to different settings, situations, and processes. Finally, we tie the concepts and examples together and situate them within the topic of data use. To reinforce the relevance of purpose, in later modules, we will encourage reflection about what is discussed in Module 2. We begin by offering the following descriptions.

**Purpose:**

- A group level intention
- The foundation or driver of other actions
- The top priority that can be used to help refocus
- An aid for making decisions when there are competing interests
- A facilitator of teamwork
Vision, Mission, & Values

The first example to help explain the general concept of purpose is one you may be familiar with. Non-government organizations (NGOs or non-profit) typically have ‘vision’ and ‘mission’ statements that guide their work. In the description below we can see that there are steps that build upon one another – going from vision to objectives. This overview of the visioning process has similarities to how we will further develop what we mean by core purpose later in the module.

Leadership – including board members - of NGOs typically engage in a “visioning” process. After the vision of the organization is defined, the mission statement is then developed, and the vision and mission are supported by core values or guiding principles. This then informs the development of an organization’s strategic plan which contains goals and objectives.

Guiding questions for a visioning process are:

- What is your vision?
- What is your mission?
- What are your core values or principles?

Here we paint a brief “stereotypical picture” to help understand the difference between passion and how we are defining purpose for this toolkit. One can imagine the outwardly energetic leader who launches an NGOs and passionately “jump right in” and begin steering the ship. These individuals tend to have it set in their minds what they are going to do. One could argue that they have a clear purpose in place. However, for our purposes of this toolkit, we argue that we do not have enough information to determine whether they do indeed have a clear purpose in place.

In the above example of the NGO, the vision process and everything else that followed was linear. This is not always the case - especially when working in the area of MMIP. Thus, processes presented below may not happen in this precise order, but we recommend to aim for structure when engaging in each of these different domains.

WHAT IS MY CORE PURPOSE?

Approach

To demonstrate how a general approach to addressing MMIP can be narrowed to eventually inform purpose, we use this example of prevention. Here we assume that a group of community members is in early stages of figuring out what their contribution will be to addressing the MMIP problem. The group decides they will focus on prevention however, their work is not over. As
demonstrated in this word cloud, the MMIP problem is cross-cutting and multidimensional. Choosing prevention is still too broad for identifying a core purpose. To get there, additional decisions need to be made and more targeted questions can facilitate this process. Examples are:

- Will we focus be on the prevention of missing persons?
- Will we focus be on preventing homicide?
- Do we want to prioritize and target certain risk factors such as intimate partner violence or substance misuse?
- What types of resources are needed for prevention? (Also see Module 3.)
- Which systems or departments might be good collaborators?

The numbers of questions one could ask themselves seems endless.

For this example, we will say that the group responded to sets of questions from a facilitator at the start of a strategic planning process. We will assume for the next example, that the group decided to focus on expanding services for youth and young adults who experience violence.
Without a core purpose as a foundation, there is greater risk of being pulled in many directions. For example, before you know it you are unsure if you have made impact in any one area but maybe a little is has been done across a lot of areas. A foundational core purpose situates you to be able to see the impact of your work through a substantial investment into one to a few key priority areas.

**Strategic Planning**

A strategic plan is a 3-to-5-year roadmap of goals, objectives. Strategic planning can occur at various levels of an organization such as the tribal government level and the department level. Below is a sample of Goals and Objectives related to addressing MMIP by providing services to youth and young adults who have experienced violence. Communities can use these as a template for developing their own goals and objectives.

In tribal communities, strategic plans are sometimes vulnerable to tribal politics such as when a new chairman is elected, and new priorities are implemented. To buffer this, one can build in contingencies into strategic plans.

Most department or project administrators revisit strategic plans on an annual basis and make modifications if needed. However, a best practice is to revisit a strategic plan every six months. These benchmarks can be opportunities not only to ensure that the purpose an approach is stable but bring together staff, offer appreciation, and remind them about the meaningful contributions they make to the department and mission. These types of staff supports can help them avoid burnout which is particularly relevant when working the area of MMIP.

**Goals & Objectives**

Having a clear purpose is useful as a foundation from which goals and objectives can derive. Based on the core purpose of expanding services for youth and young adults who experience violence that is mentioned above, this is one example of how a goal and objective can be formed to support the purpose.

**GOAL 1:** Provide targeted early intervention services for AIAN youth and young adults (age 16 – 24) who report victimization of dating or intimate partner violence to a health care provider.

**Objective 1A.** Within 3 months, engage and meet with primary care providers to assess their willingness to provide a new culturally relevant violence exposure screening tool to their patients.
Data Use for Evaluation

In the above example, data would be collected for purposes of program evaluation. This type of data is typically used for reports to funders or program improvement. The audience who would receive the information is typically a government agency, foundation, or program administrator.

In closing this module, we provide one more example of how local data can be used for evaluation and program improvement purposes. In this example both qualitative and quantitative data is used to develop and evaluate a tool.

Using Qualitative and Quantitative Data for Local Product Development & Evaluation

Sometimes qualitative and quantitative data are used in a sequence to develop a product and evaluate its effectiveness. For example, from qualitative data collection we found that law enforcement officers prefer training activities to be: 1) delivered by other officers or professionals who have common perspectives regarding law enforcement; 2) experienced in brief sessions such as 15 – 30-minute intervals; and 3) involve engagement in activities rather than receiving information through lecture style training.

One example of how these findings may have implications for developing or improving training:

According to the qualitative data, the trainer may need to break down what they might have anticipated to be a two-hour training into shorter segments. According to law enforcement officers who were interviewed, this approach would be most effective for delivering the information that needs to be conveyed.

From a data perspective, an important aspect of training is to evaluate the effectiveness for purposes of continuous quality improvement. One way this is typically done is through use of quantitative data. Many who have attended trainings have submitted feedback forms. Often participants are asked to circle a number – such as 1 – 5 – to indicate their opinion of the training based on certain criteria. After the forms are completed, an evaluator averages the scores to determine how effective the training was.

As an example of how to use this quantitative data over time:

If scores were to increase while a new person took over the training, this may indicate that the new trainer could be the right person to deliver additional training in the future.
Building on a core foundational purpose is essential for figuring out the type of data you need for your work. This happens through the development of questions you can ask for the answers you are seeking. A best practice is to carefully consider what resources and infrastructure before gathering data.

**PATHWAY TO TYPE OF DATA NEEDED**

The central focus of Module 3 is to outline the path for identifying the type of data that is needed for your purposes. In the previous module, we emphasized the importance of a clear purpose and establishing goals and objectives. This module will build on Module 2 and link new information to why having a core purpose is essential.

Without clarity, it’s easy to get off track. Data could be gathered that doesn’t help answer the questions you set out to answer. This could also mean a waste of valuable resources.

By starting with a foundational purpose – such as answers you are seeking - you can work backwards to identify the questions you need to ask. Once the questions are known, it will become clear what types of data you need for your purposes. Then you can create a plan to seeking out that data.

**Key Questions**

- What is our purpose? What do we want to know?
- What are the goals that support this purpose?
- What is needed to achieve the goals?
- What questions need to be asked to find out what we need to know?
- What data types am I looking for?
- How will the analysis be conducted?
Moving from Purpose to Data Type

Purpose

Module 2 emphasized that having a clear purpose is essential for finding answers to problems. The development of goals and objectives was also discussed in Module 2. [and can be applied beyond setting goals for a particular project as described in M2]

Assessment

After knowing your purpose and goals, an assessment process should be completed to understand what is needed to reach your goals and ultimately find answers you are seeking.

A systematic “gap analysis” is one recommended type of assessment. This involves determining all resources needed through the point of data analysis and examining all existing resources that the tribe and other entities can contribute to the efforts. It may be that a neighboring tribe can partner with you or that your HHS Area’s TEC can manage and analyze data for you. As you might imagine, this type of gap analysis assessment can take time – often more than a year. After you get to the point of understanding the gap that remains between the resources you have and what is needed to implement your data and analytical systems, then decisions can be made about the best way to fill these gaps. For example, this may involve approaching tribal council and department leadership to gain support and approvals.

A gap analysis may reveal that resources from across tribal government are needed for filling the gap. For example, if the gap analysis shows that staff need additional training to managing data systems, then departments such as Human Resources and Information Technology may need to be involved.

This figure represents the process for moving from purpose to knowing what type of data you need to help find answers to your questions.

Purpose & Goals | Assessment | Questions | Type of Data
Questions and Data Types

As mentioned above, questions are formed to find out what type of data that is needed for answering your questions. Here we start with an example of MMIP related questions that have been asked by those working in this area. The purpose of this example to show the distinction between the use of qualitative or quantitative data for certain types of questions.

Examples below show how types of questions align with the types of data that is needed. A range of questions representing the interconnectedness of MMIP related challenges are provided as examples.

What does it mean for a parent when their child goes missing?  
Qualitative data

Why did a community member die by homicide?  
Qualitative data

How does witnessing intimate partner violence as a child impact romantic relationships in adulthood?  
Qualitative data

What is the relationship between childhood trauma and substance misuse?  
Qualitative data

As you can see from the examples above, quantitative and qualitative data answer different types of questions. The remainder of this MMIP Toolkit focuses on the use of quantitative data. In the following module, we explore specific types of data and where they can be found.

Earlier in this toolkit, we gave an overview about a gap analysis assessment that is used for identifying needed resources. This assessment process can be lengthy and involve significant investments. An important take away here is that understanding the types of questions you will be asking and knowing the type of data needed to answer those questions is necessary for knowing the type of infrastructure needed.
Knowing what type of data to use to reach your goal also includes the element of Trustworthiness. Using data in a good way can help you form tools that are specific to your needs and purpose. This includes knowing your audience and how to craft tools to reach them. You may need access to data sets to meet your purpose. Inability to access data is discussed as a limitation and tools in the appendix, may help overcome this barrier.

We start this module by briefly revisiting ‘purpose’. In the last module we covered how having a core purpose can lead to the answers you want. We said that this process involves constructing questions and knowing these questions reveal the type of data that you need. We also explained that quantitative data is useful for answering certain types of questions.

In this module we expand the concept of purpose to “knowing your audience” and provide examples of how this is critical for developing tools of your own. For this module, we also expand on what we mean by ‘type of data’ and demonstrate how specific data sets can be used and where they can be found.

For this toolkit we provide examples of a one-pager and a brief as education tools aimed at particular target audiences. Several of the other concepts introduced in this toolkit were considered in the development of these tools.

Other key topics we cover in this module are access to data, limitations of data sets, and considerations when starting a local database.

DATA USE

Trustworthiness

An important concept to consider when approaching the use of data is trustworthiness. Here we briefly explain the concept and then give examples below and then again later in the module. For purposes of simplifying this MMIP Toolkit we refer to trustworthiness as meaning:

*Characteristics of data sources*

Sources are where data comes from. Sources can have varying degrees of trustworthiness. For example, a social media post as a source of data would be considered less trustworthy compared to a data point acquired through a research study.
Quality of data

The quality of data - and the data set as a whole – is dependent on many factors. Validity and reliability are some terms that are used in research that can fall within what we are describing here as trustworthiness. Below we provide a case example to demonstrate how one factor can influence the quality of a data set and lead to inaccurate answers to questions.

Case Example: “Garbage in, Garbage out”

“Garbage in, Garbage out” is a familiar phrase to researchers. Garbage in refers to “low quality” data that that when analyzed, results in unreliable results or findings. Another way to think about this is that answers to important questions can be suspect as a result of inconsistent data to begin with.

Example: If different individuals are entering data into a database system without specific instructions, this can have significant consequences when analyzing the data and interpreting results. For this example, we will look at how the lack of an explicit definition of “community” can have poor analytical results when determining the number of missing people. Let’s assume that there were two people who entered data into a shared data system as a part of their job duties. Because their supervisor, who oversees data management, did not “operationalize” the variable – or provide the employees with a specific definition of community - then the employees wind up with contrasting data entries. Let’s say one employee thinks of community as any tribal citizen from a certain tribe no matter where they currently live. The other employee thinks of community as any Native person who lives on a particular reservation. This results in two different determinations about what is entered into the database. One can see from this example that the reliability of the data influences the results. Depending on how the definition of community was supposed to be defined from the start, results would be over underestimated or overestimated and the true number of people who are missing from that “community” be unknown. In sum, something as simple as defining one variable can lead to unreliable results. If one considers if this type of oversight was a pattern, and multiple variables were impacted, then over time the true estimate of missing people could be dramatically skewed.

To prevent this type of problem, the supervisor – who in this case, is also the data manager – should have communicated to the employees how “community” was operationalized. However, if the supervisor did not do this and this was a pattern – as mentioned above, then there would be unfortunate consequences.

We encourage tribal communities to think through what ‘trustworthiness’ means to them as they approach the use of data. You might even build this into one of your project’s goals or objectives. Also, one aspect of trustworthiness is also featured in Module 1 of this toolkit.
DATA TYPES & DATA SETS

To demonstrate different types of data and data sets, we provide examples of these within modifiable resources below. For example, data from national, state, and county level sources are within the tools and Appendix. The one-pager and brief also integrate concepts introduced above. We aimed to diversify the information within the resources and supplement this with additional data in the Appendix. Substantive data points such as incidence and prevalence are embedded within the example tools and resources (as opposed to a different method of delivering this information to the user). We also aimed to include information about specific subpopulations and unique risk factors.

As mentioned in the Introduction of the MMIP Toolkit, one-pagers and briefs are educational tools meant to bring attention to an issue and help persuade a reader. These tools should be tailored and carefully constructed for strategic communications to the target audience – which typically a policy maker or key decision maker. Briefs are typically 2-5 pages in length and one-pagers have condensed information specifically designed to fit on one page.

Best Practice for Briefs and One-pagers

Briefs and one-pagers are best written by subject matter experts with policy experience because the target audience is policy and other decision makers. These individuals understand the importance of investing time into knowing their audience – and often times already have this knowledge at hand. This results in more impactful statements and an increase in the likelihood that change will occur.

The beginning of a Missing and Murdered Indigenous People “one-pager” is presented below with the idea that toolkit users will tailor it using additional data points that are in the Appendix. In other words, depending on the needs of the toolkit user, data from the Appendix can be added to form the remainder of the one pager.

MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS PEOPLE (Example one-pager)

Many tribal nations and communities share great concern about the long-standing problem of missing and murdered Indigenous Peoples (MMIP) and want to understand how to best intervene. Understanding risk is essential for prevention. Advocates have succeeded in shining a spotlight on the problem of missing and murdered Indigenous Peoples (MMIP). The next step is understanding how to prevent MMIP for specific sub-populations.

Toolkit user should refer to the Appendix to fill in the remainder of this one-pager
Ideally one-pagers are crafted with care to grab the attention of the person or group you are targeting. Gaining their attention can mean that you highlight key points that they would be most interested which may contrast that most important points you are interested in. One-pagers that are often used by policy advocates and tribal leaders.

Below is a child welfare-related example brief. It is also meant to be tailored to meet the purpose you have defined. Again, if your purpose is to address policy, then one-pagers and briefs are useful tools. In this example, we focus on California as a way to demonstrate how briefs can be tailored. Within the brief language such as “resource family home” are included since this is language that is sometimes used amongst child welfare system professionals. Other points about how this brief was developed or how it can be modified according to purpose are mentioned below.

CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM & FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

Children and families who become involved with the child welfare system have complex needs and traumas that deserve to be addressed. When a child is placed in a foster care home (also known as a resource family home), all parties should become the focus of attention with the ultimate aim of the child returning to their family. In other words, intensive support services, such as, wrap around services, should be provided to support everyone involved. This is particularly true for American Indian and Alaska Native children. Unfortunately, the foster care system has failed our Indian children and too many are placed in out-of-home care with non-Indian families and do not return to their caregivers and communities. This problem – like many discussed in this document – is complex and no one entity can resolve it. Foster care was supposed to be a temporary place for safety as caregivers learned to manage their struggles, adopt new coping strategies, and advance their parenting skills so that the child would return home to a healthier environment. National data shows that caregivers who have been reported to child protective services most often struggle with substance misuse (ACF, 2022). In studies with tribal communities, data suggests a need for targeted services to address substance misuse and domestic/intimate partner violence which may prevent a family from becoming involved with the child welfare system (Elm et al., 2021). In this sense, addressing these significant concerns has the potential to reduce intergenerational transmission of child welfare system involvement, which in turn may reduce risk for becoming MMIP.

[The remainder of this brief can be written using some of the following options below and in the Appendix / depending on what your purpose is.]

The unfortunate, yet practical, rationale for focusing on risk factors in the one-pagers and briefs below is this is what drives policy work and grabs attention. Each tool is further discussed below.
Options for Tailoring Your Own Brief

Data Points about Intersecting Risk

There is a subset of youth who fall under the jurisdiction of both the child welfare system and the juvenile justice system. Little is known about this highly vulnerable group.

Unfortunately, some young people do need to be temporarily placed in out-of-home care and need targeted support services to avoid poor outcomes that can be associated with child welfare system involvement. For example, compared to their non-child welfare system involved counterparts, risk for poor social, health, and educational outcomes increases. A few examples are:

- Increased likelihood of adolescent pregnancy (King, 2015)
- Lower likelihood of achieving education goals (Courtney et al., 2020)
- Lack of opportunity to develop critical life skills (Think of Us, 2021)

A risk factor for child maltreatment is early pregnancy. Thus, an adolescent in foster care who becomes pregnant, may have a lower chance of breaking the intergenerational cycle of child welfare system involvement.

In California, counties and colleges are funded to offer education services specifically for foster and cross-over youth such as Foster Youth Campus Support Programs on college campuses.

Sex trafficking

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) has been reporting on child maltreatment for more than 25 years. The Child Maltreatment 2018 report (2020) was the first in which they focused on the issue of sex trafficking at the national level. Sex trafficking is considered a new type of child maltreatment. Whereas previously, there were five types of child maltreatment (sexual abuse, emotional abuse, physical abuse, emotional neglect, and physical neglect). Due to 2015 legislation, in recent years, the ACF has started collecting, analyzing, and presenting data about sex trafficking among young people.

Nationally about one-third (29%) of child welfare involved children who experience the original 5 types of maltreatment are under age 3.

For sex trafficking, the pattern is reversed with the majority of young people who experience sex trafficking being age 15 and older. (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2021).
Legislation from 2015 required that states collect data on known and suspected cases of sex trafficking and have the option to define a child as a someone who has not reached the age of 24. These data include sex trafficking cases by caregivers and non-caregivers (ACF, 2020).

The child welfare system needs major reform; however, with much collective effort, there is some hope that changes can be made. In 2018, the Families First Services and Prevention Act was passed for the purpose of drawing more resources to the child welfare system for the purpose of prevention of child welfare system involvement (Andrews et al., 2022).

States are required to submit their data to ACF and they note that because this is a new type of data collection, in 2018, just 27 states reported sex trafficking data. Because of limited number of states reporting at this time, ACF sex trafficking data are particularly unreliable for AIANs. Yet, here we share a general trend that demonstrates what seems to be an obvious assumption for most. Please note that these numbers need to be interpreted with caution. Nevertheless, this data set holds much promise for addressing the prevention of MMIP.

The above brief was developed with California in mind. To understand “trustworthiness” from a different angle and how data is sometimes shared across different levels of government, we share how the governance of the child welfare system in California influences data:

Although not exclusive to California, there are some unique challenges related to reforming the child welfare system. One of these is that California has a “county-based system” which makes it difficult to understand trends at the state level. That is, there are many “smaller systems” that need to feed into a larger system (at the State level). This requires much more time and resources needed to coordinate and there is more risk for human error, relative to most states which have a centralized child welfare system.

The example brief above shows that state level data was used to supplement federal data. The University of California at Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project houses the state-level child welfare data. Relative to most data systems, this system has frequent updates and is a good source to understand current issues related to prevention of MMIP. That is, considering that child welfare involvement is associated with MMIP risk, data from University of California at Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project can provide information to help guide decision making about upstream prevention programming. For example, at the time this document went to press, the data was just three months old.

DATA ACCESS

In Module 1, it was discussed that there are limitations to accessing data from government systems. In the Appendix, we provide tools that may help address this barrier.
Perhaps the most tragic component of the MMIP crisis is that pre-invasion, our roles as Indigenous women, girls and true spirit relatives were highly revered and considered sacred. It was for this reverence and the bodily autonomy that it inspired that these same bodies were targeted for violence. The conquest of the land was waged on our bodies and then in the present day, it is violence against such bodies that serves as the ever-present proof of the ongoing work of the settler-colonial project (Bourgeois 2015, Kaye 2017, Lavell-Harvard et al. 2016, Taggart 2015). In the words of Dr. Cutcha Risling-Baldy, noted scholar and Emmilee’s first cousin:

[There are] multiple layers. The first is an understanding of the connections between historical genocide and genocidal practices, and the connections to what’s happening to people today, and especially around native women. I’m connecting between settler colonialism and missing and murdered Indigenous women as an ongoing process that is necessary for building the state that we can’t separate. You can’t separate the discussions around the success of the state itself without understanding that that success only came from violence, violence against women, violence against the land, violence against native people, violence against animals. Like it was just violence and that, that violence then becomes enshrined in law and policy and connects us to why there is such an ongoing and major issue with missing and murdered Indigenous women. Not just in the United States but globally, because it is a structure and function of settler colonialism.

Yet even with such critical insight, the case of Emmilee Risling and the many others profiled over the course of this project shine a light on the implications of settler colonialism on a personal level:

Especially lately, it's not just a theoretical or a scholarly discussion. It's not even like a historical discussion anymore. I think unfortunately, for most of us, but it’s especially for my family right now, it’s a very personal issue. And something that we are sort of facing as a family, what it means to have people who are missing in our lives. And then knowing that that is not just informed by a current social, political and criminal injustice system but also a historical one, and also a foundation that really shouldn't be up to tribes to fix.

But because it is always up to us to fix the problems that we're facing... so I think I can think of it both theoretically and even politically. But right now, it's very personal.

In this section, we build on this critical line of inquiry as it is vital to the MMIP intervention. In doing so, we hold space for the violence and trauma that have shaped Indigenous communities in the generations since contact while emphasizing the
preventative and restorative forces that culture, and in particular, women’s coming-of-age ceremonies, represent for ending the MMIW crisis.

**WHAT IS THE FLOWER DANCE AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?**

For the Yurok, Hupa, Karuk, Wiyot, Tolowa and other world renewal peoples, our worldviews are most tangibly expressed through our sacred dances. Participation and roles therein are based on gender responsibilities, much like daily life more generally (Buckley 2002, Risling Baldy 2018, Lara-Cooper & Lara 2019). Pre-invasion, tribal women featured prominently in all village roles. According to Melodie George-Moore, an enrolled member of the Hoopa Valley Tribe, long-time educator and cultural knowledge bearer for the village of Ta’k’imil-ding:

There is evidence in the language still and in the social structures that you see of a more matriarchal organization built around strong women. There are examples from the culture and from the language that I can show you to prove that. [But then] the colonization that happened, and the boarding school, the local boarding school that we had. And then further back, we’re on the campus of Fort Gaston.

As she describes the social structure of area tribes, George-Moore also links the rupture in such roles to the imposition of settlers, including soldiers at Fort Gaston and later with the boarding school era. Nonetheless, pre-invasion, George-Moore is clear that “women had, in that model, control of the house that had all of the everyday items, the stores of food, the regalia items, it was that she had control of the house.”

Drawing from her expertise on the Hupa, Prof. Risling-Baldy echoes these points:

*We could, as Indigenous women, own property, we could decide if we wanted to get married or divorced, we could be the primary owners of regalia. We were medicine people, we were doctors. We were people who they primarily went to for strategy on how to do things. You have a number of examples in multiple tribal cultures in California where it was medicine women who were the first people that they went to talk to about “If we’re going to lead this revolution?” or “do this fight or go into this area, what’s your advice? What are you thinking about how that would work?”*

One of Hupa’s first stories is about how you go to war. Our very first Hoopa general ever,...like in the whole wide world, was a woman. Her name? “Chickenhawk.” It took until 2000 and something for the United States Army to have their first woman general and ours, first woman General was the beginning of time. She has the K’ixinay person. And it was like, of course you would go to your older sister and say “hey, what should I do here?” and she would create the whole strategy of how to fight and do all the things you needed to do, and so it's very different.
Going further, the centrality of women to world renewal villages was exemplified by their roles as healers and in the teachings of the flower dance. With the former, George-Moore describes the role of Hupa, Yurok, and Karuk women as doctors:

Apparently we are unique in Northern California in that a majority of our doctors or “Indian doctors” were women. And I grew up not knowing that that was not the norm. The training that would happen for a native woman, an Indian doctor, she would experience some things in her onset of puberty usually or earlier, and she would be trained by another woman to fulfill that role and that role was key for the wealth of the village, the wealth and the health, they’re kind of intertwined. When we say wealth nowadays, it’s like monetary, but no, your riches are your health, your “how you attract goods and services from other places, the trading network.” And so her fees, her doctor fees when she successfully healed a person would bring wealth to that village, to that family, to that house and so there are stories.

It was, you know, just like the training that we have nowadays to become a doctor… it would be long, lengthy and arduous, and at the end of it would be a title that a lot of people would know. She’d have to demonstrate that she had healing powers. [It was] one of the prestigious jobs that you could have been, before the invasion. Now during the invasion, everything about that office, everything about that belief system that led to those healings, was attacked.

In our tribes and many others, it was because of the very important roles that tribal women, girls, and two spirit relatives played in their communities that they were targeted, with their power and agency essentially antithetical to western patriarchy. The position of women in ceremony is obvious even to the untrained eye. While the men sing and even whoop at times, it is the sound of shells tinkling and jingling against one another, soft and rhythmic with each round of dancing, that overwhelms the senses. Women and young girls prepare one another for ceremony, swaying heavy with dresses of shells, buckskin, nuts and beads. Their songs are steady and entrancing; soft yet insistent like hard rain skipping on leaves and rocks in a thunderstorm.

Like other coming-of-age ceremonies, the flower dance is the most prominent expression of the sacred nature of world renewal women. As in Indigenous communities more generally, these dances are qualitatively different than any other dances held, as family members come together to acknowledge the right of passage of one young girl into womanhood. Women in her life will come together to care for her as she completes a variety of tasks all while blindfolded, teaching her lessons that she will walk with for a lifetime. As medicine woman George-Moore explains:

The sovereignty of women’s bodies, and those medicines that we’re practicing and teaching at the flower dance, are meant to carry that girl through the experience of birth where, in pre-contact times, if you’re not following the
protocols and your baby's too large, or you're not following the protocols and you don't know how to handle pain, or if you're not following the protocols and you don't know how to call on other women for help. Then there would have been a death that could have been, should have been prevented; without this training, things could go wrong.

The flower dance itself is the conduit for these teachings, taking place over multiple days and many rounds of singing and dancing through the nights and into the days. In contrast to other ceremonies, women of all ages can sing and dance in this ceremony and such opportunities serve as rare opportunities to come together to honor the bodily sovereignty of young girls as they enter adulthood:

Our networks, a lot of those women that come to that ceremony to sing over the girls are members of organizations that work on this issue and so they come and there might be overlap in that way and that they come to a place where they can pray and celebrate the sovereignty of women's bodies. There's not a lot of places that just celebrate women's bodies for themselves? In a marriage, you're in a contract with your body. When you have children, you're definitely in a symbiotic relationship. I've had eight, six that I birthed and two that came along with the second marriage. The sovereignty of women's bodies is [a teaching that] we have a whole night to, depending upon how long the ceremony is going, we've had as many as five nights just for women.

Kendall Allen, MMIP Program Manager for this project, had her own flower dance and shared similar reflections as to the novelty and power of celebrating a young woman for her first menstruation:

When I had my ceremony, I think I was like 14 and mine was upriver. And this was like around the time when we were bringing these back...so I'm fortunate...I [remember] thinking “this is going to be embarrassing. Everybody is going to know,” and it wasn't. Because in our world they were preparing for all this because, you have to think about back then, they were preparing for this all the time. They knew that this was going to happen for each girl, everyone had one, every girl had them. In bringing those things back, it's not something that's frowned upon. “We don't talk about it.” We talk about it all the time. It's a form of praise really? It's the idea that you are important enough. You are important enough that our whole community recognizes you. Our village recognizes you and your new role and position within our family, within our village, within our community. That people drop what they're doing to come and help and pray and sing and to be with one another. And it's not something that's shameful or bad or negative... we talk about women during their time, during their cycle, during their moon, that they're too powerful, they're powerful beings. So they have strong medicine.
Much like the act of menstruation itself, the flower dance serves as a physical embodiment of the sacred nature of world renewal women and this is a fundamental teaching to the worldview of Yurok, Hupa, Karuk and other world renewal peoples. As explained by Dr. Risling Baldy based on her extensive research on the dance:

*What I learned from my own research about the flower dance was that not only did we do it in our everyday kind of political and social practices, how we understood the role of women as equal to, but we did it in our ceremonies [also]. The flower dance comes in and says [that] this dance that's for young women as they are starting menstruating and going out into the world, that's just as important to the balance of your culture [as other “high dances” like the jump dance and the white deerskin dance].

So women are foundationally a part of our spirituality, not in a way where they are cursed. We did not, that's not the origin story. Not in a way where “they are bad.” Not in a way where they are even in deference to men, but in a way, where they are supposed to be empowered through ceremony so that they can lead the next generation. And I think that that's a really important foundation of how we viewed the world.

In this description of the flower dance, Dr. Risling Baldy underscores the importance of the ceremony in maintaining the balance of the world, which was the primary goal of world renewal spiritual practices at-large (Buckley 2002, Risling Baldy 2018, Lara-Cooper & Lara 2019). Such importance was in direct contrast to the narrative of being “cursed” like Eve in the Bible, the feminine archetype for much of Western civilization. Dr. Risling-Baldy’s mother and Emmilee’s aunt Lois Risling is also a cultural knowledge holder and she reflects back on this inherent difference between the sacred nature of world renewal women as compared to perceptions of the feminine in settler theologies. After reading anthropological descriptions of “dirty” menstruation, Lois had returned home from college to help her grandfather with high dance ceremony. She had grown up dancing but after reading Western accounts of how “dirty” she was because she menstruated, she had begun to doubt her role in ceremony. When she voiced these concerns to her grandfather, he was quick to correct her by underscoring the foundational role of tribal women as life givers in all its many expressions:

“You guys all think I'm dirty,” and I quoted him stuff out of the book. And I said, “do you think I'm dirty and can't dance in your dance? I can't even dance in this dance because only men can dance that dance. So I'm not gonna participate in this because things have changed, people change.”

And he looked at me and he goes “That's not true. You read too much. Stop reading.” “What do you mean?” He goes “that's not true, that women are dirty,” he said, “If women are dirty, I wouldn't eat your food. Men wouldn't eat your food that you prepare,” which is a very intimate thing. Preparing these foods, especially if you're preparing, you can take something that is not sacred and you have to “ensecure” that food to feed to a certain group of people.
He said “I wouldn't eat your food. That's not true. Stop reading. They're telling you this.” And then he said to me “they have a book and out of the book comes the information for what they're telling us and applying to us as dirty. The book was the Bible and in the Bible you guys are all aware of the story of Adam and Eve. She sins. And then she makes her man sin. And they get kicked out of the, out of the Garden of Eden as their punishment. Woman gets an additional punishment. And that is to have to have menstruation and pain in childbirth. That's her additional punishment. That is something that Christians believe, and that's where the concept that the woman is dirty comes from. They thought it so much that the slang term that they gave menstruation is the curse, she is cursed for generations to come.

That is the opposite of Karuk, Hoopa, and Yurok belief system. Because we're about giving life. That's what we say: we give life. And our [sacred beings] looked at man and woman and they said “look, you know, she's given life.
You can see it. You can see her give life, she births the baby, the life. You see that she nurtures the baby. She takes care of the baby. If she, for some reason can't, there's another woman who can step in and nourish. They can't even feed the baby if they have to.” That all is all part of giving life.

In this teaching, Lois shares with us vital knowledge from her grandfather on potentially one of the most key distinctions between Indigenous and Western worldviews: the role of women and their contributions to the collective. In direct contrast to Christian theology, women were far from dirty; they were life givers and menstruation was a time of great honor and celebrated with a flower dance as an acknowledgment of a young woman’s new role and sacred ability to give life. It is because of this power that tribal women served as healers, advisors, and leaders, with just as many rights and responsibilities as their male counterparts. Yet, it is for these same reasons that they were targeted by the Western settler colonial project. This manifests in present day in a multitude of ways but none more acutely than the MMIP crisis. Restoring such ceremonies are a vital component to intervening in this crisis as the flower dance and coming of age ceremonies like it are and always have been a vehicle by which balance is restored.

Ceremony was one of the pillars by which Emmilee structured her life from her earliest days. While Emmilee did not have a flower dance, she was well-versed in many traditions as someone with ancestry in each of the Yurok, Hupa and Karuk enrollment records, including those associated with the brush dance, the jump dance, the white deerskin dance, and others. Coming from a dance family meant that her family could host an entire dance and dress all dancers using regalia and singing songs that have
been passed down for millennia. As shared earlier in the report, of those lamenting Emmilee’s arrest for arson on the eve of her disappearance on social media, one recalled her voice ringing out during ceremony, moving them to tears in its beauty and clarity in sacred spaces.

By front staging culture, we do not mean to say that those who are taken are somehow deficient or “not strong enough” in their spiritual tradition. Rather we seek to illuminate how culture can be preventative to the MMIP crisis, and further still, how holding space for the role of ceremony in such interventions is a fundamental component of any effective Tribal Community Response Plan. Although we focus on the unique traditional legacy of the Yurok and nearby tribes, we highly encourage all relevant stakeholders to seek out what relevant cultural considerations should be included as they relate to the sacred nature of women, girls and two spirit relatives in their respective jurisdictions.

As proposed in our Year 2 report, we sought out tribal leaders, tribal police, elders, and cultural keepers for their help in designing our prevention, intervention, and postvention protocols for MMIP and violence against Indigenous bodies more generally. This was based on the shared belief that MMIP policies had to be guided by cultural considerations:

- Traditional practices, spiritual values, Indigenous knowledge, and culture... depend on the idea that the health and well-being of individuals, families, communities, and nations require the restoration of balance... While prayers, songs, and ceremonies differ by tribe, these cultural practices have been used in healing trauma and grief since time immemorial. (Tehee et al. 2021: 259)

The flower dance, coming-of-age ceremonies and incorporating Indigenous culture into MMIP response more generally are all examples of tapping into cultural practices to restore balance. These measures are largely preventative; strong cultural ties have been shown to be a protective factor in the lives of marginalized tribal youth (Long & Nelson 1999). Numerous studies link positive social outcomes and physical and mental well-being to strong cultural practices (Johnson, Thompson, Downs 2009, Unger 2013), and this is especially true in cases of trauma (Hamby et al. 2021, Hamby, Schultz, Elm 2020). For Indigenous people, healing historical trauma is a first step to intervening in the MMIP crisis as such trauma has impacted tribal communities for generations. In her own family history, cultural knowledge holder George-Moore describes direct ties to ancestral experiences of genocide:

- My grandmother, my dad's mother, told the story of when she was young. She used to go visit her grandparents or great grandparents while they were still alive. And she remembered her great grandmother had shackles marks on her arms and on her legs from being kidnapped, put into chains. And then put on a boat at Trinidad and then walked inland from where the boat landed to the Round Valley Reservation. And on that reservation, there was a holding facility for a number of tribes...
She was pregnant at the time that she was shackled and sent there, and then I don't know if she gave birth in Round Valley or if she gave birth along the way, or if she was still pregnant, I was looking into that. And I do believe that she might have been still pregnant when she made it back. They didn't stay very long because when they were into the winter, she told my grandmother that everybody was starving. People were not given enough food from that Fort...

A group of them decides to leave. Now I know that they are educated, trained, thoughtful people, so they must have thought of a way of escaping, and so then, they end up going along the ridge that leads back to the territory up here...They knew about those trails so they came back. They get as far as a nearby tribal territory and their group is attacked by the local native tribe which is not wanting any trouble from anybody because they have been attacked and been told to stay out of things. “If you know of these Redwood Creek people, you'll be punished,” [they had been told by the soldiers]. And so they were looking out for themselves, but they ended up killing a majority of that group.

Despite the attack, George-Moore’s ancestors were able to make their way back to Redwood Creek, only to find settlers living in their villages instead:

But anyway, they make it back and there's people in their territory now. There's non-Natives that have taken over the place. And so that baby [born during their escape] is named “Minnie” in my family tree, “Minnie Tom [daughter of Capt. Louis Tom and Mary].” According to, I've never met her, but my grandparents and my aunties and all my uncles would talk about her and they said that she was the meanest person that you could ever come across. “Mean Minnie,” that was her name. Mean Minnie was her nickname. What that tells me now with my trauma training is that she experienced some trauma somewhere along the way and so [her response was] a survival technique.

So somewhere along the way though, Mean Minnie needs to, because now she's the last of the village at that point, she needs to get married and have children....So a survivor of a kidnapping, incarceration and a Massacre. All in one story.

George-Moore shares this story to underscore the trauma experienced in one generation can produce a number of outcomes. First, the trauma response in the individual (Anda et al. 2006, Campbell et al. 2016, Dube et al. 2005, Felitti et al. 2019, Liu et al. 2013), in this case earning her ancestor the name “Mean Minnie.” But then also its transmission across time as Minnie goes on to share eleven children with her husband, many of whom would come of age during the boarding school era, an abuse in itself (Lomawaima 2004, Norton 1979). As such, George-Moore underscores the need for healing through ceremony:
We need on a basic level to heal our bodies. Starting there. And yes, I believe that our native traditions have healings for these kinds of things. We have words, we have prayers, we have ceremonies that would have dealt with PTSD.

Going further, she urges law enforcement professionals and justice system partners to be cognizant of such traumas as they relate to the continued subjugation of Native lands and Native bodies:

The land, how you treat the land is also how you treat the women, because in our system of belief, it's mother Earth. And how you treat the land is ending up how you treat women. So these people that are in law enforcement do not get [that], or in the court system, oftentimes do not get the training that they need in order to deal with trauma.

The need for trauma-informed training cannot be understated and was a primary recommendation in our Year 1 and Year 2 reports, and the teachings of these cultural knowledge holders only underscore this intervention. Flower dances and other coming-of-age ceremonies are of particular import because they focus on adolescence, a time when the body undergoes significant biological and neurological changes (Casey, Jones & Hare 2008, Dahl 2004, Vijayakumar 2018). Yet again, modern science is only just now catching up to what Indigenous peoples have always known about shepherding the brain during this pivotal time. According to Dr. Risling-Baldy:

I keep telling people, “Native people were just the very first developmental psychologists.” They really did look at what was happening in adolescence and go “something else needs to happen here. Like this is not easy and it would make sense to do.” And the instructions given...were very much “it sucks being a teenager, you know what? You should do all these things to help get through that period of time in your life.”

Now all the studies that they're doing now about what happens to girls at the onset of puberty and adolescence shows that girls' self-esteem plummets during adolescence, while boys will remain the same or increase....this is across the board. So whatever we're doing as a society right now is increasing young men’s self-esteem and decreasing girls’ self-esteem. Now when we say adolescence, that's primarily around menstruation. So it really is about the onset of menstruation and then what happens...for vulnerable populations...like Native populations where we already have stressors and we already have like everything going on with ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences) and all kinds of stuff, the onset of this lowering of self-esteem at 11, 12, 13 is also the onset of drug and alcohol abuse in most Native girls. Suicidal ideations in most Native girls happens at 11, 12 and 13 and what you see is that suddenly their self-esteem plummets and they're trying to fix it. They're trying to figure out a way to live in this world so then they start by going well “maybe I need to drink, maybe I need to do drugs. Maybe I need to hurt myself...” These are the things that are causing this sort of compilation [of crises].
Seeking out substances, participating in risky activities, self-harm—although adolescence can be a time of experimentation, such behaviors can also be coping mechanisms for those whose brains have survived traumatic experiences (Olffa, Langeland, Gersons, 2005a, 2005b, Randall & Haskell, 2013). Dr. Risling-Baldy describes how marginalization, historical trauma and the corresponding adverse childhood experiences or “ACEs” (Anda et al. 2006, Campbell et al. 2016, Dube et al. 2005, Felitti et al. 2019, Liu et al. 2013) that result intersect with menstruation to negatively impact young women’s self-esteem. To combat this, our spiritual teachings offer the flower dance as a way to intervene in the mental health of our adolescents, a key contributing factor to the MMIP epidemic:

We intervene with ceremony and we go like “no, you don't [need to cope through negative behaviors]. This is what you should learn to do. You should learn how to run. You should learn how to eat. You should learn how to steam. You should learn the herbs that will help you. You should learn that maybe you need to change your diet slightly when you're menstruating versus when you're not. You should talk to people.” They're doing follow up studies where they go “what we need to do is talk to young women when they're in their adolescence, and that's actually going to be what builds these things.” That's why we started doing it in the beginning of time because we realize that it's just a good practice for how you move through your life. When I tell people that, they get very like “you're right, these are really kind of practical things that you should do with the young person.”

In many ways, such ceremonies are both physically and spiritually protective:

We tie her spiritually and physically to her land, her water, her river, where she comes from. We give her a home. We give her a community. And I can't tell you how many of the girls told me that at a time in their life where they started to feel the most invisible and vulnerable and also hyper-looked at, they felt that it meant something special. That they would watch these people who for three days would stop their lives for them, and they were like “people would stop their life for me. Like, why would they stop their life? Why would these “strangers” show up at my dance when they're supposed to be at work? Why would they stay late when they're supposed to wake up in the morning and go do something?” And then they were like, “these people showed up for me. So people actually care if I live or if I die, people care if I'm successful,” and so that did something.

Such ceremonies are not only protective for the young women for whom they are held, but also corrective for those young men who participate in the ceremony and are attendant in the preparations. It is vital that we do not place the burden of intervening in this crisis on the young women, girls and two spirits who are disproportionately affected by violence. Rather, we must also change those behaviors that target young women for violence, and the structures that undergird them, chiefly the Western settler patriarchy:
When you sing and dance over somebody, you cannot think of them as an object anymore. You will never be able to objectify them ever again, because you went to a place where they were holy, they were sacred to you and you sang for them and you danced over them and you watched them come out as a person, as a full-fledged human being. And you accepted a blessing from them. And now they are not an object to you.

So that is what we do for young men. We asked them to come to a place where for three days, they are not the center of the universe. They don't have a whole world set up to make their life easier. They don't have a whole world that is just telling them that patriarchy is the way the world is supposed to be, that they're asked to take a step back and be there for someone else, just in service to a young woman. And then they're told she is very important and powerful. And that's how you have to think about her.

And that's like a total theoretical intervention into patriarchy. It's basically dismantling it through a physical dance and ceremony and song. And then how do you walk away from that later and go “women are objects?”...their participation in the flower dance is very important because it is demonstrating structurally for them that there are times when they just need to be there to uplift someone else and that's going to be as just as much intervention as I think anything else that we could have done.

As much as we seek to craft protocols and best practices for use when someone goes missing or is murdered, we underscore the need to think through preventative strategies so that such mechanisms do not have to go into effect in the first place. For world renewal peoples and all other tribes with access to ceremonies like the flower dance, we encourage them to think critically about the lessons that can be gleaned from such teachings and in turn infuse their MMIP interventions with an emphasis on culture as prevention coupled with restoration through trauma healing. Emmilee’s aunt and Dr. Risling-Baldy’s mother Lois Risling urges stakeholders to remember the strengths that culture provides, especially in the hardest times:

And the one thing that I don't like that's coming out of this is they say “You did all this cultural stuff, and she's still turned out [missing]. It could have been mental illness [but] she's still turned out to have a drug issue.”

It's not because of the ceremonies. Ceremonies were trying to help her. It was because of everything you guys had done. Being the government, the society, the way that they're getting into things. That's all I can say about it. Sometimes I cry. And I grew up being told not to cry....but I have been crying for my niece because I'm crying for my brother. And crying for all of us. I'm crying for that girl who's a mother now who didn't really know her mother. And her child, who won't have a grandmother. And I'm crying for the tribes that
are trying to do something on limited resources, jurisdictional issues, all those kinds of issues. And we're fighting this the only way we know how: through our knowledge and our ceremonies. But I'm not going to let anyone blame our ceremonies for failing our people. No, they are giving us the strength to cry. Crying takes a lot out of a person.

By providing a tool to prevent future cases through restoring mental health and well-being, ceremonies like the flower dance, coming-of-age ceremonies more generally and the use of cultural tools at-large are vital components of any MMIP intervention. In this way, tribes can implement generative solutions that intervene before someone is targeted for violence.

**CULTURE: HOW TRIBAL KNOWLEDGE BENEFITS ALL MMIP STAKEHOLDERS**

Beyond the preventative and protective components that cultural ceremonies offer, there are also significant lessons that key MMIP stakeholders can gather from working with tribal partners. In particular, we offer tribal justice systems especially in PL-280 states where such courts have concurrent jurisdiction over tribal lands. Additionally, tribal justice systems offer alternative justice models that allow a reconsideration of mental health and social service provision by emphasizing “responsibilities” over “rights.” Finally, the sensitive nature of MMIP requires stakeholders to know how such topics are handled in the communities they work with—for example, there are often customs around using the name of those who have passed away as well as guidance on what to do in the event that someone is missing long-term, and tribal knowledge holders can broker sharing such details. By working with their tribal partners, law enforcement and justice system agency stakeholders can craft the most relevant and culturally resonant protocols and best practices that meet the needs of the tribal communities they serve.

**TRIBAL JUSTICE SYSTEMS**

Tribes, law enforcement agencies and their justice system partners should identify the tribal justice resources available to them regionally, with an emphasis on how these courts can support ongoing MMIP cases, facilitate community trust building, and broker information and resources between the criminal justice system and MMIP families and survivors. For example, tribal courts are often vehicles for “restorative justice” which can help restore the relationships that are damaged in the wake of violence. As described by cultural knowledge holder George-Moore:

*The Yurok court system is now doing a lot on restorative justice. There's traditional systems of payment and traditional systems of justice that can be called into play...all parties of that family need to be involved, not just the two that are involved in the altercation or the problem or the conflict. It's a whole*
system of you have to involve the families and people need to be communicating with one another that “payment was made and it was accepted” and that is a whole system because you have families that aren’t talking to certain family members or you have the fractionation of families that doesn’t allow for that to happen. And so that’s where the court can be involved...[as] another mechanism that if you're not talking to so and so and your family, well then somebody can notify you that you know payment has been made.

By providing adjacent and/or alternative means of repairing community relationships, tribal courts offer a unique resource and key partner in the effort to end MMIP. For those tribes who may not yet have a court of their own, the project team urges readers to think strategically as to how a court could better help them walk with their systems-impacted relatives. Although tribes must often design such institutions from the ground up, much like the protocols included in this report, this is a novel opportunity for tribes to intervene in this matter. As explained by Yurok Tribal Prosecutor Deck:

I'm just absolutely inspired by the opportunity to create something new that wasn't going to be punitive. It was more about accountability and responsibility, and so, for example, one of the roles of my office is to bring violations of the tribal code in tribal court. So that's our fishing rights ordinance, civil violations, controlled substance violations, environmental violations. And unlike state court or Criminal Court, tribal court is not adversarial. It's more a collaborative approach to doing justice in a culturally competent way.

Accountability, responsibility, collaboration and cultural competence—each of these components are necessary parts to any MMIP policies and procedures and we urge stakeholders to seek out their tribal partners to build such tools together in a good way.

The Yurok Tribal Court (YTC) combines traditional, cultural values with contemporary court practices and traditional mediation. In 1974, the YTC was established to regulate Indian people fishing on the Klamath River; it has expanded to additional regulatory areas, particularly family law (the Tribe operates the only Tribally controlled Child Support program in California); wellness courts (family, juvenile, adult & veteran); prisoner reentry court; juvenile & adult guardianships; and a civil access center for members with Tribal, Federal or State court legal or administrative needs, or who need assistance in responding to Yurok ordinance violations or wish to initiate civil litigation. The majority of hearings held in YTC are family law, including child custody, dissolution of marriage, domestic violence restraining orders, and child support cases. The number of court-appointed guardianship cases involving tribal children has recently increased, due to an extremely high rate of substance use disorder (SUD) and high opioid addiction rates. The YTC also addresses SUD through the use of its wellness courts and an expansive prisoner reintegration program. In 2018, the YTC established the
The overlap between chronic incarceration and the MMIP crisis is an underlying thread of this report—it was true of Emmilee’s case as well as a great many of the cases profiled in previous years’ reports. In far too many instances, the last point of contact for a missing or murdered person will be some representative of the criminal justice system. While the overlap between prisoner reentry and MMIP is a matter for future research, we offer lessons from tribal conceptions of justice and responsibility for improving the response of the Western criminal justice system to the MMIP epidemic.

The US Constitution, the Bill of Rights ensconced several liberties that an individual has the “right to,” but in many tribal worldviews, the individual was not the metric by which society was structured, nor their rights therein. Rather, it was the symbiotic relationship between the individual and the collective, and the mutually reinforcing responsibilities between one another. This is a key distinction with regards to conceptions of personal and communal responsibility. In Emmilee’s case, one of the reasons offered for her ineligibility for civil commit mental health services was that she was an adult and had the right to be unwell:

She realized something was going wrong, she realized something was wrong and she was trying to figure out how to handle it on her own. And then...she still had to work. She still had to maintain a job. She still had to figure out how to pay for her car. Like on top of everything else. There wasn’t a “focus on yourself” moment and watching as she stopped asking for help and started asking people like why they couldn’t understand that if she could fix it, she would fix it. Like if she could make it go away, she would have made it go away. But that this was what was affecting her now and that she didn't have, there wasn't, like, “OK, here's this person you can go talk to.” You can be “I understand your brain is not working the same way. What can we do?”

It's not like it happened fast. We watched it for three years and we just kept trying to do the things you're supposed to do and when it started to become like a really big issue, the only thing that we could do is try to figure out how to navigate the system and the system kept trying to like push off the responsibility rather than sort of saying “how do we care for this person in our community?” And the thing is, I think we would have done it ourselves, but that's not who is empowered by the money and the systems and all kinds of stuff.

Plus, she's an adult. And a lot of that came into play a lot, and they kept saying, “well, she's an adult. She's over 18. She has the right to do this.”
We bring this light to the difference between the “right” to be unwell compared to the “responsibility” to keep someone safe. The MMIP epidemic would greatly benefit from a reconceptualization of our obligations to others through the lens of responsibility rather than rights as such a shift could better facilitate mental health and social service provision.

Additionally, the frame of “responsibility” is doubly important for tribal people in light of the US trust responsibility to tribal peoples. As described by Emmilee’s aunt Lois, there is cruel irony in the dual citizenship of tribal citizens as tribal people like Emmilee are the least likely to have access to competent service provision of any kind:

*She attended ceremony. She could sing her songs. She knew her stories, but she suffered from mental illness...People forget we’re not only citizens of our tribe, with all those responsibilities and all those rights that come with it, but we are citizens of our county, we are citizens of our state and we are citizens of the United States. In fact, you cannot be a citizen of a tribe unless you are a citizen of the United States. That is not a tribe’s rule, that’s the federal government’s rule. So they have treaties that were made that said they are giving us these things [for what] we gave up... we’ve given up land. We’ve given up water. We’ve given up air. We’ve given up all the other things. So that they are obligated to give us the payment for that and they’re not doing it.*

More often than not, Tribes are left competing for the funds that do exist and rarely given the autonomy to use them in a way that makes the most sense for their needs. For example, investing in mental health where comparatively speaking funds for jail construction are easier to secure:

*They set the priorities and they set what happens and you have to fit within that mold. That is not what our community needs. That's not what our tribes need. We need to be able to do certain kinds of things with that. So they'll give you money to build a jail. But they won't give you enough money to build a mental health facility or facility for old people or whatever it is; you have to get a jail. Well then, if you go to jail, then you have to have somebody to maintain it. It's just a burden on the tribe to do that. So I think that's another failure that the tribe can't reach out to people who need this kind of help.*

By reconceptualizing how we conceive of responsibilities and rights in the criminal justice system, we could identify key points of intervention for MMIP cases that could prevent someone from being targeted for violence, and address any obstacles to investigations in the event that someone does go missing or is murdered.

Customs Around Death, Grief & Loss
Every tribal community has its own customs for navigating death, grief and loss. We do not in any way seek to speak in an exhaustive capacity on these matters. Rather, we share several teachings on how world renewal people such as the Yurok, Hoopa and Karuk recognize those who have passed and/or are the subject of a long-term missing persons case in ways that are respectful to cultural beliefs and practices.

As with any world renewal teaching, we must preface these examples by saying that this is only the experience of these participants and their families’ teachings, and we are grateful that they were open enough to share them with us so that we may provide them as examples to readers. Most importantly, we advocate for reaching out to those tribal partners that will be collaborating on MMIP intervention and working with them to establish the appropriate protocols on death notifications, how to speak about someone in the event of their body has not been found, and how grief and loss are contoured by the specific teachings of a respective community.

According to Hupa medicine woman Melodie George-Moore, although rare pre-invasion, there were teachings that applied to missing persons:

*I know of stories in, you know that come from precontact in which people were missing and what they did, and they mourned them as though they were dead after a certain period of time. So those stories exist. But that's up to the family to decide when that is, it's not up to the community at large. There would have been mourning protocols. So we cut our hair when people have died that are close to us. We wore these little bracelets. It's the same bracelets that are in the flower dance ceremony... the braid that marks time....[but] that's up to the family when they decide that they are truly gone.*

In this anecdote, key considerations include deference to immediate family members as to when a formal mourning period begins particularly in the event that remains are not recovered as well as specific practices associated with the mourning such as cutting one’s hair or wearing physical indications of one’s mourning.

Emmilee’s family is uniquely positioned to weigh-in on these customs even given their rich knowledge as a dance family, sacred regalia holders and her ongoing open case. Her aunt Lois shared specific teachings with us with regards to the use of an individual’s name when someone has been confirmed to have passed away vs. when they are suspected to be missing:

*We have taboos about talking about people who have died. Some people believe it's one year. It's using their name... for some people that's one year, or some people that's ten years. For some people, it's for the life of the people who are alive. And since you're always going to have people, it's a forever thing. So that's the actual taboo, how we dealt with it. And this is true, I think, for all three of the tribes because I've heard it consistently both from my Hupa side, Karuk side, and Yurok side. You use euphemisms, so I would say my niece, if I believe she's gone, not here, and that we're not going to find her. I'd say “my*
niece,” you would say “your niece.” Or you could say “that gal that used to live on Jane Court in McKinleyville.” Whatever so you're not using the person’s name… That’s the issue. It’s the direct use of the name. It’s considered a curse when you use the person’s direct name...

In the event that someone has passed and you need to use their name, one can precede the name with a specific designation:

[In Hupa], it's E:wak, you can do that too... What other people do is when you bring up someone who has passed on, you’ll say “E:wak” before their name, so you would say like “E:wak Mabelle,” that’s my grandma. And it’s like a respectful sort of acknowledgement that whom you're talking about is a person who has passed on. In English, they say “poor Jack Jones” You're sort of saying they passed on, your saying “poor [insert name]”

In most of California, I think it's the acorn eaters that do this... but really it's saying their name or not acknowledging that they're gone... you don't want to remind people of the sorrow that they that they've had to express.

Again, these teachings are not universal across the state nor even across any one tribe featured in this report. But by seeking out the knowledge about the appropriate way to speak about those who have passed away—for example, through the use of euphemisms, the specific use of mourning designations, or even the omission of names—MMIP stakeholders can hold space for the loss and grief of families navigating ongoing cases in real-time.

As this report demonstrates, the MMIP epidemic has grievously impacted the Yurok Tribe and tribes around the state and nation. Based on our research, reporting, and the work of our Tribal Council and Court, we present a framework for legislative action and policy recommendations in a PL-280 state, dialoguing with federal policy as relevant.

Part of this policy work begins at home, within our tribes and tribal councils, and ensures that the crisis is being recognized as a crisis and therefore addressed from a systemic context within our tribal governments. In 2021, the Yurok Tribe issued an emergency declaration on MMIP in light of multiple reports of attempted trafficking in the months after Emmilee’s disappearance. The declaration emphasized the disproportionate exposure to violence experienced by Indigenous bodies across the life course and asserted the tribe’s role in intervening in this crisis alongside state and county partners. This emergency declaration has been vital in moving policies and processes forward for and within the tribe, wherever possible, because once we name something as a crisis, it will be prioritized as such. The points in our emergency declaration, for example, were critical to our statewide policy advocacy this year. Yurok Tribal Chairman Joseph James and Dr. Blythe K. George echoed these points in their
testimony to the state legislature on May 4, 2022, and drew on them for the following substantive recommendations.

**FRAMEWORK FOR POLICY ACTION AND LEGISLATION**

Tribes across the country cannot address this crisis alone. We need support and reform at the local, state, and federal level. The Yurok Tribe has created one of the strongest judicial systems and infrastructure frameworks to address MMIP issues in the nation. Yet, policy changes are needed at all levels so that this tribe and tribes suffering similar issues are better able to address the crisis of violence against Indigenous people. Part of the work in the last year has been to increase the capacity of our tribe to drive forward and lead on legislation that will address MMIP at the state, federal and local level, with an action framework that can be applied at all levels:

1. Advocacy for legislation that eliminates systemic barriers to tribal communities and increases access to justice, protection, and resources for tribal people.
2. Advocacy for funding for tribes and tribal people for violence prevention and social service provision—addressing both the upstream, public health needs to prevent MMIP and the downstream, responsive needs of our community in addressing this crisis.

Below we dive deeper on some examples of state and federal policy reform and budget advocacy we are exploring. We provide the above framework and examples below as tools and ideas to generate similar exploration in other tribal communities.

**ADVOCACY AT THE STATE LEVEL - MMIP**

It is important to note, when discussing state policy, that the Yurok and California Tribes are impacted by Public Law 280 (PL-280), through which, in 1953, the federal government gave criminal jurisdiction on Indian land to California and 5 other states. This change was made without tribal input and without the required federal funding or support for the tribes and/or the states that were impacted (Anon, n.d.c.).

Tribal nations in states without Public Law 280 have a much greater degree of agency over their policing systems; they can choose between several models—all of which are rigorously funded and supported by the federal government. Yet, tribes like Yurok in PL-280 states are part of a complicated system of criminal governance, and despite great needs, such tribes are rarely included in federal legislation on MMIP and justice issues, or treated as an afterthought in federal law. Therefore, California and other PL-280 states have an additional responsibility to support Tribal people as we address MMIP as partners.
In 2020 and 2021, the California legislature made important steps forward with AB 3099, which directed the California Department of Justice (DOJ) to provide assistance to law enforcement agencies with tribal lands and to assist tribal police in the reporting of statistics, training, outreach and procedures relating to crime issues on tribal lands and in Native American communities. While key, this legislation was only a first step in intervening in this crisis; additional legislation and funding is needed to help tribes and Native communities to bring their relatives home. Additionally, MMIP interventions must be more proactive and not enacted just after a case is opened; they must include prevention through fostering Indigenous lives before they are taken. Some examples of our statewide legislative reform efforts to do exactly that are as follows:

We advocate for legislation that will allow tribal police and tribal courts to protect tribal people and enforce justice to the fullest extent of the law. Existing federal law recognizes that Indian Tribes retain inherent sovereign authority over their Indian Country, including the authority to exercise tribal law enforcement. Thirteen states, but not California, and the federal government provide tribal law enforcement authority to enforce state or federal law if said officers meet qualifications delineated in the state and federal authorizing legislation and regulations. Today in California, because no such law exists, tribes are reliant on local county sheriffs to decide if and when a tribal officer will be deputized as an officer and such agreements can be limited or terminated at the discretion of the sheriff at any time. Legislation is needed to authorize state peace officer status for tribal police officers in California who meet the qualifications. As sovereign nations, tribes and their police departments have inherent jurisdiction yet it is not acknowledged even as university campus police, museum police, and other such departments have such powers. This will grant Tribal officers access to the same systems and infrastructure as state police, which are necessary to public safety. Humboldt County Sheriff Honsal is highly in favor of such legislative changes:

*If they're fully trained, if they maintain all the standards that other peace officers have, why not? They should have that same authority. I'm really hoping that this year, this happens and I've been making a lot of great progress with the State Sheriff's Association. I'm the tribal liaison for the State Sheriff's Association and we are talking openly with several sheriffs. We have lots of Sheriffs that are on board with this law and passing this and so I'm really optimistic that if this actually gets written, that there will be support on the state sheriff's level. I'm fully supporting it and being a very vocal supporter of that. So fingers crossed, hoping the last two years this has got some momentum and we get this on the governor's desk to sign into law this year.*

Going further, Sheriff Honsal describes the corresponding need for resources to support aptly positioned tribal police departments:
No one knows their community better than tribal officers, right? And there's different funding mechanisms that occur... federal and even state money can go into enforcing state law on tribal land and it just makes sense. They're having all these resources. Why not be given the authority to enforce state law? So I'm hoping.

We strongly support such legislation with the key point that it must also be funded appropriately. Without the requisite funding and resources, tribal police will struggle to fully enact this jurisdiction, therefore any such legislation must also be accompanied with full support financially and otherwise. This would allow tribal police departments to secure the necessary manpower, training, and infrastructures to thoroughly investigate crimes on tribal lands.

In addition to recognizing the jurisdiction of tribal police to enforce state law, we also need legislation that grants access for tribal courts and tribal police to the California Law Enforcement Telecommunications System, also known as CLETS. Access to systems such as CLETS are vital so that tribal courts and police can enter, verify, and update missing person's information, as well as enter in court orders like protective orders for access by all appropriate jurisdictions. Because Tribal Domestic Violence orders are not in the CLETS system, county sheriffs called to a domestic violence incident will routinely let the parties go and then call the tribe the next day to confirm the parameters of the order. Despite Attorney General Guidance stating that a California law enforcement officer must enforce the order as if it were an order issued by a California court, this is not happening. This creates greater harm for women, children and victims fleeing violence who are calling the police and, adding to their harm, experiencing apathy at the hands of the people who are there to protect them. We need a meaningful response to violence.

Studies have shown that public safety improves when Tribal Nations have the resources to enforce their own laws and to protect their people. With this proposed legislation, we will do exactly that.

**LEGISLATION TO PROTECT TRIBAL CHILDREN WHEN THEY GO MISSING FROM FOSTER CARE**

We propose legislation to strengthen the county social services response when Indigenous children or any other child in care goes missing from foster care. Going missing or running away while in foster care is a critical pipeline to MMIP as well as trafficking (Hannan et al. 2017, Hart 2022), and these occurrences disproportionately impact tribal children. Today, Native American children enter the child welfare system at a rate that is 2.7 times their representation in the population, the highest of any racial group (AFDC 2020). National data shows that 85% of all missing Indigenous children over a 10-year period of time were Endangered Runaways. We also know that nationally, American Indian or Alaska Native children had the highest rates of
victimization at 14.8 per 1,000 children in the population of the same race or ethnicity (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2021)

Tragically, the theft of Indigenous children in present day is part of a generations-long theft by the state of Indigenous children from our communities. Now more than ever, we must protect our children. Legislatively, we need laws that mandate that tribal notification whenever one of our children goes missing from foster care. Further, we need laws that mandate that social services contact police and file a police report as soon as a runaway is identified. In our experience on-the-ground, such reports are not being filed and this is in direct violation of state guidance. For example, while the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) issued guidance in an “All County Letter” in 2016 that such reporting to tribes should be a part of county foster care policy, policies surveyed in two of the three counties regionally in 2022 do not include any form of tribal notification when a tribal child goes missing from care. In addition, despite guidance from CDSS indicating that law enforcement must be contacted within 24 hours when a child goes missing from care, county social workers are routinely taking matters into their own hands and failing to contact police or file a police report when Indigenous children go missing. This is unacceptable as such informal mechanisms could have unintended and even potentially dire consequences.

We advocate for state legislatures to take the very clear and strong guidance that the California Department of Social Services has outlined on this issue and turn it into law so that our most vulnerable children are not going missing without tribes being notified; we cannot protect our children when we do not even know they are at risk.

**LEGISLATION TO CREATE A STATEWIDE-ALERT SYSTEM FOR MISSING INDIGENOUS PEOPLE**

We need an improved alert system for Indigenous people when they go missing. Amber Alerts do not cover runaways. In Washington state, the legislature passed a bill that creates the first ever alert system specifically for missing Indigenous people. The new alert system functions similarly to “silver alerts” which help locate missing vulnerable people. Now in Washington, when an Indigenous person is reported missing, law enforcement can activate the alert, resulting in detailed information about the person being broadcast via highway advisory radio messages, signs and press releases for the media. Such an alert system would not only help locate the individual and improve communication between law enforcement agencies and local jurisdictions, but also increase awareness about the crisis of missing Indigenous people.

We as a project team are pleased to announce that at the time of report drafting, the California state legislature is considering legislation for a “Feather Alert” as introduced by Assemblymember James C. Ramos (D-Highland), the first and only California Native American serving in the state Legislature. Such an alert is a direct reflection of efforts like this project and others: “‘creating an alert or advisory system was a top recommendation from tribal leaders at a May 4 hearing to highlight this issue,’ said Ramos” (Reports, Lake County News, 2022).
As we have showcased in this report and in previous years, factors including mental health, violence and victimization, human trafficking, substance use, and transitions from foster care, along with a lack of adequate services to address and prevent these issues all put Indigenous people at risk of being targeted for violence. Because these issues are so complex, any policy solutions to repair them must be comprehensive and holistic, addressing both the historical trauma and present-day risk factors for MMIP in Native American communities. The federal government has created its own comprehensive and holistic action plan through President Biden’s Executive Order on November 15, 2021. We recommend that states take a similarly holistic approach and commit the resources needed to tackle the high rates of violent crime that Native Americans experience across the life course.

State legislatures have the capacity to boost regional services across the state for tribal people in rural and urban areas. As was evident across this report and at key points in the Emmilee Risling in particular, there are simply not enough services to meet the needs of tribal peoples, and at times, no services at all. Such interventions should also include:

- Violence-free and restorative shelter environment for survivors/victims and their children who are fleeing from abusive situations. Domestic violence is a contributing factor to the MMIP crisis and further resources must be made available for culturally appropriate safe places for those fleeing intimate partner violence.

- Dual diagnosis mental health facilities and wellness centers that provide healthy housing options for families returning to the tribal community after completing residential treatment or reuniting with their children, paired with intensive support services and development of their economic and academic opportunities. These centers could provide residential and community services, individual, family and group drug, alcohol and mental health services, including methamphetamine treatment, medically assisted treatment for opioid addiction, Cognitive Behavior Therapy, meditation, guided imagery, breathing, relaxation techniques, and cultural activities and events.

The importance of more expansive and committed mental health funding cannot be understated and might be the most pressing recommendation of this report. Reflecting back on some of the reasons shared by our study participants, we underscore the need for more and better mental health in this country, and especially in those communities where historical trauma and adversity have spanned generations like tribal communities.
George-Moore directly linked mental health investment to ongoing considerations of policing, with an emphasis on how to best intervene in the MMIP crisis by using the strengths of each group of stakeholders:

Revamping our mental health programs, like revamping the way that we handle mental health issues right now, we don’t handle anything that has mental health issues attached to it. The recent missing person case in this valley, we were relying on a very crowded penal system that if the person was nonviolent felony, they let them go…We were relying, praying for that penal system to keep her until we could find a bed for a mental facility, for a rehab facility so she could begin to cleanse her body so that her mind, then we could address the mental health issues because you have to separate out the mental health issues and the drugs, the substance abuse issues…. The cop going into a mental health issue has been trained to subdue, has been trained to [intervene in crime]. We need other places. Places so that the time can be spent to sort out those things…A lot of people say “defund the police” Yeah, OK, but that’s a negative way of putting it. Let’s “fund the mental health system first adequately.” And then begin to address some of these problems before they become the problem of the police…a lot of prevention.

Some of the greatest proponents for increased mental health investment included the law-enforcement stakeholders interviewed for this project. In the words of Yurok Tribe Police Chief O’Rourke, the need for access to 24-hour, 7-days a week, mental health facilities could be hugely preventative:

I would love to see the tribe actually have its own detox center. So instead of bringing somebody to jail, who’s under the influence, unable to care for themselves, we bring them to a detox syndrome. Using this woman as an example, I had her ready to go. If we have detox, if we have temporary beds, mental health at the ready, we can actually then walk her across the hall to the mental health side, put her in a bed, start that treatment, start that trauma-informed care to deal with the trauma, addiction and/or alcoholism. And then we don’t have to wait. We can take a proactive, immediate response to help our own people.

In addition to access to such facilities, we also recommend funding for crisis intervention teams as well as mental health response teams to be deployed alongside law enforcement to mental health calls for service, known as the “San Antonio model” as described by Sheriff Honsal:

They embedded mental health clinicians in with patrol deputies and they had a joint response to calls where we know it was a mental health call and it was a highly successful partnership that was created… we want them to be first responders. So those people in the mental health crisis, it’s not a deputy showing up with a badge and a gun…offering assistance to someone in a crisis. That’s not assistance. And so we want to actually provide them [with assistance by]…a clinician that can come in and give someone help without taking


someone's rights away and taking them to the hospital or 5150...we're working with mental health to get people hired so they can be embedded with us and having clinicians out and caseworkers out in the street responding to calls. And there's going to be some calls that we just give to them without having a patrol response.

In the expertise of this project, mental health response teams and investments more generally in mental health would be the primary means of prevention in the MMIP epidemic.

- Tribally created and managed programs in Northern, Central, and Southern California that include justice and legal services, social services, case management, and court services.

Tribes are fundamental stakeholders in addressing the MMIP crisis and significant collaborators to their law enforcement and justice system counterparts. Supporting them will support these agencies in turn and we underscore the need for such investments, particularly in PL-280 states. Often, even the most dedicated to ending this crisis are under-resourced and spread thin as they attend to the many complex and overlapping factors that shape the MMIP epidemic. As described by Yurok Tribal Prosecutor Deck:

We're all dealing with limited resources and this issue deserves all the resources. Navigating that emotion and being accountable to the community and experiencing that myself is something that is new to me...I don't want anyone to think that we're not giving it a hundred percent of the attention. It's just that we all have to operate within the confines of what we're given and what we're able to do....I think it is important to honor these people who are missing to do the work, to not just get an answer for their family, but for accountability. That's something I've been dealing with lately just because I feel like I am so under-resourced right now and it's making me feel like I'm not doing enough, but I'm doing everything I can, so I'm just living in that space right now.

The need for increased investment was also palpable to families and survivors. In her expertise as a scholar and a loved one of an active MMIP case, Dr. Risling Baldy expressed the significant need for legal services to best serve the needs of families like Emmilee's:

There really needs to be a person who is a lawyer advocate that can be assigned to families to go to these meetings. I think that the Sheriff's Office and DA, I think they talked down to Indian families and the thing about my family is we're fortunate enough that many of us went and got higher education degrees and have been able to navigate these types of systems. But they still talk down to my uncle, as if he is some kind of like super old Indian man who doesn't know very much...they dismiss him with his questions that he has about what's happening. If there was somebody whose job was to be there with the families, to advocate for them and to know the law so that they can say “actually that's incorrect.”
Law-enforcement and justice system agencies have the unique burden of sitting with people often on their worst days and that is no different in the Emmilee Risling case. Yet as this sentiment indicates, we must do better and offer more support to families like Emmilee’s so that the relationships and connections that criss-cross any one case can be leveraged effectively rather than serving as missed chances for collaboration and relationship building.

- An unconscionably high percentage of MMIP cases go unsolved with inadequate responses from local, state and federal authorities. There should be increased capacity for investigative support and resources needed to solve such cold cases.

As stated previously, there is a cold case epidemic in our country and the MMIP crisis fits squarely within it. Additional resources must be dedicated to cold case closure explicitly—police departments should not have to pick between active investigations and closing their existing cases. In a resource-strained department, a report taken today is always going to take precedence and that’s not acceptable to the families who have spent years waiting for updates let alone answers. We are deeply appreciative of our shared commitment to cold cases as described by local law enforcement. Sheriff Honsal describes his department’s cold case unit established in recent years:

> We have about 50 plus cold cases where we have missing persons that we believe have been homicide victims. We also have homicides that are unsolved for the last 60 years. It's been a goal of mine to actually publish those on our website and to launch a cold case unit. I have a retired detective and a retired lieutenant that are working these cold cases now. It's actually been very beneficial. We've actually closed out a couple cases where they've been cleared because the suspect that we know did it is deceased. It's shed some light on a lot of cases and and we've created an avenue for people to report things that they weren't comfortable reporting 20-30 years ago, and so we have generated a lot of leads and a lot of possible avenues to clear up some of these cold cases. So very, very happy about that.

Even with this commitment the resource constraints are ever present especially for the small rural police departments that handle so many of the existing MMIP cases in the state and nation:

> I would love for the state or federal government to provide an avenue so we can hire more people or have a grant to provide advertising because especially in small rural jurisdictions, we don't have a very big budget and every dollar is spent accordingly. Now we're going to have budget issues this year and [the cold case detectives are] actually one of the things that may be on the table to be cut and I hate to cut these two positions....our resources are thin. So having state or federal funding so I can maintain this program would be huge.
Previously, we articulated the importance of cold case investigation in the preceding in-depth case profile. Yet, it bears repeating that the transition from an open case to a cold case is one of the most painful experiences for those left behind in the wake of MMIP. A further insult still is how these cases are rarely prioritized by the jurisdictions responsible for them. It is a harsh reality that most jurisdictions do not have the resources to adequately devote time and attention to cold case closure and we could not critique this more strongly nor recommend an intervention more highly. Federal and state legislators must provide the resources for adequate cold case investigation.

We as a project team were heartened to see that there has been success in our lifting up of these issues and advocating for funding to support our communities to address MMIP statewide. The May Revision to the Governor’s Budget for 2022-2023 (which will be finalized in July) included critical allocations to tribes and tribal communities to address MMIP. This was in large part due to the tireless advocacy of tribes and tribal leaders, advocates, and community-based organizations. These allocations included:

1. **$12 Million in Grants for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and People (MMIWP).** The May Revision includes a $12 million General Fund over three years to establish a competitive grant program to help California tribes locate and identify missing Indigenous persons. California has the 5th highest rate of MMIWP (Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and People) cases in the country. This $12 million solution-oriented funding investment in MMIWP is an important start for the state to help tribes address the crisis. The fund will allow tribes to expand and/or develop comprehensive programs and services to address these needs on the ground.

2. **$30 Million for the Yurok Tribe California Regional Wellness Center and the Village San Francisco Wellness Center.** The May Revision includes a one-time $15 million General Fund to support the construction of a Regional Wellness Center for substance abuse and behavioral health services for the Yurok Tribe and tribes across the Northern California region. The Regional Wellness Center ($15 million) will be a first-of-its kind center in the Northern California region for tribal communities who face high rates of violence, poverty, mental health issues, and substance abuse but do not have any form of culturally centered intensive mental and behavioral healthcare in the region. The Yurok Regional Center will, for the first time, meet these needs for tribes across the region. It will offer residential and community individual, family and group drug, alcohol and mental health services, including methamphetamine treatment, medically assisted treatment for opioid addiction, Cognitive Behavior Therapy, meditation, guided imagery, breathing, relaxation techniques, and cultural activities and events. This one-time $15 million investment in our region is fundamental to our communities’ health and wellbeing. Additionally, the May Revision proposes a one-time $15 million General Fund to support the construction of the Village San Francisco, Friendship House facility that will offer health care, behavioral health, and social support services. This facility will be critical in meeting the
needs of Urban Indians living in the Bay Area who struggle with similar yet distinct challenges.

These two investments should be advanced and prioritized. As of the writing of this report, it is our great hope that these allocations are protected and formalized in July of 2022 as part of the Governor’s budget for 2022-2023, and that these allocations will be seen again in the years to come.

**ADVOCACY AT THE FEDERAL LEVEL - MMIP**

While the Yurok Tribe has spent the bulk of its time creating specific action items for its state-based advocacy, it is also working to develop a federal advocacy plan as well. This work is critical because, federally, we have seen the passage of Savannah’s Act, The Not Invisible Act, and Executive Order 14053. And while these are important first steps, additional legislation and funding is needed to help tribes and Native communities implement such interventions to address this crisis.

As a starting point, we believe that the federal government needs to understand and address the MMIP crisis in PL-280 states differently than it does in non PL-280 states. We know that the issues we face in a PL-280 state are unique, and we need to address the enormous negative impacts that PL-280 has had on California Tribes’ ability to protect their people. Therefore, we are working with our federal legislators to ensure that there are more studies, reports, and a greater understanding at the federal level of the ways that PL-280 has impacted tribes in the 10 states where it is law, specifically regarding the MMIP crisis. We need to understand, at a national level, what the data tells us about the difference between PL-280 and non-PL-280 states when we examine the tribes’ in those respective states’ ability to protect their people, specifically examining access to court, law enforcement, and social services. We want to understand and have data that can tell us about the unique issues that tribes face in PL-280 states in addressing issues of safety and violence that create the MMIP crisis and how they are different from non-PL-280 states.

While we advocate for a greater understanding of PL-280 and MMIP at the federal level, we are also advocating for change in areas that are very clearly broken and systems that are harmful and not working. Specifically, we are advocating for the assignment of a federal MMIP coordinator for California. The structural apparatus associated with Operation Lady Justice, the federal government’s 2019 initiative on this matter, assigned three different federal coordinators to California (Weyand & McPherson 2021), splitting the state into parts and attaching them to other regions of the country, so that we as a state with the largest population of Native Americans, do not have our own coordinator on MMIP. This is a huge issue as we need access to federal resources when our tribal people go missing just as other states do. Even as the federal government has ceded jurisdiction in PL-280 states, there still needs to be a concerted effort to incorporate explicit support and guidance for tribes in these states. Federal partners still have a trust responsibility in intervening in the MMIP crisis and we
advocate for federal legislation across the different policy areas described above with an emphasis on how and why policies must be adapted for application PL-280 states. This is an example of “low hanging fruit” that may seem basic, but will make an enormous difference for the tribes in California in connecting us to federal resources when a person goes missing.

As we deepen and strengthen our federal policy advocacy action plan, these are the kinds of issues we will be bringing forward to our lawmakers and representatives.
We were in the midst of drafting our own “Tribal Community Response Plan” or TCRP template when Emmilee Risling went missing in the final year of our project. Such a process is currently the strategy recommended by the US Department of Justice (DOJ) for tribes, law enforcement, and justice system agencies when seeking to intervene in MMIP. Over the course of this report, we draw from the lessons learned from this specific case to leverage a more general consideration of the policies and procedures that should be considered when addressing MMIP. We offer tools for tribes and their law enforcement and justice system partners to design their own TCRP and draw substantively off of the resources prepared by the US Department of Justice, two special journal issues of the Journal of Federal Law and Practice Issues dedicated to MMIP, toolkits from community-based VSPs the National Indigenous Women’s Resource Center and the Sovereign Bodies Institute, and the lessons gleaned from the three project years of To’ Keep Sky’ So Ney-Wo-Chek’.

From the minute foul play is suspected through making a report through an ongoing long-term missing persons case; what to do in the event that someone is murdered; someone runs away; remains are found; or an elder has gone missing—by establishing protocols for each scenario, we provide a tangible list of action steps that can be taken by the relevant stakeholders on a given case, including tribes, law enforcement and justice system agencies, and families and survivors. These protocols comprise the “Tribal Community Response Plan” or TCRP.

A TCRP HAS FOUR PARTS:

- Guide for Developing Law Enforcement Agency Guidelines for Missing Person Cases;
- Guide for Developing Victim Services Guidelines for Missing Person Cases;
- Guide for Developing Media and Public Communications Guidelines for Missing Person Cases;
- and a Guide for Developing Community Outreach Guidelines for Missing Person Cases.
Each guide includes relevant protocols for missing, murdered and unidentified remains or “MMUPs”.

The first step to establishing a TCRP is to conduct an inventory of all existing policies that relate to MMIP. To establish one’s TCRP, the US Department of Justice recommends:

- Stakeholders conduct a missing Indigenous person or “MIP” inventory to assess capacity;
- Examine local, state and federal resources available for MMIP intervention;
- Identify the non-law-enforcement agencies available to assist;
- Establish the scope and severity of the MMIP problem in a given community; and
- Determine gaps in existing policies and training needs.

Further, the Department of Justice (2021) has offered the following questions and considerations for use in conducting an MIP inventory:

### I. INVENTORY OF MISSING Indigenous PERSONS (MIP) POLICY

a. Does your tribe have a law enforcement agency?
b. If not, who has primary jurisdiction for MIP for your tribe?
c. Does your tribe have a law enforcement agency who keeps an MIP policy?
d. If not, does your tribe have an MIP policy and who maintains it?
e. Who, in that agency, is responsible for reviewing it and updating it?
f. Once an MIP policy is identified, a thorough and honest review of the policy should be conducted by the person identified who has maintenance responsibility including, but not limited to:
   i. To identify your agency’s resource capabilities.
   ii. To identify your agency’s response capabilities.
   iii. To work with outside Law Enforcement Agencies. MOAs.
   iv. To have the skills and authority to organize a Search and Rescue group?
   v. To with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) community groups?
g. To prepare a written report of your inventory.
   i. This report can be completed prior to beginning your TCRP
process; or,

ii. During the TCRP process.

After answering these questions internally, a tribe can then identify resources across key stakeholders. Together, these agencies can collaboratively design the TCRP drawing from the following considerations (US Department of Justice 2021):

I DRAFTING THE FINAL TCRP

a. How will the Working Groups (WG(s)) come together to create the final draft?

b. Work together with the work group(s) to form a consensus?

c. Will the tribal council have final approval? Or, have a separate group of final decision makers to approve the final drafts?

d. How will each WG present their guide to the other groups or final decision makers?

e. What will the final TCRP look like?

i. Guidebook?

ii. Checklists?

iii. Combination of both?

f. Will you codify your TCRP?

g. Identify the “keeper” of the final TCRP? (Tribal Council, Court, Law Enforcement, Administration, Search and Rescue, other (define)

TCRPs are living documents and should be assessed annually, and potentially even more frequently depending on case volume and/or frequency. Each new case offers a chance to adapt and expand one’s TCRP by establishing what worked, what didn’t work, and what lessons were learned. The questions below facilitate such reflection and review:

I POST TCRP REVIEW

a. How often should your community review the TCRP

i. Annually?

ii. A year and a half?

iii. Every 60 days?

iv. Less or more?

b. After each critical MIP incident, review the lessons learned from the incident?

i. What worked?

ii. What didn’t work?

iii. What did you not think about? i.e. were there surprises?

c. It is recommended as a best practice to review your TCRP annually, or as deemed appropriate by your tribe.

d. Continue to work with your MMIP Coordinator or the United States Attorney’s Office Tribal Liaison (TL) to develop a training plan to stay up to date on your TCRP.

We offer the subsequent guide templates as resources to tribes, law enforcement and justice system agencies seeking to design their own TCRPs
In this guide, we provide a template for law enforcement agency guidelines for missing and murdered persons cases. We include protocols and best practices from before a case is opened; when a report is filed and scenarios therein; the initial search efforts; through an ongoing long-term missing persons case; and cold case prioritization—by establishing protocols for each category, we provide a template for other tribes to do the same with their respective law enforcement and justice system partners. We have designed these protocols for use by sheriffs’ departments, tribal police, city police and highway patrol, and encourage those reading to take what is most applicable to their relevant jurisdiction.

**BEFORE SOMEONE IS TAKEN**

All departments should have an established missing and murdered Indigenous protocol on file, including but not limited to the following Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs):

- Tribal Police
- County Sheriff
- City Policy
- CHP (California Highway Patrol)

Establish multidisciplinary teams or MDT on MMIP that include stakeholders from a variety of agencies in a specific region as defined by tribal leaders (Connell et al. 2021, Moran 2021, Weyand & McPherson 2021). This may include:

- Mental health
- Public health
- Social services
- Tribal bodies
- Law enforcement agencies (LEAs)
- Justice system Agencies
- Victim Services Providers (VSPs)

Establish MDTs (multidisciplinary teams) for:

- Missing Persons
- Cold Cases

Maintain contact information and consider listserv notifications for all MDT participants with contact information:

- Update on a rolling basis so it accurate in the event a call comes in

As a part of MDTs, think through jurisdictional overlap and have shared understandings across all agencies as to legal jurisdiction pending incoming reports.

- Determining jurisdiction and making sure all parties have this information will ensure that no matter what agency receives the call that someone is missing or foul play is suspected, they can direct the reporting party accurately if they cannot take the report themselves.

**Implement Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) training and MMIP training**

- Such training prepares police officers to be attentive to trauma informed interventions and the risk factors for MMIP when called to take a report

**Implement mental health response teams to be deployed alongside officers when taking mental health calls for service**

- These mental health professionals are specifically trained to respond to mental health episodes and can be a resource to both the officers and those calling for service.
There are multiple scenarios under which a report could be filed for a missing person. We describe several in this section but encourage readers to think through the unique considerations in their jurisdictions to identify any additional scenarios not included in this template but should have corresponding protocols in place nonetheless. Despite the potential differences and nuances across missing persons cases, there are specific steps that should be taken every time a report is filed. We walk through these steps and expand them as relevant across the different case scenarios. A one-page handout version of this information can be found in the Appendix A, known as a “Posse Box Handout.”

Do not make a reporting party wait 24 hours before filing a report:
- There is no 24-hour requirement for someone to have gone missing before taking a report and there needs to be an policy that instructs all personnel to take a report as soon as possible to dispel any concerns with the “24-hour myth”
- This is especially true if foul play is suspected time can be of the essence especially early on in a case and delaying taking a report can have negative consequences for case outcomes
- Other instances where a missing persons report should be filed without hesitation:
  - The person is missing under suspicious circumstances
  - The person is missing under unknown circumstances
  - The person is missing under known dangerous circumstances
  - The person is missing for more than 30 days
  - They have been the subject of past threats or acts of violence
  - They do not have a pattern of running away or disappearing

Federal guidance on taking missing persons reports:
- Law enforcement agencies should not consider any report of a missing person to be routine and should assume the missing person needs immediate assistance until an investigation reveals otherwise. This approach is similar to death investigations where detectives should assume the death was a result of a carefully planned murder until the case facts and circumstances prove otherwise. (Moran 2021: 141).

In our needs assessments, the families and survivors interviewed often struggle to file a report in a timely manner. Additionally, when they most feared for their loved ones safety, some felt that law enforcement were skeptical, uncaring, or minimizing their loved one’s disappearance. Further, when things were taken seriously, reporting parties at times felt like potential suspects rather than concerned loved ones.

Establish specific protocols for the following scenarios and/or of missing persons:
- Minor < 21
  - They may have been abducted by a non-custodial parent
  - The person is missing as a result of a stranger abduction
  - Runaways
  - Foster Youth
  - If a child is tribally enrolled, notify the department at their tribe responsible for child welfare that the child has gone missing so that relevant support services can be initiated
Minor children missing from foster care or group homes are of particular concern. According to John Clark, the President and CEO of National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), “the vast majority of missing children are endangered runaways, many of whom are missing from foster care or group homes and represent some of the most vulnerable children in this country.” In these instances especially, a report should be made to each of these databases (see below) in the first 24 hours every time, no exceptions.

Unlike those under the age of 21 whose disappearance must be reported by law, it is not illegal for an adult to go missing. Yet protocols should be in place in case an adult is suspected missing by their loved ones, especially if:

- Adult 21-65
  - they are missing under suspicious, unknown and/or dangerous circumstances;
  - have been missing for more than 30 days;
  - have been the subject of past threats or acts of violence; and/or
  - they do not have a pattern of running away or disappearing.

Missing persons cases involving elderly victims are more common than one might expect and require a unique approach.

- Elderly Person 65+
  - They have eloped from a nursing home
  - They need medical attention, including but not limited to a person needing prescription medication or presenting dementia-like symptoms

For example, canvassing an area immediately surrounding a nursing home in the event that an Alzheimer’s patient has gone missing; or using social media and leveraging neighborhood watch to be on the lookout for those missing from their personal residence; or monitoring time elapsed since last medication—all of these are factors that may not be relevant in other instances but should be built into the protocols associated with reporting the elderly as missing persons.

- Other “High risk” missing persons:
  - They are mentally impaired or developmentally or intellectually disabled
  - They are a veteran, active duty, or reserve member of the United States armed forces or National Guard and are believed to have a physical or mental health condition related to their service
  - Any other factor that may, in the judgment of the law enforcement official, indicate that the missing person may be at risk, or the person has already been designated as a high-risk missing person by another law enforcement agency (Moran 2021: 139)
By establishing specific protocols for each of these scenarios, law enforcement agencies can build mechanisms for when a report is filed to efficiently and accurately meet the needs of the reporting party and the missing person they are looking for without losing vital time trying to determine how their response must be adapted. By spending the time to do so beforehand, LEAs will be ready when a report across any of these scenarios is filed.

Enter the missing person into the relevant databases based on their specific characteristics and/or scenario under which they have gone missing:

- All reports will need to be dually input into state and national databases to be searchable by all law enforcement agencies, therefore mechanisms must be in place for data entry in both locations

- These databases include:
  - The National Crime Information Center (NCIC): All missing persons should be entered into this database, yet it is mandatory for all missing persons under the age of 21.
  - The missing person’s basic information should be entered upon reporting and then reviewed again 90 days later, closing the report if the person was found, and if not, reviewed again every year after (Myers 2021). All data entry into NCIC must be done by the reporting law enforcement agency.
  - NCIC is housed by Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS). Most agencies generally have the ability to enter information into NCIC through their state CJIS Systems Agencies (CSA).
  - Tribes can access NCIC through the Tribal Access Program (TAP). TAP allows selected federally recognized Tribes to access NCIC through the federal CJIS Systems Agency (CSA) within the DOJ.

- The National Missing and Unidentified Person System (NamUs): This “national information clearinghouse and resource center for missing, unidentified, and unclaimed person cases across the United States provides resources at no cost to law enforcement, medical examiners, coroners, allied forensic professionals, and family members of missing persons” (Moran 2021: 141):
  - Investigation support, training, and forensic services—including family DNA collection kits provided at no cost.
  - Unlike NCIC, families can also report to NamUs. That said, reports submitted by families or advocates will not be displayed in NamUs without confirmation from the responding law enforcement agency.
  - Some families are still waiting on their reports to be approved so be sure to check any potential reports requested by families in your jurisdiction.

- The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC): Co-founded by John Walsh in 1984 after the abduction of his son, NCMEC provides resources for missing persons investigations involving victims under the age of 20. Reports must be initiated by law enforcement or any person responsible for the child’s welfare. (Clark 2021).
Without data entry, databases cannot be effective in finding a missing person. Additionally, agencies like NCMEC have resources—such as volunteer search teams of retired law enforcement—to deploy upon request and support local agencies in working as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Identify and initiate the relevant alert system to notify the public that this individual has gone missing: These alerts can include:

- **Amber Alert:** confirmed abduction of a child
- **Ashanti Alert:** missing adult between the ages of 18 and 64 where there is a proven mental or physical disability; or the missing person's physical safety may be endangered; or an abduction or kidnapping is suspected (OLJ 2020)
- **Silver Alert:** missing senior citizens without Alzheimer's disease, dementia or other mental disability (these include found person reports)
- **Blue Alert:** a law enforcement officer that has been injured, killed, or is missing and/or abducted
- **Feather Alert:** in Washington and potentially California soon, police officials can now use this “feather alert” system for Indigenous peoples who have gone missing.
- **In California:** the California Highway Patrol can issue a “missing and unidentified persons alert” which reaches the general public through the same channels as an Amber Alert but with much less stringent criteria (suspected kidnapping, minor, etc.)

Broker tribal access to databases and alert systems as appropriate

- Sometimes tribes will only have access to these systems if law enforcement facilitates, therefore LEAs should prioritize such collaboration

Investigators & Analysts: Reach out to regional missing persons fusion center:

- Fusion centers house a variety of resources for law enforcement agencies from day one of an investigation through searches to long-term missing persons cases; while not all states have a fusion center, reaching out to the ones in your region can provide helpful resources to tailor to the specific needs of your department
Establish a task force of key stakeholders to meet daily:
- Include stakeholders from all relevant jurisdictions with explicit expectations associated with confidentiality of an open case and the sensitive material shared therein.
- As decisions are made in unison across different law enforcement and emergency services agencies, efficiency and collaboration are prioritized from the earliest moments of such cases.

Incorporate “liaison officers” to coordinate on-the-ground with stakeholders and community members to facilitate the transfer of vital case updates, especially to families and loved ones.
- Communication ensures families, victims and survivors feel informed and cared for at their potentially worst moments.

Contact Victim Services Providers to assist with victim support, work with families and provide approved updates on the search, the investigation, and any next steps in the investigation.
- Develop a plan for a predictable flow of information, including how the family should provide information or leads directly to law enforcement.

Coordinate interviews of family members or witnesses, as well as ante-mortem interviews, DNA collection, collection of scent items, etc.

Plan and prepare official case briefings and updates on schedule developed with VSPs on behalf of victims and/or families.

Establish protocols for the three scenarios under which a missing persons case concludes:
1) Recovered Alive
   a. LEA must physically and visually confirm the missing person is okay, and from there, “information should only be shared with those who are legally entitled to receive it” (Stewart et al. 2021).
   b. Identify a reunification plan. Pay particular attention to privacy, especially if there has been significant media involvement.
i. It may be difficult for the person to return to and live in a community when the public is aware of circumstances surrounding the disappearance. If a crime occurred, investigators and prosecutors should try to avoid sharing sensitive or salacious details of victimization. Similarly, victim and family privacy should be considered in press releases or statements to the public.

2) Recovered Deceased
   a. There must be extreme care and sensitivity taken at the time of a death notification; work with VSPs to deliver such news:
      i. Multiple notifications may need to be provided simultaneously. Cultural norms may impact how to talk about death.
      ii. “Every person remembers when, where, how, and by whom they were told about the death of their family member. It forever impacts their experience. Respect and dignity are shown by planning for death notifications that may need to be provided by teams simultaneously in multiple locations. (Stewart et al. 2021: 37)”
      iii. Death notifications should only be handled by trained professionals.
           1. For relevant training, please see Pennsylvania State University training module “We Regret to Inform You,” a 30-minute four-part training on how to deliver this most delicate news (deathnotification.psu.edu)
   b. Provide case updates including notifications about any autopsy and release of remains.
   c. Personal effects can have deep significance and emotional meaning. Cultural belief systems and family requests should guide their return.
   d. Continue sharing official case updates and family briefings. Families should be provided opportunities to ask questions that are answered directly and honestly.

3) A long-term missing person investigation (see below)
Maintain task force efforts for a minimum of 30 days

Prepare for transition to long-term missing persons case, and corresponding scaling back of resources, in preparation for family notification:

- Provide official case updates for the family, including the transition and what the investigation will look like moving forward.
- Determine how the family will want future case updates including to whom and how often.
- Notify families at critical times like when remains are found that are not their loved ones.
- Consider identifying a family member for case updates in addition to the legal next-of-kin. In a long-term investigation, the legal next-of-kin may pass away or become incapacitated.
- Create a continuity plan for new investigators that includes introductions to family members.

Regardless of outcome, debrief task force efforts:

- What went well?
- What did not work?
- What will be done differently next time for a better response?

Remember the grief associated with the transition to a long-term missing persons case:

- This has been described as the “ambiguous loss” (Stewart et al. 2021), “cruel limbo” (Moran 2021) and “forgotten victims” (Adcock 2021) associated with long-term missing persons cases.
- Mirror the language that the victim families use, including present tense when they talk about their missing family member.

The transition from an acute investigation to a long-term missing case is devastating for families. Nothing is more important than their missing loved one, and victims continue to have hope that their loved one will be found. Law enforcement and [victim service providers] should work together to update families before, during, and after transitions to answer questions, to hear concerns, and to foster transparency. (Stewart et al. 2021: 37)

Establish anonymous tip lines for relevant case information:

- Some witnesses may be reluctant to share information directly with law enforcement and tip line provides a place for such information to be shared anonymously.

Enhance investigative resources for investigating long-term missing persons cases:

- Investigator can also follow up on leads generated from the tip line without diverting resources from other active cases.
Maintain proper case file management

- Case files are the living documents and careful organization is key to their efficacy over time
- Key case file components:
  - Cover Sheet: contains a synopsis of what/when/where/how case occurred; consider list of undeveloped leads; as an investigation progresses, this document may change, and the leads section should be adjusted
  - Police report
  - Witness statements
  - Physical descriptors
  - Demographic information
  - Details on personal habits, any pictures of their clothing, belongings, any vehicles that they owned.
- Templates for case file cover sheets, case logs, and research activity logs are available in the Appendix B.
- Track case activity using an "activity summary" so any new detectives can quickly and easily be brought up-to-speed
A key MMIP best practice includes the high prioritization of cold case clearance as well as the inventory and management structures necessary to keep such records in living condition. Maintaining cold case files ensures that fresh eyes can revisit them easily and perhaps see connections not previously made.

Establish cold case inventory (see graphic CCP)
To close cold cases, we recommend forming a dedicated Cold Case Unit to establish a variety of baselines:

- How many cases are there?
- What are the types of cases (homicides, sexual assaults, missing persons)?
- How many cases have been reviewed?
- How many had physical evidence?
- How many of those were sent to the laboratory?
- What was the turnaround time for laboratory reports?
- How much time was consumed by detectives to conduct a thorough review?
- How much time was expended by support staff in creating timelines, relationship charts, searches, etc.? (Adcock 2021: 121)

Coordinate with qualified volunteers to work through cold case inventory
- This can include retired law enforcement professionals, tribal MMIP program associates, university professors, survivor-leaders and other “free” volunteers
- These “qualified volunteers” are effective as they save “detectives many hours of digging through case files doing administrative work. Plus, in the review of cases, some have done an excellent job of evaluating the case file information with accuracy and bringing to the forefront sound investigative ideas. (Adcock 2021: 125)
- Work with tribal stakeholders to form Cold Case Units and ensure tribal access to existing cold case inventory tribes can be a vital source of collaboration, information and resources in prioritizing cold case review.
CONDUCT 100% INVENTORY 7

LOG ALL CASES 8

ORGANIZE FILES BY CATEGORIES 9

INSERT COVER SHEET 10

VIEW EVIDENCE-VIABILITY 14

TRIAGE & PRIORITIZE 13

CURSORY REVIEW 12

START ACTIVE SUMMARY 11

EVIDENCE TO LAB 15

IN DEPTH REVIEW 16

MISSING DOCS? 17

VICTIMOLOGY REPORT 18

ADVISE FAMILY 22

INTERVIEW FORMER DETECTIVES 21

SUSPECTOLOGY 20

DEVELOP THEORIES 19

TEAM DISCUSSION 23

INVESTIGATIVE PLAN 24

RE-EVALUATE 25

INVESTIGATE 26
Categorize cold cases using following typology for case closure

- Priority I: Files with physical evidence and a female victim.
  - “Why female victims first? They tend to provide more physical evidence than males” (Adcock 2021: 112)
- Priority II: Files with physical evidence and a male victim.
  - “Remember Locard’s (French criminalist) theory of exchange: ‘every contact leaves a trace’” (Adcock 2021: 113)
- Priority III: Files with a suspect named in case documents.
- Priority IV: Files with investigative possibilities.
- Priority V: Files that probably are not solvable (Adcock 2021: 112)

This categorization can seem time-consuming and laborious, but it is time well spent as it establishes the “lay of the land” for a given agency’s cold case inventory.

Seek to bring all cases to “contemporary status”:

- “All conventional investigative methods have been completed and all contemporary investigative methods have been applied.” (Moran 2021: 146)
- Exhauising leads and the life expectancy of the missing person should not be reasons for closing a case. The missing person case file and all associated documents and evidence must be retained in perpetuity until the individual has returned or been located. (Moran 2021: 134)
Media attention can be an important tool for MMIP case response. A coordinated media strategy is vital from early on in a case so that information shared with news outlets is up-to-date, accurate, and does not limit ongoing investigation(s). Media strategies should adapt based on case developments, case characteristics, family & survivor preferences, and other considerations. We recommend the following best practices:

Identify a primary contact person for communicating with media:
- There may be multiple individuals who can speak to the media behalf of the different stakeholders (law enforcement, family, tribe, etc.) in an MMIP case but there should be an identified person who will coordinate interactions with media.
- Reach out to your tribe’s media relations department for help on working with the media and to leverage existing tribe-media networks for coverage.

Utilize the distribution of press releases for case developments:
- This can include publicizing alerts, be-on-the-lookouts or “BOLOs,” and requests for individuals with case information to come forward.
- Press releases should be no more than 2 pages and be concise, accurate and accessible to news outlets via print, email and social media.

Track ongoing press coverage including news outlet, media type and publication date.

Never share sensitive case information with the media without the consent of the family.

Never volunteer family members for media interaction without first confirming their interest and checking in as time goes on as preferences may shift.

- Be sure to work with families to identify their preferences in how frequently they want to interact with media regarding their loved ones’ case. Some may want to participate in every interview while others may do so early on and only sparingly over time. Others still may not be comfortable speaking with the media at any time and tribes can be an important buffer between media and families as they broker connections therein.
- Often, families may identify a “spokesperson” for media interactions and this person should be the primary contact for media.
Be aware of media fatigue and always prioritize family, victim, and survivor privacy.

- Every interview about a missing or murdered loved one is inherently sensitive and can trigger extreme feelings of grief and loss. Families often want to participate in interviews if it may bring closure to their loved ones’ case, yet protocols must be in place to protect their well-being and their confidentiality.
- Media and public communications can be a tool for case breakthroughs but we must carefully manage these experiences and offer appropriate trauma-informed aftercare, particularly when sensitive topics are shared during an interview.

Consider social media and other alternatives to print media to reach wider audiences and share case information with wide-reaching audiences.

- Such outreach should still be coordinated through primary media contact (see above)

Remember, media coverage is ongoing and when done respectfully and purposefully, can be a helpful tool in solving long-term missing person investigations and other cold cases.
Per the US Department of Justice, victim services providers or “VSPs” provide “essential victim support [to] people during the most difficult times of their lives while also assisting law enforcement engage the family of the missing person during an investigation” (US Department of Justice, 2021). Drawing from these federal resources, we identify specific guidelines for maximizing victim services support for a missing and/or murdered person case.

The following resources are drawn from the US Department of Justice’s draft Guide for Developing Victim Services Guidelines for Missing Persons Cases (2021) and have been modified based on the lessons learned over the course of this project.

Identify victim services provider resource base
- This will include both systems-based VSPs and community-based VSPs
  - Systems-based VSPs are mandated to share any information they receive with the justice system and law enforcement.
  - Community-based VSPs can maintain full confidentiality for families and survivors but are externally-based
- Eligibility for services will vary depending on provider type but establishing what resources exist for families, victims, and survivors is fundamental to having these supports readily available

Involve VSPs from the first days of a case to make sure families and survivors are fully supported and knowledgeable as to the resources available to them.
- The lead investigative agency should initiate VSPs provision when a report is filed.

Consider developing a tribally-based victim services program to support those who are not eligible for systems-based VSPs.
- For example, if there is no evidence a crime has occurred, a case may not be eligible for services from the county but could be supported by their tribe and/or other community-based VSPs.

Service provision should be victim-centered, trauma-informed, and culturally appropriate.
- Tribes and collaborating VSPs should remember that they are often working with individuals in their worst days and must incorporate care for historical trauma and cultural nuance.

The more VSPs, the better.
- Do not be afraid to support victims, families and survivors “too much”—depending on eligibility criteria, fit, available services etc., individuals may seek support from more than one VSP. It is highly likely that no one VSP will be able to meet all of the needs associated with a given case and instead should work collaboratively to support those associated with a case.
Adapt based on how quickly a missing person is recovered alive or found deceased.

Be flexible and prioritize the needs of each case:

- Drawing on federal guidance, we concur that VSPs should “be fluid and adaptable depending on the situation, resources, and needs” associated with a given case. For example, factors such as age, circumstances under which someone went missing, vulnerabilities of the missing person, or whether the person is a victim in another case can all impact case support.

Build trust and elicit cooperation by showing respect and communicating in a direct, trauma-informed, and honest way, even when delivering difficult news.

- Advise when information is law enforcement sensitive and cannot be shared yet.

Do not make promises that cannot be kept. Follow up continuously even if only to say that something is still pending.

Plan for all possible outcomes in an investigation, including a missing person being located alive or found deceased, or a transition to a long-term missing person investigation.

Plan for mobilizing the family quickly if there is an acute case event.

- Develop a contact list, phone numbers and emails for quick response to the victim or victim’s family members.

Initial Response:

VSPs can assist with the following tasks (US Department of Justice, 2021)

- Explain the VSP role and boundaries, including limits of confidentiality and what information the VSP has the authority /permission to share with law enforcement.
- Explain that no determination has been made at this time that a crime has occurred if law enforcement has determined that is the case.
- Learn about the missing person and gather additional information about disabilities, health needs or medication, behavioral health or counseling history and past history of trauma or involvement with social services or other agencies.
• Determine if the missing person has minor children and if they are being cared for.
• Gather family information, including who is legal next-of-kin, who are caregivers, and adopted relatives.
• Provide support and develop an understanding of cultural, spiritual, and religious belief systems. Identify first language and preferred language, especially for interviews of young children or elders. Learn if the family is traditional.
  o This includes customs around grief, loss and death.
• Assess needs and identify resources to assist families including basic needs (food, lodging, transportation, fuel, utilities, phones, other travel, etc.), financial resources, counseling, and medical care.
• Educate about the investigative process. If law enforcement determined that a crime occurred, provide information about crime victims’ rights. In criminal investigations, the system based VSP or law enforcement official should document in the investigative file that the victims have been advised of their rights as required by law.
• Coordinate with law enforcement officials to provide approved updates on the search, the investigation, and any next steps in the investigation.
• Develop a plan for a predictable flow of information, including how the family should provide information or leads directly to law enforcement.
• Make recommendations for dealing with media and social media, assist in setting boundaries and expectations for respect and privacy.
• Consider privacy at all times and respect family wishes regarding contact and notifications. Victim information should not be shared with tribal leadership or elected officials without consent from the legal next-of-kin.
• Listen to concerns and share relevant information with investigators.

Optional support depending on case needs:
• Coordinate forensic interviews of children.
• Coordinate interviews of family members or witnesses. Provide support during those interviews.
• Provide the family with the information required to make informed decisions when completing investigative tasks that may be difficult.
• Provide support during ante-mortem interviews, DNA collection, collection of scent items, etc.
• Communicate with families about tasks they can perform to assist the investigation, such as helping target search locations, gathering photographs, and distributing posters.
• Provide transportation or other resources so families can participate in case-related appointments.
• Serve as a liaison between victim and/or victim’s family members and investigative agencies. Provide observations and updates to investigators. Communicate family requests and needs.
• Assist law enforcement with planning and preparing official case briefings and updates.

**Victim services when a person is located alive:**

• Plan for medical care, possible forensic examination, and interview support.
• Assist with the reunification plan. Pay particular attention to privacy, especially if there has been significant media involvement.
• Identify resources to assist with travel, if necessary, emotional support, especially if the person was missing for a long time or circumstances were traumatic, and counseling.
• Continue to reassess needs and provide additional community support or resources, if needed.
• It may be difficult for the person to return to and live in a community when the public is aware of circumstances surrounding the disappearance. If a crime occurred, investigators and prosecutors should try to avoid sharing sensitive or salacious details of victimization. Similarly, victim and family privacy should be considered in press releases or statements to the public.
• If a crime occurred, provide assistance during the criminal justice process.
• If applicable, facilitate the transition from VSPs supporting law enforcement to VSPs supporting prosecution.

**Victim services when a person is found deceased:**

• Plan for death notifications to occur in a purposeful and sensitive way with notification teams of at least two people. Multiple notifications may need to be provided simultaneously. Cultural norms may impact how to talk about death.
  o See We Regret to Inform You training at [https://deathnotification.psu.edu/](https://deathnotification.psu.edu/) for general training on death notifications but adapt accordingly based on cultural norms surrounding death, grief and loss.
• Utilize crisis intervention skills. Listen. Provide emotional support.
• Provide case updates including notifications about any autopsy and release of remains.
• Personal effects can have deep significance and emotional meaning. Cultural belief systems and family requests should guide their return.
• Assist families with site visits. Share cultural knowledge to assist families with requests for ceremonies or other cultural practices.
• Provide information on addressing media and social media, especially during funerals.
• Assist secondary victims in schools, communities, and other affected populations.
• Assist with counseling referrals, grief support, financial aid, burial assistance, and repatriation of remains if the death occurred in another location.
• Assist investigators with official case updates or family briefings. Families should be provided opportunities to ask questions that are answered directly and honestly.
Victim services when the case transitions to a long-term missing person investigation:

- Plan for transition long before the scaling back of resources.
- Mirror the language that the victim families use, including present tense when they talk about their missing family member.
- Provide official case briefings for the family, including the transition and what the investigation will look like moving forward.
- Determine how the family will want future case updates including to whom and how often.
- Remember anniversaries of the disappearance and the missing person’s birthday.
- Create a continuity plan for new investigators and VSPs that includes introductions to family members.
- Notify families at critical times like when remains are found that are not their loved ones.
- Refer families to resources such as peer support with other families who have suffered similar loss, and local community services that can assist families long-term.
- Consider identifying a family member for case updates in addition to the legal next-of-kin. In a long-term investigation, the legal next-of-kin may pass away or become incapacitated.
- Contact families directly even if the VSP is working on the case for the first time after many years. Families will appreciate the contact and any case update, even if the update is that it is still being investigated or that a new VSP is assigned to the case. Families worry that their loved one will be forgotten and the VSP can remind them that the search and investigation continue.

Ultimately, VSPs must advocate for, support and listen to victims, families, and we offer these tools as ways to help both systems-based and community-based VSPs in their efforts to do so.
The pervasive nature of the MMIP crisis means that beyond individual cases, significant work must also be done reaching out to the community and keeping the issue on the public conscience so that information can continue to come to light and facilitate case closure. This can include outreach for specific cases as well as general community outreach. In both cases, such outreach is foundational to rebuilding the relationship between law enforcement and justice system agencies and the tribal communities they keep safe.

Coordinate events for national days of awareness as well as Indigenous Peoples’ Day, Native American Heritage Month, etc.

- Remember: intervening in MMIP is not only a matter of bringing awareness to the crisis but also prevention promoting Indigenous lives through cultural programming.

Even with days of awareness, MMIP is year-round so coordinate seasonal events or community gatherings that can recognize the passage of time for those families who continue to look for their loved ones.

- Find ways to bring people together that are respectful to customs around death, grief, and loss.

Organize rallies, vigils, marches and parades for ongoing MMIW cases:

- These can be for a specific case or number of cases, or in recognition of ongoing violence against Indigenous bodies.
- Such events can require extensive planning, preparation, permits, supplies, resources, etc. Families, victims and survivors should never be expected to cover these expenses and fundraising can help offset these considerations. Tribes can be powerful sponsors in making resources available to hold such events on a regular basis.

Consider billboards and rewards as ways of combining community outreach with meeting ongoing investigative needs:

- By keeping cases in the public eye, the passage of time can actually work in one’s favor as individuals may be more likely to come forward as time goes on. Effective outreach can remind individuals that such investigations are ongoing and that they can come forward at any time.

Advertise resources such as tip lines, victim services and justice system supports:

- Families, victims, survivors and key MMIP stakeholders more generally must know these resources exist so make sure you advertise them accordingly
- Collaboration cannot happen in a vacuum and outreach can make sure that relevant partners know what your tribal organization has to offer for MMIP intervention
[They say] it takes a village to raise a child. It takes a village to find a missing person, it takes a lot.

– Judy Rissing, mother of Emmilee

“'It's real difficult when you deal with the grandkids, and the grandkid says, ‘Grandpa, can you take me down the river and can we look for my mama?’ What do you tell him? ‘We’re looking, we’re looking every day,’”…And then he says, “What happens if we can’t find her?’”’

– Gary Rissing, father of Emmilee (Flaccus 2022)

Of all the people that I can think of in my family, in my immediate family, of my community, I wouldn't have ever assumed that this would've been something within the realm of possibility for her, to have happened to her. Because she was smart and she was beautiful. She had a way with words, she was a mom, she was a good mom. That's hard to be a single mother...to navigate those obstacles...I kept thinking when all of this is going on, “wow, this really could happen to anybody.” There's not one thing that, “if we did this differently, we could have prevented this”…I don't know what else to say other than like my heart breaks every time I see her babies.

- Kendall Allen, MMIP Program Manager, cousin of Emmilee Rissing

We also had a bunch of stories that came down in our family and they were about women who were assaulted by soldiers when they first came in. Women who were stolen when they were 13 or 14 years old by minors, by tradespeople and so that's why flower dances kind of went underground because the history that comes from her own people says “you couldn't do them in public” because then, the white guys who were the militia guys, would say, “oh, they've had that dance. Now that makes them eligible for sex” and they would steal these girls. And that's missing Indian women, and we have generations of concrete stories of that. You get lulled into a situation where you think that kind of stops because it doesn't happen to you? To me, it didn't happen to me directly. And then your niece is gone. Gone. Somebody who was successful in the white man's world, went to the University of Oregon, got a bachelor's degree, got a job, had children. Who didn't live in poverty? So it's still there and it's still hurting our families.– Lois Rissing, aunt of Emmilee Rissing and sister of Gary Rissing

I will say that the way that I explain it to some people is like grief for the missing is like constant and dull and it's always there because you don't quite know. You don't know what you're grieving. And like loss is just constant. And then you catch yourself talking about them in past tense. It gets really hurtful because you don't want to. You hold out hope and then there's all this emotion because you can only do what you can do and you always feel like you could do more, I think. People would be surprised at the consistency by which her dad has tried to find some new way every day that he can do something...I think we would all move every mountain, every mound of dirt looking for her, if we could...everybody keeps writing about her like she's a mom and she's a daughter. But she was also [pause] She cared for other people.

– Prof. Cutcha Rissing Baldy, cousin of Emmilee Rissing
When someone goes missing or is murdered, so much of our knowledge, our way of life, and our vitality goes with them. Emmilee Risling’s disappearance in October 2021 was a defining moment in the lives of her family, friends, and this project as we sought to meet the needs of her case in real time. Over the course of this report, we featured an in-depth consideration of the Emmilee Risling case and are deeply grateful to her family for being so open and willing to share with us about this sensitive matter. As of this drafting, Emmilee is still missing and her case remains open.

From this ongoing case, we formulated key lessons learned from turning points in her case. We contextualized these lessons within a discussion of enhanced quantitative data goals that emphasized tribal data capacity building. We introduced the importance of coming-of-age ceremonies like the flower dance as a means of MMIP prevention through fostering strong cultural affiliations and a sense of identity. We offered a Tribal Community Response Plan or “TCRP” template for use by other tribes, law enforcement, and justice system agencies in crafting their own TCRPs. We also drafted the four guides associated with TRCPs with the relevant missing and murdered case protocols therein.

In conclusion, we remind readers that no report can fully capture the depth and breadth of what is lost with every life taken by the MMIP epidemic. As a team of tribal researchers, we struggled at times to document this crisis while at the same time grieving cases that hit very close to home. On the hard days, we lean into the progress made by this project in just three short years. In particular, we spotlight the accomplishments of this project over the course of three years:

**YEAR ONE**

- First step in establishing scope and severity of the MMIP crisis in the Northern rosemar California region.

Identified gaps in services and needs for additional areas for support, with recommendations in eight categories: data collection, interagency coordination, investigatory resources, law enforcement and justice system accountability, legislative considerations, support services, protective factors, and community strength building.

- Offered study instruments for tribes to initiate similar studies of their own MMIP crises, including cover sheets, research logs, needs assessment interviews and codebooks.

**YEAR TWO**

- Critically engaged in ongoing state and federal legislation on MMIP and violence against Indigenous women.

- Identified five new areas for analysis: foster care and violence against youth, mental health impacts, intergenerational trauma, culturally informed ideas of justice and healing, and family and survivor centered justice and healing
• Facilitate the establishment of an Office of the Tribal Prosecutor

Enhancing the justice system capacity to address MMIP was a fundamental recommendation in our Year One and Year Two reports where we advocated for additional resources to investigate, prosecute and ultimately close MMIP cases. In our third year, the Yurok Tribe adopted an Office of the Tribal Prosecutor to implement this recommendation in the lifetime of this project. Prosecutor Rosemary Deck has been an integral part of the project since her office began. The Prosecutor is tasked with bringing all violations of the Yurok Tribal Code in Tribal Court, which includes fishing violations, cultural violations, environmental violations, and more. The Office of the Tribal Prosecutor is also working towards asserting Special Domestic Violence Criminal Jurisdiction pursuant to the Violence Against Women Act which would allow the Tribe to prosecute criminal domestic violence cases in certain circumstances.

• Yurok Tribal Chairman Joseph James and project co-author Dr. Blythe George testified to the state legislature on May 4, 2022, in recognition of the state’s day of awareness. This testimony coupled with the long-time leadership of the Yurok Tribe in tribal justice and wellness facilitated a proposed $15 million investment in a tribally-operated wellness center. According to a press release from the Yurok Tribe:

“The state-of-the-art Regional Wellness Center will offer culturally relevant and conventional drug, alcohol and mental health services. With an option to stay for up to a year, based on court referrals, residents will have access to a wide variety of supportive services, which revolve around the restoration of mental, physical and spiritual health. Services will include methamphetamine treatment, medically assisted treatment for opioid addiction, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy meditation and guided breathing and relaxation techniques. The Center will provide on campus and off campus cultural activities and events to keep residents connected to their community. Individual, family and group therapy will be available too.

• Coming together in community gatherings and mural dedication.

For the first time in the course of the project, we were able to safely convene in-person community gatherings in recognition of MMIP awareness. This included three events during the week of May 5 at different locations on the reservation. Highlights included a screening of the film A Long Line of Ladies which focuses on the flower dance of a young Karuk woman and premiered at the 2022 Sundance Film Festival, as well as flower drops into the Klamath River in acknowledgment of those relatives we have lost in the course of the MMIW crisis. Hundreds attended these gatherings and we will continue gathering in this way to grieve together and advocate for change in equal measures. On July 29, 2022, the project will unveil a mural dedicated to MMIP in conjunction with the release of its Year 3 Report.
June 2022 MMIP Regional Roundtable

We cannot overstate the importance of collaboration across jurisdictions and between tribes, law enforcement, justice system agencies and any other key stakeholders on the MMIP issue. Multidisciplinary teams or “MDTs” need to be actively in conversation well before a case is reported and a task force must be assembled; in fact, task forces can only move nimbly if these mechanisms are already in place before someone is taken. We have made significant inroads in forming collaboration across the relevant stakeholders in Yurok Country and the larger Humboldt-Del Norte counties region. In June 2022, we convened a round table of all MMIP programs in the region. The project plans will hold this standing meeting such that a regional task force can be assembled for efficient intervention in the matter in tribal communities across northern California. By pooling efforts together, tribal nations in the far northern region will be able to engage in systemic change and secure much-needed resources. Expanding such efforts are key so that next time someone goes missing, those law enforcement agencies responsible for the case do not have to choose between initiating searches or investigations, as was true early on for the Emmilee Risling case. This regional task force could be a model for replication across the state and nation.

Despite such accomplishments, significant work remains to intervene in the cycles of violence that perpetuate MMIP. We will disseminate the findings of this report to all regional stakeholders and will be working with the Humboldt County Sheriff, the Yurok Tribal Police, and the Office of the Tribal Prosecutor to design a corresponding law enforcement and justice system workshop that will serve as a training protocol on MMIP for relevant professionals.

This training guide and corresponding curriculum will help facilitate the adoption and implementation of the Tribal Community Response Plan and include MMUPs procedures. This curriculum will include a “Posse Box Handout” for use on-the-ground in real-time by law enforcement professionals when called to take an MMIP report (draft version located on pgs. 116-117). This training will use multimedia formats and will be based on case studies and cultivating buy-in amongst law-enforcement and justice system personnel on intervening in the issue of MMIP.

To’ Kee Skuy’ Soo Ney-wo-chek’, a project funded by the US Department of Justice’s Coordinated Tribal Assisted Solicitation (CTAS Grant) and the Bureau of Indian Affairs Tribal Justice Support, addresses the severe impact of missing and murdered Indigenous people (MMIP) in Northern California, defined as from the San Francisco Bay Area and Sacramento up to the Oregon border. The project team is incredibly grateful for all participants who made each report possible and express deep gratitude to the families, victims, and survivors who shared some of their hardest days with us so that we could learn from them and better respond the next time one of our relatives is taken.

Wokhlew’, wokhlew’, wokhlew’.
APPENDIX A

POSSE BOX HANDOUT
WHEN A REPORT IS FILED

DO NOT MAKE A REPORTING PARTY WAIT 24 HOURS BEFORE FILING A REPORT:
- There is no 24-hour requirement for someone to have gone missing before taking a report and there needs to be an policy that instructs all personnel to take a report as soon as possible to dispel any concerns with the “24-hour myth”
- This is especially true if foul play is suspected time can be of the essence especially early on in a case and delaying taking a report can have negative consequences for case outcomes

MINOR<21
- They may have been abducted by a non-custodial parent? *Consider Amber Alert below*
  - Is the person missing as a result of a stranger abduction? *Consider Amber Alert below*
- Runaways
- Foster Youth
  - IN ALL CASES: If a child is tribally enrolled, notify the department at their tribe responsible for child welfare that the child has gone missing so that relevant support services can be initiated

ADULT 21-65
- The person is missing under suspicious circumstances
- The person is missing under unknown circumstances
- The person is missing under known dangerous circumstances
- The person is missing for more than 30 days
- They have been the subject of past threats or acts of violence
- They do not have a pattern of running away or disappearing

ELDERLY PERSON 65+
- They have eloped from a nursing home
- They need medical attention, including but not limited to a person needing prescription medication or presenting dementia-like symptoms
  - Consider:
    - Canvas area immediately surrounding a nursing home in the event that an Alzheimer’s patient has gone missing
    - Use social media and leveraging neighborhood watch to be on the lookout for those missing from their personal residence
  - Always monitor time elapsed since last medication
  - All of these are considerations that may not be relevant in other instances but should be considered in elderly person search efforts.

OTHER HIGH RISK MISSING PERSONS
- They are mentally impaired or developmentally or intellectually disabled
- They are a veteran, active duty, or reserve member of the United States armed forces or National Guard and are believed to have a physical or mental health condition related to their service
- Any other factor that may, in the judgment of the law enforcement official, indicate that the missing person may be at risk, or the person has already been designated as a high-risk missing person by another law enforcement agency (Moran 2021: 139)
WITHIN FIRST 24 HOURS: ENTER THE MISSING PERSON INTO THE RELEVANT DATABASES BASED ON THEIR SPECIFIC CHARACTERISTICS AND/OR SCENARIO UNDER WHICH THEY HAVE GONE MISSING

1. This includes state and national databases to be searchable by all law enforcement agencies. Multiple entries may need to be made:
   - Minors < 21
     - The National Crime Information Center (NCIC): All missing persons should be entered into this database, yet it is mandatory for all missing persons under the age of 21.
     - The missing person's basic information should be entered upon reporting and then reviewed again 90 days later, closing the report if the person was found, and if not, reviewed again every year after (Myers 2021). All data entry into NCIC must be done by the reporting law enforcement agency.
     - Enter information into NCIC through your state’s Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) Systems Agencies (CSA).
     - Tribes can access NCIC through the Tribal Access Program (TAP).
     - The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC)
   - All missing persons:
     - The National Missing and Unidentified Person System (NamUs)

IDENTIFY AND INITIATE THE RELEVANT ALERT SYSTEM TO NOTIFY THE PUBLIC THAT THIS INDIVIDUAL HAS GONE MISSING: THESE ALERTS CAN INCLUDE:

- Amber Alert: confirmed abduction of a child
- Ashanti Alert: missing adult between the ages of 18 and 64 where there is a proven mental or physical disability; or the missing person’s physical safety may be endangered; or an abduction or kidnapping is suspected (OLJ 2020)
- Silver Alert: missing senior citizens without Alzheimer’s disease, dementia or other mental disability (these include found person reports)
- Blue Alert: a law enforcement officer that has been injured, killed, or is missing and/or abducted
- Feather Alert: in Washington and potentially California soon, police officials can now use this “feather alert” system for Indigenous peoples who have gone missing.
- In California: the California Highway Patrol can issue a “missing and unidentified persons alert” which reaches the general public through the same channels as an Amber Alert but with much less stringent criteria (suspected kidnapping, minor, etc.)

BROKER TRIBAL ACCESS TO DATABASES AND ALERT SYSTEMS AS APPROPRIATE

- Sometimes tribes will only have access to these systems if law enforcement facilitates therefore LEAs should prioritize such collaboration
ESTABLISH A TASK FORCE OF KEY STAKEHOLDERS TO MEET DAILY, AND INCLUDE TRIBAL REPRESENTATIVES

- Include stakeholders from all relevant jurisdictions with explicit expectations associated with confidentiality of an open case and the sensitive material shared therein.

INCORPORATE “LIAISON OFFICERS” TO COORDINATE ON-THE-GROUND WITH STAKEHOLDERS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO FACILITATE THE TRANSFER OF VITAL CASE UPDATES, ESPECIALLY TO FAMILIES AND LOVED ONES.

CONTACT VICTIM SERVICES PROVIDERS TO ASSIST WITH VICTIM SUPPORT, WORK WITH FAMILIES AND PROVIDE APPROVED UPDATES ON THE SEARCH, THE INVESTIGATION, AND ANY NEXT STEPS IN THE INVESTIGATION.

- Develop a plan for a predictable flow of information, including how the family should provide information or leads directly to law enforcement.

COORDINATE INTERVIEWS OF FAMILY MEMBERS OR WITNESSES, AS WELL AS ANTE-MORTEM INTERVIEWS, DNA COLLECTION, COLLECTION OF SCENT ITEMS, ETC.

PLAN AND PREPARE OFFICIAL CASE BRIEFINGS AND UPDATES ON SCHEDULE DEVELOPED WITH VSPS ON BEHALF OF VICTIMS AND/OR FAMILIES.

PROTOCOLS FOR TWO MISSING PERSONS OUTCOMES:
1) Recovered alive
   a. Must physically and visually confirm the missing person is okay, and from there, only those who are legally entitled to know outcome are informed
   b. Identify a reunification plan. Always prioritize victim’s privacy in all interactions
2) Recovered deceased
   a. REQUIRES extreme care and sensitivity taken at the time of a death notification; work with VSPs to deliver such news:
      i. Multiple notifications may need to be provided simultaneously. Cultural norms may impact how to talk about death.
      ii. Death notifications should only be handled by trained professionals.
   b. Provide case updates including notifications about any autopsy and release of remains.
   c. Personal effects can have deep significance and emotional meaning. Cultural belief systems and family requests should guide their return.
   d. Continue sharing official case updates and family briefings. Families should be provided opportunities to ask questions that are answered directly and honestly.
Blythe K. George, Ph.D.

Dr. Blythe K. George is a member of the Yurok Tribe and currently serves as an Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of California-Merced. Her research focuses on processes of adversity and resilience in tribal communities, with an emphasis on qualitative methodologies and database creation and management. Dr. George received a B.A. in Sociology from Dartmouth College in 2012, and an M.A. in Sociology and Ph.D. in Sociology & Social Policy from Harvard University in 2016 and 2020 respectively. Dr. George has twice been recognized by the National Science Foundation, the Social Science Research Council’s Mellon Mays Initiatives, the Washington Center for Equitable Growth, the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation, and Indigenous Education, Inc. for her work on prisoner reentry on tribal reservations. In 2021-22, Dr. George and Judge Abby Abinanti were honored alongside Yurok Tribal Court Director Jessica Carter as Circle 3 Intergenerational Indigenous Women’s Fellows by the Spirit Aligned Fellowship Program for their efforts in helping others build their own tribal justice systems. In May 2022, Dr. George testified to the state regarding MMIWP from the level of the data to the personal. She will bring this expertise statewide as she works with the California Department of Justice to determine how to increase state criminal justice protective and investigative resources for reporting and identifying missing Native Americans in California.

Jessica Elm, Ph.D.

Dr. Jessica Elm is a citizen of Oneida Nation, descendant of Stockbridge-Munsee Band of the Mohicans, sole proprietor of Twehsaks Consulting, and affiliate of Life Paths Research Center. Dr. Elm is a social and health scientist and serves as a subject matter expert (SME) in the areas of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), tribal research, and diversity, equity, and inclusion. She has served Indian Country in various capacities for over 15 years including research, legislative advocacy, behavioral health administration, strategic planning, and direct social work practice. In this time, she has honed her skills to provide tailored services in research, evaluation, grant writing, project and program planning, and training/instruction. Dr. Elm’s professional priorities are supporting tribal self-governance – especially access to and use of data for informed decision making and improving the lived experiences of the most vulnerable American Indians through research, evaluation, education, and program development. Her research examines accumulation of myriad stressors including discrimination, violence, and ACEs and risk for substance misuse and mental health challenges. She also investigates the moderating effects of opportunity and ability to resolve stressors and cultural and social resources on behavioral health outcomes across the life course.
Nan Benally, M.C.
Researcher, Consultant, Counselor

Nan Benally has spent a lifetime acquiring experience around passionate and purposeful people. The constant and driving passion for Nan has been in the world of research – the desire to learn, the desire to explore and the desire to create. Coupled with her passion in bringing healing to people who have been through traumatic/stressful events has guided her research in the areas of social justice. Utilizing her role as a researcher has created outcomes of direct application and influence in resolving concrete problems and meeting community-based needs, transforming the status quo of institutions and challenging stakeholders in addressing these issues collaboratively, leading to a multidisciplinary commitment to enact change. Through her experience and education, Nan has gained training in various therapeutic treatment modalities, utilized her background in areas of social justice in helping to create outcomes of direct application and influence in resolving concrete problems and meeting community-based needs, transforming the status quo of institutions and challenging stakeholders in addressing these issues collaboratively, leading to a multidisciplinary commitment to enact change. Nan has continued her passion for learning and has her Master of Counseling degree from Arizona State University. She continues to work on her doctoral degree and pathways toward professional licensure. She is a member of the Dine’ Tribal Nation and leads her own consulting firm, N.A.N.(Native American Narratives) Consulting. Her membership in professional organizations such as the American Psychological Association, the Society of Indian Psychologists of the Americas, National Congress of American Indians, and Alpha Pi Omega reinforces her ties to remain abreast of evolving trends and to continually develop her professional alliances as a unique network base to push forth the collective voices of transformation.

Contributor Bios
Abby Abinanti, JD

Judge Abby is the Chief Judge of the Yurok Tribe. She is an enrolled member of the Yurok Tribe. She received her law degree from the University of New Mexico’s Law School and was the first tribal woman to be admitted to the California State Bar. She served as a judicial officer in the San Francisco Superior Court for 20 years. She has served as Chief Justice since 2008, helping to establish the judicial system with practices based on the Yurok values of interlocking responsibilities in village society.

Jessica Carter, JD, MA

Jessica Carter currently serves as the Court Director for the Yurok Tribe where she has held this position for the last 12 years in developing the tribal justice system. She is an enrolled member of the Yurok Tribe and descends from traditional healers from the Yurok villages of Requa, Wehlkwew, Hoppaw, Sregon, Wausec, and the coastal village at Dry Lagoon in Northern California. Ms. Carter is a member of the California Bar and...
Jessica Carter, a graduate of UCLA where she earned a Master’s Degree in American Indian Studies. Jessica’s master’s thesis Keeping Watch: the Poh-lik-la and their Lands studied the victimization of the Yurok People by the loss of their homelands beginning in 1850 to the present. She currently oversees numerous restorative justice programs specifically targeted at addressing substance abuse, domestic violence, child abuse/neglect, and missing and murdered indigenous people. Ms. Carter has played an integral part in the development of the Yurok Wellness Court and Joint Jurisdiction Courts in Humboldt and Del Norte Counties. As Tribal Court Director, Jessica has witnessed the legacy of her people being disenfranchised from their culture through boarding schools and all forms of historical violence from genocide to mass incarceration. Jessica believes the Yurok people deserve the chance to be well and in balance again. She is determined to be a positive influence and do her part to help this happen. Ms. Carter is married to a U.S. Coast Guard Veteran/Middle School Teacher and has a son who is currently in high school. Jessica attributes her commitment to tribal service to her parents, her father is a U.S. Veteran, who served in Vietnam, and her mother is a tribal planner who has brought essential services to tribal communities.

Angi Cavaliere, JD, MJ, CWLS

Angi Cavaliere is the Supervising Staff Attorney for the Yurok Tribal Court. She is a member of the Stockbridge-Munsee Band of Mohicans and a descendant of the Brotherton Tribe. She has a Bachelor’s Degree in Social Change & Development with a minor in First Nations Studies from University of Wisconsin – Green Bay. She obtained her law degree accompanied by a fellowship in Children’s Rights from Whittier Law School. The Public Law Center awarded Angi the Wiley Manuel Award for Public Service in 2011 for the work she did as a law student assisting underrepresented populations. After law school, Angi obtained a Master of Jurisprudence in Children’s Law & Policy from Loyola Law School - Chicago. Having previously served as Minor’s Counsel in the LA County ICWA Court, she moved north to work with the Yurok Tribal Court in the Spring of 2019. She continues her ICWA advocacy with the National Indian Justice Center where she trains tribal and state social workers and advocates on Dependency and ICWA. In January 2020, she was certified as a Child Welfare Legal Specialist by the National Association of Counsel for Children. Angi’s life experiences, both personal and professional, have instilled a deep commitment to preventing violence to Native American people.

Kendall Allen-Guyer

Kendall Allen-Guyer serves as the MMIW Project Manager for the Yurok Tribal Court. Kendall is Yurok, Karuk, Wiyot, and an enrolled member of the Hoopa Valley Tribe. Kendall attended both College of the Redwoods and Humboldt State University. She has worked in the legal field for the past fifteen years performing intense research, drafting, and analytical skills as a Paralegal, Senior Clerk and a Wellness Court Program Director. She contributes to ceremony by creating prayer items, singing, and caretaking for her family’s regalia.
Alanna Nulph, BS

Alanna Nulph is a Paralegal and Special Domestic Violence Criminal Jurisdiction Coordinator for the Yurok Tribal Court. She graduated from the University of Utah in 2013 with a Bachelor’s in Political Science, and a minor in Environmental Studies. Alanna is a former track and field athlete for the University of Utah and former All-American and Academic All-American. She is currently attending an online law program at Purdue University Global while working full-time for the Yurok Court. Alanna is of the Hupa Tribe, enrolled in the Yurok Tribe, and is from the village of Taki’miLding in the Hoopa Valley. When she is not working or studying Alanna likes to weave baskets, fish the Klamath River, play video games, and garden.

Rosemary Deck, JD

Rosemary Deck is the Chief Prosecutor for the Yurok Tribe. She has a Bachelor’s Degree in Politics from CalPoly Humboldt (formerly Humboldt State University). She earned her Juris Doctorate in 2017 from the University of the Pacific, McGeorge School of Law, in Sacramento where she served as the Executive Chair of the Moot Court Honors Board and as an editor of the University of the Pacific Law Review. Upon graduation, Rosemary graduated from the Order of the Coif with Great Distinction, Order of the Barrister, received a Capital Commendation for Public Service, and was awarded the Outstanding Student Achievement Award. After briefly working for the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, Board of Parole Hearings, Rosemary served as a Deputy Public Defender in Humboldt County for four years, providing criminal defense to indigent members of the community. In 2021, she became the Chief Prosecutor for the Yurok Tribe. Rosemary is originally from Toronto, Ontario, Canada.
Data Points for Tailoring Tools

Below are optional data points that can be used to tailor tools to meet your purpose.

**Trafficking**
Some evidence supports that AIAN women and girls are often arrested for prostitution when, in fact, they are victims of sex trafficking. (Farley et al., 2011)

**Justice**
Among AIANs released from state prison, 43% are arrested within one year. [Bureau of Justice Statistics, Recidivism of State Prisoners Released in 2012 data collection, 2012-2017 (34 states reporting)]

**Homicide**
Among homicides involving IPV of AIANs, about one out of five victims had been using substances, including alcohol at the time of their death. (Petrosky, 2021)
It appears that those between the ages of 25 and 44 are more likely to die by homicide. (Petrosky, 2021)
In addition to current or former intimate partners as suspects, acquaintances and friends are named in about one out of five cases. (Petrosky, 2021)
Approximately half of AI/AN homicide victims lived or were killed in metropolitan areas. (Petrosky, 2021)
“Rape or sexual assault occurred in nearly one third of IPV-related homicides precipitated by another serious crime.” (Petrosky, 2021)
For AIAN males, homicide is 9th highest leading cause of death. (Leading causes of death and numbers of deaths, by sex, race, and Hispanic origin: United States, 1980 and 2018 https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/hus/contents2019.htm#Table-006)

**Missing**
Running away generally indicates a missing status and one study reported that as many as nearly 50% of 17-year-olds in foster care in the Midwest region had run away at least once (Courtney et al., 2004).
A recent study has concluded that foster youth often go missing from foster care and increase their risk for negative outcomes such as being trafficked and substance misuse (Latzman, 2020).
Among 12 states that participated in a study, California reported the highest number of missing foster children who died (HHS, 2022).
Risk Factors
- 1 in 7 child “runaways” are likely sex trafficking victims (National Center for Missing and Exploited Children)

LGBT/Two-Spirit Data
- 16% of LGBTIQQ/two-spirits from a 2005 health survey reported trading sex before age 18. This did not vary by gender. Participants in the study were from 7 metro areas including San Francisco–Oakland (Walters & Elm, unpublished)
- Two-spirits report higher rates of child physical abuse (48% vs. 25%; Balsam et al. 2004)
- Two-spirit men more likely to report sexual & physical assault (45% vs. 2%; Simoni, Walters, Balsam, & Meyers, 2006).
- Two-spirit female current drinkers: physical neglect, sexual & emotional abuse each about 70% (Yuan at al., 2014).
- 24% of justice-system involved AIAN youth identify as sexual minorities (Irvine, 2010).
- 23% of AIAN youth in child welfare are sexual and gender minorities (Wilson, 2018).

California
- Among 12 states that participated in a study, California reported the highest number of missing foster children who died (HHS, 2022).


Data and Locations

Missing Children Clearinghouse by State
https://www.missingkids.org/gethelpnow/clearinghouses

National Vital Statistics System
https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/index.htm

National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS)
https://ncvs.bjs.ojp.gov/Home

National Center for Health Statistics - Homicide
https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/homicide.htm

Leading Causes of Death
https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/hus/contents2019.htm

National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS)
https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/datasources/nvdrs/index.html

National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS)

Violence & Injuries
Key Considerations

Questions that can be asked to help assess readiness for data gathering and infrastructure building

What is our purpose?
What do we want to know?
What are the goals that support this purpose?
What is needed to achieve the goals?
What questions need to be asked to find out what we need to know?
What data types am I looking for?
How will the data analysis be conducted?
Can the data be accessed?
Tools to Access Government Data

Public Information / FOIA Request Tools

Access to government information can be sought through a public information or “FOIA request”. Below is an example for law enforcement information in California.

To Whom It May Concern:

Pursuant to the [California Public Records Act], I [INSERT NAME], hereby request the following public records:

Concerning the processing of missing persons cases, including cold cases, I request duplicate electronic copies of all communications including but not limited to emails, email chains, and email attachments, meeting notes, other documents, and meeting recordings between the [NAME OF County Probation Department] and the [NAME OF Police Department]. I request that you provide these for dates from January 1, 2021 to June 30, 2021.

This request is not being made for commercial purposes.

If you expected the fees for processing my request to be higher than [INSERT AMOUNT WILLING TO PAY], I request you contact with an estimate of the total charges - at which time I may modify my information request or increase the amount I am able to pay.

I prefer that my request be filled by e-mail attachment or other electronic means as appropriate.

Thank you in advance for your anticipated cooperation in this matter. I look forward to receiving your response to this request within[10] business days, as required by statute.

Sincerely,

[INSERT NAME OF PERSON WHO WILL RECEIVE THE INFORMATION]
Study Instrument Templates
Case File Cover Sheet
Contact Log Template
Updated Needs Assessment Template
Field Notes Template
Updated Quantitative Data Point List
Codebook
Study Instrument Templates

• A Note on Study Instruments

These are study instrument templates are for tribes and law enforcement agencies alike to use in collecting data and coordinating family support and outreach efforts. These are tangible tools for streamlining data sharing and will help facilitate joint taskforce efforts for addressing the scope and severity of MMIWG2S.

With the cover sheet, contact logs, and research logs, we hope that other research teams will be able to keep a well-organized and thorough documentation of their MMIWG2 files as well as track ongoing family contact and investigatory efforts. They are made for use with both electronic files as well as confidential records that must be kept in hard copy.

As to the Needs Assessment, we have designed this template to speak to the following research questions:

• What is the existing knowledge base of stakeholders as to the scope and severity of MMIWG2 in service area?
• What are the pressing needs of MMIWG2 families, survivors and other stakeholders in service area?
• What are the recommendations of MMIWG2 families, survivors and other stakeholders for the justice system and its response to issues of MMIWG2?
• What are the recommendations of MMIWG2 families, survivors and other stakeholders for local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies and their responses to issues of MMIWG2?

This needs assessment is designed for use in one-on-one in-depth, semi-structured interviews, as well as in-depth, semi-structured interviews with small stakeholder focus groups (3-5 people) and/or nuclear family units. It has been compiled based on our extensive quantitative research, literature review, and in consultations with families and survivors. We will continue to refine these tools in Year 2 but offer this “family-approved” study instrument for use now by other tribes, LEAs and other justice agencies hoping to intervene in MMIWG2S.

This Needs Assessment is designed for use with all stakeholders, including but not limited to: families, service providers (county, nonprofit, tribal), police (county, tribal, federal, etc.), CPS/Youth Services, Domestic Violence/Victim Services, tribal court staff and other community leaders. For non-family stakeholders, interviewers should also ask the supplemental questions included in each section as relevant.

To analyze this data, we have included our existing qualitative codebook for use by other research teams. This coding scheme is designed with a modified grounded theory framework in mind (Glaser & Strauss 1967, Corbin & Strauss 1990, Charmaz 1995, Small 2009) and should be expanded on a rolling basis to include those themes that emerge over the course of data analysis.
Case File Cover Sheet

Identifying Characteristics:

Name:
Indian Name: (Leave blank if n/a)
Tribe:

Area of Residence:
Area Last Seen if missing:
Incident Location:
Incident Area Classification (Reservation/Rural/Urban):
Agency with Jurisdiction:
Assigned Detective:

DOB:
Age At Time of Incident:
Age Now (if missing):
Date Reported Missing:
In case of status change, date of change:

Status:
Customary designation for those passed on?:
Example: Yurok: A:wok First Name-Last Name
Hupa: E:wak First Name-Last Name
Ojibwe: First Name-Last Name-iban

Case Status (open/closed/pending):

Contact Notes (see Contact Log for full details):

Contact Person:

Relationship to Individual:

Contact Information & Preference:
Contact Log - Date:

- Contact Details:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of Visit:</th>
<th>Purpose of Visit:</th>
<th>Contact Person:</th>
<th>Relationship to Case:</th>
<th>Contact Details:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;Date of Visit&gt;</td>
<td>&lt;Describe purpose of visit, such as establishing first contact, following up on previous visit, court appearance, etc.&gt;</td>
<td>&lt;Whom are you meeting with?&gt;</td>
<td>&lt;How do they know the individual?&gt;</td>
<td>&lt;Contact details including phone, address, email and note their preference for future contacts if known.&gt;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Contact Assigned:  
<ID whom at SBI has been assigned to steward this case and any subsequent follow-up.>

Projected Date of Next Contact:  
<Identify timeline for completion of next steps and establish next plans to be in touch regarding this case.>

Action Steps:  
<Outline takeaways from visit and follow-up/action steps going forward based on day’s visit.>

Notes on Visit:  
<Describe qualitatively the visit, from the drive there to the drive back. Think about what you observed with all five senses and note that here. Prioritize details on tasks accomplished as overarching narrative, but do not hold back on descriptive details about all parts of the interaction(s). Note those in attendance, environment/location, time spent together and action steps going forward, etc. This will serve as a fieldnote observation for this visit and therefore our primary record of this encounter. We want to be able to recall it for years after the initial event and interpretable by those beyond the author/attendees.>

Any Last Thoughts?:  <Add anything not covered in previous categories, last thoughts, or thoughts that occur after the fact.>
Research Log - Date:

- Search Details:

  Date of Search: <Date of Search>
  Entered By: <Who is entering this search?>
  Database(s) Searched: <What database do these search results come from?>

  Search Keywords: <What search keywords were used in this query(ies)?>

  Notes on Search Results: <Any notes on the search in general or about particular results/links. If search needs to be conducted on an on-going basis or if certain links no longer work, note these details here. Download media links upon accessing them on a rolling basis to ensure we have a copy even if online archives change/links are no longer active.>

- Search Results
  Include links to online resources here and save a version to the case file as 1) a hard copy and 2) a .pdf and/or Word document.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Memorials &amp; Obituaries</th>
<th>Missing Persons Data/Postings</th>
<th>Newspaper articles and/or blog posts</th>
<th>Social Media Posts/Real-Time Data</th>
<th>Videos/Multimedia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;Sort information and/or links here on obituaries, memorials, tributes, remembrances, etc.&gt;</td>
<td>&lt;Sort information and/or links here on official entries for Missing Persons’ databases, NAMUS, etc.&gt;</td>
<td>&lt;Sort information and/or links here on newspaper articles, blog posts, online profiles, etc.&gt;</td>
<td>&lt;Sort information and/or links here on social media posts or event data, real-time case updates, police and other LEA announcements [screenshots as best practice for LEA data like Tweets or Facebook posts]. This does not include screenshots of personal family information posts, etc. without consent.&gt;</td>
<td>&lt;Sort information and/or links here on relevant videos, news coverage and other multimedia case data and/or representations, etc.&gt;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**COPY AND PASTE OR PRINT PREVIOUS PAGES FOR NEW SEARCH ENTRIES**
Needs Assessment Template

Section 1. Lead-In & Knowledge Base
This interview is about me getting to know you, your connections to missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and two spirit peoples, your needs as part of this community and your recommendations to relevant stakeholders like yourselves, the justice system and law enforcement agencies.

As a participant, you were invited to speak with me today because you are a stakeholder in the missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and two spirit community. I have a list of questions to guide you, but a lot of what you will tell me will depend on your experience and/or expertise.

For all:
• Tell me more about yourself—where you’re from, who’s your family, how you spend your time most days, anything else I should know to get a sense of who you are.
  Data point: Building rapport and providing glimpse of worldview

• What do you know personally about MMIWG2?
  Data point: Knowledge base family/individual level

• What do you know about MMIWG2 locally?
  Data point: Knowledge base community level

• What do you think are the contributing factors or intersecting issues that lead to MMIWG2 cases?
  Data point: Knowledge base risk factors for MMIWG2

• What do you wish people knew about MMIWG2 based on your experiences?
  Data point: Knowledge base community level

• What is your understanding of violence against Indigenous women?
  Data point: Knowledge base risk factors for MMIWG2

• Are there any gaps in your knowledge of MMIWG2? About violence against AI/AN women? What are they?
  Data point: Knowledge base identifying gaps in knowledge on MMIWG2

• Why do you think Indigenous women experience higher rates of violence than non-Indigenous women? Do you think these issues receive the same level of attention by police, the media, the justice system, etc.?
  Data point: Knowledge base Understanding of colonial origins of violence and/or interpretation of violence through Indigenous worldviews
For non-family stakeholders:
• What is your perception of Indigenous women, girls, and two spirit people? How often do you engage with them in your work?
  Data point: Knowledge base MMIWG2

• How do issues of MMIWG2 intersect with your work/job responsibilities?
  Data point: Knowledge base stakeholder expertise

• Do you feel like you have been trained for MMIWG2? What are other topics you think you may need training on for MMIWG2? On violence against AI/AN women?
  Data point: Knowledge base stakeholder expertise and/or gaps therein

• Are there any things that you feel you, other people in your position, or the organization you work for need in order to better respond to MMIWG2 cases, or the contributing factors you identified?
  Data point: Knowledge base stakeholder expertise

• What is your perception of MMIWG2 families? What do you think their needs and priorities are?
  Data point: Knowledge base non-family stakeholder perceptions
Section 2. Needs Assessment
The following questions can be personal and I want to remind you that you do not have to tell me anything that you do not want to, or that you think may risk your safety or the safety of a loved one. As a reminder, you have consented to share only that information which you are comfortable being included in a publically accessible written report on MMIWG2.

You have the right to skip any questions you do not want to answer, to end the interview at any time, or to retract your comments after today’s interview if you decide for any reason at all that you would no longer like to participate.

For all:
• Are there any gaps in service provision for families and survivors of MMIWG2? What are they?
  Data point: establishing gaps in service provision

• What else can service providers do to support families and survivors of MMIWG2? Tribal bodies?
  Data point: establishing gaps in service provision

• Are there any gaps in service provision for those at risk of MMIWG2, like those in foster care, juvenile detention, runaways, those experiencing human trafficking and/or survival sex work? What are they?
  Data point: establishing gaps in service provision

• What else can service providers do to support those at risk of MMIWG2? Tribal bodies?
  Data point: establishing gaps in service provision

• What are the community conditions that contribute to MMIWG2? If they need further prompting: What about things like poverty, lack of affordable housing, unemployment or school conditions?
  Data point: describing factors that impact MMIWG2

• Where are the places here where you think Native women and children are safe? Where are the places where they are unsafe?
  Data point: Describing factors that impact MMIWG2

• How does mental health factor into MMIWG2 and violence against Indigenous women?
  If they need further prompting: What about things like the lack of access to mental health services in most communities, the absence of drug and alcohol treatment and rehabilitation facilities in rural areas, or any unique local factors that might increase the frequency of MMIWG2 or violence against Indigenous women more generally?
  Data point: describing factors that impact MMIWG2

• What is your knowledge of historical trauma in Indigenous communities, nationally and locally? How does historical trauma factor
into MMIWG2 and violence against Indigenous women?
Data point: Knowledge base & describing factors that impact
MMIWG2

• What healing resources are available? What more is needed?
  Data point: establishing scope of and gaps in service provision

• How do we support those at an increased risk of being taken, like
  those in foster care, juvenile detention, runaways, those experiencing
  human trafficking and/or survival sex work?
  Data point: establishing gaps in service provision

Ø Do you think schools can be doing more for children related to
MMIW? Please tell me more.
  o Data point: establishing gaps in service provision as they relate to
schools

• What are the limitations on the justice system and/or local law
  enforcement’s abilities to address issues of MMIWG2? To violence
  against AI/AN women?
  Data point: establishing limitations in addressing MMIWG2

• How do the different jurisdictions and/or the different geographies
  at play impact the ability of law enforcement agencies and the
  justice system-at-large to address MMIWG2? Violence against AI/AN
  women?
  Data point: establishing complexities of multiple jurisdictions

• What recommendations do you have for policy makers in designing
  legislation to address MMIWG2? What would your dream legislation
  include?
  Data point: establishing policy recommendations for MMIWG2

For non-family stakeholders:
• What do you need to better support families and survivors of
  MMIWG2?
  Data point: establishing stakeholder needs for service
  provision

• What do you need to better support those at risk of MMIWG2, like
  those in foster care, juvenile detention, runaways, those experiencing
  human trafficking and/or survival sex work?
  Data point: establishing stakeholder needs for service provision

• What does “trauma-informed services provision to Indigenous
  victims and their families” mean to you in your work? Do you feel you
  have the resources to provide trauma-informed services?
  Data point: establishing stakeholder expertise and needs for
  service provision
For non-family stakeholders:
• What do you need to better support families and survivors of MMIWG2?
  Data point: establishing stakeholder needs for service provision

• What do you need to better support those at risk of MMIWG2, like those in foster care, juvenile detention, runaways, those experiencing human trafficking and/or survival sex work?
  Data point: establishing stakeholder needs for service provision

• What does “trauma-informed services provision to Indigenous victims and their families” mean to you in your work? Do you feel you have the resources to provide trauma-informed services?
  Data point: establishing stakeholder expertise and needs for service provision

Section 3. Recommendations for Justice System
For all:
• What is the role of the justice system in supporting families and survivors of MMIWG2?
  Data point: establishing recommendations for justice system

• What can the justice system do to support families and survivors of MMIWG2?
  Data point: establishing recommendations for justice system

• What is the role of the justice system in supporting those in foster care, juvenile detention, runaways, those experiencing human trafficking and/or survival sex work?
  Data point: establishing recommendations for justice system

• What can the justice system do to support those in foster care, juvenile detention, runaways, those experiencing human trafficking and/or survival sex work?
  Data point: establishing recommendations for justice system

• What could the justice system do to improve their response to issues of MMIWG2? To violence against AI/AN women?
  Data point: establishing recommendations for justice system

• What do those working in the justice system need to know to improve their response to issues of MMIWG2? About violence against AI/AN women?
  Data point: establishing recommendations for justice system
Section 4. Recommendations for Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs)
As a reminder, you may skip any questions you do not want to answer, to end the interview at any time, or to retract your comments after today’s interview if you decide for any reason at all that you would no longer like to participate.

For all:
• What is the role of local law enforcement agencies in supporting families and survivors of MMIWG2? Federal or state agencies? Have they been meeting their responsibilities in that role?
  Data point: establishing recommendations for LEAs

• What can local law enforcement agencies do to support families and survivors of MMIWG2? Federal or state agencies?
  Data point: establishing recommendations for LEAs

• What is the role of local law enforcement agencies in supporting those in foster care, juvenile detention, runaways, those experiencing human trafficking and/or survival sex work? Federal or state agencies? Have they been meeting their responsibilities in that role?
  Data point: establishing recommendations for LEAs

• Do you feel that law enforcement brutality, negligence, or corruption exist in the local region? If so, do you think that contributes to MMIWG2, and are there specific agencies, officers, or other examples you feel comfortable sharing?
  Data point: establishing scope of police violence as factor for MMIWG2

• What do those working in local law enforcement agencies need to know to improve their response to issues of MMIWG2? About violence against AI/AN women? How does this extend to federal or state agencies?
  Data point: establishing recommendations for LEAs

• What can local law enforcement agencies do to support those in foster care, juvenile detention, runaways, those experiencing human trafficking and/or survival sex work? Federal or state agencies?
  Data point: establishing recommendations for LEAs

• What can local law enforcement agencies do to improve their response to issues of MMIWG2? To violence against AI/AN women? How does this extend to federal or state agencies?
  Data point: establishing recommendations for LEAs

Section 5. Personal Expertise
The following questions are personal and of a sensitive nature. Please remember to only share with me what you are comfortable sharing.

• How many MMIWG2S do you know of in the region? How many did
you know personally?
  Data point: establishing knowledge base of regional MMIWG2

• How many Native women do you know that are victims of violence?
  Data point: establishing knowledge base of regional violence against Indigenous women

• Are you aware of any people who abuse their power to hurt Native women or children? I.e. law enforcement, healthcare, educators, tribal admin, etc.
  Data point: establishing knowledge base of regional violence against Indigenous women

• Please tell me more about your ties to MMIWG2S and violence against Native women. For example, how it has impacted you, your loved ones? Whatever you are comfortable sharing in this regard.
  Data point: establishing scope and severity of regional MMIWG2

• What do you wish people knew about MMIWG2S based on your experiences?
  Data point: establishing recommendations for stakeholders

Section 6. Conclusion
• Do you have any questions for me as we wrap up? Anything you’d like to add?

• *** I am also looking for others to talk with as part of this project. Is there anyone you can think of? ***

• If so, would you be willing to share their contact info, please?
Updated Quantitative Data Point List

• Name (Including birth name, maiden name, and cultural name)
• Date of Birth
• Age
• Gender
• Tribal Affiliation(s)
• Tribe Enrollment Status (which tribe enrolled; descendant (enrolled or no))
• Last known location if/when missing (City/County/State)
• Location of deceased (if found) (City/County/State)
• Date of Missing status
• Date of Found status
• State in which found (safe, deceased, injured)
• Deceased Date
• Current Status to include Missing, Murdered, Death (if not ruled a homicide), Found.
• Child Welfare involvement with the person to include:
  o Involvement as a minor
  o Involvement as an adult (parent, foster parent, adoptive parent, etc.)
• Law Enforcement involvement to include:
  o What law enforcement agencies are involved in the MMIW case
  o When law enforcement became involved with the MMIW’s case
  o Current Case Status by Law Enforcement (active, cold, closed)
  o Outcome of Law Enforcement case (suspect identified, arrests, charges)
• Prosecution of Identified Suspects
  o Jurisdiction (Tribal, State, Federal)
  o Status (Active, Declination, Trial)
  o Trial Status (Acquitted, Guilty, Plea)
  o Post Conviction Status (Appeal information, Parole Status, Probation Status)
• Demographical information on Suspect Name
  o Age
  o Race
    • Tribal Affiliations if applicable
  o Gender
  o Relationship to MMIW
CA MMIWG2 Codebook
List of Code Abbreviations = Code Color = Code Name

Law Enforcement Agency (LEA) Codes: Blues
1. LEAD = Light Blue = LEA Development
   a. LEAD-C = LEAD County
   b. LEAD-T = LEAD Tribal
   c. LEAD-S = LEAD State
   d. LEAD-F = LEAD Federal
2. LEAI = Sky Blue = LEA Inaction
3. LEAV = Medium Blue = LEA Violence
4. MUJ = Medium Dark Blue = Multiple Jurisdictions
5. COR = Teal Blue = Court Ruling
6. DAH = Dark Blue = Data Hole
   a. INC = Inaccuracy

Contextual & Individual Codes: Oranges/Yellows
7. SC = Light Orange = Structural Constraint
8. MHC = Medium Orange = Mental Health Consideration
   a. HT/IGT = Historical/Intergenerational Trauma
9. SUB = Dark Orange = Substances
   a. SUB-M = Methamphetamine
   b. SUB-H = Heroin (also use for morphine)
   c. SUB-O = Opioids (Oxycodone, methadone, etc.)
   d. SUB-A = Alcohol
10. ULF = Light Brown = Unique Local Factor
    a. ULF-MI = Marijuana Industry
11. TRF = Dark Brown = Trafficking
12. SSW = Mustard Yellow = Survival Sex Work
13. CPS = Light Pink = CPS Involvement and/or Foster Care System
    a. CPS-R = CPS Removal
14. YTH = Dark Pink = Youth
    a. YTH-R = Runaway

Survivance Codes: Reds
15. IW = Light Red = Indigenous Worldview
    a. TAF = Tribal Affiliation
16. EKE = Medium Red = Extended Kin Efforts
17. AOM = Medium Dark Red = Absence of MMIWG2
18. RAR = Dark Red = Resilience & Remembrance
    a. REC = Recommendations

Perpetrator Pattern Codes: Greens
19. VFP = Light Green = Violence Family/Partner
    a. IPV = Intimate Partner Violence
    b. FV = Family Violence
APPENDIX B

20. VST = Lime Green = Violence Stranger
21. VIN = Medium Green = Violence Indigenous
22. VNI = Forest Green = Violence Non-Indigenous
23. VUK = Dark Green = Violence Unknown

List of Code Descriptions

Law Enforcement Agency (LEA) Codes: Blues

1. LEAD = LEA Development = Light Blue
   This code will be applied to any case developments on the part of law enforcement agencies (LEAs), including filing a report, assigning a detective, evidence gathering, searches, witness questioning, etc.
   a. LEAD-C = LEAD County: Apply this code to any case developments on the part of county law enforcement agencies (Sheriff, Coroner, etc.)
   b. LEAD-T = LEAD Tribal: Apply this code to any case developments on the part of tribal law enforcement agencies
   c. LEAD-S = LEAD State: Apply this code to any case developments on the part of state law enforcement agencies (both state-level (like CHP) and non-county i.e. city law enforcement)
   d. LEAD-F = LEAD Federal: Apply this code to any case developments on the part of federal law enforcement agencies (FBI, DOJ, AG, etc)

2. LEAI = LEA Inaction = Sky Blue
   This code will be applied to the lack of action and/or slow movement on the part of an LEA, whether on a particular case or on the issues affecting MMIWG2 in general.

3. LEAV = LEA Violence = Medium Blue
   This code will be applied to instances where an LEA, either as an institution or as an individual, commits violence against an individual or community. This can include direct and indirect acts, failure to provide protection, as well as discursive or verbal acts of violence.

4. MJU = Multiple Jurisdictions = Medium Dark Blue
   This code will be applied to issues where a case file, individual characteristics, or contextual factors interact with multiple LEAs and/or legal jurisdictions.

5. COR = Court Ruling = Teal Blue
   This code will be applied to formal court rulings, including convictions, dropped cases, sentencing, etc.

6. DAX = Data Hole = Dark Blue
   This code will be applied to instances where a gap in data exists, where a lack of data constrains research and/or interventions, and other examples of “data holes” affecting MMIWG2
   a. INC = Inaccuracy: Apply this code to any instances of factual inaccuracies in the coded data as verified and triangulated with another data source.
### APPENDIX B

1. **SC** = Structural Constraint = Light Orange  
   This code will be applied to specific contextual factors in a given case file or other data point, including but not limited to poverty, crime, unemployment, lack of access to utilities like electricity and phone, environmental hazards, etc.

2. **MHC** = Mental Health Consideration = Medium Orange  
   This code will be applied to mental health considerations, including but not limited to addiction to substances, psychiatric conditions, trauma and trauma responses, historical trauma, family history, etc.
   a. **HT/IGT** = Historical/Intergenerational Trauma: Apply this code to instances where historical trauma or intergenerational trauma is explicitly named, or in cases where an individual describes witnessing or experiencing violence in the home when growing up, family or ancestral experiences of violence, etc.

3. **SUB** = Substances = Dark Orange  
   This code will be applied to any mentions of the role of substances including drugs and alcohol. As possible, double code entries with relevant substance-specific sub-code:
   a. **SUB-M** = Methamphetamine
   b. **SUB-H** = Heroin (also use for morphine)
   c. **SUB-O** = Opioids (Oxycodone, methadone, etc.)
   d. **SUB-A** = Alcohol

4. **ULF** = Unique Local Factor = Light Brown  
   This code will be applied to unique contextual factors. For example, different locations have different climates and therefore different implications for sheltering outdoors or search efforts, etc. Another example includes local economic factors, both licit and illicit. For mentions of the marijuana industry, double code with sub-code **ULF-MI**:
   a. **ULF-MI** = Marijuana Industry

5. **TRF** = Trafficking = Dark Brown  
   This code will be applied to instances of human trafficking, either as direct experience or through social networks and/or extended kin. This code will be sub-coded as necessary.

6. **SSW** = Survival Sex Work = Mustard Yellow  
   This code will be applied to instances of survival sex work, either as direct experience or through social networks and/or extended kin. This code will be sub-coded as necessary.

7. **CPS** = CPS Involvement and/or Foster Care System = Light Pink  
   This code will be applied to instances of Child Protective Services (CPS) involvement and/or mentions of foster care placements, child removal, custody, etc.
   a. **CPS-R** = CPS Removal: Apply to any case where a victim’s child(ren) was/were removed and/or their custodial rights were terminated, especially if this was a turning point for them.
APPENDIX B

8. **YTH = Youth = Dark Pink**
   This code will be applied to case files involving MMWG2 that are under the age of 18. This code also applies to descriptions and/or narratives of personal events before turning 18. As relevant, double-code entries with the "runaway" sub-code.
   a. **YTH-R = Runaway**

### Survivance Codes: Reds

1. **W = Indigenous Worldview = Light Red**
   This code will be applied to manifestations of Indigenous worldviews, including but not limited to participation in ceremony, family and community beliefs and practices, self-presentation, spiritual considerations, etc. This code will be sub-coded as necessary.
   a. **TAF = Tribal Affiliation**: Apply to instances where the tribal affiliation of a victim/survivor is stated.

2. **EKE = Extended Kin Efforts = Medium Red**
   This code will be applied to any efforts on the part of extended kin, either through searches, social media, LEA interactions, remembrance ceremonies and other forms of memorialization. This code will be sub-coded as necessary.

3. **AOM = Absence of MMWG2 = Medium Dark Red**
   This code will be applied to instances where the absence of an individual or individuals is tangibly and intangibly expressed. This can include but not limited to children being raised without mothers, aunts or grandmothers; families mourning loss; suicide; coping strategies; and the loss of knowledge and presence within a multigenerational framework. This code will be sub-coded as necessary.

4. **RAR = Resilience & Remembrance = Dark Red**
   This code will be applied to instances of resilience and remembrance broadly defined. This can include but not limited to memorials, ongoing search efforts, vigils, fighting for visibility and police action, court attendance, personal narratives of resilience, sobriety, etc. This code will be sub-coded as necessary.
   a. **REC = Recommendations**: Apply this code to any recommendations made for law enforcement, justice system, service providers, tribes, legislators and other stakeholders. This code will be sub-coded as necessary.

### Perpetrator Pattern Codes: Greens

1. **VFP = Violence Family/Partner = Light Green**
   This code will be applied to instances of violence where the perpetrator is a family member or current or former intimate partner, husband, boyfriend, etc. This code will be sub-coded as necessary.
   a. **IPV = Intimate Partner Violence**: Apply this code to any instances of intimate partner violence experienced by the victim or survivor, including but not limited to physical, emotional, psychological, and financial abuse.
   b. **FV = Family Violence**: Apply this code to any instances of family violence witnessed by the victim or survivor, including but not limited to physical, emotional, psychological, and financial abuse.
2. **VST = Violence Stranger = Lime Green**
   This code will be applied to instances of violence where the perpetrator is not known to the victim and/or they have been targeted for violence by a non-acquaintance. This code will be sub-coded as necessary.

3. **VIN = Violence Indigenous = Medium Green**
   This code will be applied to instances of violence where the perpetrator is Indigenous. This code will be sub-coded as necessary.

4. **VNI = Violence Non-Indigenous = Forest Green**
   This code will be applied to instances of violence where the perpetrator is non-Indigenous. This code will be sub-coded as necessary.

5. **VUK = Violence Unknown = Dark Green**
   This code will be applied to instances of violence where no details or identifying characteristics are known about the perpetrator.
REFERENCES


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