



25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

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Missing and Murdered Diné Relative Task Force advances sovereign database development with Navajo Technical University



The Missing and Murdered Diné Relatives Task Force held a work session to evaluate the progress of a sovereign database system under development by Navajo Technical University.

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — The Missing and Murdered Diné Relatives (MMDR) Task Force held a work session on Tuesday, Sep. 30, to evaluate the progress of a sovereign database system under development by Navajo Technical University (NTU) and led by database consultant Dr. Gil Gonzales.

The discussion centered on the next steps for building an integrated, community-centered platform designed to improve data access, accountability, and coordination around missing person cases across the Navajo Nation.

“The MMDR database aims to bridge families and agencies and provide real-time data updates,” said Task Force Chairwoman Amber Kanazbah Crotty. “This effort is about restoring power and transparency to our people. Our families deserve a system that centers their voices, documents their loved ones with dignity, and holds systems accountable.”

The MMDR database will serve as a centralized repository to document, track, and support families impacted by the crisis of missing Diné individuals. It will include tools for advocacy, communications, survey feedback, and case tracking, all while prioritizing data sovereignty and community control.

During the meeting, Dr. Gonzales presented the draft scope of work for the MMDR application, which incorporates feedback from law enforcement, advocacy groups, service

providers, and families. The development will include modules for a CRM (what is CRM) system to track communications, a data-sharing platform with external agencies, survey tools to monitor service quality, and open-source technology to ensure accessibility across all bandwidth conditions, including mobile access for remote users.

NTU's role is to build and host the database infrastructure on tribal servers and to preserve data sovereignty. Additionally, NTU will use the project to develop student training pathways in software engineering, maintenance, and data analysis.

"This project is about building capacity within the Nation," Chairwoman Crotty emphasized during the session. "We're leveraging the strengths of our students and educators to create something lasting."

The current process for public data on missing persons, usually filtered through the FBI's NCIC database, is often delayed and incomplete, particularly when tribal jurisdictions overlap with state and federal boundaries. The MMDR system will allow agencies to share real-time alerts and provide families with updates, even when formal law enforcement records lag. The Task Force also explored how artificial intelligence could be used in future phases to analyze longitudinal trends and improve system responsiveness.

The Task Force also acknowledged the importance of incorporating advocacy groups and victim service agencies into the platform.

Development of the prototype is currently underway, with NTU aiming to complete the infrastructure build and technical documentation in the coming months. Job postings for the project, including for a project director and researcher, will be shared on the MMDR website to ensure visibility for Diné students and professionals.

The next public session is scheduled for October 9 and will be available both in-person and via Zoom. For more information or to access resources on how to report a missing loved one, visit the MMDR Task Force webpage on the 25th Navajo Nation Council's website.

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