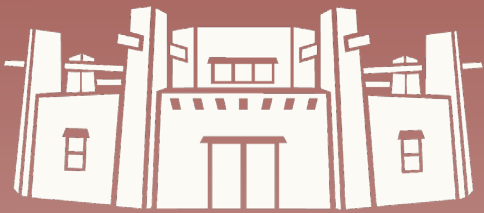
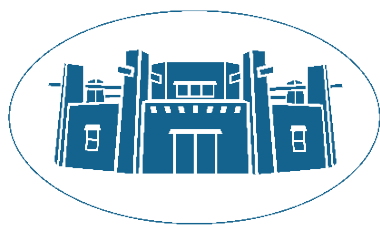


MISSING AND MURDERED DINE' RELATIVE TASK FORCE

SPRING SESSION REPORT 2025





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MISSING AND MURDERED DINE' RELATIVE
TASK FORCE**

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Acronym list

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1. Missing and Murdered Diné Relative Task Force - MMDR Task Force
2. Navajo Nation Police Department Missing Person's Unit - NNPD MPU
3. Search and rescue - SAR
4. 4Corners K9 Search and Rescue - 4CK9SAR
5. Northern Arizona Victim Services - NAVS
6. Navajo Nation Criminal Investigation - CI
7. Tribal Community Response Plan - TCRP
8. Navajo Technical University - NTU
9. Division of Children and Family Services - DCFS
10. Division of Public Safety - DPS
11. Utah Navajo Health System- UNHS
12. The National Missing and Unidentified Persons System- NamUs
13. Federal Bureau of Investigation- FBI
14. Bureau of Indian Affairs - BIA
15. Missing and Murdered Indigenous People - MMIP
16. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, and Two-Spirit, with the “+”
signifying additional identities - LGBTQ2S+
17. Violence Against Women Act- VAWA
18. Tribal Law and Order Act - TLOA
19. Community Emergency Response Team - CERT
20. Navajo Nation Department of Justice - NDOJ



Executive Summary for the Missing and Murdered Dine' Relative Task Force



Missing and Murdered Dine' Relative Task Force members attended the Fall Leadership Meeting in September 2024

The Missing And Murdered Diné Relatives (MMDR) Task Force was established to confront the crisis of violence and disappearance disproportionately affecting Diné people—particularly women, girls, and two-spirit relatives. Since its formation through Resolution NABIN-36-22, the task force has served as a coordinated, interagency body focused on building investigative capacity, expanding data infrastructure, supporting families, and securing justice.

Major developments include the launch of a data institute at Navajo Technical University (NTU), a formal proposal for an MMIP investigative unit, and revised Tribal Community Response Plan (TCRP) Protocols. These efforts are complemented by increased nonprofit collaboration and expansion of law enforcement training.

Despite these gains, challenges remain. Limited funding, fragmented jurisdiction, lack of forensic capacity, and administrative delays continue to affect families seeking justice. This report presents an overview of progress made, persistent obstacles, and clear legislative actions needed from the Navajo Nation Council to ensure long-term solutions.





In response to the ongoing crisis of violence, murder, and disappearance affecting Indigenous communities, particularly the Diné (Navajo) people, the Naabik'íyáti' Committee of the Navajo Nation Council passed Resolution NABIN-36-22. This resolution formally establishes the MMDR Task Force to develop and coordinate a comprehensive, culturally grounded response to cases of missing and murdered Diné individuals on and off the Navajo Nation.

The task force's mission includes policy development, data collection, community engagement, and advocacy for improved victim services and intergovernmental cooperation. Specific goals include creating a nonprofit data institute, launching a publicly accessible missing persons toolkit, securing funding for transitional housing and judicial tracking systems, and building cross-jurisdictional partnerships with federal and state agencies.

Comprised of representatives from all three branches of the Navajo government and community members, the MMDR Task Force is empowered to conduct studies, issue recommendations, and coordinate with various agencies to improve reporting, investigations, and support systems. This initiative aligns with federal efforts, including the Not Invisible Act of 2019, to address violence against Indigenous peoples through coordinated and sustained action.



1. Integrated MMIP Investigations + Data System

MMIP Investigative Unit (Proposed):

2 investigators per district, integrated with NNPD, FBI, BIA, NamUs.

Focus: case tracking across jurisdictions, active investigations.

Funding: \$5.3M startup, \$2.5M annual.

MMDR Data Institute at NTU:

Centralized, secure, culturally sensitive database.

Real-time family updates, case tracking, policy briefs.

Trains Diné students in data & public policy.

Funding: \$1M secured, \$500K pending for expansion.

2. Enhanced Tribal Community Response Plan (TCRP)

Standardizes coordination across tribal, state, federal agencies.

Defines clear roles for law enforcement, SAR, advocates.

Builds family-centered case tracking & communication.

Integrates nonprofit SAR and victim services.

Includes public alert & storytelling strategy.

Strategizes how the task force will create outreach programs.

Impact:

Living document guiding response and accountability.

No family left without answers.

3. Family Advocacy + Victim Services Expansion

Partners: Victim Witness Services, UNHS, MMDR Coalition.

Services: legal, mental health, crisis support, report filing.

Advocates assist with healing, briefings, reporting a missing loved one.

Current gap: funding limits MMIP-focused services.

Next Steps:

Secure flexible funding for all MMIP cases.

Expand advocate training & family peer networks.

4. Strengthening K-9 Search & Rescue (K9SAR) and Search & Rescue (SAR)

Volunteer-certified K-9 SAR teams, such as 4Corners K-9 Search and Rescue, provide critical boots-on-

the-ground support with highly trained personnel and certified working dogs.

Their K-9's specialize in Human Remains Detection (Cadaver), Trailing, and Air Scenting, and are certified through FEMA and the National Association of Search and Rescue (NASAR).

Current Needs:

-Fields ops, incident command training, communications, transportation, technology and software updates, case studies — underfunded.

- Funding that provide preparedness initiatives, security enhancements, and emergency support functions such as certified SAR teams.

Goals or What's Next:

-Formalize partnerships, facilitate the sharing of resources, and institutionalize systemic changes to response times, reporting, protocols, legislation, jurisdiction, data collection, and training with partnering law enforcement agencies (i.e. NNPD MPU) and other inter-agencies that provide search and rescue (K9SAR & SAR) services and support.

-Assist with launching and implementing training for Navajo Nation operated certified SAR program.

-Train rural communities in certified SAR with the assistance and involvement of Chapter Houses.

5. Public Communication & Education Strategy

Established a website for the task force to share critical resources to families, created flyers, and in process creating a media plan to share victim's family story to increase visibility for their missing loved one.

Collaborating with Public Information Officers (PIOs) across Navajo Nation divisions and three branch government.

Planned Enhancements:

Social media campaigns.

Established a media plan for the TCRP.

Ongoing education to raise awareness.

Summary

The MMDR Task Force is building a connected, sustainable system linking investigations, data, advocacy, SAR, and public awareness.





The MMDR Task Force is focused on sustainable progress to prevent future cases, support families, and pursue justice. Key priorities include building capacity, strengthening partnerships, and creating systemic change across the Navajo Nation.

1. Launch MMDR Data Institute

- Complete database with NTU by late 2026.
- Integrate historical cases and real-time updates for families.
- Secure data-sharing agreements and publish annual progress reports.

2. Establish MMIP Investigative Unit

- Secure funding for dedicated investigators within NNPD.
- Prioritize active investigations and unsolved case reviews.
- Coordinate directly with FBI, BIA, and federal partners.

3. Expand Victim Services

- Expand funding beyond DV/SA cases.
- Grow family peer support networks and train more advocates.
- Hold regular Family Days and briefings for direct engagement.

4. Develop Navajo SAR Program

- Build a Navajo-operated SAR team with certified training.
- Formalize emergency protocols in the updated TCRP.
- Secure sustainable funding and equipment.

5. Advance Policy and Legislative Advocacy

- Submit policy recommendations to Council.
- Push for federal and state legislative reforms.
- Advocate for mutual aid agreements and testify before federal bodies.

6. Strengthen Public Communication

- Run public education and prevention campaigns.
- Expand outreach through social media and community materials.
- Develop culturally respectful messaging for chapters and schools.

7. Ensure Long-Term Sustainability

- Build a five-year sustainability plan.
- Secure recurring tribal and federal funding.
- Institutionalize MMIP response in Navajo Nation law.
- Grow partnerships with universities and nonprofits.



1. Jurisdictional Barriers

- Confusing legal overlaps between tribal, state, and federal agencies.
- Limited authority for Navajo Nation law enforcement off-reservation.
- Delayed response times and poor coordination with outside agencies.
- Lack of mutual aid agreements complicates multi-jurisdictional cases.

2. Insufficient Funding

- Major federal funding cuts to MMIP initiative from USDOJ: from \$2M to \$200K.
- Current funding largely restricted to domestic violence/sexual assault cases, excluding broader MMIP cases.
- SAR teams and victim services lack consistent tribal funding.
- Database expansion and investigative units require sustained investment.

3. Data Gaps and Fragmentation

- Missing, inconsistent, or delayed data sharing from partner agencies.
- Lack of centralized, Navajo-controlled database until full NTU system launch.
- Families often left uninformed about case progress.

4. Limited Victim Advocacy Capacity

- Shortage of trained, culturally competent advocates for MMIP cases.
- Heavy reliance on nonprofits with limited resources.
- Advocates face burnout and high demand, especially in rural areas.

5. Search and Rescue Limitations

- No certified Navajo-operated SAR program; reliance on volunteer teams.
- Lack of standardized SAR protocols and training.
- Inadequate equipment and funding for effective response.

6. Communication and Public Awareness Gaps

- Families sometimes unaware of available resources or case processes.
- Inconsistent public communication across agencies.
- Need for stronger media engagement to raise awareness and visibility of active cases.

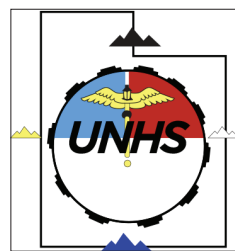
7. Family Trust and Community Engagement

- Families often feel compelled to conduct their own searches due to slow responses.
- Historical mistrust of law enforcement complicates cooperation.
- Need for better family support systems and communication channels.

8. Policy and Legislative Gaps

- No mandates requiring cross-agency collaboration.
- Slow progress on mutual aid agreements and jurisdictional reforms.
- Lack of enforceable protocols for data sharing and case handling.





Nonprofit organizations remain the backbone of MMIP response despite inconsistent funding:

4Corners K-9 Search and Rescue: 4CK9SAR is committed to community outreach and education, offering training on the basics of search techniques and safe field practices to families and rural communities. SAR boots-on-the-ground teams refer to non-K9 personnel who assist in ground searches using traditional methods such as tracking, navigation, and coordination with command teams.

Victim Witness Services UNHS: Utah Navajo Health System (UNHS) offers comprehensive victim services for Navajo families, including shelter, legal assistance, counseling, and financial aid for those affected by domestic, sexual, physical, emotional, or financial abuse. Services are available in Utah and parts of New Mexico, with culturally sensitive care and 24/7 support. Contact UNHS at 435-678-0240.

Northern Arizona Victim Witness Services: Victim Witness Services for Northern Arizona offers trauma-informed advocacy, crisis counseling, and victim compensation to Navajo families affected by crime. Their culturally grounded support spans the Navajo Nation, providing legal assistance, emotional care, and connections to essential resources. After-hours help is available at (928) 856-7676.

Missing and Murdered Diné Relative Coalition: Missing and Murdered Diné Relatives Coalition (MMDRC) work to provide support to victims of the Missing and Murdered Indigenous relatives crisis, allocating much-needed aid to Diné families in finding their loved ones and achieving justice for the loved ones they have lost through community support and resource sharing.

Navajo Nation Division of Children and Family Services: Provide assistance with services and feedback for Diné families who are facing struggles with a missing loved one

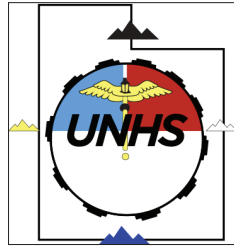
Navajo Nation Public Safety: Provide feedback and updates on missing people reports



MISSING AND MURDERED DINÉ RELATIVE
COALITION

MISSING PERSON
TOOLKIT
FOR ALL NAVAJO PEOPLE

Scan the QR code



Funding request estimate amounts

1. Utah Navajo Health Services - \$1.5M (Provide services to families and resources for their healing.)
2. Northern Arizona Victim Services - \$1M (Provide services for families and resources for their healing, for educational outreach and advocacy.)
3. Navajo Nation Criminal Investigation to establish Missing and Murdered Indigenous Unit - \$5M (startup for the MMIP Unit for Criminal investigation)
4. 4 Corner K9 Search and Rescue - \$250k (Provide SAR services for families and communities, training certified SAR program for rural communities, and resources for SAR initiatives i.e. technology and transportation)
5. Navajo Nation Division of Children and Family Services - \$500,000 (Provide educational outreach, services and resources through the Dine' Action Plan (DAP), and continue their work with the community.)



Prepared by:
The Missing and Murdered Diné Relatives Task Force
April 2025

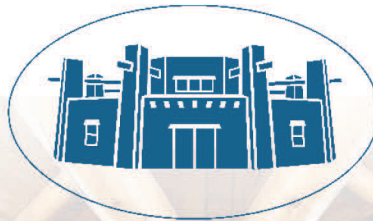
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