



# New Mexico Indian Affairs, Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women & Relatives Task Force

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11 May 2021

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The New Mexico Indian Affairs Department (NMIAD) signed on as a client for the Spring 2021 course, DEV 502: Native Americans in the Twenty First Century: Nation Building II, at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government. The NMIAD requested assistance with moving the work of its Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Relatives (MMIWR) Task Force forward. The Task Force's report, published in December 2020, revealed that the percentage of MMIWR cases in New Mexico are likely higher than data suggests and that both a lack of clarity around jurisdiction and a lack of coordinated data reporting methods across the state are severely exacerbating the present MMIWR crisis. As such, our work centered on researching how different states in the U.S. as well as Canada are working to minimize the MMIWR crisis and strategizing and prioritizing the Task Force report's many recommendations. In tandem with the New Mexico IAD, we spoke and met with members of the Task Force as well as guest speakers involved in MMIWR work throughout the semester to better understand the barriers facing moving this work forward. Our team helped draft an executive order that was signed by Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham on May 5, 2021 to extend the work of the Task Force. We also developed a community tool kit with resources for New Mexico's Indigenous communities and beyond. Finally, we strategized recommendations with a focus on raising awareness and outreach, centering the MMIWR crisis as a larger issue of economic politics, and prioritizing the Task Force's recommendations with a focus on legislation and funding.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank the staff at NM IAD for being wonderful and collaborative partners on this project--Stephanie Salazar, Christine Means, and Eldred Lesansee. We also want to thank Professor Eric Henson and our fellow classmates in DEV502 at the Harvard Kennedy School for their insights, support, and community over this semester. Also at Harvard, we want to thank Melissa Yazzie for her time and guidance on building a community toolkit. And lastly we especially want to acknowledge experts whose insights were pivotal to our work: Denise Billy, Judge Marion Buller, Amber Crotty, Navajo Nation First Lady Phefelia Nez, Carmela Roybal, Captain Troy Velasquez, and other members of the MMIWR Task Force who took the time to speak and share with us. Thank you.

## INTRODUCTION

In December 2020, the NMIAD released its MMIWR Task Force's report and recommendations to the state's Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham. Enacted by House Bill 278, the MMIWR Task Force assembled to research this crisis that has been identified as a national epidemic. In the United States, Native women and girls are nearly twice as likely to experience violence as their non-Native counterparts. Today, murder is strikingly the third-leading cause of death for American Indian and Alaska Native women in some parts of the country. In the Southwest, 46% of Native women have reported that they have been the victim of sexual assault or violence. After one-year of convening tribal governments, tribal law enforcement, the US Department of Justice, and community members, the MMIWR Task Force developed and presented recommendations related to the improvement of data collection and documentation, support for survivors and families, support for the justice system and law enforcement, and strengthening of community outreach and resources.

## PROJECT REQUEST, GOALS, & OBJECTIVES

The following is the project description submitted to Professor Eric Henson for KSG DEV502 Native Americans in the Twenty First Century: Nation Building II Spring 2021 course:

*To assist the IAD in these efforts, this project calls to identify how the State of New Mexico can institutionalize the MMIWR Task Force and its recommendations. This project will particularly call for strategic planning, prioritizing report recommendations, receiving community feedback, and tangible next steps for the state in this work. The team assembled will work under the MMIWR Task Force Project Assistant Christine Means as well as collaborate with Task Force members, state and tribal leadership, and other stakeholders. The research will build off of other state, national, and international MMIWR task forces and initiatives to identify next steps. Some examples include Minnesota's MMIWR task force, Canada's National Inquiry into MMIWG, and the recently announced US Lady Justice initiative. At the conclusion, the group will present its report and recommendations and possibly draft legislation to the MMIWR Task Force.*

## CLIENT/TRIBAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### **New Mexico Indian Affairs Department**

#### **History**

The Commission on Indian Affairs was created by statute in 1953 by the New Mexico State Legislature. The statute established a state agency, the Office of Indian Affairs (OIA), which would serve as a vehicle between New Mexico's governor, legislature, and the state's separate and distinct tribal groups. On June 20th, 2003, Former Governor Bill Richardson signed Executive Order No. 2003-022 elevating the OIA to the Indian Affairs Department (IAD) to a cabinet-level department. Subsequently, in April 2004, House Bill 39 which formerly established the Indian Affairs Department by legislative statute, was passed and signed into law. (1)

#### **Vision**

Our vision is that tribal nations, tribal communities and Indigenous people are happy, healthy and prosperous and that traditional ways of life are honored, valued and respected.

#### **Mission**

The NM Indian Affairs Department is committed to be a resource by:

- Advocating for tribal interests at state and federal levels through policy and legislative work;
- Supporting tribes with access to resources, technical assistance and funding opportunities; and
- Connecting tribes with the executive branch, other tribes and with the tools and resources they need to be self-governing and self-sufficient.

As a legislative entity, the New Mexico Indian Affairs department serves approximately 228,400 Native American citizens that reside in the state of New Mexico. The total population of Native Americans in the state of New Mexico represents nearly 11% of the state's entire population. Of that, New Mexico is home to 23 federally recognized tribes which includes nineteen Pueblos, three bands of Apache, the Navajo Nation, and a considerable urban Indian population that represent a variety of tribes from across the US and Canada. (1)

### **MMIWR Task Force**

In 2019, House Bill 278 was passed and signed into law by New Mexico Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham. This legislation established the formation of the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIWR) Task Force. Composed of 13 members from Tribes and Pueblos across the state as well as from different state agencies, the Task Force's primary objectives were to study and address jurisdictional and resource gaps, raise awareness about the ongoing MMIWR crisis and broadly focus on the following initiatives:

- Increase tribal resources for reporting and identifying MMIWR cases.
- Work with tribal law enforcement agencies to determine scope of problem and identify barriers.
- Establish partnerships to improve reporting and investigations of MMIWR cases.
- Work with tribal communities and governments.
- Collaborate with the Department of Justice to improve information sharing processes and coordinate resources for MMIWR.

Early on in its work, the Task Force heard frequently from community members how men and LGBTQIA/two-spirit persons were also experiencing violence but were not being included in the crisis, so with that in mind, the Task Force revised its name to be inclusive of all people and genders in its work, adopting the title Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Relatives (MMIWR).

In spite of many limitations stemming from the on-going COVID-19 pandemic as well as lack of outcome data (which needs to be sorted by race and ethnicity) and data collection being uneven across jurisdictions, the Task Force successfully transitioned to a virtual operation and conducted a lot of work, culminating in very [thorough final report published in December 2020](#).



The main findings from the Task Force report are that the percentage of missing Native American and Indigenous persons is **likely higher** than current data suggests; racial misclassification of homicide data collected by the state may be lowering the **real** number of MMIWR cases; human trafficking--both on and off tribal lands--is a contributing factor to the crisis and needs to be further researched; and tribal nations and pueblos need to pass legislation on their side in order to cultivate on-going, collaborative relationships with NMIAD to better counter the MMIWR crisis.

Because of a lack of coordinated data collection procedures and systems across different state and federal law enforcement agencies, including a need for the National Crime Information Center to update its forms to include tribal nation affiliation, the Task Force was limited in this aspect of its work. However, data from San Juan and McKinley county law enforcement agencies provide a great insight into the complex nature of the MMIWR crisis.

Based on the report's findings, the Task Force compiled an extensive list of recommendations targeting the following areas:

- Data must be reported and documented accurately
- Support services for survivors and families
- Support tribal justice systems with resources
- Education, outreach, and other preventative measures needed
- Improving collaboration across law enforcement agencies
- Develop community resources for strong responses

**OUR WORK**

As part of our project helping NMIAD move forward with its work, we read and researched a variety of reports on the MMIWR crisis in states across the U.S. as well as the Canadian Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls to better understand other approaches and how those insights could inform the work of the NMIAD and the Task Force. We also conducted analyses of the MMIWR Task Force Report's recommendations using the SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) methodology. Based on this work, we found that the New Mexico report was exemplary and a lot more thorough with recommendations and items clearly listed than most other U.S. reports. And finally, from our weekly meetings with NMIAD and having the opportunity to meet and speak with experts involved with this type of work, including members of the Task Force, we obtained a better understanding of the scope and nature of the problem facing the Task Force. In order to continue the work of the Task Force, NMIAD realized that an executive order, including findings from the 2020 report, would need to be drafted for Governor Grisham in order to extend the Task Force, which was set to expire this spring. As such, we drafted an executive order in collaboration with NMIAD.

While the Task Force Report recommendations are through and many, considering this is a complex and systemic issue that will not be solved quickly, we pivoted toward prioritizing and strategizing recommendations the Task Force and NMIAD should pursue, in an effort to help chart a path forward. Furthermore, based on our conversations with NMIAD, Task Force members, and Melissa Yazzie at the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development, we realized that a community toolkit with resources for New Mexico's 23 Tribal Nations and Pueblos could help bridge the education and critical awareness gap.

## EXECUTIVE ORDER

Our team completed an Executive Order (EO) on behalf of the NMIAD which was eventually presented to New Mexico Governor, Michelle Lujan Grisham. Executive Order 2021-013 entitled, “Executive Order Establishing the New Mexico Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Relatives Task Force” is a statewide directive that will ensure the NMIAD MMIWR issue remains a critical priority and helps manage the operations of the NMIAD MMIWR Task Force initiatives.

The NMIAD MMIWR Task Force Report which was published in December 2020, was the primary source of information utilized in creating the EO. As of May 5th, 2021, this EO was officially signed by New Mexico Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham.

## TOOLKIT

We developed the toolkit by conducting research, meeting with different speakers and collecting existing materials and resources online. We met with a number of tribal community members including Denise Billy who explained what was already achieved in the Task Force and gave us access to all the [Indian Treaties](#). The objective was to develop a new community toolkit to ensure success for the MMIWR Task Force to engage the community and do outreach. In the toolkit, we focus on tribal community resources such as: tribal community health centers, cultural societies, schools/educational providers, and tribal social media websites, pages, and accounts; state/local resources available to tribal communities (such as: homeless shelters/agency networks, Missing Persons Clearinghouse (each state), domestic violence alliances/coalitions), and federal and national resources (such as: the American Red Cross, the Department of the Interior, Missing persons organizations/resources, and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)).

## RESEARCH

- MMIWR Task Force Report, December 2020
- National & Canadian Reports
- MMIWR Experts
- Toolkit Research & Materials

Over the past semester, our team at Harvard worked in collaboration with the NMIAD and met with a number of Task Force members, state and tribal leadership, and other stakeholders. The research built off of other state, national, and international MMIWR Task Forces and initiatives to identify next steps. Some examples include Minnesota's MMIWR task force, Canada's National Inquiry into MMIWG, and the recently announced U.S. Lady Justice initiative.

To begin, we reviewed task force reports and prepared a summary of report outcomes and recommended next steps. We identified common themes and findings throughout MMIWR reports nationally, identified what is different about NM's report from the others, and produced a summary of what resulted from the reports, including actions that were implemented in the reports based on the findings.

A full list of all reports can be found at **[LINK](#)**

([http://bit.ly/nmiad\\_mmiw\\_resources](http://bit.ly/nmiad_mmiw_resources))

1. Canada: Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.
2. Minnesota: Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls: A Report to the Minnesota Legislature.
3. Montana Department of Justice: Looping in Native Communities: Report to the State-Tribal Relations Interim Committee.
4. South Dakota: A Study on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in States Impacted by the Keystone XL Pipeline.
5. Urban Indian Health: A Snapshot of Data from 71 Cities in the United States.

6. Washington State Patrol: Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.
7. A Corrected Research Study of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in Washington State.
8. Wyoming Missing and Murdered Indigenous People Statewide Report.

### **STRENGTHS WEAKNESSES OPPORTUNITIES THREATS (SWOT) ANALYSIS**

As a group exercise, we completed two SWOT Analyses. The first SWOT Analysis reflected data collection practices and experiences among agencies. The second SWOT Analysis was based upon Law Enforcement practices among tribal, state, and federal agencies. The information utilized was derived from the New Mexico MMIWR Task Force Report.

### **COMMUNITY LEADERS & FIELD EXPERTS**

Over the course of the spring 2021 semester, we met with a variety of community leaders and field experts that shared their experience in the field and offered a first-hand account of current approaches utilized by respective agencies. These individuals included the following:

- Carmela Roybal, Native American Budget and Policy Institute
- Amber Crotty, Navajo Nation Delegate
- Captain Troy Velasquez, New Mexico State Police
- Judge Marion Buller, Chief Commissioner for the Canadian National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls
- First Lady of the Navajo Nation, Phefeilia Nez
- Denise Billy, New Mexico MMIP Coordinator

### **TOOLKIT**

We developed the toolkit by conducting research, meeting with different speakers and collecting existing materials and resources online. We met with a number of tribal community members including Denise Billy who explained what was already achieved in the Task Force and gave us access to all the [Indian Treaties](#). The objective was to develop a new community toolkit to ensure success for the MMIWR Task Force to engage the community and do

outreach. In the toolkit, we focus on tribal community resources such as: tribal community health centers, cultural societies, schools/educational providers, and tribal social media websites, pages, and accounts; state/local resources available to tribal communities (such as: homeless shelters/agency networks, Missing Persons Clearinghouse (each state), domestic violence alliances/coalitions), and federal and national resources (such as: the American Red Cross, the Department of the Interior, Missing persons organizations/resources, and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)). The toolkit also includes a list of MMIWR resources, federal legislation, resources about New Mexico's Native American communities, and other resources and toolkits.

## RECOMMENDATIONS & PRIORITIES

### Short-Term Recommendations

1. Prioritize raising awareness about MMIWR across the state beyond the Indigenous community, framing this as an issue that affects all New Mexicans
  - a. Build extensive social media presence and utilize traditional media to educate both Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations.
  - b. Establish daily/weekly routine for posting on social media/publishing information.
  - c. Identify and build relationships with potential ally organizations across New Mexico that work to combat domestic violence.
  - d. Liaise with tribes on developing streamlined practices for raising awareness.
  - e. Establish permanent MMIWRR communications manager (Indigenous-preferred) at the state level.
  - f. Galvanize support for MMIWR crisis by connecting New Mexico's experience to the national crisis and the recent appointment of U.S. Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland.
2. Build relationships with tribes, local communities, and local organizations
  - a. Host public virtual events with high profile inspirational leaders from the community.
3. Conduct interviews with state law enforcement agencies to understand why the data is not consistent and get to the core of the issue

### Long-Term Recommendations

#### **1. Consult with Tribes and Pueblos to establish permanent agreements that will remain in place during tribal government transitions**

- a. Establish permanent MMIWR positions at the state level dedicated to liaising with New Mexico's Tribes and Pueblos to cultivate ongoing, collaborative relationships on addressing the MMIWR crisis.

- b. Consider setting a 1 or 2-year timeline with clearly stated goals for achieving this, e.g., *‘by summer 2022, NMIAD will have worked with X tribes to understand what agreements on the tribal side need to be passed in order for sustained future collaboration with the state.’*
- c. Examine what agreements with Tribes and Pueblos, if any, are in place with the state and prioritize any gaps.
- d. NMIAD develop a template, in tandem with Tribes and Pueblos, that could be used to draft tribal legislation/agreements aimed at accomplishing specific goals.
- e. Consider using a third party mediator to assist with addressing gaps between tribal legislation and the work of the NMIAD.

**2. Improve data collection methods, and related training, for law enforcement agencies so that data can be collected uniformly and accurately**

- a. Develop partnerships and network among national, local, and tribal law enforcement and social service agencies.
- b. Continue to develop a national database for MMIWR.
- c. Promote collaboration between federal agencies to track MMIWR cases.
- d. Include a more diverse set of data that includes race, ethnicity and demographics.

**3. Frame NM MMIWR an Issue of Economic Politics**

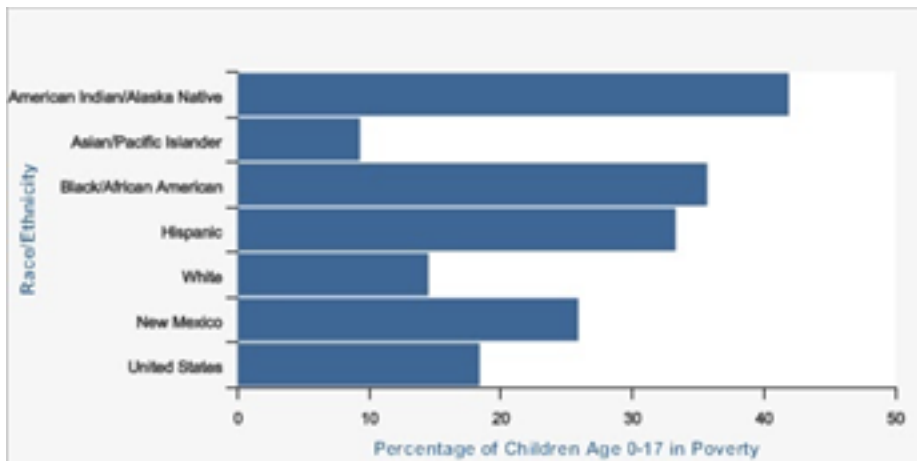
- a. Identify parallels between domestic violence, violence, and homicide to polity-economics rather than solely based on race, gender, and assumed deviancy.
- b. According to scholar, Madeleine Adelman from Arizona State University, her research identifies a clear relationship between economics and instances of violence, domestic violence, and homicide rates. In a paper published in 2004, Adelman states “A political economy of domestic violence situates domestic violence within cultural-historical context to reveal the intersection between domestic violence and the organization of the polity.”

(4)



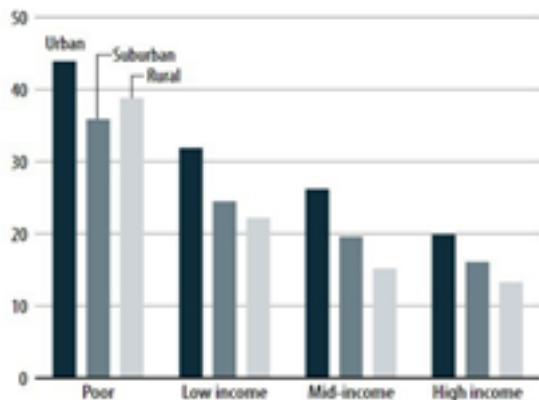
- c. The combination of these conditions contribute to domestic violence and US society structural inequities which are created by state-economy. Under these conditions, poor women present higher levels of domestic violence and disproportionate concerns related to domestic violence. The current US/global economic system contributes to conditions of poverty and often isolates and traps women's economic viability, mobility, and stability in this political and economic arrangement. Adelman further states, "Structural inequalities shape domestic violence and that domestic violence structures inequalities."
- d. The current model of understanding domestic violence centers the victim protections and involvement through heightened policing, arrest, prosecution, punishment, and mandated treatment of individual men demarcated as deviant criminals. Essentially making the criminal justice and legal systems designated caretakers of criminalized forms of domestic violence which further rationalizes state intrusion into families and communities.
- e. According to the New Mexico Indicator Based Information System report, New Mexico's child poverty rate has consistently been about 30% higher than the U.S. rate. Of that, Native American children between the ages of 0-17 living in the state of New Mexico, experience the highest rate of poverty in comparison to other ethnic groups in the state.  
(1)
- f. According to a survey published in a "Violence and Abuse in Rural America" report which reflects information collected between 2008-2012, rural populations that experience moderate to high levels of poverty are at higher risk of experiencing violence and domestic violence (2). For measure, nearly 33% of New Mexico's population reside in what is defined as "rural" areas in the state. A significant portion of New Mexico's rural population includes Native American tribes.
- g. National events over the past year have illustrated growing public outcry against increased policing and an overhaul of public safety policies that address the disproportionately high

carceral rates and deaths experienced among minority and impoverished populations. As such, it would serve the NMIAD MMIWR Task Force to further develop methods that address economic development and well-being and its relationship to heightened instances of violence and death experienced among Native American populations.



**Rate of violent victimization, by poverty level and location of residence, 2008–2012**

Rate per 1,000 persons age 12 or older



Note: Poor refers to households at 0% to 100% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). Low income refers to households at 101% to 200% of the FPL. Mid-income refers to households at 201% to 400% of the FPL. High income refers to households at 401% or higher than the FPL. See appendix table 7 for estimates and standard errors.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 2008–2012.

#### **4. Indigenous Data Sovereignty**

- a. As tribes, states, and national public safety and public health agencies develop comprehensive data collection systems and practices that better facilitate the tracking and investigation of MMIWR cases, it is imperative that tribal nations consider developing and/or reevaluating data sovereignty policies that support and protect tribal nations. According to the United States Indigenous Data Sovereignty Network, “The current movement toward open data and open science does not fully engage with Indigenous Peoples rights and interests.”
- b. As such, “existing principles within the open data movement (e.g. FAIR: findable, accessible, interoperable, reusable) primarily focus on characteristics of data that will facilitate increased data sharing among entities while ignoring power differentials and historical contexts. The CARE Principles for Indigenous Data Governance are people and purpose-oriented, reflecting the crucial role of data in advancing Indigenous innovation and self-determination.” (3)

#### **5. K-12 Educational Curriculum**

- a. Many recommendations listed in the New Mexico Indian Affairs Department MMIWR Task Force Report address concerns related to resolving issues once a person is missing and murdered. However, one glaring area worth examining is developing methods that address prevention and awareness of behaviors, issues, and conditions that contribute to MMIWR cases. One such method includes working with the New Mexico Public Education Department and respective tribal education boards in developing curriculum on MMIWR issues that help K-12 audiences identify and prevent instances of MMIWR activity in New Mexico.

## PRIORITIES

The New Mexico MMIWR Task Force has identified a number of priorities and recommendations for Phase 2 of the MMIWR Task Force. The immediate next steps identified by the MMIWR Task Force, as listed in the MMIWR Task Force Report, are:

- Secure funding for MMIWR task force.
- Establish a permanent position within the state (ex: MMIWR Director/Tribal Liaison).
- Complete a MMIWR clearinghouse with task force work products.
- Enhance qualitative and quantitative data collection.
- Create a MMIWR data institute.

These priorities cascade from the MMIWR Task Force recommendations listed in Section IV of the report. Currently, the authorizing Executive Order and corresponding state legislation does not provide for continued or a permanent Task Force to focus on the issues and priorities identified in the Task Force's report. For this reason, we recommend the MMIWR Task Force work with the state legislature to develop robust legislation that will allow the Task Force, working with the NMIAD to achieve the immediately identified priorities, and work on resolving some of the longer-term issues.

The MMIWR Task Force should seek to establish permanent funding for the Task Force and for an office that will focus solely on the work of the Task Force, through legislation enacted at the state level. Currently, the MMIWR operates based on the authority established in a state Executive Order. While Executive Orders are an efficient and effective way to quickly enact and authorize specific actions, they are not always a viable solution for longer term issues, that span more than one elected Administration (state or Federal).

Below is an outline of what we recommend be included in any proposed legislation.

**1. Funding for the MMIWR Task Force in the amount of \$50,000.00 annually.**

- b. The MMIWR Task Force received \$100,000 for FY 2019 and FY 2020. The MMIWR Task Force was reauthorized for an additional \$50,000.00 for FY 2021 to complete the work initiated in the previous fiscal years. Based on this information, we recommend an annual appropriation to support the convening and related activities of the Task Force.

**2. Establish a permanent office within the state to work on MMIWR, including funding for two full-time employees.**

- a. Currently, IAD is managing the facilitation, coordination, and related follow up activities of the Task Force. Legislation could establish an office within IAD, or a related Justice office, to work specifically and primarily with and “for” the Task Force. Given the high level of communication and coordination with Tribal Governments, state, tribal, and Federal law enforcement agencies, and the community at large, a minimum of two full time employees should staff this new office. Improve coordination and collaboration between tribal, state, city, county and federal agencies by establishing liaison positions, meeting regularly to address challenges, and developing agreements to streamline processes. Appropriations to allow for this expanded/new office should be included so that IAD’s current budget is not impacted.

**3. Develop a MMIWR clearinghouse.**

- a. The legislative proposal should clearly define as one of the purposes the development of a MMIWR clearinghouse that shall include a comprehensive list of all missing persons who are Native American within the state of New Mexico, and all missing persons who belong to a tribe located in New Mexico, regardless of where they may reside. The legislative proposal shall mandate reporting of Native American missing persons within the state to the clearinghouse. Appropriations for this effort should be included.

**4. Create a MMIWR data institute.**

a. A legislative proposal should include a section that establishes a data institute to track and study cases of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, Trans/2S+ and LGBTQ community members that also documents tribal-specific data. The institute could be housed at an institute of higher education, or within the Attorney General's office, to ensure that all law enforcement agencies contribute to the data. The data institute will include work products of the Task Force, including toolkits and guides for community members (including families of victims and survivors), Tribes, schools, health providers, and law enforcement agencies. The data institute will include reports conducted by the Task Force, and related state efforts, and can serve as a resource center for those communities and individuals looking to learn more and become involved in raising awareness regarding MMIWR. An establishment of a MMIWR data institute in New Mexico will also allow for the Task Force and IAD to partner with a higher education institution to assist with the development, and storing, of resource materials.

**5. Enhance qualitative and quantitative data collection.**

a. A legislative proposal should support increased data-gathering capacity across law enforcement agencies to increase accountability and ability to understand frequency, type and location of crimes. In order to support changes to data gathering, policies and legislation need to be created or adjusted to include more information. A significant amount of the recommendations are centered around the collection of data. It is clear that the methods and systems used to collect data across state, tribal, and Federal law enforcement agencies vary and can be difficult to translate from one agency to another. A legislative proposal should include a section that creates a pilot to develop an interoperable data system that allows the various existing systems utilized to "speak to each other" and share data as it pertains to missing and murdered Native Americans.

**6. Increase the capacity and support for Law Enforcement Officers**

- a. The legislative proposal should include language that provides tribal law enforcement officers who meet New Mexico training standards with similar law enforcement powers of New Mexico law enforcement officers. This would eliminate the need for NMSA § 29-1-11 because every tribal officer who graduates from the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) would also be recognized to have New Mexico law enforcement powers.
- b. The proposal should also mandate BIA or tribal police to be included in the New Mexico Department of Homeland Security Emergency Management Fusion Center. This will provide better collaboration between state and tribal entities for murdered and missing persons investigations and will include New Mexico tribes in a comprehensive, consolidated and coordinated program of mitigating and collaborating for these types of incidents. Tribes should also have the ability to post or send info out via the New Mexico Fusion Center that will be viewed by all New Mexico law enforcement entities when needed for better response and collaboration, especially when timing is critical.

## CONCLUSION & PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

### CONCLUSION

By increasing visibility of the MMIWR epidemic, we are hopeful that this awareness will equate to additional funding and political support. As a recently organized component of the NMIAD, we realize that the NMIAD MMIWR Task Force is in an early phase of planning and organization. As such, we are hopeful that the deliverables we were able to accomplish on this project will provide a framework for the NMIAD MMIWR Task Force that will assist in current and future planning initiatives. The criticality of MMIWR as an issue of public health, public safety, economics, and education, clearly delineates MMIWR as not only a Native American issue, but as a shared concern that negatively affects all New Mexicans.

### PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

#### Heidi K. Brandow

As a member of the Navajo Nation (Dine) and of Native Hawaiian (Kanaka Maoli) heritage, I am aware of how MMIW issues have directly impacted my community. In 2016, Ashlyn Mike, an 11-year old Navajo girl from Shiprock, New Mexico was kidnapped, raped, and murdered by her assailant. The ensuing shockwaves of grief and disbelief reverberated throughout the Navajo Nation but were especially felt throughout the state of New Mexico. Although I did not personally know Ashlyn, the violence surrounding her passing shook me to the core. Unfortunately, cases like Ashlyn are not rare. Since her loss, I became hyper aware of subsequent and similar cases affecting not only Indigenous communities in New Mexico, but also extending to Black and Latino communities.

Therefore, the prospect of working with the New Mexico Indian Affairs Department's Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Relatives Task Force project was an intentional decision and I was excited for the opportunity to be assigned this project. Like so many other concerned



Native Americans, I wanted to learn more about the issue and find ways to contribute to the NMIAD MMIWR Task Force's initiatives in meaningful and sustainable ways.

As a result of this experience, I've gained a significant amount of understanding on the magnitude of the issue in the state of New Mexico, nationally, and in Canada. While the statistics are not encouraging at the moment, I do believe that with additional support and funding, the NMIAD MMIWR Task Force is in a position to lead the nation in terms of developing policies and comprehensive programs that effectively address and prevent MMIWR incidences. With the recent appointment of Deb Haaland (Laguna Pueblo) as Secretary of the Department of Interior and Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham's recent support of the MMIWR Executive Order, I am hopeful that this type of high-level visibility within the political spectrum will contribute to ongoing efforts which include additional access to funding and programs associated with NMIAD MMIWR Task Force initiatives.

### **Yasmine El-Baggari**

My experience working with the New Mexico Indian Affairs Department was very positive and impactful. I've learned a lot about MMIWR and the different challenges tribal communities face not only in New Mexico, but also across the United States and Canada. Having the opportunity to meet with different Task Force members and hearing firsthand about their experience, work, and efforts was enlightening and provided me with a deeper understanding of what is needed on the ground. The Harvard team was very collaborative throughout the semester, and I've learned from each of the other students. Finally, I've learned new skills and tools that will allow me to continue this work in the years ahead. My hope is that the community toolkit can be expanded on and more meetings can take place between community members, the Task Force and government officials to ensure implementation of the different recommendations and policies we put forward this semester. Finally, I want to thank Christine Means for leading us each week and keeping us on track. Thank you, and I'm grateful for this experience of taking

Native Americans in the Twenty First Century: Nation Building II, at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government.

**Isaac Moore**

Working with the NMIAD this past semester on countering the MMIWR crisis in New Mexico was a very meaningful experience. As a member of the Northern Cheyenne Nation, I am profoundly aware of the devastating impacts the broader MMIW crisis continues to have on Indigenous communities across the U.S. Growing up, hearing about missing Indigenous women and children was a frequent phenomenon and those experiences have stayed with me. This project was my first time being involved in this work, so I am especially honored to have contributed in a small way to the work of the NMIAD and have had the opportunity to give back to the Indigenous community. Despite some hurdles and the difficulties of working in a virtual environment, I am pleased with the outcome of this collaboration. I've learned a lot about the Indigenous communities in New Mexico as well as broader issues that impact all of Indian Country, including data sovereignty, law enforcement jurisdiction, and the need for increased visibility of Indigenous peoples in education and outreach. Thank you for making this a great learning experience. *Neaese!*

**Lillian Sparks-Robinson**

The staff of the New Mexico Indian Affairs Department were very welcoming and friendly. However, the staff did not seem to have a clear direction of the work that they expected of the students, nor did they seem to understand the expert skill set of the students participating in/with the project. In hindsight, it would have been useful if NMIAD asked for the student's resumes and/or list of each participant's areas of expertise and skills. It also would have been useful if the students were able to observe an actual Task Force meeting, especially at the beginning of the project period, so that each student participant could gain a greater understanding of the dynamics of the Task Force, as well as a better understanding of the priorities of the Task Force. For future projects, it will be useful if NMIAD has a strong sense of

the deliverables expected at the beginning of the project period so that the student participants can best strategize on how to meet the deadlines and any additional demands of the project.

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## APPENDIX

APPENDIX A: SWOT Analysis

APPENDIX B: Toolkit

APPENDIX C: Executive Order

## APPENDIX A: SWOT ANALYSES

### SWOT Analysis 1: Law Enforcement

#### Question for NM IAD:

Denise Billy appointed as NM MMIP Coordinator in 2019. What work/initiatives have been done specifically around law enforcement?

**Overall goal:** Improving communication and collaboration between state/local/city law enforcement agencies and tribes.

1. How do we go about reaching this goal? What are actionable steps that can be taken in the next months? Years? What recommendations build on others in support of the overall objective?

**Strength:** the recommendations are robust and point out the various ways in which the existing structures/relationships inhibit the role of law enforcement in the MMIWR crisis. However, it is not clear at times who should be responsible for initiating some of these objectives. Furthermore, organizing the recommendations into areas and prioritizing recommendations that can be realized and that support larger ones would be a great way to begin.

#### Communication/collaboration/relationship building

1. Law enforcement MOUs (who/which agencies will be spearheading this?)
2. Tribal Nations meet with NM DPS
3. Establish permanent MMIWR Task Force
4. Establish agreements with NM tribal nations for registry >> tribal affiliation recorded
5. Support NM tribes' participation in VAWA (what exactly is meant by support and who?)
6. Require mandatory MMIWR reporting from all agencies
7. Establish mandatory protection order sharing

**Legislation**

1. Training standards
2. NM DHS Emergency Management Fusion Center
3. Streamline SLEC process
  1. Implement agreement b/w BIA and NMDPS

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weakness</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommendations are robust and point out the various ways in which the existing structures/relationships inhibit the role of law enforcement in the MMIWR crisis. However, it is not clear at times who should be responsible for initiating some of these objectives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jurisdictional boundaries: federal, state, and tribal boundaries interfere with law enforcement efficiency</li> <li>• Funding: Tribal law enforcement funding is critically underfunded; meeting 42% of usual law enforcement funding standards; leading to under-staffing</li> </ul>
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threat</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community outreach</li> <li>• Legislation for tribal officers to have extended powers similar to NM state police officers</li> <li>• Create reporting system</li> <li>• Education, training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of funding</li> <li>• Lack of law enforcement powers</li> <li>• Lack of reporting system &amp; tribal affiliation information for MMIWR</li> <li>• Lack of authority due to jurisdictional red-tape</li> </ul>

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## **SWOT Analysis 2: Data**

### **Strengths:**

5,700 reports of MMIW in National Crime Info Center

Passage of Savanna's Act- improves coordination among law enforcement agencies and allows tribal agencies to access law enforcement databases to help solve cases involving MMIWR

New Mexico and NamUs have an agreement that any information supplemented into the NamUs database will be shared with New Mexico's Missing Persons Clearinghouse

### **Weaknesses:**

Not all cases are being documented in reporting systems

Racial misclassification of AI/AN/NH women entered (or listed as "other")

Significant discrepancies in data sets- NamUs does not align with the data compiled by the state's Missing Persons Information Clearinghouse

Lack of outcome data sorted by race and ethnicity

Data collection is uneven across jurisdictions and agencies

Law enforcement agencies inability to develop reports, or respond to requests related to data of MMIWR- "excessively burdensome or broad"

Data included in the report is limited- restricted to jurisdictions that had the capacity to respond to the Task Force's data request and collected data by race and ethnicity

Qualitative data gathered at public task force meetings included concerns of how information and data was shared

No national database or collaboration exists between federal agencies to track the MMIWR cases

### **Opportunities:**

Improve data collection methods, and related training, for law enforcement agencies so that data can be collected uniformly and accurately.



Develop partnerships and network among national, local, and tribal law enforcement and social service agencies

Build relationships with the Tribes, local community, and local organizations

VAWA reauthorization

Develop a national database for MMIWR

Promote collaboration between federal agencies to track MMIWR cases

Include trafficking crimes in data collected

Include a more diverse set of data that includes race, ethnicity and demographics

Data as a fundamentally tool and resource - key to the agency

Better tools and systems to collect data

Interview agencies to understand why the data is not consistent

**Threats:**

Coronavirus

Jurisdictional challenges to information sharing

Access to broadband

Family and survivor's willingness to share information- trauma inducing

Lack of funding and resources

Data not reported and collected accurately to fully understand the scope of MMIWR

Data not sorted by race and ethnicity

Trust with communities/tribes

Policy not being implemented

## APPENDIX B: MMIWR COMMUNITY TOOLKIT

The MMIWR Community Toolkit can be accessed online at:

[http://bit.ly/NMIAD\\_TOOLKIT\\_EXCEL](http://bit.ly/NMIAD_TOOLKIT_EXCEL)

## HONOR THE TREATIES

Hello! 🌟

Welcome to your **MMIWR Toolkit: Honour The Treaty**

This document is to help you better understand the Treaties signed in New Mexico

Honour The Treaty Number	Name of Treaty	Treaty link	Treaty creator (organisation, author, etc)	Date signed
1	Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo	<a href="https://digitalcommons.cs">https://digitalcommons.cs</a>	U.S. Government.	1848, February 2
2	Ratified Indian Treaty 256: Utah - Abiquiu, New Mexico Territory, December 30, 1849	<a href="https://catalog.archives.g">https://catalog.archives.g</a>	U.S. Government.	3/4/1789
3	Treaty Between the United States and the	<a href="https://catalog.archives.g">https://catalog.archives.g</a>	U.S. Government.	3/4/1789
4	Treaty: Ratified Indian Treaty 261: Apache - Santa Fe, New Mexico Territory, July 1, 1852	<a href="https://catalog.archives.g">https://catalog.archives.g</a>	U.S. Government.	July 1, 1852
5	Treaty: Treaty Between the United States and the Apache Indians Signed at Santa Fe,	<a href="https://catalog.archives.g">https://catalog.archives.g</a>	U.S. Government.	3/4/1789
6	Treaty: Treaty between the United States Government and the Navajo Indians Signed	<a href="https://catalog.archives.g">https://catalog.archives.g</a>	U.S. Government.	June 1, 1868
7	US House of Representative Resolution for a Report on California and New Mexico	<a href="https://digitalcommons.cs">https://digitalcommons.cs</a>	U.S. Government.	1849, December 31
	Treaty of Abiquiú	<a href="https://coloradoencyclope">https://coloradoencyclope</a>	U.S. Government.	1849

## TIER I: TRIBAL COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Hello!

Welcome to your **MMIWR Toolkit: Honour The Treaty**

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Honour The Treaty Number	Name of Treaty	Treaty link	Treaty creator (organisation, author, etc)	Date signed
1	Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo	<a href="https://digitalcommons.csu">https://digitalcommons.csu</a>	U.S. Government.	1848, February 2
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7	US House of Representative Resolution for a Report on California and New Mexico	<a href="https://digitalcommons.csu">https://digitalcommons.csu</a>	U.S. Government.	1849, December 31
	Treaty of Abiquiu	<a href="https://coloradoencyclope">https://coloradoencyclope</a>	U.S. Government.	1849

## TIER II: STATE/LOCAL RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO TRIBAL COMMUNITIES

Hello!

Welcome to your **MMIWR Toolkit: Tier 1 Guide**

This document is a Guide for Developing Community Outreach Guidelines

### Tier I: Tribal Community Resources

<i>Resource</i>	<i>Description</i>
Tribal Elders	
Tribal Leaders	
Tribal Healers	
Disaster and Crisis Response	
Human Services	
	Indian Child Welfare Act
	Child Protective Services/Child Welfare
	Domestic Violence Programs/Coalitions
	Shelter Programs/Outreach Workers
	Boys and Girls Clubs
	Adult Protective Services
Tribal Community Health Centers	
Cultural Societies	
Faith Communities	
Media Outlets (Radio, Newspapers)	
Tribal social media websites, pages, and accounts	
Schools/Educational Providers	
Tribal Public Works	
Tribal Transportation/Roads	
Tribal Forestry	
Tribal Community Grass Roots Groups	
Casinos	



## APPENDIX C: EXECUTIVE ORDER

An copy of the Executive Order can be accessed online at: <https://adobe.ly/3b83USK>



### State of New Mexico

Michelle Lujan Grisham  
*Governor*

#### EXECUTIVE ORDER 2021-013

##### EXECUTIVE ORDER ESTABLISHING THE NEW MEXICO MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND RELATIVES TASK FORCE

**WHEREAS**, the welfare of New Mexican Indigenous women, children, and relatives is connected to the broader well-being, health, and safety of all New Mexicans;

**WHEREAS**, the missing and murdered Indigenous women and relatives (MMIWR) crisis in New Mexico and beyond is inextricably rooted in the larger, complex history of state-sanctioned colonial violence against Indigenous peoples;

**WHEREAS**, tribal nations across the United States face continued external threats that jeopardize tribal sovereignty and the well-being and safety of Indigenous women, children, and relatives;

**WHEREAS**, in 2009, based on a report from the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, the Bureau of Indian Affairs found that federal funding for law enforcement personnel in Indian Country met only 42% of the need;

**WHEREAS**, New Mexico's 23 sovereign nations—19 Pueblos and four Tribes—each with its own land base bordering either state or federal lands, have distinct histories, cultures, and governments;

**WHEREAS**, law enforcement responses to MMIWR are impacted by lack of clarity around jurisdiction, particularly in rural parts of the state where land status varies mile to mile and in urban populations and border towns with large Indigenous populations;

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**WHEREAS**, working relationships between tribal nations and law enforcement agencies exist in some areas, but are not reflective of the state as a whole;

**WHEREAS**, there is a dire need to better understand how dynamics in border towns—cities and towns near or adjacent to reservations with histories of racial tension—contribute to MMIWR cases across the state;

**WHEREAS**, it is critical that data be accurately reported and captured and more research be done to fully understand the scope of the MMIWR crisis and appropriate recommendations for justice;

**WHEREAS**, federal legislation has been passed with a look toward reviving tribal sovereignty to prosecute crimes by non-Indians on tribal lands, including the Tribal Law and Order Act of 2010 and the Violence Against Women Act of 2013;

**WHEREAS**, in 2020, Savanna’s Act and the Not Invisible Act were signed into law to improve coordination between tribes and law enforcement agencies and increase data access;

**WHEREAS**, jurisdictional restrictions between tribal, state, and municipal boundaries create barriers that restrict the ease of access and accuracy of the information collected and available between agencies when reporting missing and murdered cases;

**WHEREAS**, the complex maze of jurisdiction often slows and hampers an effective and coordinated response to the MMIWR crisis;

**WHEREAS**, commission agreements, cross-commissions, and memorandums of understanding are tools that must be explored and implemented across New Mexico to more effectively respond to MMIWR cases;

**WHEREAS**, New Mexico Missing Persons Information Clearinghouse data research analysis conducted in New Mexico between 2014-2019 reported 986 missing person cases, 97% of which remained unsolved and 16% of which involve Indigenous persons;

**WHEREAS**, due to the absence of an established reporting standard that requires documentation of tribal affiliation, the number of unsolved, missing, and murdered cases of the Indigenous demographic could be significantly higher;

**WHEREAS**, according to data from McKinley County and San Juan County between 2014-2019, 52% of unsolved missing person cases were identified as Indigenous;

**WHEREAS**, based on data collected from the New Mexico Police Department, specifically from McKinley County and San Juan County, Indigenous populations are overrepresented in missing and murdered cases in the Farmington and Gallup region;

**WHEREAS**, the absence of a uniform standard of data collection that includes a requirement of designating race and age creates inaccuracies in the total number of reported missing and murdered cases;

**WHEREAS**, many missing and murdered cases are not categorized as such and therefore are not reported to the state and national missing and murdered person databases;

**WHEREAS**, multiple tribal law enforcement agencies have strongly advocated for a uniform requirement that all tribal and non-tribal public safety agencies report missing and murdered cases regardless of jurisdictional boundaries;

**WHEREAS**, public safety agencies within tribal communities are requesting increased and continued financial resources to address the critical necessity of increasing staffing and workforce needs that affect investigations;



**WHEREAS**, a lack of critical funding to public safety agencies among tribal communities has adversely affected access to education and ongoing training on the significance of data collection practices and the overwhelming disparities of violence experienced among Indigenous populations;

**WHEREAS**, New Mexico's interstate highways, I-40 and I-25, have routes that traverse through tribal territories, increasing the likelihood of human trafficking which is tied to the crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women and relatives;

**WHEREAS**, Indigenous populations of New Mexico experience violence at higher rates than the national average, and Native American women have the highest rate of homicide among all racial and ethnic groups;

**WHEREAS**, the federal government declines to prosecute many major crimes that occur on tribal lands due to insufficient evidence, resulting in a lack of justice for the victim, the family, and the community; and

**WHEREAS**, inconsistent financial support and resources result in victim service gaps in rural areas of New Mexico, such as a lack of access to specialized medical, mental health, legal services, and limited crisis prevention, limited substance abuse prevention, and inadequate family shelters and housing programs.

**NOW THEREFORE, I, Michelle Lujan Grisham, Governor of the State of New Mexico**, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and Laws of the State of New Mexico, do hereby **ORDER** and **DIRECT** as follows:

1. The New Mexico Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Relatives Task Force (the "Task Force") is created to develop a state response plan addressing systemic changes that support prevention, reporting, and investigation of MMIWR incidents.

*Executive Order 2021-013*

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2. The Task Force shall consist of no more than 40 members appointed by the Secretary of the Indian Affairs Department (the “Secretary”).

3. The Task Force members shall not be compensated for their service, other than for per diem for members traveling more than 100 miles to the designated meeting location, or for contractual services that the Secretary deems as necessary, subject to appropriations.

4. The Secretary shall serve as the Chair, appointing representatives, convening meetings, facilitating stakeholder participation, and providing strategic direction for achieving the above outlined goals.

5. Members of the Task Force, whom shall serve at the pleasure of the Secretary, shall include the following:

i. No more than ten representatives from the New Mexico Department of Public Safety, including the Department’s Missing Persons Clearinghouse; the New Mexico Children, Youth & Families Department; the Office of the New Mexico Attorney General; the United States Bureau of Indian Affairs, Office of Justice Services; the New Mexico Sheriff’s Association; and the municipal police departments of the Cities of Albuquerque, Gallup, Farmington, and Santa Fe;

ii. Two Legislators, including one Senator and one Representative nominated by the majority leaders of the House and Senate who serve on the following interim committees: Courts and Criminal Justice, Indian Affairs, and Health and Human Services;

iii. No more than three Pueblo representatives from a Northern Pueblo, a Southern Pueblo, and the All Pueblo Council of Governors;

iv. No more than two representatives from the Jicarilla Apache Nation;

v. No more than two representatives from the Mescalero Apache Tribe;

vi. No more than three representatives from the Office of President and Vice President of the Navajo Nation, the Navajo Nation Council, and the Navajo Nation Chapter House;

vii. No more than five representatives from an Urban Indian Center, a local nongovernmental organization that provides counseling services to Indigenous peoples who have been victims of violence, a statewide or local nongovernmental organization that provides legal services to indigenous women and girls who have been victims of violence, a local nongovernmental organization that provides direct services to homeless individuals, a local nongovernmental organization that provides direct services to survivors of sex trafficking;

viii. No more than four representatives from the Coalition to Stop Violence Against Native Women, Missing and Murdered Diné Relatives, the New Mexico Crime Victim Reparation Commission, and the Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission;

ix. No more than five representatives who are Indigenous survivors of violence or family members of an Indigenous relative who has been a victim of violence, members of the LGBTQ/2S+ community, and Indigenous youth; and

x. No more than four representatives who have experience working as a tribal prosecutor, a tribal criminal investigator, a tribal dispatcher, a tribal police chief, or a tribal social worker or program director.

6. The Task Force shall form subcommittees, including a Steering Committee, a Data Subcommittee, a Systems Subcommittee, and a Community Impact Subcommittee.

7. Each subcommittee shall nominate a chair, who must also serve on the Steering Committee.
8. The Steering Committee shall compile policy recommendations and legislative proposals.
9. The Task Force, through the subcommittees, shall develop a MMIWR State Response Plan that will advise the Executive Branch on initiatives, programs, and policy changes that will support implementation of Task Force report recommendations.
10. The Task Force shall evaluate policies and explore legislation that can be presented to the appropriate interim legislative committees and introduced during the 2022 Legislative Session to improve the state's efforts surrounding prevention and response to MMIWR incidents.
11. The Task Force shall develop a framework for the State Response Plan and present proposed legislation to the appropriate legislative interim committees and the Governor as soon as possible.

**I FURTHER ORDER and DIRECT** as follows:

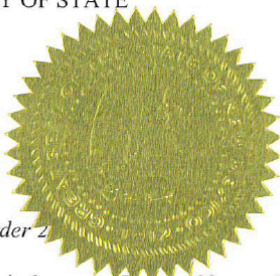
1. This Order shall take effect immediately and shall remain in effect until June 30, 2022, unless otherwise modified, rescinded, or renewed.


ATTEST:

  
MAGGIE TOULOUSE OLIVER  
SECRETARY OF STATE

DONE AT THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE  
THIS 5TH DAY OF MAY 2021

WITNESS MY HAND AND THE GREAT  
SEAL OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO



  
MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM  
GOVERNOR

*Executive Order 2*

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