

GUIDE TO DEVELOPING A TRIBAL COMMUNITY RESPONSE PLAN FOR

# Missing Person Cases





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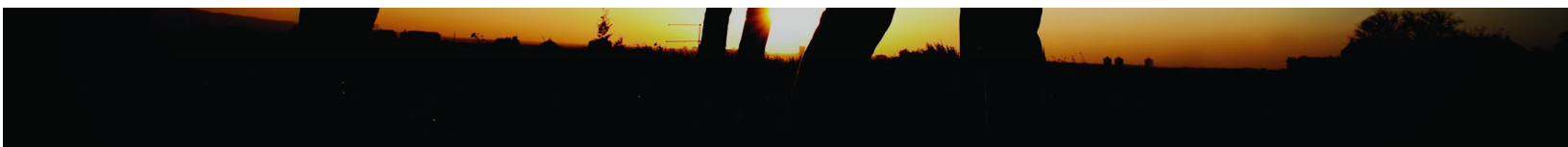


Recommended citation: U.S. Department of Justice. 2022. *Guide to Developing a Tribal Community Response Plan for Missing Person Cases*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.



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# Introduction

This *Guide to Developing a Tribal Community Response Plan for Missing Person Cases* provides a set of guidance documents for Tribal governments and U.S. Attorney's Offices, working with other partners, to develop a Tribal community response plan to respond to missing person cases that are tailored to the specific needs, resources, and culture of a specific Tribal community.

Tribal governments and American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) organizations have expressed concerns about missing and murdered members of Tribal communities and the response to these issues. In response, in November 2019, then–Attorney General William P. Barr launched a national U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) initiative to address missing and murdered Indigenous persons (MMIP). That same month, a Presidential Executive Order established a national task force on missing and murdered AI/AN persons.<sup>1</sup> In addition, in October 2020, *Savanna's Act* became law.<sup>2</sup> More recently, in November 2021 Deputy Attorney General Lisa O. Monaco established the DOJ Steering Committee to Address the Crisis of Missing or Murdered Indigenous Persons, and on November 15, 2021, President Joseph R. Biden, Jr. issued a new Executive Order to improve public safety and criminal justice for Native Americans and address the crisis of missing or murdered Indigenous people.<sup>3</sup> These authorities all include direction to develop guidelines or protocols to apply to, address, or respond to missing AI/AN person cases.

Informed by initial input from Tribal leaders, Tribal law enforcement, and other community members, the DOJ and the national task force created this guide, which includes four documents to help develop specific parts of a community response plan:

1. Developing Law Enforcement Agency Response Guidelines
2. Developing Victim Services Response Guidelines
3. Developing Media and Public Communications Response Guidelines
4. Developing Community Outreach Response Guidelines

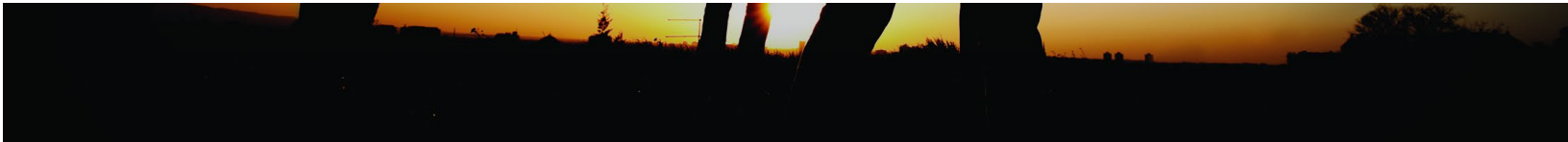
These guidance documents have been used in pilot projects by U.S. Attorney's Offices, Tribal governments, and other partners to develop Tribal community response plans in Tribes located in six states. Lessons learned from these pilot projects were used to improve the original draft guid-

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1. *Executive Order 13898 of November 26, 2019 Establishing the Task Force on Missing and Murdered American Indians and Alaska Natives*, 84 Fed. Reg. 231 (December 2, 2019), <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2019-12-02/pdf/2019-26178.pdf>.

2. *Savanna's Act*, Pub. L. No. 116–165, 134 Stat. 760 (codified at 25 U.S.C. §§ 5701–5705 and 34 U.S.C. §§ 10452, 10461, and 20126), <https://www.congress.gov/116/plaws/publ165/PLAW-116publ165.htm>.

3. Lisa O. Monaco, Deputy Attorney General of the United States, “Steering Committee to Address the Crisis of Missing or Murdered Indigenous Persons,” memorandum to heads of DOJ components, November 15, 2021, <https://www.justice.gov/media/1175651/dl?inline=%5d>; *Executive Order 14053 of November 15, 2021 Improving Public Safety and Criminal Justice for Native Americans and Addressing the Crisis of Missing or Murdered Indigenous People*, 86 Fed. Reg. 220 (November 18, 2021), <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2021-11-18/pdf/2021-25287.pdf>.





ance documents. In addition, Savanna’s Act requires the Attorney General to direct U.S. Attorneys to develop different regionally appropriate guidelines with very specific requirements to respond to cases of missing or murdered AI/AN persons.

This introduction provides background information for the creation of a Tribal community response plan. Part I discusses the legal and procedural framework for missing person cases. Part II summarizes law enforcement in Indian country. Part III summarizes the capacities and authority in Indian Country of the Bureau of Indian Affairs–Office of Justice Services (BIA-OJS), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the U.S. Marshals Service (USMS), and the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC). Part IV outlines the process for developing your tribal community response plan.

## I. Legal and procedural framework for missing person cases

The statutory and procedural framework for responding to AI/AN missing person cases is a tapestry of federal, Tribal, and state law provisions. It is not a crime to go missing in most cases: Adults are generally permitted to travel without providing advance notification to anyone. The situation is different if there is indication of criminal activity by an adult or any time a person under age 21 goes missing. Responding officials should become familiar with all relevant legal and procedural provisions that apply to their jurisdiction, including the following:

- **National Crime Information Center entry.** 34 U.S.C. § 41307 requires federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies to report each case of a missing person under age 21 to the National Crime Information Center (NCIC).<sup>4</sup> 34 U.S.C. § 41308(3) requires that report be made within two hours of receipt of the information.<sup>5</sup> Note that this statute does not apply to Tribal law enforcement agencies.
- **No waiting period.** 34 U.S.C. § 41308(1) bars state and local law enforcement agencies from having any policy that requires a waiting period before accepting a missing child or unidentified person report.<sup>6</sup>
- **National Center for Missing & Exploited Children notification.** 34 U.S.C. § 41308(4)(C) requires that state and local law enforcement agencies notify NCMEC of each report of a child missing from a foster care family home or child care institution.<sup>7</sup>
- **State missing child and missing persons statutes.** Nearly all states have laws governing the timing to report a missing child to NCIC, which can vary widely from the federal requirement of two hours. In addition, states have disparate requirements for other provisions governing missing children and missing person cases; for example, some states require certain

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4. Reporting requirement for missing children, 34 U.S.C. § 41307, <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/USCODE-2020-title34/html/USCODE-2020-title34-subtitleIV-chap413-sec41307.htm>.


5. State requirements for reporting missing children, 34 U.S.C. § 41308, <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/USCODE-2020-title34/html/USCODE-2020-title34-subtitleIV-chap413-sec41308.htm>.

6. State requirements for reporting missing children (see note 5).

7. State requirements for reporting missing children (see note 5).







actions when a person older than 60 is missing (Silver Alert) or that law enforcement notify other agencies when a child is missing; in 2022, the state of Washington launched the Missing Indigenous Persons Alert (MIPA) System.<sup>8</sup>

- **Existing protocols and procedures.** Many Tribal, local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies have existing protocols and procedures governing their responses to missing person cases. Responding officials should familiarize themselves with the protocols of any agencies they expect to collaborate with on a missing person case so they will be fully aware of those agencies' response resources and limitations.

## II. Law enforcement in Indian country

Creating a standardized response to missing person cases in Indian country is difficult in part because of the maze of criminal jurisdiction provisions and wide variety of Tribal law enforcement agencies. There are 574 federally recognized Tribes in the United States, with Tribal lands spread across 36 states.<sup>9</sup> Although a detailed description of criminal jurisdiction issues is beyond the scope of this document, what follows is a general outline of some important jurisdictional issues to consider in developing a community response plan:

- **Indian country** is a legal term defined in 18 U.S.C. § 1151: (a) all land within the limits of any Indian reservation under the jurisdiction of the United States Government, notwithstanding the issuance of any patent, and, including rights-of-way running through the reservation, (b) all dependent Indian communities within the borders of the United States whether within the original or subsequently acquired territory thereof, and whether within or without the limits of a state, and (c) all Indian allotments, the Indian titles to which have not been extinguished, including rights-of-way running through the same.<sup>10</sup>
- **Public Law (P.L.) 280** (18 U.S.C. § 1162 and 25 U.S.C. § 1321) is legislation passed by Congress in 1953 that authorizes states to exercise criminal jurisdiction over offenses by or against Indians in some areas of Indian country. Tribes retain concurrent jurisdiction and the United States can accept current criminal jurisdiction per 25 U.S.C. 1321(a)(2).<sup>11</sup>
- **For non-P.L. 280 states**, when an abduction or other significant crime is part of a missing person case, criminal jurisdiction will depend on the location of the offense, the race of the victim and perpetrator, and the offense committed. Thus, the law enforcement agency with primary investigative responsibility in a missing person case in Indian country might not be a


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8. "State Launches M.I.P.A.—Missing Indigenous Person Alert System," Washington State Patrol, June 30, 2022, <https://www.wsp.wa.gov/2022/06/30/state-launches-m-i-p-a-missing-indigenous-person-alert-system>.

9. The following states, nor the District of Columbia, do not have federally recognized tribes: Arkansas, Delaware, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Kentucky, Maryland, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Vermont, and West Virginia.

10. Indian country defined, 18 U.S.C. § 1151, <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/USCODE-2020-title18/html/USCODE-2020-title18-partI-chap53-sec1151.htm>.

11. State jurisdiction over offenses committed by or against Indians in Indian country, 18 U.S.C. § 1162, <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/USCODE-2020-title18/html/USCODE-2020-title18-partI-chap53-sec1162.htm>; Assumption by State of criminal jurisdiction, 25 U.S.C. § 1321, <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/USCODE-2020-title25/html/USCODE-2020-title25-chap15-subchapIII-sec1321.htm>.



Tribal law enforcement agency. The guidelines, procedures, and suggested best practices in these guidance documents will be most effective if they are adopted by the widest range of law enforcement agencies possible: Tribal, local, state, and federal.

**Tribal law enforcement.** There are hundreds of law enforcement agencies operating in AI/AN communities. In addition to state or local law enforcement agencies that may have jurisdiction pursuant to P.L. 280, Tribal law enforcement agencies might also have primary investigative responsibilities. Tribal law enforcement is administered through the following processes:

- **BIA administered.** Some tribes elect to have BIA-OJS provide direct law enforcement services, which may include street officers, criminal investigators, and dispatchers. These BIA officers and staff are federal employees.
- **Tribally administered.** Tribes that elect to operate some or all of their law enforcement functions may enter into 638 contracts or compacts with BIA-OJS and receive funding to administer the service.<sup>12</sup> BIA-OJS may also provide training and oversight to ensure common standards. Officers and staff are Tribal employees. The vast majority of the more than 200 Tribal law enforcement agencies across the country operate under this model.
- **Tribal self-funding.** Tribes may also elect to fund and operate their own law enforcement agencies with no assistance or supervision from BIA-OJS. Only a few Tribes do so.
- **Village public safety officers (VPSO).** In some communities in rural Alaska, VPSOs serve as the first responders. VPSOs may not be armed, have limited authority, and are employed by regional native nonprofit corporations with assistance and oversight from the Alaska Department of Public Safety.
- **Village police officers / Tribal police officers.** Some villages and tribes in Alaska hire their own police officers, who are not connected with the Alaska Department of Public Safety.

### III. Capacities and authority of certain federal law enforcement agencies and organizations

Certain federal law enforcement agencies and organizations play a particularly important role in missing person cases in Tribal communities. The capacities and authority of several are set forth in this section. A list of federal law enforcement resources available to assist local, state, and Tribal law enforcement partners—other than BIA-OJS, FBI, and USMS resources—is provided in appendix C.

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12. “638 contract” refers to contracts the Federal Government makes with Tribes and refers to Public Law 93-638, the Indian Self Determination and Education Assistance Act, which is codified at 25 U.S.C. § 5301 et seq., <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/USCODE-2020-title25/html/USCODE-2020-title25-chap46.htm>.



## Bureau of Indian Affairs–Office of Justice Services

Part of the U.S. Department of the Interior, BIA-OJS oversees BIA’s law enforcement program. Through either direct service or indirectly through 638 contracts or self-governance compacts, BIA is responsible for the primary law enforcement agencies for approximately 200 federally recognized Tribes. A list of BIA resources available to assist local, state, and Tribal law enforcement partners is attached as appendix A.

## Federal Bureau of Investigation

The FBI may provide a wide range of investigative support and when appropriate may serve as the lead law enforcement agency. The FBI has specialized operational resources available to assist local, state, and Tribal law enforcement partners, particularly when the law enforcement agency would benefit from the use of investigative techniques they are unable to employ on their own.

When applicable, the FBI may open either a primary or concurrent investigation and deploy FBI resources, or a specific request from a law enforcement partner may be considered. While the process to initiate the request for assistance from the FBI will vary depending on the specialized operational resource sought, the local FBI office can assist the requesting agency in determining the appropriate investigative resource and preparing the official request for assistance. A list of FBI specialized operational resources available to assist local, state, and Tribal law enforcement partners is attached as appendix B.

The FBI’s Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) Division provides national crime information database services for 18,000 federal, Tribal, state, and local law enforcement agencies across the United States. The National Crime Information Center (NCIC), housed in the FBI’s CJIS Division, contains information belonging to federal, Tribal, state, and local agencies that submit that information based on the requirements of federal, Tribal, or state law. CJIS acts as a repository for that data and has regulations about how that data may be accessed, by whom, and for what purpose.

As noted earlier, in many missing person cases, entering information quickly into NCIC is required by federal law. Entering this information into NCIC’s Missing Person File (MPF) is a critical piece of any missing person investigation and helps facilitate the law enforcement response. Information is entered into NCIC/MPF when a missing person meets one of the following criteria:

- Has a proven physical or mental disability
- Is missing under circumstances indicating that they may be in physical danger
- Is missing under circumstances indicating their disappearance may not have been voluntary
- Is missing after a catastrophe
- Is missing and not declared emancipated as defined by the laws of their state of residence and does not meet any of the previously specified entry criteria



- Is missing and does not meet any of the previously specified criteria, but there is a reasonable concern for their safety or they are younger than 21 and declared emancipated as defined by the laws of their state of residence

Federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies can generally enter information into NCIC/MPF through their state CJIS Systems Agency (CSA). However, many Tribal law enforcement agencies do not have such access. To address this problem, the DOJ operates the Tribal Access Program (TAP). TAP allows selected federally recognized Tribes to access NCIC/MPF through the federal CSA.

## United States Marshals Service

The USMS is authorized under federal law to assist in any case where a child younger than 18 is missing.<sup>13</sup> When appropriate resources are available, the USMS Missing Child Unit (MCU) can contribute investigative, analytical, and technical support to a missing child investigation. With deputies located in all 94 federal judicial districts across the country, USMS is particularly well suited to respond to missing child cases. The authority for USMS to assist in missing child cases was enacted in 2015, and USMS/MCU continues to build its national roster of MCU-trained investigators. USMS/MCU is invested in and well equipped to focus on endangered runaway cases (13–17 years old).

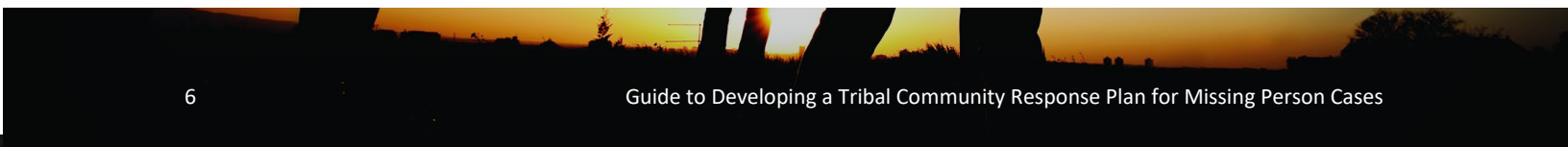
## National Center for Missing & Exploited Children

Since 1984, the NCMEC has assisted in missing child cases and supported law enforcement and families of missing children. NCMEC operates a national call center for missing persons younger than 21, which can be reached at 1-800-THE-LOST. NCMEC personnel take reports of missing children and offer the following resources:

- A 24-hour hotline to report missing children
- Case management and analysis
- Team Adam, a rapid-deploying onsite response and support system comprising some 90 retired investigators

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13. United States Marshals Service Powers and duties, 28 U.S.C. § 566, <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/USCODE-2020-title28/html/USCODE-2020-title28-partII-chap37-sec566.htm>.





- Partnerships:
  - Federal agency staff are detailed onsite to NCMEC, including staff from the U.S. Department of State Diplomatic Security Services, FBI, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), USMS, U.S. Postal Inspection Service, U.S. Secret Service, and military criminal investigators.
  - Missing person clearinghouses in every state provide resources for missing children and their families and are generally based in a state-level law enforcement agency such as a department of public safety or state police.
  - As the national clearinghouse for AMBER Alert information, NCMEC coordinates incoming alerts.

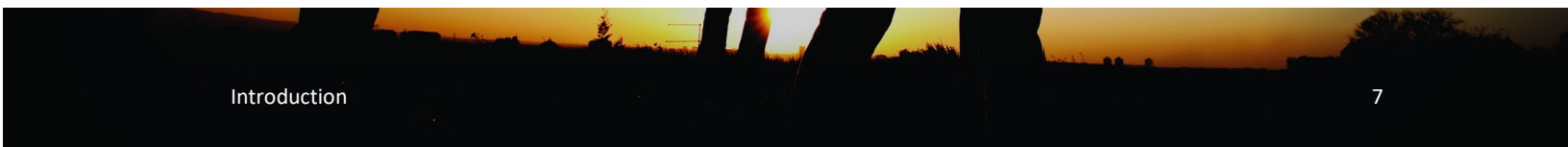
## Federal law enforcement commitment

Federal law enforcement agencies that participated in drafting this guide, including BIA-OJS, FBI, and USMS, support the steps outlined in it and are committed to continuing to work to improve their response to MMIP cases across the nation.

## IV. Developing your tribal community response plan process

To create a Tribal community response plan, the Tribe will first need to plan the drafting process. This guidance document will give you steps to consider in drafting an implementation outline—the roadmap to developing your Tribe’s community response plan. Remember, this is your community’s response plan, and you may choose to follow all, some, or none of the recommendations contained in these guidance documents. This guidance document covers six sections: (1) Inventory of Missing Person Policy, (2) Review of the Guidance Documents, (3) Development and Implementation of a Working Group, (4) Procedural Recommendations, (5) Compiling the Final Response Plan, and (6) Post-Development Processes.

Prior to or during the development process, it is recommended that you bring together a group of Tribal and community leaders, both governmental and nongovernmental, to learn about the response plan process and the four guidance documents (I. Developing Law Enforcement Agency Response Guidelines, II. Developing Victim Services Response Guidelines, III. Developing Media and Public Communications Response Guidelines, and IV. Developing Community Outreach Response Guidelines). If you desire, this can be coordinated through your local U.S. Attorney’s Office Tribal liaison. The presentation should provide a general overview of the Tribal community response plans and should include a final discussion on next steps. You should review the four guidance documents ahead of the meeting.







## 1. Inventory of missing person policy

- a. Does your Tribe have a law enforcement agency?
  - i. If yes, does that agency have a missing person policy?
  - ii. If not, who has primary jurisdiction for missing person cases for your Tribe?
- b. If the Tribe does not have a law enforcement agency, does your Tribe have a missing person policy? What agency maintains it?
- c. Who in that agency is responsible for reviewing and updating the missing person policy?
- d. Once a missing person policy is identified, a thorough and honest review of the policy should be conducted by the person identified who has maintenance responsibility, including the following:
  - i. Identify your agency's resource capabilities.
  - ii. Identify your agency's response capabilities.
  - iii. Do you work with outside law enforcement agencies? Do you have memoranda of understanding (MOU) or memoranda of agreement (MOA)?
  - iv. Do you have an organized search and rescue group?
  - v. Do you work with nongovernmental organizations and community groups?
- e. Prepare a written report of your inventory. Complete this report either —
  - i. Prior to beginning your response plan development process, or
  - ii. During the response plan development process.

## 2. Review of the guidance documents

- a. As you inventory your missing person policy and resource and response capabilities, review the four guidance documents: I. Developing Law Enforcement Agency Response Guidelines, II. Developing Victim Services Response Guidelines, III. Developing Media and Public Communications Response Guidelines, and IV. Developing Community Outreach Response Guidelines.
- b. Identify any policies or procedures your Tribe has in place for law enforcement response, media and public communications, victim services, and community outreach for a missing person case.
- c. Identify resources your Tribe already has in place to implement all or portions of these plans.
- d. Identify with whom you can partner to assist in the implementation of the plans.
- e. After reviewing the four guidance documents, identify all, some, or a combination of them for implementation consideration by the Tribal Community Response Plan working group(s).
- f. Once you have decided which guidelines your Tribe will develop, consider creating a working group(s) to develop the community response plan. You can create —
  - i. A separate working group for each guidance document, or
  - ii. One working group to address a number of the guidelines.








### 3. Development and implementation of working groups

- a. It is recommended as a best practice to have Tribal government leadership show support for the working groups, either directly or through an appointed Tribal leader or elder.
- b. It is recommended as a best practice that your working group(s) work with your U.S. Attorney's Office Tribal liaison to facilitate or moderate the working group(s).
- c. The Tribe should identify someone with strong leadership skills to support and lead the working group(s) with the facilitator.
- d. The Tribe should identify stakeholders to participate in and support the working group(s). These may be Tribal government, community-based organizations, outside law enforcement, or other parties. The Tribal liaison can support this effort.
- e. It is recommended as a best practice is to have a law enforcement representative on the working group(s).
- f. It is a recommended best practice to have a collaborative effort, as the response plan is Tribally driven.
- g. Finalize and approve your working group(s).

### 4. Procedural recommendations

- a. Keep in mind that this is a Tribally based plan.
- b. Engage the Tribal lead(s) in the planning phase:
  - i. Tribal Chief, President, Chair, etc.
  - ii. Tribal administrator, manager, chief executive officer, etc.
  - iii. Tribal law enforcement
  - iv. Tribal victim services
  - v. Other
- c. Distribute documents to Tribal lead(s) for distribution to response plan team members for pre-work review.
  - i. *This Guide to Developing a Tribal Community Response Plan for Missing Person Cases*
  - ii. Other documents specific to the Tribe or U.S. Attorney district
- d. Work with the Tribal lead(s) to use the Developing Community Outreach Response Guidelines document to develop an initial list of community response plan team members. (Members may be added as the team's needs are determined through the work process.)
  - i. The U.S. Attorney's Office Tribal liaison can provide input on what the needs are for the plan development process, to help the Tribe identify the appropriate participants and representatives.
  - ii. Determine who will do the invitations and outreach.
  - iii. Distribute materials to the participants.



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- e. Schedule initial meeting logistics:
    - i. Time
    - ii. Date
    - iii. In-person meeting, videoconference, or teleconference
    - iv. Identify topics for work in each scheduled section
    - v. Team members
    - vi. Your U.S. Attorney's Office Tribal liaison can facilitate/moderate your work with your Tribal lead(s) support if the Tribe wishes
    - vii. Note-taker
    - viii. Wellness break facilities and scheduling
    - ix. Snacks and drinks if in person
    - x. Technical support
    - xi. Basic ground rules for team consideration/modification
    - xii. Open in a good way
    - xiii. Close in a good way
    - xiv. Summary of work to start each day
    - xv. Debrief of work and experience to end each day
    - xvi. Wellness/mental health support available as needed
    - xvii. Tribal Community Response Plan drafting
      - 1. Start from template, or start from scratch?
      - 2. Who is the keeper of the community response plan writing?
        - (a) Sub/committee writers,
        - (b) Response plan lead(s), or
        - (c) U.S. Attorney's Office Tribal liaison at direction of the response plan participants
      - 3. Identify who will document the work.
      - 4. Set reasonable goals and deadlines.
    - xviii. Schedule a plan to finish the community response plan draft for Tribal approval. Share the final Tribal Community Response Plan with the Tribally identified stakeholders, working group(s), and U.S. Attorney's Office Tribal liaison.

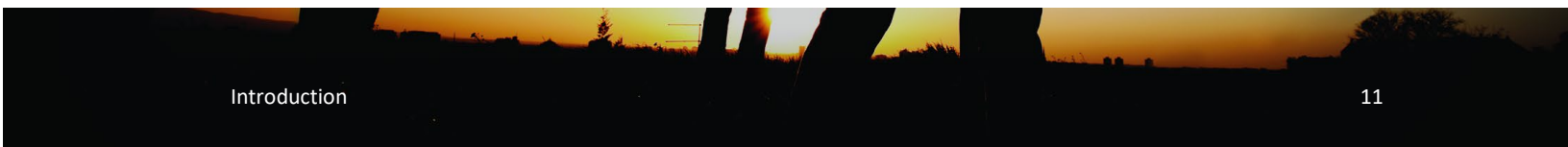


## 5. Compiling the final tribal community response plan

- a. How will the working group(s) come together to create the final draft?
- b. How will the working group(s) form a consensus?
- c. Will Tribal council have final approval? Or will a separate group of final decision makers approve the final draft?
- d. How will each working group present their guidelines to the other groups or final decision-makers?
- e. What will the final community response plan look like?
  - i. Guidebook?
  - ii. Checklists?
  - iii. Combination of both?
- f. Will you codify your response plan?
- g. Identify the “keepers” of the final community response plan (Tribal council, court, law enforcement, administration, search and rescue, or other (define)).

## 6. Post-development processes

- a. How often will your community review the community response plan? It is recommended as a best practice to review your community response plan annually, or as deemed appropriate by your Tribe.
  - i. Annually?
  - ii. Every year and a half?
  - iii. Every six months?
  - iv. Less or more often?
- b. After each critical missing person incident, review the lessons learned.
  - i. What worked?
  - ii. What didn't work?
  - iii. What did you not think about, i.e., were there surprises?
  - iv. Are there any adjustments needed to the response plan?
- c. Continue to work with your U.S. Attorney's Office Tribal liaison to develop a training plan to stay updated on your community response plan.







# I. Developing Law Enforcement Agency Response Guidelines for Missing Person Cases

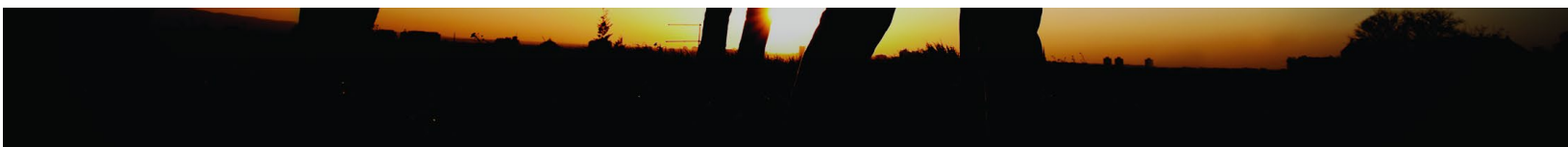
One of the best ways to prepare for missing person cases of all types is to develop a plan that is multidisciplinary and tailored to the resources of the AI/AN community and that elicits community assistance—and this plan can help effectively resolve these cases. This guidance document provides suggestions on how to develop law enforcement response guidelines for a law enforcement agency as part of an overall Tribal community response plan for missing person cases.

Recognizing that there is no one plan or set of guidelines to respond to missing persons in AI/AN communities that will fit the needs of every Tribe, this guidance document is designed to help a Tribal law enforcement agency establish its own guidelines. This document can be used as a starting point and a tool to help create guidelines specific to the needs and resources of the agency and its community. This guidance document is divided into two sections: (1) general implementation guidance and (2) investigation guidance. The first section includes information on conducting an inventory of resources, legal mandates, purpose and policy statements, definitions, and other considerations. The second section details the steps of an investigation, from setting up a command structure through initial report and response to ongoing investigation through long-term cases, return, and recovery.

## 1. General implementation guidance

When developing guidelines for missing person cases, the agency should first review its own resources, available community resources, its current approach to such cases, and relevant legal provisions.

Because cases involving AI/AN communities often require a multijurisdictional response, missing person guidelines should include procedures for resolving jurisdictional questions. An early determination of which agency will take the lead in a case helps avoid unnecessary delays in time-sensitive investigations. Jurisdictional questions in AI/AN communities are complex, so agencies in the community should collaboratively establish procedures in advance to determine jurisdiction and coordinate efforts.





People may go missing for many reasons. Some go missing voluntarily to flee domestic violence or financial difficulties. An agency’s guidelines should reflect that it is not a crime for an adult to go missing and how to respond if an adult is found and does not want their whereabouts known to others.

## Inventory

Missing person cases, particularly in AI/AN communities, often involve multiple agencies and other federal, Tribal, state, local, and nongovernmental organizations and resources in and available to the Tribal community. Thus, the agency should document which other agencies, organizations, and resources should be involved in each type of investigation.

### **Law enforcement and other federal, state, local, and nongovernmental organizations and resources**

The agency should have a clear understanding of its capacity to respond to and properly address a variety of missing person cases (e.g., abducted child, teenage runaway, person missing under suspicious circumstances, or elder with dementia or other cognitive impairment).

Agency leaders should critically assess department personnel and resources, available training, special skills such as tracking or digital forensics, and its ability to ensure an effective, informed, and timely response. Because missing person cases require a multidisciplinary community response, a thorough understanding of the training, resources, and capabilities of child protection, social, behavioral health, medical, victim, Tribal emergency service, and other community services is imperative. The agency guidelines should account for and merge seamlessly with the resources provided by those community organizations as part of an overall response plan.


### **Roster of contact information**

The agency should compile and maintain a comprehensive list of contact information for each community organization and develop a process to keep it updated. The following are the categories and types of agencies that should be included:

- Tribal community resources
  - Behavioral health services
  - Child protective services / social services (Tribal, BIA, state, etc.)
  - Community missing Indigenous person team
  - Cultural societies/groups
  - Elder programs
  - Emergency services
  - Local faith organizations
  - Medical health services
  - Missing person task forces or working groups
  - Preventative health services
  - Public affairs office
  - Search and rescue teams
  - Substance use disorder services
  - Victim services organizations





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- Local/State resources
    - AMBER Alert contact
    - Ashanti Alert contact
    - Silver Alert contact
    - State fusion center
    - State missing person task force
    - State missing person/child clearing-house
    - State police
    - Any local or Tribal law enforcement agency in the community or nearby
    - Any local or Tribal prosecutor's office in the community or nearby
    - Any local or Tribal victim services in the community or nearby
    - Any Tribal, state, or local probation office in the community or nearby
    - Other Tribal or state alert contact
  - Federal resources / international resources (see community outreach guidance document)
    - BIA-OJS law enforcement (if any in the area)
    - BIA Missing and Murdered Unit
    - FBI or state (or both) Child Abduction Rapid Deployment Team contact
    - Homeland Security / U.S. Border Patrol / ICE
    - Local FBI field office / resident agency
    - Local FBI field office victim specialist
    - Local U.S. Attorney's Office Tribal liaison
    - Local U.S. Attorney's Office victim witness assistant
    - Local U.S. Probation office
    - Local USMS
    - Local/regional NCMEC Team Adam point of contact
    - Regional National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs) contact
    - Royal Canadian Mounted Police provincial contacts, First Nation law enforcement contacts, and other international partners
  - Miscellaneous resources
    - Local press contacts (to distribute missing person information)
    - Other supporting agencies specific to the AI/AN community

## Federal or state database access

The agency should understand the type and extent of access it has to federal and state missing person databases before a person goes missing. For example, the agency may have its own access to the NCIC or it may have to submit information and queries through another agency, such as a local sheriff's office. In addition, the agency or submitting agency may not have sufficient staffing to submit all information and queries, in which case, the agency can work to address this deficiency.



## **FBI CJIS NCIC: MPF and Interstate Identification Index**

Having full entry access to FBI CJIS NCIC's MPF allows the agency to quickly enter information about a missing person into the MPF with details on the person's disappearance. Access to NCIC's Interstate Identification Index allows the agency to run criminal histories on suspects or witnesses and to quickly disseminate important "be on the lookout" (BOLO) messages in missing person cases. If the agency does not yet have access, it can request access through the state's FBI CSA (usually the state police or Attorney General's Office); apply to participate in the DOJ's TAP, which provides CJIS access through DOJ; or enter a MOU or MOA with a neighboring agency to enter information and queries for the agency. To determine if the agency already has entry access to the MPF, contact FBI CJIS's Tribal Engagement Program at [cjisTribaloutreach@fbi.gov](mailto:cjisTribaloutreach@fbi.gov).

## **The National Missing and Unidentified Persons System**

NamUs is a publicly accessible online repository for information about missing persons and unidentified human remains. It is owned by DOJ and operated by DOJ's National Institute of Justice through a contract. It houses information on long-term missing person and unidentified remains cases, and has regional support specialists who can assist law enforcement agencies and the public.<sup>14</sup> The agency should ensure personnel know how to enter information on long-term missing person and unidentified remains cases into NamUs. Visit <https://namus.nij.ojp.gov/> to become familiar with the platform.

## **Law Enforcement Enterprise Portal**

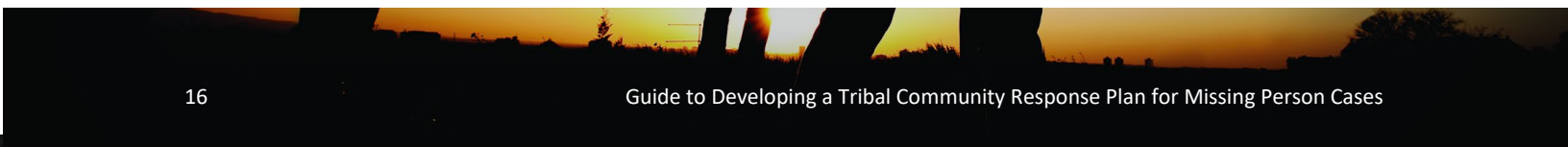
The Law Enforcement Enterprise Portal (LEEP) is a secure platform for law enforcement agencies, intelligence groups, and criminal justice entities. LEEP provides web-based investigative tools and analytical resources, and the networking it supports is unrivaled by other platforms available to law enforcement. Users collaborate in a secure environment, use tools to strengthen their cases, and share departmental documents. To learn more about LEEP and apply for an account, visit <https://le.fbi.gov/informational-tools/leep>.

## **State fusion centers**

Fusion centers are owned and operated by state and local entities and are designated by the governor of their state. There are two types of fusion centers: (1) primary and (2) recognized. Primary fusion centers typically provide information sharing and analysis for an entire state. These centers are the highest priority for the allocation of available federal resources, including the deployment of personnel and connectivity with federal data systems. Recognized fusion centers typically provide information sharing and analysis for a major urban area. As the Federal Government respects the authority of state governments to designate fusion centers, any designated fusion center not designated as a primary fusion center is referred to as a recognized fusion center.

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14. "Meet the NamUs Team," National Missing and Unidentified Persons System, accessed October 4, 2022, [https://namus.nij.ojp.gov/about/staff?field\\_contact\\_division\\_target\\_id=16&combine=](https://namus.nij.ojp.gov/about/staff?field_contact_division_target_id=16&combine=).





## Legal mandates

There are a wide range of federal, Tribal, state, and local mandates that might apply to an agency in guiding its response to a missing person case. Many of those federal mandates are set forth earlier in this guide. The agency should consult with its own legal counsel to review federal, Tribal, state, and local laws to determine which mandates apply and to incorporate those requirements in its missing person guidelines.

## Purpose

The agency should consider stating a purpose or mission in the introductory section of the guidelines. This is the agency's opportunity to describe why the guidelines exist. For example, a "purpose" section could read:

The purpose of these guidelines is to establish responsibilities regarding [Agency]'s response to reports of missing persons.

The agency can state a more detailed purpose or omit the section altogether.

## Policy statements

The agency should consider setting forth broad policy statements to help guide the general actions of officers and staff members during a missing person investigation. These should be general, easy to remember, and repeated often so that they become guiding principles for the agency. Examples of such statements include the following:

- [This agency] will thoroughly investigate all reports of persons gone missing from or believed to be in its jurisdiction.
- [This agency] will not require a waiting period before a missing report can be submitted.
- [This agency] will enter every missing person report that meets the FBI CJIS NCIC missing person criteria.
- [This agency] will ensure that all unresolved missing person cases are kept active by means of validation through NCIC until the case is resolved.





- In cases involving persons reported missing from Indian Country or believed to be in Indian Country, jurisdiction should be quickly evaluated to determine the lead agency to investigate the report.
  - If the missing person is an Indian, generally the local Tribal or BIA-OJS agency will immediately initiate the investigation process described in this policy.
  - If the missing person is a non-Indian, generally the local or state agency in that jurisdiction will assume responsibility for the investigation.
- All investigative materials, including but not limited to notes, recordings of interviews, and documents, should be preserved in accordance with agency policy and made accessible to any authorized agency upon proper request.

## Definitions

The tapestry of legal terms applicable to missing person cases across federal, Tribal, state, and local agencies can be confusing even for experienced practitioners. The agency should specifically define the terms used in its guidelines. The agency should also add to its guidelines any other necessary terms and adjust definitions required by Tribal, state, and local laws. Some of the terms that the agency may want to use include the following:

**Adult.** Any person aged 18 years or older.

**AMBER Alert.** A public notification system used to broadcast information about abducted children, aged 17 years of younger, as described in 34 U.S.C. § 20501 et seq.

**Ashanti Alert.** A public notification system used to broadcast information about missing adults, aged 18 to 75 years, as described in 34 U.S.C. § 21901 et seq.

**At-Risk missing person.** A missing person aged 18 years or older for whom there is a reasonable concern for their safety or for whom one or more **risk factors** (q.v.) is present.

**Child of tender years.** A child aged 12 years or younger, as defined in FBI protocol.

**Endangered runaway.** A missing child older than age 12 but younger than 18, where credible information exists that the child has left parents or legal guardians without permission and for whom there is a reasonable concern for their safety or for whom one or more **risk factors** (q.v.) is present.





**Indian country.** As defined by 18 U.S.C. § 1151, this includes (a) all land within an Indian reservation that is under the U.S. government’s jurisdiction, (b) all dependent Indian communities within U.S. borders, and (c) all Indian allotments that have not been extinguished.

**Indian Tribe.** A federally recognized Indian Tribe or a Native village, regional corporation, or village corporation (as defined in the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act or Alaska Native Tribal consortium) listed as eligible to receive BIA services.<sup>15</sup>

**Law enforcement agency.** A federal, Tribal, state, or local law enforcement agency.

**Missing adult.** An individual who

- is older than the age for which an AMBER Alert may be issued in the state or Tribal territory where the individual is identified as missing;
- is identified by law enforcement as missing;
- meets the requirements to be designated as a missing adult, as determined by the state or Tribal territory where the individual is identified as missing.<sup>16</sup>

**Missing child.** Any individual younger than age 18 whose whereabouts are unknown to their parent or guardian.<sup>17</sup>

**Risk factors.** Risk factors for missing persons, such as endangered runaways or at-risk missing persons, can include one or more of the following circumstances:

- Being out of the zone of safety for their age and developmental stage
- Having physical, mental, behavioral, or cognitive conditions or disabilities
- Being drug dependent, including prescribed medication and/or illegal substances, and the dependency is potentially life-threatening

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15. Notification by the United States Marshals Service, 34 U.S.C. § 20504(f), <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/USCODE-2020-title34/html/USCODE-2020-title34-subtitleI-chap215-sec21504.htm>; Ashanti Alert Communications Network Definitions, 34 U.S.C. § 21901(6), <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/USCODE-2020-title34/html/USCODE-2020-title34-subtitleI-chap219-sec21901.htm>; Alaska Native Claims Settlement Definitions, 43 U.S.C. § 1602, <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/USCODE-2020-title43/html/USCODE-2020-title43-chap33-sec1602.htm>.

16. Ashanti Alert Communications Network Definitions, 34 U.S.C. § 21901(7) (see note 15).

17. Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Missing Children Definitions, 34 U.S.C. § 11292(1), <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/USCODE-2020-title34/html/USCODE-2020-title34-subtitleI-chap111-subchapIV-sec11292.htm>.





- Being in a life-threatening situation (e.g., suicidal ideation, experienced past threats, or acts of violence)
- Being in the company of others who could endanger their welfare
- Being absent in a way inconsistent with established patterns of behavior and the deviation cannot be readily explained
- Being in a situation causing a reasonable person to conclude the person should be considered at risk

**Silver Alert.** A public notification system used to broadcast information about missing persons, especially older adults with Alzheimer's disease, dementia, or other mental disabilities, to help locate them.

**Young adult.** Any person aged 18 to 20 years.

## Other guidelines to consider as part of the law enforcement agency guidelines for missing person cases

The agency should consider developing other guidelines for missing person cases, including victim services, media and public communications, and community outreach. Guidance documents for developing those guidelines have also been developed and are also available from various locations, including U. S. Attorney's Offices and on the U.S. Department of Justice MMIP website and are included in later sections of this guide.<sup>18</sup>

## 2. Investigation guidance

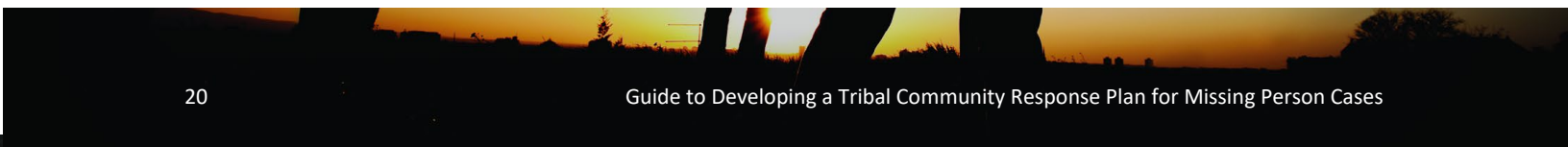
Every missing person investigation should be tailored to the circumstances of the particular case.

There are many circumstances that will require a different level of response and different investigative strategies and techniques. For example, a juvenile in foster care may frequently run away in a similar manner or to the same locations. In that case, the agency's guidelines may first direct contact to the foster family, child protective services, or those previously involved in helping a juvenile who had run away or direct a check of common locations to where the teen tends to go.


Using this guidance document as a starting point, the agency may choose to create a single set of guidelines or to develop multiple sets for different types of missing person cases (e.g., Missing Child of Tender Years, Endangered Runaways, Missing Older Adults). The agency should incorporate and streamline its existing policies or protocols with the new or revised missing person guidelines developed using this guidance document.

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18. "Missing or Murdered Indigenous Persons," U.S. Department of Justice, accessed October 4, 2022, <https://www.justice.gov/tribal/mmip>.







The agency is also encouraged to refer to the FBI's *Child Abduction Response Plan: An Investigative Guide* (3rd edition) for detailed discussions of the topics in this section.<sup>19</sup> The FBI publication provides valuable information that should be considered in the development of these guidelines.

## Command structure

The command structure for the response to a missing person case will depend on the personnel available to the agency and circumstances of the case.

The following list of tasks and responsibilities that may be required during a missing person investigation is not exhaustive, nor in any particular order. Some of these roles may be fulfilled by the same person, depending on the size of the agency. The agency should create a detailed list of roles and responsibilities, including these and other relevant tasks and chain-of-command, as it develops its plan or guidelines. If an agency does not have sufficient personnel to fulfill the necessary investigative tasks, it can enhance its resources with resources from community organizations through a Tribal community response plan and entering into MOUs or MOAs with neighboring agencies.

The agency should consider specifying which personnel will be generally responsible for the following tasks:

- Incident command

A missing person investigation may involve multiple agencies, community organizations, and more. Proper coordination of these entities and their resources is important. Thus, a single, experienced law enforcement officer could be designated to oversee all aspects of a missing person investigation.

- Case agent

A lead investigator or multiple investigators can be appointed in advance to handle incoming information and direct all investigative action, and a supervisor can also be identified.

- Crime scene supervision

The location where the person went missing will likely need to be secured and monitored until the completion of the physical investigation of the space. The personnel who will secure the scene and how movement in and out of the scene will be tracked can be determined.

- General search coordination

In many cases, a well-coordinated search for the missing person should be initiated as soon as possible after a report is received. The personnel who will lead this effort and who will supervise them can be determined.

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19. Child Abduction and Serial Killer Unit, *Child Abduction Response Plan: An Investigative Guide* (Quantico, VA: Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2004), <https://www.ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/child-abduction-response-plan-investigative-guide>.



- Neighborhood/Area investigation coordination

A team may be required to conduct a thorough investigation of the area or neighborhood where a person went missing, including interviews, physical searches, and evidence collection. The personnel who will lead this effort and who will supervise them can be determined.
- Digital searches

The preservation and search of electronic devices can be critical in a missing person investigation. The personnel who will coordinate those searches and secure any necessary court orders or subpoenas can be determined.
- Forensic searches

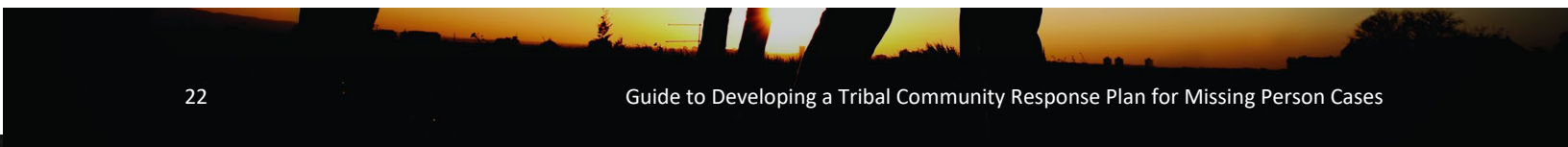
Depending on the complexity and duration of an investigation, it might become necessary to collect various kinds of forensic evidence and submit them for analysis. This could include fingerprints, DNA samples, hair samples, and palm prints. The personnel who will collect forensic evidence and where it will be submitted for analysis can be determined.
- Incoming information coordination

An experienced investigator or administrative specialist may need to be appointed to receive, assess, and categorize all incoming information for dissemination and action. Those personnel and their direct supervisor can be determined, as well as how incoming information will be routed and properly addressed.
- Liaison with outside agencies and organizations

A missing person investigation will likely involve multiple agencies and other organizations. The person or team who should be responsible for maintaining a clear line of communication with these outside organizations can be determined, as well as how communications with those organizations will be maintained, in a central location, so that the entire investigative team can access the information promptly.
- Media relations

The media can be a valuable resource in a missing person investigation. The person who will be responsible for determining what information can be shared with the public and who will be tasked with communicating accurate and timely information to local media to disseminate information about the missing person can be determined.
- Volunteer coordination

An investigation might need qualified volunteers to assist in the search for a missing person or perform other duties. The person who will be responsible for recruitment and supervision can be determined.





## Initial report and response

There can be multiple stages in a missing person investigation, and the movement from one stage to another is not always linear. However, it is helpful to be prepared for three main stages of an investigation: (1) receipt of the initial report and preliminary investigation, (2) response to a confirmed report of a missing person, and (3) ongoing investigation procedures.

The initial report of a missing person may be received by an agency through any number of mechanisms: a call to police dispatch, flagging down an officer, or otherwise contacting sworn law enforcement.

For cases involving a missing AI/AN, the initial report might be received by the FBI, BIA, a Tribal law enforcement agency, or a VPSO—or it may be received by city, county, or state law enforcement. An example of guidelines language for the receipt of an initial report follows:

When a person is reported missing, if [this agency] is the lead investigative agency, it will ensure that the following actions take place as quickly as possible:

- Dispatch a sworn officer, without delay, to the location where the missing person was last seen.
- Identify and separately interview the reporting party and any other witnesses present at the scene.
- Obtain the full name, age, and current physical description of the missing person.
- Determine the circumstances of the disappearance, including
  - when, where, and by whom the missing person was last seen;
  - whether there is any information about or description of a potential suspect, suspect vehicle, or both.
- Determine if the missing person has any risk factors that might endanger their welfare.
- If the missing person is a child:
  - Confirm the child's legal and physical custody status.
  - Identify the missing child's zone of safety for their age and developmental stage.
- Notify a supervisor of the report.
- The supervisor will review the responding officer's report for completeness and accuracy and consult with the responding officer to determine if the person should be considered missing and endangered, and, if so, determine the appropriate classification for entry to NCIC. (See "Submitting information to NCIC and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children on page 31 for classification information.)



- Upon confirmation that the person is missing and under 21 years old, the investigating officer shall ensure that the steps in “Submitting Information to NCIC and National Center for Missing & Endangered Children” on page 31 are taken by [this agency]; if no other person is available to take such actions, the investigating officer shall complete those steps.
- Communicate known details about the missing person to agency patrol units and to law enforcement agencies in surrounding jurisdictions and places where the missing person may be traveling.
- If a missing child and the facts meet the standards of an AMBER Alert, contact the state AMBER Alert coordinator to initiate an AMBER Alert; see steps in “Requirements for issuing AMBER Alert, Ashanti Alert, Endangered Missing Person Advisory, or Silver Alert” on page 33.
- If the circumstances do not allow an AMBER Alert to be initiated, consider activating other Tribal/state broadcast media protocols available in the agency’s operational area (e.g., Missing Endangered Person Alert (MEPA)).
- If the missing person is an At-Risk Missing Person, consider activating adult-related broadcast media protocols (e.g., Ashanti Alert, Silver Alert, or Crime Alert System Notifications; see steps in “Requirements for issuing AMBER Alert, Ashanti Alert, Endangered Missing Person Advisory, or Silver Alert” on page 33).

The guidelines can detail how a missing person report is taken (e.g., if a specific form is used, what specific information to take), how a preliminary investigation is performed, how information regarding the missing person is assessed, how an at-risk determination is made and a case is classified, which supervisor is notified and by which means, and how BOLO alerts and other alerts are authorized and communicated. The agency should tailor its guidelines to its particular circumstances and needs.

## Response to a confirmed report of a missing person

The process for responding to a confirmed report of a missing person will vary based on the lead agency involved and information obtained in the preliminary investigation. The agency is encouraged to tailor its response to the particular circumstances and the resources available. Once a report is received, processed, and confirmed, the timeliness and thoroughness of the response of law enforcement often is the difference in whether a person is located quickly and safely or not. In addition, there may be a time at which a missing person investigation becomes a criminal investigation, or otherwise needs to be assigned to another lead investigative agency. During the process of developing these law enforcement guidelines, consider including the agency or agencies to identify the circumstances and process for such a transition.

The following sample guideline language and suggested best practices address the process of expanding a response to a confirmed report of a missing person. Some of the suggested steps may be performed during the preliminary investigation and may be repeated in this stage of the





investigation. The agency should consider the provisions of this section, add details and requirements as needed, and tailor the guidelines to its local circumstances, including adjusting guidelines language to accurately reflect the capacity of outside law enforcement agencies (e.g., FBI, USMS) to assist in their local area.

Following the initial response and preliminary investigation, the officer(s) assigned to the case may need to initiate an expanded investigation. The investigating officer(s) and other personnel as indicated may take some or all of the following steps in the order necessitated by circumstances:

- Respond promptly to the scene of the report and, if available, activate vehicle and body cameras for the purposes of documenting the scene and conversations with witnesses.
- Obtain a recent and appropriate photograph of the missing person, if available, as well as a detailed description of the clothing the person is believed to be wearing and all other items the person is thought to have in their possession. Officers should also determine if the missing person left behind any items that would commonly be in their possession, such as a purse, wallet, phone, or keys.
- Determine if specialized outside help is needed. If so, arrange for federal, Tribal, state, or local resources, which may include a community missing Indigenous person team (if applicable), search and rescue (SAR) resources, investigative resources, forensic resources, interpretive services, technical services, telephone services (traps, traces, triangulation/location data), and media assistance.
- If the missing person is a child of tender years who went missing under suspicious circumstances, an abducted person, or any person where there are indications a crime caused or contributed to the person's disappearance, promptly notify the FBI, BIA, or state police (P.L. 280 Tribes) to establish communications and ensure timely response and introduction of specialized resources. (See "Requesting assistance from other law enforcement agencies" on page 33.)
- If the missing person is under 18 years old and deemed to be an endangered runaway, promptly notify the USMS MCU to establish communications and ensure timely response and introduction of specialized resources. (See "Requesting assistance from other law enforcement agencies" on page 33.)
- Dispatch more officers to the area surrounding the last known location of the missing person.
- Seal and otherwise protect the scene of the disappearance and any other potential crimes scenes, including the missing person's room or residence, which may contain needed forensic evidence.





- Conduct a detailed search of the area where the person was last seen; if the person is reported missing from their home, ensure a thorough search is made of the residence and any other structures or vehicles on the property. The search should include any space or container large enough to conceal a person.
- As appropriate, use officers in marked vehicles to set up checkpoints at logical traffic chokepoints around the perimeter of the area.
- Document and log identifying information about all vehicles in the area of a possible abduction to help investigators compare vehicle registrations against any results from the neighborhood canvass and to identify potential suspects.
- Determine whether and what kind of access the missing person had to a cellphone(s), tablets, computers, gaming systems, or other communication devices.
- Obtain all email addresses, social media site usernames or profiles, passwords, and all other online identities used by the missing person.
- Notify and incorporate members of key community organizations, including Tribal and federal multidisciplinary teams or the Tribal child protection team.
- Assign a victim specialist to interface with and support the missing person's family.
- Conduct a preliminary canvass of the neighborhood or location where the missing person was last seen to identify potential witnesses and vehicles in the vicinity.
- Secure the missing person's room or residence as a potential crime scene. This is a good location to identify journals, notes, digital media, and other items that may provide insight into the missing person's whereabouts.
- At the missing person's residence, obtain "known samples" from the missing person for use in ongoing or future forensic examinations (e.g., hair, body fluids, fingerprints).
- In cases involving children, obtain child protective agency records for reports of child abuse.
- Review records for previous incidents related to the missing person and prior police activity in the area, including prowlers, indecent exposure, attempted abductions, etc.







## Ongoing investigation procedures

Subsequent investigative steps will vary greatly depending on the age of the missing person, the circumstances of their disappearance, and the resources available to the agency.

In establishing guidelines, the agency can describe when, how, and under what circumstances the following actions may be taken.

### Administrative

- Establish command posts (temporary and fixed)

A temporary command post may need to be established early in the investigation to be a physical base of operations near the location where the person went missing. A fixed command post may then need to be established as soon as possible afterward at a secure location.

- Track case information

For investigative and prosecution purposes, it is usually critical to maintain a centralized repository of information about the case. Which platform will be used and who will enter and maintain the data can be determined. Systematically documenting and tracking case information (such as neighborhood search results indicating what homes were covered and who was contacted) avoids confusion and duplication of efforts. There are federally supported, no-cost lead-tracking software options available from the FBI, such as the Virtual Command Center through LEEP.

- Establish briefing schedules for investigators and supporting personnel

To best coordinate with any personnel involved in the investigation, consider establishing and maintaining a daily briefing schedule tailored to the needs and size of the investigation.

- NCIC MPF

- Update the NCIC file, as necessary, with any additional information gathered during the investigation regarding the missing person, suspect(s), and vehicle(s).
- Validate the FBI CJIS NCIC MPF when requested to do so, or the information will be removed. All MPF records are subject to validation in the first 60–90 days of entry and then every year following their initial validation.
- As soon as the missing person is found and confirmed to be the person in the FBI CJIS NCIC MPF, a “Locate message” should be placed in the record by the finding agency. The record will then be automatically cleared from the FBI CJIS NCIC MPF.

- NamUs

Consider entering the missing person into NamUs after 30 days. Information on NamUs can be found at <https://namus.nij.ojp.gov/>.



- Case file

Organize the case file into a logical order to allow information to be easily retrieved and managed by current and future investigators.

## Communication

- Communicating with Tribal leadership and the community

If there is a missing person case in an AI/AN community, it is particularly important to keep Tribal leadership and the community regularly updated about the investigation's status. AI/AN communities may use communication methods different from those with which law enforcement is most familiar; it is not unusual for Facebook, other social media or a Tribally operated radio station to be the most efficient way to provide information. Determine which media platforms to use in coordination with the media and public communications group lead.

- Coordination with federal, Tribal, state, and local investigators

A missing person investigation could include dozens of law enforcement personnel from multiple agencies. How the agency will keep all personnel current with any developments in the investigation can be determined.

- Coordination with federal, Tribal, state, and local probation officers

Probation officers are a valuable source of information about convicted persons who live, work, or otherwise frequent the area where the missing person was last seen. When and how to contact the probation officers can be determined.

- Coordination with federal, Tribal, state, and local prosecutors

Coordination with the applicable prosecutor's office early in an investigation is critical to secure any necessary search warrants, subpoenas, or court orders. In addition, prosecutors can help guide the investigation to avoid legal pitfalls. When and how to coordinate with can be determined.

- Establishing a phone number, website, or email address for information

It is important that the public have dedicated methods of communicating information and tips relevant to a missing person case. A phone number and a way to send information online, such as a dedicated website or email address, can be established.

Consider seeking the ability to "trap and trace" all incoming calls to the fixed command post or missing person hotline with a device that documents all incoming phone numbers. Maintain detailed records of all incoming calls and messages.

- Requesting and incorporating community assistance

The eyes and ears of the community can be a tremendous resource during a missing person investigation. Outline the steps the agency can take to request assistance from the community and develop a strategy for receiving and following up on any leads received.





## Evidence collection and analysis

- 911 call / Call to police dispatch

Obtain the recording of the original 911 call or other initial call to law enforcement and all related documents.

- Cell phone analysis

Investigators can determine the phone number and service provider for any cell phone of the missing person, particularly one still believed to be in their possession. Preservation orders can be submitted to the service provider until the appropriate legal paperwork can be obtained, and exigency requests should be used, if appropriate. In addition, cell phone tower data may assist in locating a missing person.

- General searches

A general area search is the physical search for the missing person and could include any location, space, or container large enough to conceal a person. During the course of an investigation, there might be multiple general searches conducted using a number of different search strategies. The agency's guidelines can detail which investigative unit will conduct these general searches and might also specify which techniques could be used (zone search, wheel search, spiral search, etc.).

- Digital searches

The missing person and their family likely will have items such as laptop or desktop computers, tablets, phones, or gaming systems that might hold valuable information for the investigation. The agency's guidelines can detail which investigative unit will be responsible for seizing such electronics and what search guidelines should be followed.

- Forensic searches

Searches to collect forensic evidence performed by specialized teams (Evidence Response / Crime Scene Investigation Team) can be conducted at the missing person's home and the location where the person was last seen.

- Collection of records

Consider obtaining the missing person's medical and dental records as soon as practical.

- License plate readers

Investigators can determine if there are license plate readers in the area where the person went missing or on any probable travel routes to and from that location. Data from the relevant time period can be secured for future analysis.





- **Trash cans and dumpsters**

In some cases, a missing person's body is discovered in a trash receptacle or a landfill. Consider a search of any trash cans or dumpsters in the area of the disappearance and whether to work with governments and private companies to delay trash collection in the area the person went missing. To help with the timing of those searches, consider obtaining information about collection schedules, transfer stations, landfill locations, or other dump sites in case a search of those locations becomes necessary.

- **Video canvass**

Investigators can establish probable travel routes to and from the location where the person went missing and obtain any available security videos or traffic camera footage from the relevant time period. This collection will often need to be done within 24 hours to ensure video is not overwritten or otherwise deleted.

- **Aerial photos**

Consider securing aerial photos of the area of disappearance, either actual photographs or secured from a web-based platform, which can help investigators visualize strategies for searches, canvasses, and other investigative activities.

## **Investigative**

- **Comprehensive interviews**

Interviews can be conducted with any additional pertinent witnesses, such as family members, close associates, or people who may have been in the area when the person went missing. These witnesses will likely need to be interviewed separately and as quickly as possible after an investigation begins.

- **Develop a timeline**

Identify the window of opportunity, which is the period of time between the person's last confirmed sighting and the time that the person was reported missing. This timeline assists investigators in focusing interviews, resources, and narrowing the list of potential suspects.

- **Duplicate clothing**

It can be helpful to secure an exact duplicate of the clothing worn by the missing person at the time of their disappearance, to provide accurate details to investigators and the public. The duplicate set of clothes should be appropriately preserved for possible future forensic use.

- **Intelligence analysis**

Obtaining and analyzing intelligence in a missing person case is often critical to the investigation. Searching law enforcement and commercial databases, conducting open source research, and producing analytical products can be tremendously helpful. If the agency does not have the in-house capacity to do this analysis, determine how it can be done or who to contact for assistance. State fusion centers can be an excellent resource for exigent database searches: law enforcement, commercial, and open source. Every state has a fusion center that is part of the national network.





- Neighborhood investigation

Once sufficient personnel are in place, the agency should consider conducting a comprehensive neighborhood investigation in the area the missing person was last seen. This investigation includes interviewing property owners and searching properties, including vehicles and containers, in the targeted area.

- Sex offenders and others known to law enforcement

Investigators should consider interviewing any registered sex offenders or other persons of interest known to law enforcement who are in the general vicinity of the location where a person went missing as part of the investigation.

- Suspect investigation

If an abduction is suspected, personnel should be assigned to specifically investigate a subject. The investigation should likely include interviews with known associates, searches, electronic device analysis, and criminal and commercial database inquiries.

- Roadblock canvasses

The roadblock canvass is distinct from the checkpoints set up early in an investigation. Here, the goal is to identify persons who routinely travel through the area where a person went missing and may have information pertinent to the investigation. This canvass should take place the next day after the person goes missing (or is reported missing) at the same time period the missing person was last seen and may continue for several days at a similar time.

- Vehicle documentation

Logging identifying information about all vehicles in the area of a possible abduction will help investigators compare vehicle registrations against any results from the neighborhood canvass and to identify potential suspects.

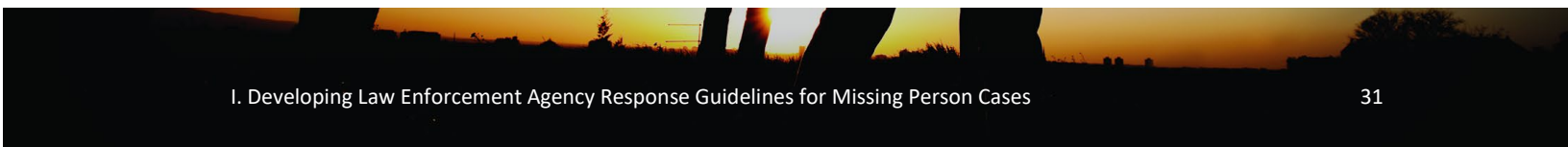
- Creating a victim profile (victimology)

A comprehensive investigation into a missing person's background and family dynamics can provide helpful information in an investigation.

## Submitting information to NCIC and NCMEC

The gateway to many federal and national-level resources in a missing person investigation is submission of information about that missing person to NCIC MPF and, for children and young adults, to NCMEC. These submissions enable assistance from a wide range of federal law enforcement agencies, and other support. The submission of information about a missing person to NCIC and NCMEC can only be made by law enforcement.

FBI CJIS provides detailed technical instructions on how to enter a missing person into NCIC. The agency should consider either placing these specific instructions in its guidelines or cross-reference a location where they can easily be found. For all missing person cases, the agency should





adhere to the reporting requirements outlined in 34 U.S.C. § 41308, requiring that any missing person younger than 21 be entered into NCIC within two hours of receipt of the minimum data required to enter a record into the FBI CJIS NCIC MPF. This information shall include the following:

- The name, date of birth, sex, race, height, weight, and eye and hair color of the missing person
- The date and location of the last known contact with the missing person
- The NCIC classification under which the person is reported missing:
  - **Disability (EMD).** A person of any age who is missing and has a proven physical or mental disability.
  - **Endangered (EME).** A person of any age who is missing under circumstances indicating that they may be in physical danger.
  - **Involuntary (EMI).** A person of any age who is missing under circumstances indicating their disappearance may not have been voluntary, e.g., abduction or kidnapping.
  - **Catastrophe victim (EMV).** A person of any age who is missing after a catastrophe.
  - **Juvenile (EMJ).** A person who is missing and not declared emancipated as defined by the laws of their state of residence and does not meet any of the above entry criteria.
  - **Other (EMO).** A person who is missing and does not meet any of the above criteria but there is a reasonable concern for their safety or is younger than 21 and declared emancipated as defined by the laws their state of residence.

It should be noted that a missing person may fall into several classifications, but only one classification code can be entered into NCIC. The classification code entered for a missing person is established at the discretion of the reviewing supervisor following a review of all available information. It is helpful if additional pertinent information regarding the missing person, including Tribal affiliation and if the person went missing from Tribal lands, is entered into the “Miscellaneous” field in the NCIC entry record.

In the case of a missing child or young adult, once the agency has determined that the child or young adult is in fact missing, it should promptly contact NCMEC at 1-800-THE-LOST to make a report. The agency’s guidelines should specify which staff member will make this notification and how to record it in the agency’s records.







## Requesting assistance from other law enforcement agencies

Every missing person investigation begins with a single agency. In cases where an agency's resources are limited or in multijurisdictional or otherwise complex cases, agencies are often compelled to call on resources provided by outside law enforcement agencies. The timely introduction of these resources can be essential to the safe recovery of the missing person. The guidelines should specify when and how requests will be made to the FBI, BIA-OJS, and USMS and to local and state law enforcement. An example of such guideline language follows and should be tailored as appropriate to local capacity and circumstances.


- In any missing person case involving a Child of Tender Years, [this agency] will contact the FBI for assistance.
- In any missing person case involving an Endangered Runaway, [this agency] will contact the USMS for assistance.
- In any missing person case involving an endangered missing person, [this agency] will contact the BIA-OJS for assistance and specialized resources.
- In any missing person case where there is evidence of foul play, abduction, or where the person is missing under suspicious circumstances, [this agency] will contact the FBI for assistance and specialized resources.
- [This agency] will contact the [FBI or appropriate outside law enforcement agency] for specialized investigative or technical assistance in any case deemed appropriate.
- [This agency] will request assistance from NCMEC in any case deemed appropriate by [this agency] where the missing person is under 21 years old.

## Requirements for issuing AMBER Alert, Ashanti Alert, Endangered Missing Person Advisory, or Silver Alert

There are generally four kinds of public alerts that may be available to law enforcement when investigating a missing person case. The requirements for each are governed by state or Tribal law; each agency's missing person guidelines should specifically address the situations where each alert will be utilized, and the procedures to do so.

1. **AMBER Alerts** enable public service announcements on various platforms in cases of abducted children.
2. **Ashanti Alerts** enable public service announcements on various platforms in cases of missing adults.



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3. **MEPAs** have been developed by many states for use when other alerts are not applicable.
  4. **Silver Alerts** are used by many states to facilitate searches for mentally impaired or older adults.

## When an American Indian or Alaska Native goes missing off Tribal land

The agency should consider outlining steps, such as the following, to take if an AI/AN person is reported missing from a location outside that agency's jurisdiction. For example, the agency could determine if the missing person has been entered into the NCIC MPF or the appropriate state missing person clearinghouses, and if not, the agency could then contact the lead agency in that jurisdiction to encourage it to report the missing person or establish whether there is an ongoing investigation. The agency could also offer assistance such as interviews of family members living within the agency's jurisdiction, obtaining medical and dental records, collecting known DNA samples from the missing person's home or family, providing pertinent information from Tribal social service agencies, locating next of kin, and establishing victim support services for the missing person's family members. In addition, the agency could advise the lead agency on specific cultural considerations that may assist it in its investigation and serve as an important link between the lead agency and helpful resources in the missing person's Tribal community.

The agency can also address issues that can inhibit missing person investigations in other jurisdictions. At times, the officers of the lead agency in that jurisdiction may be unavailable, may refuse to take a missing person report, or may fail to appropriately communicate with the victim's family. In addition, the lead agency's investigative response may be inadequate. For example, an endangered runaway may live on Tribal lands but go missing in a neighboring city, and that city's police department may refuse to take a missing person report or fail to thoroughly pursue the case. The agency could outline steps to take if these situations are encountered, such as contacting the lead agency and encouraging action or contacting any other agencies with jurisdiction to investigate, which in certain circumstances could include the FBI, USMS, or the state bureau of investigation.

## Long-term missing person cases

Some cases are not immediately resolved, and the missing person remains missing or unrecovered for months or years. In these cases, the investigation will transition into a long-term missing person investigation, which requires special consideration by the agency. Some of these considerations include how the case will be transitioned to a single investigator or smaller investigative unit, how resources will be reduced and normal police operations resumed, how multiagency reports are received and maintained, how information is centralized and the case file organized, communications to the family and public about the agency's transition, and preservation and storage of evidence for future use.

## Unidentified persons

The agency may periodically encounter a deceased person or a person in custody who cannot be identified. In such cases, the agency should make every effort to positively identify the person and ensure they have not been reported missing in that jurisdiction or another.



Numerous forensic markers can be used to identify an unidentified person, including fingerprints and DNA. The agency can develop and describe in its guidelines the specific steps to take when an unidentified person is encountered, and how staff should address the situation before and after identification.

## Recovery or return

The goal of every missing person case is the safe and prompt return of the missing person to their loved ones. When this happens, and even when it does not, the agency should plan how it will handle the return of a missing person or the recovery of a body.

The guidelines should specify in detail which agencies and personnel will be involved in the process of reunifying a child with their parents or guardians upon return. The agency should pay attention to issues such as the child's best interests and welfare, the child's medical needs, the need for a forensic interview and forensic evidence collection, and the family's wishes.

As noted earlier, adults may voluntarily go missing for any number of reasons. When such a missing person is located, the agency should ensure that the person's wishes about family contact be respected. While it is acceptable to note that the person has been located alive and well, no further information should be shared with the reporting party without the person's consent.

Unfortunately, not every missing person case ends with a successful return. The agency should specify in its guidelines the process for culturally appropriate identification and handling of human remains, including forensic evidence collection and death notification.

## Conclusion

Law enforcement guidelines to respond to missing person cases that are often multidisciplinary in makeup, that are tailored to the resources of the AI/AN community, and that elicit community assistance can be an important part of a Tribal community response plan to quickly manage missing person cases. This guide only contains recommendations for agencies. Each agency needs to develop its own guidelines tailored to ensuring missing persons in its unique community are found.







## II. Developing Victim Services Response Guidelines for Missing Person Cases

This guidance document provides suggestions on how to develop victim services guidelines for a victim service provider (VSP) as part of an overall Tribal community response plan for missing person cases.

### General

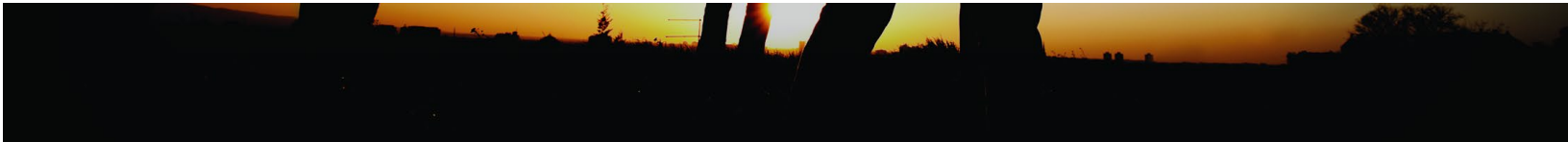
When a person is reported missing in an American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) community, there may be a multijurisdictional response not only to the investigation but also to the victim, the family, and the impacted community. VSPs can be a vital component of a missing person investigation. Essential victim support can help people during the most difficult times of their lives while also helping law enforcement engage the family of the missing person during an investigation. Family members may contribute to the overall efforts of law enforcement when they are supported and provided opportunities to contribute and when efforts are directed by investigators. The composition of VSPs and how they collaborate will vary across Tribal jurisdictions depending on the availability of resources and case circumstances. All investigative personnel and VSPs need to ensure an understanding of roles, responsibilities, communication, victim needs, and case collaboration.

VSPs may be systems- or community-based:

- **Systems-based VSPs** work for the law enforcement agency or prosecutor's office and have limited confidentiality. They work in partnership with the investigative team and share all relevant information with the team.
- **Community-based VSPs** are located outside of law enforcement and the prosecutor's office and sometimes work for nongovernmental organizations. In addition, they often have advocate privilege, which may prevent the sharing of information.

VSPs can provide family support and direct victim services in addition to contributing to the overall operational needs of the missing person investigation. The perspective of the VSP helps law enforcement understand the family's needs and coordinate efforts in a way that assists law enforcement while supporting families.

VSPs can provide operational support for the case, victim, and family. The VSP can make suggestions to the investigative team that further the mission. However, the VSP is not an investigator and should not collect evidence, conduct interviews, or make investigative decisions. In addition, VSPs who are part of law enforcement or the prosecutor's office should not document witness statements relevant to the case unless there is no law enforcement officer present to do so. Systems-based VSPs have limited confidentiality and must share all discoverable information,





including statements, text, email, and social media communications with the responsible investigator. There may be occasions in which a law enforcement officer needs to interview either a systems-based or community-based VSP about something that requires documentation, such as an exculpatory or inculpatory statement made by a victim.

The lead investigative agency may involve a systems-based VSP at the earliest opportunity appropriate in the investigation. If the lead investigative agency does not have a systems-based VSP, this resource may be requested from a federal, Tribal, state, or local jurisdiction. Community-based VSPs may assist law enforcement or respond on their own. Collaborative victim services are a best practice. Guideline development should include discussions about boundaries, information sharing, integration into the operational response, and other essential matters that may impact the investigation and support for families.

When VSPs are limited or not present in Tribal communities, pre-incident planning may involve identifying resources such as behavioral health professionals, school social workers or counselors, social service agencies, and community programs. Training can be provided for law enforcement personnel so that interactions with families occur in a victim-centered, trauma-informed, and culturally appropriate manner. Some remote communities may also use technology to deliver services. NCMEC has peer support resources that can connect families with others who have had similar experiences. Additional resources exist for trauma-informed counseling, reunification, repatriation, and burial.

## **Victim-centered, trauma-informed, and culturally appropriate services**

All investigative personnel and VSPs interacting with victims and their families should strive to be victim-centered, trauma-informed, and culturally appropriate.

- **Victim-centered.** VSPs can work to ensure that all interaction occurs in a victim-centered manner by assessing victim and family needs and addressing concerns while delivering services in a compassionate and nonjudgmental manner. VSPs assist investigators in their interactions so that families are provided with information, are heard, and are made to feel safe.
- **Trauma-informed.** VSPs can work to ensure that all contact occurs in a trauma-informed manner. Trauma-informed victim services seek to reduce system impacts of trauma while supporting families' needs by listening, providing support, defining and managing expectations, planning, and sharing information. Honest communication builds trust and shows respect.
- **Culturally appropriate.** VSPs can work to ensure all contact occurs in a culturally appropriate way. Cultural and community context that impacts the delivery of services for victims and the family should be considered. When personnel are brought in to assist, they should be briefed with information about cultural and community context so that improper inferences or conclusions are not made based on lack of understanding or awareness. VSPs may collaborate with a member of the Tribal community to provide additional support for the victim, the family of the missing person, or the Tribal community when appropriate.







VSPs work in a multidisciplinary context and collaborate not only with law enforcement but also with child and adult protective services, medical and behavioral health providers, prosecutors' offices, and other appropriate agencies. VSPs can assist law enforcement with understanding vulnerabilities, victimology, and historical context in addition to helping mobilize other team members to assist in gathering information. The multidisciplinary team approach can help obtain information useful to investigators while concurrently planning for the needs of the victim and their family.

The VSP response should be fluid and adaptable depending on the situation, resources, and needs. The role of a VSP in a missing person case can vary depending on factors such as age, circumstances under which the person went missing, vulnerabilities of the missing person, or whether the person is a victim in another case. Every missing person case is unique in situation and circumstance, requiring a unique and individualized response. The timing of VSP tasks may vary depending on when the VSP becomes involved in the investigation or how quickly the missing person is located alive or found deceased.

VSPs should be trained on how trauma impacts people differently and incorporate that understanding into how they provide victim services, assess needs, refer to resources, and plan for various case outcomes.

## **Initial response to a missing person case**

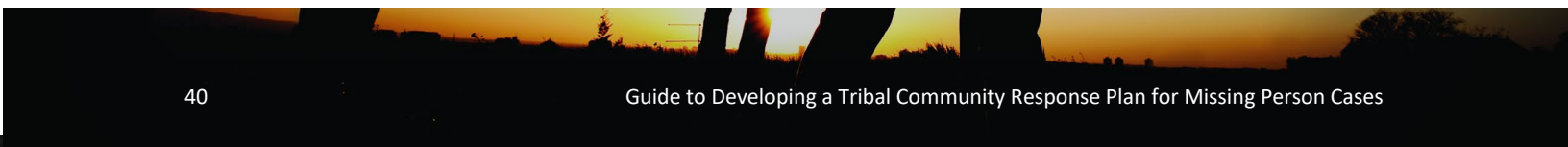
During the initial response to a missing person case, VSPs can provide the following:

- Explain the VSP role and boundaries, including limits of confidentiality and what information the VSP has the authority or permission to share with law enforcement.
- Provide documentation about statutes limiting what information can be shared in what circumstances.
- Explain that no determination has been made that a crime has occurred at this time, if 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 whether they are being cared for.
- Gather family information, including who is legal next of kin, who are caregivers, and who are 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 whether the family is traditional.
- 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 the family about the investigative process. If law enforcement determined that a crime occurred, provide information about crime victim's rights. In criminal investigations, the systems-based VSP or law enforcement official should document to the investigative file when victims have been advised of their rights, if 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.
- Plan for mobilizing the family quickly if there is an acute case event. Develop a contact list, with phone numbers and emails, for quick response to the victim or victim's family.
- Make recommendations for dealing with media and social media, and assist in setting boundaries and expectations for respect and privacy.
- Assist law enforcement in identifying a family spokesperson.
- Share press releases with the family first, working with law enforcement. There may be situations in which an agency determines that it should not take the time to do so, such as when there is a fugitive investigation and community safety is paramount. In these cases, the official statement should be shared as soon as possible.
- Consider privacy at all times and respect family wishes regarding contact and notifications. Victim identity *should not be* shared with Tribal leadership or elected officials without consent from the legal next of kin.
- 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.
- Listen to concerns and share relevant information with investigators.
- Do not make promises that cannot be kept. Follow up continuously even if only to say that something is still pending.





## Operational support

VSPs can provide the following types of operational support to the investigation while assisting families:

- 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 about completing investigative tasks that may be difficult.
- Provide support during 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 location, gathering photographs, and distributing posters.
- Provide transportation or other resources so families can participate in case-related appointments.
- Serve as a liaison between the victim 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.

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

## When a person is located alive

Victim services when a person is located alive can include the following tasks:

- Plan for medical care, possible forensic examination, and interview support.
- Assist with a 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 supports or resources, if needed.
- Avoid sharing sensitive or salacious details of victimizations. 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. Similarly, victim and family privacy should be considered in press releases and statements to the public.
- Provide assistance during the criminal justice process if a crime occurred.
- Facilitate the transition from VSPs supporting law enforcement to VSPs supporting prosecution, if applicable.





## When a person is found deceased

Victim services when a person is found deceased can include the following tasks:

- 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.
- Use crisis intervention skills. Listen. Provide emotional support.
- Provide case updates, including notifications about any autopsy and release of remains.
- Return victims' personal effects, which can have deep significance and emotional meaning, being sensitive to cultural belief systems and family requests.
- 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.

## When the case transitions to a long-term missing person investigation

Victim services when the case transitions to a long-term missing person investigation can include the following tasks:

- Plan for transition long before scaling back resources.
- Mirror the language that the victim's family uses, 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 wants future case updates, such as 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, such as when remains are found that are *not* their loved one.
- 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 primary next of kin may themselves 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.

VSPs should participate in after-action discussions with the Missing Persons Investigative Team, with their multidisciplinary team, and with their victim service partners to ensure continued improvement in delivery of victim services in missing person cases. In addition, victims' families can be asked to provide feedback about their experiences so that they are heard and so that the victim services response can be continuously improved.









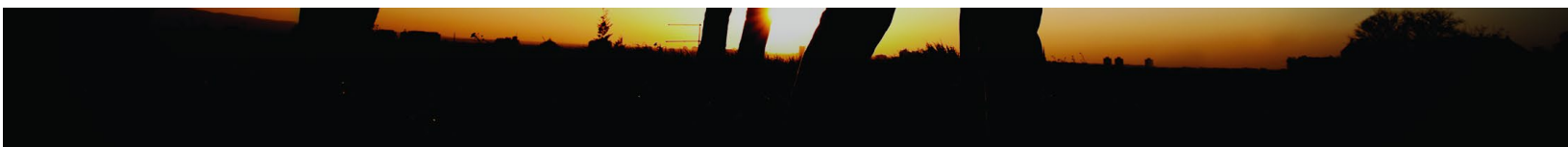
# III. Developing Media and Public Communications Response Guidelines for Missing Person Cases

This guidance document is intended as a tool for federal, Tribal, state, and local law enforcement officials to use to develop media and public communications guidelines as part of an overall Tribal community response plan for missing person cases. In addition to prevention goals, it provides suggested practices for communicating about active missing person cases at distinct and overlapping stages: initial reporting, search and investigation, rescue or recovery, and criminal prosecution.

The goals are to produce a timely and accurate account of law enforcement efforts and to seek public assistance where appropriate, to rescue and recover missing persons, and to seek justice for victims.

## Prevent

- **Impacted agencies.** All agencies
- **Strategy.** Prevent missing person incidents and the conditions that increase risk and vulnerability through programs, outreach, training, and public awareness.
- **Tactics.**
  1. Support and raise awareness of prevention programs via public service announcements and use social media platforms to reach target audiences.
  2. Conduct outreach and training.
- **What to communicate.** Law enforcement should work with the media to encourage the community to call with actionable tips, reinforcing both how and whom to call as well as emphasizing doing so helps protect their community. Many community members are distrustful of the process of reporting tips, so reinforcing that this helps protect the community and that the tip reporter will be protected is critical.





## Initial Reporting

- **Impacted agencies.** Lead agency investigating the missing person case
- **Strategy.**
  - Reassure the community that law enforcement is aware and active.
  - Solicit information and assistance from the public.
  - If appropriate, clarify whether there is an active threat to the community.
- **Tactics.**
  1. **CRITICAL.** Make an initial statement that law enforcement is aware of the disappearance and actively looking for the person, provide information about the missing person and solicit information and assistance, and if appropriate clarify whether there is an active threat to the community.
  2. Coordinate communications with all relevant agencies and stakeholders as appropriate.
  3. Create and disseminate a missing person poster.
  4. Ensure applicable alerts are used, like AMBER Alerts in some circumstances for children. Plan for daily briefings.

### Considerations:

- Establish a joint communications structure, joint information center (JIC), or virtual JIC.
- Protect privacy rights of victim (e.g., domestic violence or other private circumstances that explain disappearance), privacy of witnesses, and due process rights of potential defendants.
- Protect sensitive law enforcement information, sources, and methods.
- Avoid speculation or opinions.
- Urgency. Is there an indication that a crime has occurred? Is the missing person a minor or an adult?

If the case is likely to attract substantial attention, notify appropriate national press office (BIA/FBI/DOJ).

- **What to communicate.** Provide the media with the following information on the missing person:
  - Name
  - Recent picture
  - Age
  - Attire
  - Distinctive characteristics, e.g., piercings, tattoos
  - Location of where the missing person was last seen
  - Tip line information





Consider the missing person’s rights and their family’s privacy. Do not share the missing person’s associates or relationships.

If a federal criminal case is possible, seek guidance from the local U.S. Attorney’s Office (<https://www.justice.gov/usao/us-attorneys-listing>).

## Search and Investigation

- **Impacted agencies.** Lead agency investigating the missing person case, which may be a multiagency coordinated effort
- **Strategy.**
  - If appropriate, engage the public in the effort to search and locate.
  - Engage Tribal leaders and communicators early and throughout each stage to give input and distribute information to the Tribal community.
  - Use one speaker: the head of the lead law enforcement agency.
  - Identify resources deployed and steps taken in the search, as appropriate, and law enforcement partners.
- **Tactics.**
  1. Decide the best method of communication. Hold a press conference or issue a press release.
  2. Coordinate message preparation with joint communications structure (i.e., JIC) and victim witness coordinators.
  3. Appoint a primary and backup public affairs or information officer from the lead law enforcement agency as the key point of contact for the media and coordinator for all participating agencies.
  4. Double-check facts and refute false or misleading information.
  5. Establish a tip line or social media page (or both) and inform public how to report.

Considerations:

- Protect privacy rights of victim, privacy of witnesses, and due process rights of potential defendants.
- Protect sensitive law enforcement information, sources, and methods.
- Avoid speculation or opinions.





- **What to communicate.** Provide the media with the following:
  - Contact information for the lead agency public affairs or information officer and backup
  - Updates to the timeline of missing person’s last known activities and steps taken to find the person
  - Information about the missing person and the tip line.

## Rescue or Recovery

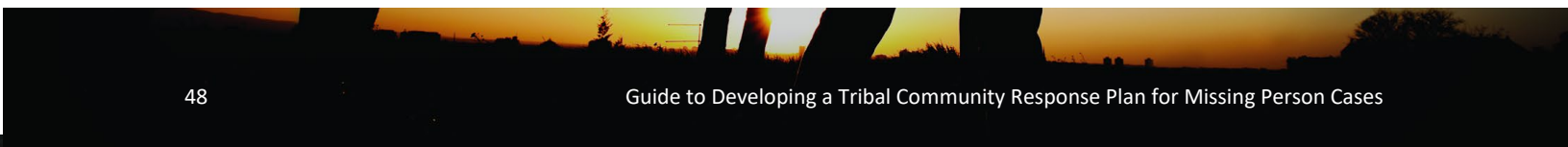
- **Impacted agencies.** Lead agency investigating the missing person case holds press conference to announce rescue or recovery.

If nonpublic, federal charges possible, consult the U.S. Attorney’s Office before issuing any statement; they may join in a press conference to indicate investigation remains ongoing.

- **Strategy.**
  - Reassure the community and account for law enforcement actions.
  - Recognize law enforcement and any public assistance to investigation.
  - Express sympathy or condolence to the victim and their family.
- **Tactics.**
  1. **CRITICAL.** Issue a press release with a timeline and documented account of steps taken by law enforcement.
  2. Coordinate message preparation with joint communications structure (JIC), led by lead law enforcement agency or prosecution agency’s public affairs or information officer and victim witness coordinator.
  3. Double-check facts and refute false or misleading information.

Considerations:

- Be aware of concerns of prejudice toward any potential defendant through pretrial publicity.
  - Protect victim’s rights and witness privacy.
  - Protect sensitive law enforcement information, sources, and methods.
  - Avoid speculation or opinions.
- **What to communicate.** Provide the media with the following:
    - Update with general information (on social media, if applicable), keeping in mind the person’s privacy (if no criminal charges are likely)
    - Minimal information, such as when and where the person or body was discovered, as there could be a criminal investigation (if criminal charges are possible)





## Seek Justice

- **Impacted agencies.** Lead prosecution agency announces charges.
- **Strategy.** Announce charges to assure the family, the public, and the community that there will be justice.

Generally, recognize law enforcement efforts and any public assistance to investigation.

- **Tactics.**

1. Hold a press conference to announce charges.
2. Issue press releases at charging, conviction, and sentencing.

Considerations:

- Be aware of concerns of prejudice toward any potential defendant through pretrial publicity.
  - Ensure that release of information is confined to public record or charging documents.
  - Protect victim's rights, witness privacy, and due process rights of defendants.
  - Protect sensitive law enforcement information, sources, and methods.
- **What to communicate.** Provide the media with the following:
    - Confirmation of the existence of an investigation to ease public's concern, but no further updates (prior to announcing charges)
    - Referral to the local U.S. Attorney's Office (<https://www.justice.gov/usao/us-attorneys-listing>) if a federal prosecution is possible; otherwise, referral to the appropriate state or Tribal prosecution office
    - No information outside the U.S. Department of Justice Confidentiality and Media Contacts Policy (<https://www.justice.gov/jm/jm-1-7000-media-relations>)









## IV. Developing Community Outreach Response Guidelines for Missing Person Cases

This guidance document provides suggestions on developing community outreach response guidelines as part of an overall Tribal community response plan. Community outreach guidelines are a resource for identifying potential non-law enforcement partners to assist in the response to missing AI/AN person cases from Tribal communities, which may impact multiple jurisdictions. The goal is to assist law enforcement's search efforts and identify and support family and community needs early by involving those agencies and professionals who may be able to efficiently and effectively provide resources and assistance.

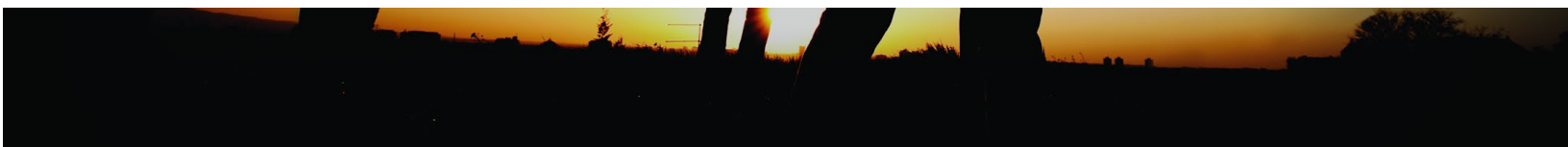
This guidance incorporates a four-tier approach:

- **Tier I.** Tribal resources
- **Tier II.** Inter-Tribal and regional association resources
- **Tier III.** State and local resources
- **Tier IV.** Federal, national, and international resources

Many Tribes have well-established programs and relationships within their own communities; therefore, the guidance focuses on first identifying existing Tribal resources and then augmenting and building upon those resources with inter-Tribal and regional; state and local; and federal, national, and international resources.

A tiered approach and stakeholder discussions will allow Tribal communities to identify potential response gaps and ensure additional resources will complement and support the Tribe's response.

The guidance is not intended to be a comprehensive list. It is recommended that the list be reviewed and updated at a frequency to be determined by the user.





## Tier I. Tribal resources

- Businesses and enterprises
  - Construction
  - Gas stations
- Casinos
  - Security
  - Events management
  - Housekeeping
  - Hotel check in
  - Bar and beverage
  - Surveillance
  - Valet parking
- Child advocacy centers
- Colleges
- Community health centers
  - Behavioral health
  - Community health
  - Inpatient
  - Outreach programs
  - Substance abuse
- Community grassroots groups
- Cultural societies, women's and men's groups
- Disaster and crisis response
- Elders (individuals and elder services)
- Enrollment
- Facilities and trail managers
- Faith communities
- Forestry
- Healers
- Housing
- Human resources, payroll, and training department (look for training on how to spot red flags)
- Human services
  - Adult protective services
  - Child protective services and child welfare services
  - Domestic violence programs/ coalitions
  - Indian Child Welfare Act
  - Shelter programs and outreach workers
  - Youth programs (e.g., Boys and Girls Clubs)
- Identified well-connected Tribal members (Tribal volunteers)
- Information technology and management information system security
- Juvenile detention officers
- Leaders
- Legal department
- Media outlets
  - Radio
  - Newspapers
  - News media
  - Television
- Powwow committees
- Probation department
- Public alert announcement system
- Public works
- Schools and educational providers
  - School districts



- Individual schools
- Head Start
- Preschools and day cares
- Social media websites, pages, and accounts
- Transportation/roads agencies
- Tribal court
- U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations, Commodity Foods Program (<https://www.fns.usda.gov/fdpir/food-distribution-program-indian-reservations>)

## **Tier II. Inter-Tribal and regional association resources**

- Child advocacy centers
- Inter-Tribal council organizations
- Inter-Tribal task forces
- National Congress of American Indians
- Outside Tribal community resources
- Outside Tribal law enforcement
- Tribal coalitions
- Tribal government to government
- Urban Indian groups

## **Tier III. State and local resources**

- Aircraft and unmanned aerial vehicle resources
- Bridge authorities
- Central dispatch
- Child advocacy centers
- City housing programs
- City offices and managers (obtain a list of all construction from city)
- Coroners and medical examiners
- Domestic violence alliances and coalitions
- Faith communities
- Fusion centers (e.g., collaborative teams across agencies and states)
- Gravel pits, excavator companies
- Homeless shelters and agency networks
- Human trafficking alliances and coalitions
- Law enforcement and state task forces
- Media outlets
- Missing persons clearinghouse (each state)
- National Guard
- Prisons and their respective emergency response teams
- SAR organizations
- Schools and educational providers
- Social service organizations (governmental and nongovernmental organizations)
- State and private health centers and hospitals
- State departments of transportation
- State government agencies
- State housing programs
- State-specific hotlines

- Surveyors, title company, planners, real estate agents (people with maps and photos of locations)
- Telephone companies (augment cellular communications with mobile units)
- Trade unions and other unions
- Transportation (buses, trains, ferry service, airport, cabs, etc.)
- Two-spirit groups
- Universities, colleges, and extension services
- State or Tribal task forces
- Waste management, landfill, and dump station companies
- Weather alert and state alert systems


#### **Tier IV. Federal, national, and international resources**

- U.S. Department of Justice
  - Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (<https://www.atf.gov/>)
  - Drug Enforcement Administration (<https://www.dea.gov/>)
  - Federal Bureau of Investigation
    - ▲ Law Enforcement Enterprise Portal (<https://www.fbi.gov/services/cjis/leep>)
    - ▲ The Crimes Against Children Program's Child Abduction Rapid Deployment (CARD) teams (<https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/violent-crime/cac>)
    - ▲ The Evidence Response Teams (<https://www.fbi.gov/services/laboratory/forensic-response/evidence-response-team>)
    - ▲ Interpol (<https://www.justice.gov/interpol-washington>)
- U.S. Department of the Interior (<https://www.doi.gov/>)
  - Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA):
    - ▲ BIA Human Services (<https://www.bia.gov/bia/ois/dhs>)
      - Indian Child Welfare Act (<https://www.bia.gov/bia/ois/dhs/icwa>)
      - Child and Adult Protection (<https://www.bia.gov/bia/ois/dhs/child-and-adult-protective-services>)
      - Financial assistance (<https://www.bia.gov/bia/ois/dhs/financial-assistance>)
      - Individuals Indian Money (IIM) accounts (<https://www.bia.gov/bia/ois/dhs/individuals-indian-money-accounts>)
      - Welfare assistance (<https://www.bia.gov/bia/ois/dhs/welfare-assistance>)



- ▲ BIA Office of Justice Services (BIA-OJS) (<https://www.bia.gov/bia/ojs>)
  - Law enforcement personnel, funding, and equipment resources
  - Victim services
  - Tracking and searching capabilities
- ▲ Branch of Geospatial Support Mapping (<https://www.bia.gov/gis>)
- Bureau of Land Management (<https://www.blm.gov/>)
  - ▲ Geo-referenced maps (<https://www.blm.gov/maps/georeferenced-PDFs>)
  - ▲ Public Safety Program: search and rescue (<https://www.blm.gov/programs/public-safety-and-fire>)
- Indian Health Service (IHS)/Tribal Health Programs (<https://www.ihs.gov/>)
  - ▲ Important and timely information regarding the missing person
  - ▲ Medical/mental health support for family members
- National Park Service (<https://www.nps.gov/index.htm>) Search and Rescue Teams (Rangers)
- Office of Inspector General (OIG) Hotline: 800-424-5081 (<https://www.doioig.gov/>)
  - ▲ Recovery successes locating missing or endangered HHS foster children
  - ▲ Liaison with law enforcement and service agencies
  - ▲ Capability to work with IHS and other public health and welfare agencies to determine where a person last accessed services
  - ▲ Assist to determine when or where a missing person last accessed their U.S. Department of the Interior-Office of Special Trustee IIM account
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) (<https://www.hhs.gov>) Administration for Children & Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) (<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/fysb>)
  - Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA) Programs (<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/fysb/programs/family-violence-prevention-services>)
    - ▲ National Domestic Violence Hotline: 800-799-7223 (<https://www.thehotline.org/>)
    - ▲ StrongHearts Native Helpline: 844-762-8483 (<https://strongheartshelpline.org/>)
    - ▲ Counseling and therapeutic support
    - ▲ Adolescent pregnancy prevention programs



- 
- National Runaway Safeline: 800-RUNAWAY (800-786-2929) (<https://www.1800runaway.org/>)
    - ▲ Assist in reunification efforts
    - ▲ Street Outreach Program provides information/services for youth
  - Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) Programs (<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/fysb/runaway-homeless-youth>)
  - U.S. Department of Homeland Security (<https://www.dhs.gov/>)
    - Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) (<https://www.fema.gov/>) Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) (<https://www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/practitioners/integrated-public-alert-warning-system>)
      - ▲ National system for local alerting to send geotargeted emergency alerts and information to the public through multiple communication delivery systems. An example of an IPAWS purpose is an AMBER Alert.
      - ▲ Examples of communication delivery: media, cellphones, internet, NOAA, and Hazards Weather Radio.
      - ▲ IPAWS Lab is available for training, familiarization, and customization.
    - ICE (<https://www.ice.gov/>)
    - U.S. Coast Guard (<https://www.uscg.mil/>) for maritime emergencies
    - U.S. Customs and Border Protection (<https://www.cbp.gov/>)
  - U.S. Department of Transportation – Port Authorities (<https://www.maritime.dot.gov/>)
  - U.S. Department of Defense Search and Rescue Resources (<https://policy.defense.gov>)
  - American Red Cross (<https://www.redcross.org/>)
    - Disaster and crisis response
    - Meals for search volunteers and teams, investigative teams, and families
  - Missing Persons Organizations/Resources
    - Polly Klaas Foundation: 800-587-4357 (<https://www.pollyklaas.org/>)
      - ▲ Print and disseminate posters of missing persons
      - ▲ Information for family and loved ones
    - Morgan Nick Foundation: 877-543-4673 (<https://morgannickfoundation.com/>)
      - ▲ Train search and rescue workers
      - ▲ Print and disseminate flyers of missing children
      - ▲ Advise on local and national resources for family
      - ▲ Annual conference for families with long term missing children (Project Hope)





- Jacob Wetterling Resource Center/Zero Abuse Project: 651-714-4673 (<https://www.zeroabuseproject.org/>)
  - ▲ Print and disseminate posters of missing persons
  - ▲ Family support for media and working with law enforcement
  - ▲ Victim services
  - ▲ Education and training
- National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC): 1-800-THE-LOST (<https://www.missingkids.org>)
  - 24-hour toll-free hotline for information regarding the location of missing child
  - Assistance and information to families, governments, and law enforcement to locate children both domestically and internationally
  - Information regarding free or low-cost legal, food, lodging, and transportation services available for the benefit of missing and exploited children and their families
  - Official national resource center and information clearinghouse for missing and exploited children
  - Technical assistance
- National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs): 833-872-5176 (<https://namus.nij.ojp.gov/>)
  - National information clearinghouse and resource center for missing, unidentified, and unclaimed persons cases
  - Only database not restricted to law enforcement and is available at no cost to medical examiners, coroners, allied forensic professionals and family members of missing persons
- Royal Canadian Mounted Police (<https://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/>)
- Salvation Army (<https://www.salvationarmyusa.org/>) regional offices have locating capabilities

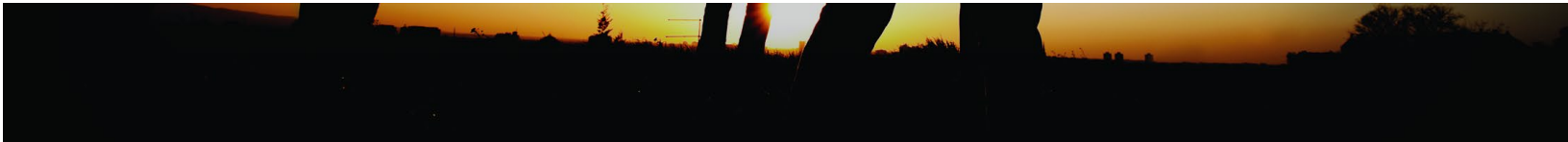






# Appendix A. BIA-OJS Resources Available to Assist with Missing Person Cases

BIA-OJS has resources that can be made available to Tribal law enforcement agencies during a missing person investigation. Tribes can request resources through the regional BIA-OJS office, which will allocate them on a case-by-case basis, subject to availability in the affected district/region. They are as follows:

- Access to U.S. Department of Interior partner response (Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, etc.)
  - Command vehicles
  - Communications trailers and trucks
  - Cultural support such as an Archaeological Resources Protection Act investigator
  - Evidence technicians
  - Field command center
  - Incident commanders
  - Land mobile radio services
  - Peer support
  - Surveillance trailers and equipment
  - Telecommunications equipment operators to assist with data entry into NCIC, fusion centers, etc.
  - Victim Assistance Program services
- 





# Appendix B. FBI Resources Available to Assist with Missing Person Cases

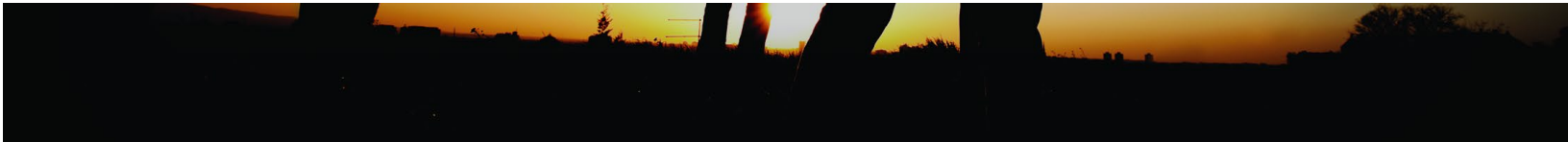
The FBI has specialized operational resources available to assist local, state, and Tribal law enforcement partners, particularly when the law enforcement agency would benefit from the use of investigative techniques they are unable to employ on their own. When applicable, the FBI may open either a primary or concurrent investigation and deploy FBI resources, or a specific request from a law enforcement partner may be considered. While the process to initiate the request for assistance from the FBI will vary depending on the specialized operational resource sought, the local FBI office can assist the requesting agency in determining the appropriate investigative resource and preparing the official request for assistance.

FBI specialized operational resources available to assist local, state, and Tribal law enforcement include the following:

- **The Child Abduction Response Deployment (CARD) team**

The FBI's CARD team consists of special agents and analysts experienced in investigating violent crimes committed against juveniles. CARD special agents and analysts are strategically located in field offices throughout the United States to facilitate rapid onsite response. The CARD team is designed to supplement FBI field office investigative, technical, and personnel resources, as well as to provide subject matter expertise to local, state, and Tribal law enforcement investigating the abduction of a child. Tribal, state, and local law enforcement partners are encouraged to contact their respective FBI liaison special agent for consideration of FBI assistance regarding violent crimes committed against adults.
  - **Behavior Analysis Unit**

This unit consists of teams of special agents and analysts (in addition to specific subject matter experts, when relevant) who review and assess submitted behavior analysis material, engage in onsite or phone consultations, and provide criminal investigative analysis findings to the FBI Field Office point of contact and the requesting agency.
  - **Evidence Response Team Unit**

This unit assists FBI Field Office Evidence Response Teams (ERT), Hazardous Evidence Response Teams (HERT), Hazardous Evidence Response Components (HERC), Underwater Search Evidence Response Teams (USERT), and law enforcement partners with traditional and hazardous evidence collection capabilities by providing forensic training, resources, and expertise in support of the FBI's investigative priorities.
- 



- Victim Services Division

The Victim Services Division provides a variety of services to inform, support, and assist victims in navigating the aftermath of crime and the criminal justice process with dignity and resilience.

- Child Victim Services Unit – Child/Adolescent Forensic Interviewers

The Child Victim Services Unit employs child/adolescent forensic interviewers (CAFI) who are strategically located throughout the country to support FBI investigations involving crimes against children. CAFIs work with multidisciplinary teams to ensure juvenile victims and witnesses are appropriately interviewed as part of the investigative team’s efforts to develop evidence against offenders.

- Regional Computer Forensics Laboratory

The Regional Computer Forensics Laboratory (RCFL) is a partnership between the FBI and other federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies operating a regional digital forensic task force. The laboratories provide forensic services and expertise to support law enforcement agencies in collecting and examining digital evidence for criminal investigations. RCFL services include consultation on pre-search, search, and seizure of evidence; duplication, storage, and preservation of digital evidence; forensic examination of digitally stored media; consultation on digital forensic matters; and courtroom testimony.



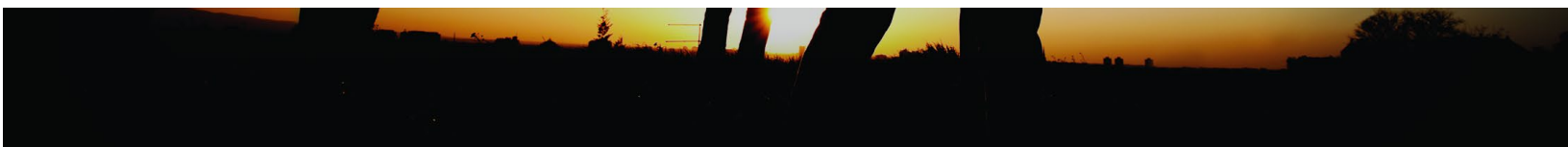




# Appendix C. Other Federal Law Enforcement Resources Available to Assist with Missing Person Cases

The following federal law enforcement agencies (not including BIA-OJS, FBI, and USMS) have resources that can be made available to federal, Tribal, state, and local law enforcement agencies during a missing person investigation.

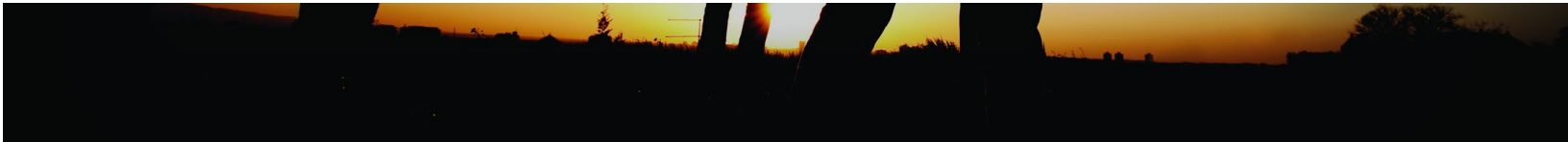
- U.S. Department of Justice
  - Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives – Investigative Assistance
  - Drug Enforcement Administration – Investigative Assistance
- U.S. Department of Interior
  - Bureau of Land Management Law Enforcement – Search and Rescue
  - National Park Service – Search and Rescue
  - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – Search and Rescue
  - Office of Inspector General – Investigative Assistance
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Inspector General – Investigative Assistance
- U.S. Department of Homeland Security
  - U.S. Coast Guard – Search and Rescue (waterborne operations)
  - U.S. Border Patrol – Search and Rescue and Investigative Assistance
- U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Forest Service – Search and Rescue Resources and Investigative Assistance
- U.S. Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration – Investigative Assistance
- U.S. Department of Education, Office of Inspector General – Investigative Assistance
- U.S. Postal Service, U.S. Postal Inspection Service – Investigative Assistance





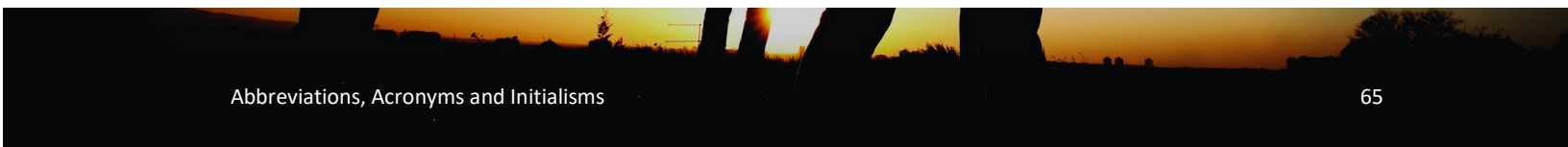
# Abbreviations, Acronyms, and Initialisms

<b>AI/AN</b>	American Indian/Alaska Native
<b>AMBER Alert</b>	America's Missing: Broadcast Emergency Response Alert
<b>BIA</b>	Bureau of Indian Affairs
<b>BIA-OJS</b>	Bureau of Indian Affairs–Office of Justice Services
<b>BOLO</b>	be on the lookout
<b>CAFI</b>	child/adolescent forensic interviewer
<b>CARD</b>	Child Abduction Rapid Deployment
<b>CJIS</b>	FBI Criminal Justice Information Services Division
<b>CSA</b>	CJIS Systems Agency
<b>DNA</b>	deoxyribonucleic acid
<b>DOJ</b>	U.S. Department of Justice
<b>ERT</b>	Evidence Response Team
<b>FBI</b>	Federal Bureau of Investigation
<b>FEMA</b>	Federal Emergency Management Agency
<b>FVPSA</b>	Family Violence Prevention and Services Act
<b>FYSB</b>	HHS Administration for Children & Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau
<b>HERC</b>	Hazardous Evidence Response Component
<b>HERT</b>	Hazardous Evidence Response Team
<b>HHS</b>	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
<b>ICE</b>	Immigration and Customs Enforcement
<b>IHS</b>	Indian Health Service
<b>IIM account</b>	Individuals Indian Money account





<b>IPAWS</b>	FEMA Integrated Public Alert and Warning System
<b>JIC</b>	joint information center
<b>LEEP</b>	Law Enforcement Enterprise Portal
<b>MCU</b>	USMS Missing Child Unit
<b>MEPA</b>	Missing Endangered Person Alert
<b>MIPA</b>	Missing Indigenous Persons Alert
<b>MMIP</b>	missing and murdered Indigenous persons
<b>MOA</b>	memorandum of agreement
<b>MOU</b>	memorandum of understanding
<b>MPF</b>	NCIC Missing Person File
<b>NamUs</b>	National Missing and Unidentified Persons System
<b>NCIC</b>	National Crime Information Center
<b>NCMEC</b>	National Center for Missing & Exploited Children
<b>P.L. 280</b>	Public Law 280
<b>RCFL</b>	Regional Computer Forensics Laboratory
<b>RHY Programs</b>	Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs
<b>SAR</b>	search and rescue
<b>TAP</b>	Tribal Access Program
<b>U.S.C.</b>	United States Code
<b>USERT</b>	Underwater Search Evidence Response Team
<b>USMS</b>	U.S. Marshals Service
<b>VPSO</b>	Village Public Safety Officer
<b>VSP</b>	victim service provider





U.S. Department of Justice  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Washington, DC 20530

e092229029  
Published 2022