



When a Loved One Goes Missing

Resources for Families of Missing American Indian and Alaska Native Adults



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When a Loved One Goes Missing: Resources for Families of Missing American Indian and Alaska Native Adults

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Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Missing Adults	2
Searching for a Loved One	3
The First Days After a Disappearance.....	3
Filing a Missing Person Report	5
Collecting and Sharing Information With Law Enforcement	8
Supporting the Search	9
Creating a Missing Person Flyer.....	10
Using Social Media	11
Contacting the Media.....	12
Understanding Intentional Disappearance and Confidentiality	13
30 Days or More After a Disappearance	14
Gathering Physical Identification Information	14
Searching for a Long-Term Missing Loved One	14
Finding Assistance and Supportive Services	16
Emotional	16
Financial	17
Legal	17
Coping With Trauma and Grief	18
Trauma	18
Grief and Traumatic Grief.....	18
Self-Care and Community Care	19
Caring for a Returned Loved One	21
Trauma in Survivors	21
Healing Needs of Survivors.....	22
Survivors of Human Trafficking.....	23
Resources	24
Appendix — Missing Person Flyer	27
Appendix — Map of Tribal Coalitions	28
Appendix — Law Enforcement and Jurisdiction	29



Introduction

This guide provides information and practical resources to assist family members and friends with the search for a missing adult loved one. While not an exhaustive list of actions, this guide offers helpful steps to take while searching for a loved one, suggestions about how to cope with trauma, and a list of resources for navigating this difficult situation.

Dial 911 or contact law enforcement immediately when a person younger than 21 years old disappears or if the missing person is at immediate risk of injury or death.

Each missing loved one's situation is unique, and not every recommendation or resource in this guide will apply in every situation. If the information in this guide feels overwhelming right now, consider asking a family member, friend, or another person to read it for you, provide support, and share information with you when you are ready.

If you need to talk with someone, contact StrongHearts Native Helpline (www.strongheartshelpline.org) at 844-7NATIVE (762-8483) or the Alaska Native Women's Resource Center (www.aknwrc.org) at 907-328-3990.

Additionally, the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (www.missingkids.org) at 800-THE-LOST (843-5678) offers many resources to help families looking for a missing child.



Missing Adults

There are many reasons why adults may go missing. If you are reading this, you care about your loved one. Be aware that they may have left unannounced to escape a dangerous situation.

Until a law enforcement investigation is conducted, it may be unknown if an individual is in danger or if the loved one is a victim of a crime. For these reasons, it's critical for families and friends to report to law enforcement when someone goes missing — and for law enforcement to take a missing person report.

A missing person report is an official record of the disappearance so no loved one is ever forgotten, no matter how long a case goes on.

There is no standard, national protocol for how local law enforcement responds to missing adults over the age of 21. So, there may be times when law enforcement does not take a missing adult person report immediately. In this situation, seek out support from Tribal coalitions, advocacy programs, and grassroots organizations. These organizations are there for a family's well-being and safety in Tribal communities.

Additionally, throughout the process of searching for a missing loved one, emotions can run high, and people may not be supportive. There is the possibility you may encounter "victim blaming." This may happen when the missing loved one's behavior or past experiences influence the community or law enforcement response to the search. Focusing on the missing loved one's importance to you, your family, and your Tribal community can help if you encounter victim blaming during this emotional time.



Searching for a Loved One

When an adult loved one goes missing, it's often confusing and extremely stressful for the family. This section shares steps to take during the first days after a disappearance through 30 days or more into the search.

You Are Not Alone

At any point, national hotlines can offer support over the phone and via chat services. Conversations are confidential and anonymous. National hotlines may refer you to state or local resources for support.

National Domestic Violence

Hotline:

800-799-7233

www.thehotline.org

National Runaway Safeline:

800-786-2929

www.1800runaway.org

National Human Trafficking

Hotline:

888-373-7888

www.humantraffickinghotline.org

National Suicide Prevention

Lifeline:

800-273-8255

www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

National Missing and Unidentified Persons System

(NamUs):

833-872-5176

www.namus.gov

StrongHearts Native Helpline:

844-762-8483

www.strongheartshelpline.org

The First Days After a Disappearance

When a loved one goes missing, time is critical. Once you have determined a loved one — regardless of their age — is missing, contact local law enforcement as soon as possible to file a report. This is especially important if the person has any health issues, disabilities, impairments, or medication requirements. Again, time is critical; notify law enforcement immediately.

Emergency

Dial 911 when there is —

- evidence or suspicion of foul play or your loved one is in danger; or
- immediate risk of injury or death, including a missing elder with cognitive disabilities or when someone goes missing during adverse weather conditions such as extreme heat or cold.

If 911 capability is unavailable in a Tribal community, contact local law enforcement.

Non-Emergency

Contact the law enforcement non-emergency number in the location where the individual went missing when —

- there is no immediate physical danger; or
- a loved one has been missing for some time (e.g., several weeks, months, or years).

If the loved one went missing on Tribal land, contact the Tribal police department, if there is one, or your local police department and ask to report a missing person. If the loved one lives or went missing outside of the territorial boundaries of Tribal land, contact the police department in that area. Note: If the Tribe does not have a police department, or you are unsure who to contact, call the local police department or county sheriff's office and ask for assistance.

When there is evidence of a crime, local law enforcement agencies are generally best suited to determine if and when to involve a federal or state law enforcement agency. There are complex jurisdictional questions at play when a crime occurs on Tribal land, and local law enforcement will know if state or federal authorities have the proper jurisdiction in these situations.

Filing a Missing Person Report

Contact law enforcement in person, over the phone, or online to file a missing person report. Provide as much information as possible about the missing loved one. This includes their last known whereabouts, places they like to go, and friends or relatives who may have been in contact with them.

It's OK if you don't have all the information right away. Share what you know so law enforcement can create a missing person report and begin investigating. Any information — positive or negative — can help investigators locate a missing loved one. If you are concerned about sharing negative information, remember that every missing person is more than the sum of their experiences. Keeping the missing loved one's importance to you, your family, and your community at the forefront can help build trust between you and the investigators when you file a report and during the search.

Take notes when you talk with law enforcement. During any emotional time, it can be easy to forget information. Write down the date, time, who you spoke with, and what you talked about to help you remember the discussions about the missing loved one.

If local law enforcement is not willing to assist or seems confused about the jurisdiction responsible for investigating, file a complaint with the supervisor or supervising entity. For example, for the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) police, the supervising entity is the local BIA superintendent. For Tribal police, contact the police chief or the Tribal judicial committee. For county police, contact the sheriff; for city police officers, contact the police chief.

Information to gather and share with law enforcement.

- Recent photo
- Full name, nickname, and aliases
- Tribal affiliation(s)
- Home address
- Date of birth and age at the time of disappearance
- Gender and biological sex (include both if they are different)
- Detailed description: height and weight; hair and eye color; unique scars, marks, and tattoos
- Date and time of disappearance
- Description of clothing or accessories worn at the time of disappearance
- Last known location
- Who they were last seen with before they went missing
- Any likely destinations such as favorite places, work, or study locations
- Information on any previous missing episodes and how those were resolved
- Medical conditions or behavioral health information
- Disability (physical or mental)
- Bank, credit card, or other financial statements
- Vehicle registration number, make, model, or other transportation methods
- Personal items left behind such as their purse, wallet, phone, or keys
- Social media account usernames/handles, email addresses, and cellphone numbers

Take notes for your own records.

- Name and phone number of the police department
- Name of the officer you spoke with and their badge number
- Date and time the missing person report was filed
- Missing person case report number
- Notes about the conversation

Record this information in the same place so it is easily found and can serve as a timeline of events. You can also ask for a copy of the missing person report for future reference.

It can be helpful to have support when communicating with law enforcement. Ask a family member, friend, or partner to be with you during these discussions. Some police departments have trained advocates who may also be able to support you. If an investigator asks to speak with you privately, it may be to help you feel comfortable disclosing information about the missing loved one that may feel private or sensitive.

After reporting your loved one missing, the law enforcement response will vary depending on the circumstances. People who are older adults/elders or those with a physical or mental disability are considered particularly vulnerable; law enforcement will take quick action in these cases and when there is suspicion or evidence that someone is a victim of a crime.

Individuals who are not possible crime victims or don't fall within a vulnerable category may not receive as much urgent law enforcement attention. Legally speaking, adults have the right to be left alone. It's possible there may be limited police involvement after a report is filed.

Collecting and Sharing Information With Law Enforcement

As the investigation begins, families can support the search by —

- talking with family, friends, and others who may know something.
- sharing the individual's social media account usernames/handles (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Twitter, etc.) to determine who may know the missing loved one and have some information about them.
- writing down information in a notebook, phone, or tablet and sharing new information or details with law enforcement.
- gathering recent photos of the missing loved one.
- securing areas such as a bedroom or a bathroom; law enforcement may need to collect certain items to support their search.

Share any new information with the law enforcement investigator handling the missing person case and keep copies of the information for your own records. If your missing loved one returns home safely or contacts family members or friends, immediately notify police so they can confirm their safety and welfare.

Law enforcement will use the information you provide to aid in the search of your loved one and will provide information, when possible, on what is being done. Understand that law enforcement is often unable to disclose all the steps taken in a case, as it could jeopardize the investigation.

If you are concerned that law enforcement is not doing enough, first speak with supervisory staff, the police chief, or the sheriff where the loved one was reported missing. If further help is needed, contact local media to tell your story; reach out to elected Tribal, state, or federal representatives; or consult with a civil attorney. While publicizing a case in the media or with elected officials may increase awareness and attention, it might also impact the investigation and divert law enforcement staff time and resources.

Supporting the Search

Families have a right to search for their missing loved one. If you do search on your own, it is helpful to maintain open communication with law enforcement throughout the search process (at the beginning, during, and after the loved one is located), especially if evidence needs to be preserved.

Families can support the search by identifying individuals who can —

- coordinate with law enforcement,
- manage and communicate with volunteers,
- oversee food and shelter arrangements,
- work with victim service providers, and
- arrange for Elders to provide spiritual guidance.

Searches on some terrain may require specialized equipment and volunteers such as horse and rider teams, volunteers for foot searches, ATVs, boats, divers, sonar equipment, planes, helicopters, and drones. Work with law enforcement to connect with a professional search team or search online to find an organization in your area. Some organizations provide their time and expertise for free to families searching for a loved one.

During the search, law enforcement may contact hospitals, jails, and medical examiners or coroners' offices. While health care organizations may not be able to share personal information (even with family) because of confidentiality laws, law enforcement is exempt when there's a safety threat.

Law enforcement may enter details about the missing person into a national database — the National Crime Information Center — to connect with other local, state, Tribal, and federal law enforcement officers across the country.

Creating a Missing Person Flyer

A missing person flyer can increase awareness and support, both online and in the community. Sharing a digital flyer on social media can reach people across a large geographic area quickly. To spread awareness, ask others to share the flyer on their social media accounts. If distributing paper flyers, post them in the location where the missing person was last seen and in places they normally frequent, such as shopping centers, bus stops, parks, Tribal centers, gyms, or restaurants.

If you need assistance with printing costs for missing person flyers, local businesses may discount the cost or print them for free.

When creating a flyer, include the following information:

- Name
- Recent photo
- Date of disappearance
- Gender and biological sex (if different)
- Detailed description (height, weight, build, hair, eye color)
- Identifying marks or scars, especially tattoos and other unique marks

Don't include personal contact information (i.e., home address, personal phone number, or personal email address) on the flyer. Instead, use the law enforcement agency's preferred contact number. Consider creating an email address specifically for the search effort.

A missing person flyer template is in the appendix. You can also create a “printable poster” for missing person cases published in the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs). Contact 833-872-5176 or namus@usdoj.gov for assistance with printing posters.

NamUs is a public resource for long-term missing person cases verified by law enforcement. Friends, family, or the general public can use the database (www.namus.gov) to share updates, access case information, and connect with criminal justice professionals in NamUs.

Using Social Media

Posting the missing person's photo and flyer on social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.) and asking others to share it immediately spreads awareness and increases community involvement.

Steps to consider when using social media:

- Coordinate with law enforcement before using social media when they are assisting with the case; there may be considerations about what case details to share publicly on social media.
- Determine what to share publicly; keep sensitive details about the loved one private.
- Think about creating a new social media account for the missing person separate from your personal accounts.
- Share the law enforcement non-emergency number or hotline to call with tips; avoid sharing personal contact information online.
- Designate a family member or friend to update and manage posts.
- Include a direct ask in social media posts, such as asking others to share the post or call with information.
- Share photos just of the missing person; photos should not include other people (to protect their privacy and avoid confusion).
- Identify relevant hashtags, or create a new hashtag for your search, to include in the social media posts to potentially reach more people and make it easier to find related online posts.
- Look for online groups highlighting missing persons in your area; ask them to share information about your missing loved one.

Be aware if you post on social media: You may receive negative comments on social media posts. These comments may shame or blame the missing loved one for their own disappearance. You don't need to reply and can delete negative comments. Also, the FBI warns families to beware of scammers exploiting the disappearance of a loved one for money. Learn more at the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center (www.IC3.gov or www.fbi.gov).

Contacting the Media

Contacting local media about your missing loved one can help raise awareness, especially early in the search. You can share the missing person flyer and ask that the information be shared on the air or in a story.

Steps to consider when contacting media outlets:

- Coordinate with law enforcement before contacting media outlets, if possible; there may be considerations about what case details to share publicly depending on each individual situation.
- Determine what to share publicly; keep sensitive details private.
- Share the law enforcement non-emergency number or hotline to call with tips; avoid sharing personal contact information.
- Designate one person as the media contact/spokesperson so consistent information is shared.
- Include a direct ask for reporters to convey to the public, such as asking people to call the police with any information.

Media coverage can have drawbacks, including intense focus on the family during a difficult time, disclosure and scrutiny of personal information about the loved one or the family, or the potential to undermine a police investigation.

Understanding Intentional Disappearance and Confidentiality

A loved one may intentionally leave home without telling family or friends their location. There are many reasons a person may disappear, including personal choice or to escape a volatile or abusive relationship. Regardless of the reason, the missing person has a right to leave and may not want to share where they are going and the reasons for leaving.

An individual may intentionally go missing to escape domestic or sexual violence. In these cases, confidentiality is more than just an issue of privacy: It can be one of survival. Domestic violence shelters offer a safe haven and cannot share any information with families or law enforcement without the individual's consent.

Law enforcement officials and service providers have confidentiality obligations to the missing individual that may prevent disclosure of their location to family members. For instance, when a missing adult is located alive, the missing person must consent for law enforcement to share their location.

Family members can request that law enforcement relay a message, asking the missing loved one to contact their searching family. The individual, however, is under no obligation to contact family members and, in some cases, may have well-justified fears about contacting those who reported them missing.

Many local service provider programs, such as domestic violence shelters, have a privileged or confidential relationship with their clients, with limited exceptions. Unless the individual gives consent through a waiver of confidentiality or privilege, the counselor, therapist, shelter worker, or service provider program volunteer cannot disclose the individual's location.

30 Days or More After a Disappearance

If a loved one is not found quickly, Tribal coalitions and victim service programs may offer support navigating the uncertainty.

When there is suspicion of foul play, law enforcement and specialized victim services may also be available to families. Specialized victim services may include providing emotional support, assessing needs, identifying resources, and sharing case updates on the investigative process.

At this point in the process, collecting biometric data from the family can help further the search.

Gathering Physical Identification Information

Law enforcement may request biometric information to assist in the ongoing search efforts. Biometric information refers to an individual's unique physical identifiers, such as fingerprints and DNA, and can assist law enforcement, forensic specialists, medical examiners, and coroners with resolving a missing person case.

Depending on the circumstances of the disappearance, law enforcement may ask for medical and dental records and for parents, full siblings, or children to provide a DNA sample. To note, law enforcement will only use family DNA samples in the search for a missing loved one and not for any other purpose. If law enforcement has not gathered biometric information, families can contact regional NamUs specialists for support at 833-872-5176 or namus@usdoj.gov.

Searching for a Long-Term Missing Loved One

No loved one is ever forgotten, no matter how long a case goes on. Until the missing individual is recovered, law enforcement, medical examiners, and forensic specialists will continue sharing information with one another in national missing person databases.

Tribal coalitions across the country can offer support and services to families searching for a missing loved one. These Tribal coalitions are well connected in their communities and serve as advocates for American Indian and Alaska Native families in the area.

The Alliance of Tribal Coalitions to End Violence (www.atcev.org) is a good starting point to connect with a Tribal coalition in your area. Contact them at 888-577-0940. A map of where Tribal coalitions are located is in the appendix. Additionally, the Tribal Resource Tool (www.tribalresourcetool.org) is a searchable directory of available Tribal services in your geographic area.

Vigils, marches, and prayer ceremonies can encourage community support and raise awareness about the missing loved one. Tribal coalitions, grassroots organizations, and Tribal communities can support families in organizing these events. Consider refreshing missing person flyers with different pictures to share during these community awareness events.

Nonprofit organizations and community-run groups like Miracle Messages (available at 800-MISS-YOU (647-7968) or www.miraclemessages.org) and Forget Me Not (www.facebook.com/groups/1607335859320104) work to connect missing loved ones with their families.



Finding Assistance and Supportive Services

You are not alone. For generations, American Indian and Alaska Native communities have gathered for song or prayer to overcome challenges. Tribal councils, Tribal coalitions, family services, and victim services can help raise public awareness, create healing spaces, and give support as they walk alongside you during this process. Cultural traditions can also offer comfort during this difficult time.

It may be helpful to seek supportive services during the search for a missing loved one. Available services will vary, especially in remote areas where access is limited or nonexistent. Contact local or Tribal health care providers, such as Indian Health Service (www.ihs.gov/findhealthcare), as a starting point for mental health and other supportive services.

The Tribal Resource Tool (www.tribalresourcetool.org) is a directory of services for American Indian and Alaska Native survivors and victims of crime and abuse. Contact information is available in a searchable map.

Emotional

Feelings of loss or grief are a normal response to a traumatic event and can be difficult to manage. You may also experience survivor's guilt or feel you could have done something to prevent or change the situation.

Talking with friends, family members, and Tribal or spiritual leaders can be comforting. When these feelings become overwhelming or difficult to process, consider seeking help from a therapist. Professional therapy can provide additional emotional support and coping strategies.

Financial

Financial support for handling a missing loved one's personal affairs may be available through Tribal coalitions and grassroots organizations when the missing individual has not been a victim of a crime.

When the missing loved one has been a victim of a crime, there may be resources available to support their healing. Crime victim assistance programs (www.ovc.ojp.gov/help-for-victims/overview) may offer services like crisis intervention, counseling, emergency shelter, criminal justice advocacy, and emergency transportation.

State victim compensation programs (www.nacvcb.org/state-information) may reimburse victims and secondary victims for expenses like medical costs, mental health counseling, lost wages, or loss of support. When state and local resources are exhausted, federal funding for victims of crime through the local FBI office may be available on a case-by-case basis.

When a loved one is found deceased as a result of a crime, BIA or FBI Victim Services can offer additional support with navigating crime-related costs, legal resources for declaring someone's death, and reunification support.

Legal

Seek the help of a reputable attorney if you think you need legal advice. Local legal aid services may be able to assist families with navigating the financial affairs and estate of a missing loved one. You can search Law Help (www.lawhelp.org) for legal aid programs, or contact the National Center for Victims of Crime at 202-467-8700 or info@victimsofcrime.org for help connecting to legal services.



Coping With Trauma and Grief

Searching for a missing loved one can create high levels of stress on the family. This stress is called trauma and can occur immediately or over time, affecting an individual's mental, physical, social, emotional, and spiritual well-being. This section gives ideas for practicing self-care and seeking community support to cope with trauma and grief.

Trauma

Traumatic events, like the disappearance of a loved one, can cause feelings of shock, denial, and sadness that are difficult to process. Trauma can refer to either the event itself, or the reaction to it. In either case, trauma is unpredictable and complex; everyone processes trauma differently. Community support, as well as cultural and spiritual practices, may provide comfort and healing.

Trauma impacts everyone differently. Individuals who may have experienced trauma in the past can experience flashbacks, anger, and depression from previous trauma, retriggered when a loved one goes missing. Recognizing that individual reactions to trauma vary can help foster open communication within families and a better understanding of each other's responses.

Grief and Traumatic Grief

One emotion that frequently accompanies trauma is grief. When a person is missing from our lives, we can experience feelings of loss or grief, even if the person is still alive. Coping with loss can be difficult, and grief is a normal and healthy response. Some missing person cases continue for a long time.

Losses without closure are called ambiguous losses and can be particularly difficult to process. Continuing to seek help and surrounding yourself with healthy relationships is important, even if years pass without a clear end.

Grief can be particularly intense in the case when a death occurs, whether early in an investigation or after many years of searching. The grieving process of a violent death is even more painful. Such a death can create physical and emotional strain in many areas. Traumatic grief – a grief accompanying an unexpected loss – can result in feelings of guilt, despair, and even thoughts of self-harm or suicide.

The grief associated with a sudden death can strain relationships and be expressed in different ways. Some people may want to talk more openly about their feelings; others may be reluctant to express their emotions. Some people may want to be left alone; others may want to be around those closest to them. Feelings of grief can continue and resurface over time.

For children, the loss of a loved one can be confusing and the world can feel upside down. Some children may not understand the meaning of death or the complexity of their feelings. Trained child specialists can offer strategies for coping and other support services for children. Local service providers can be found in the Tribal Resource Tool (www.tribalresourcetool.org). Online resources discuss the needs of children and teens who are grieving a death and provide education and resources for parents and caregivers, such as Sesame Street In Communities (www.sesamestreetincommunities.org/topics/grief) and the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (www.nctsn.org/what-is-child-trauma).

Self-Care and Community Care

The term self-care describes ways to cope with trauma and grief, but there is no singular definition. Self-care generally includes activities and practices to reduce stress and support long-term physical and emotional well-being. These activities can include practicing deep breathing, eating healthy food, exercising, and getting enough sleep.

No matter how you react to trauma, or how your grief displays, providing self-care, seeking outside support, and maintaining community ties can offer healing support during this difficult time.

There is no timeline for how long it takes to grieve losing a loved one.

Here are a few ways to cope with trauma and grief:

- Acknowledge your feelings of grief as normal responses to abnormal situations.
- Practice self-care, like getting enough sleep and exercising.
- Ask loved ones and friends for support and spend time with them.
- Participate in spiritual, religious, or traditional ceremonies and practices.
- Identify and engage in peer support groups or networks.
- Seek mental and health care, such as in-person therapy or teletherapy with a psychiatrist, psychologist, or other counselor.
- Work with law enforcement to identify victim services when appropriate.

Most missing person cases end with family and loved ones reunited. However, trauma and grief can be present after any missing person investigation. Even when you are reunited with your loved one, your emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual health may still need care.



Caring for a Returned Loved One

When a loved one returns home, they may be experiencing trauma as a result of their disappearance. The effects of trauma can occur immediately or over time, affecting an individual's well-being. This section covers how trauma may impact a survivor, the healing needs of survivors, and where to get help for a loved one who may have experienced human trafficking.

Trauma in Survivors

Reactions to trauma vary from person to person and can last for hours, weeks, months, or years. Creating safe conditions, remaining calm, and connecting with others are ways to support a loved one dealing with trauma. When supporting someone who has undergone trauma, it's important to respect a loved one's decisions and be sensitive to their needs.

When possible, help a returning loved one transition home with these ideas:

- Help them feel in control by letting them make their own decisions.
- Create a routine, which includes time for self-care.
- Find a safe place to gather and promote support.
- Organize ways for them to connect with loved ones and friends.
- Make sure they know where to access support and resources.

Don't:

- Force people to tell their stories.
- Probe for personal details.
- Say things like “everything will be OK” or “at least you survived.”
- Say what you think a returned loved one should feel or how they should act in a situation.

Healing Needs of Survivors

When a loved one returns home, they may ask for your support and understanding as they cope with what happened to them. Immediate emergency needs may be easiest to meet; longer-term needs often require outside support from family services, victim services, or spiritual practices.

To find local service providers, contact local or Tribal health care providers like Indian Health Service (www.ihs.gov/findhealthcare) or use the Tribal Resource Tool (www.tribalresourcetool.org).

Immediate emergency needs may include the following:

- **Safety:** Does the individual need to file a police report or restraining order if they experienced violence before or during their disappearance? Do they feel safe in the environment they have returned to?
- **Medical care:** Does the individual need health care? Do they have immediate access to medication? Is their provider approaching health care in a trauma-informed way to prevent the long-term onset of post-traumatic stress?
- **Mental health:** Is the survivor receiving professional help for processing trauma? Is the individual connected with their community and traditional or spiritual practices? Does their insurance cover mental or emotional health services, or are there community health options?
- **Behavioral health:** Does the individual need treatment for substance use, especially if this was a contributing factor to their disappearance? Does their insurance cover any behavioral health services, or are there community health options?
- **Shelter:** Does the individual have a permanent, safe place to live? Do they need help finding shelter? Can friends or relatives provide safe housing? Can local victim service providers provide housing referrals? Are there local government programs that can provide housing assistance, either in a safe, trauma-informed shelter or through direct financial aid?

Longer-term needs vary depending on the individual. These needs can include ongoing medical care, therapeutic counseling, cultural and spiritual practices, transportation to medical and mental health care appointments, legal aid, and other services.

Survivors of Human Trafficking

Human trafficking is a crime that involves the exploitation of a person — using force, fraud, or coercion — for the purpose of compelled sex or labor. Additionally, any person under the age of 18 who is engaged in commercial sex acts is a victim of human trafficking.

If a loved one was a victim of human trafficking while missing, the National Human Trafficking Hotline (www.humantraffickinghotline.org) offers services and support to get help and stay safe. Call 888-373-7888 or text 233733. All calls and texts are confidential; you may request assistance anonymously.



Resources

Alaska Native Women's Resource Center (AKNWRC)

AKNWRC is a nonprofit organization working to strengthen local, Tribal government's responses through community organizing efforts and advocating for the safety of women and children.

Phone: 907-328-3990 • Email: info@aknwrc.org • Website: www.aknwrc.org

Alliance of Tribal Coalitions to End Violence (ATCEV)

ATCEV is a nonprofit organization advancing Tribal sovereignty and the safety of American Indian and Alaska Native women by providing support to Tribal coalitions and communities in their efforts to address equal justice for survivors of violence.

Phone: 888-577-0940 • Website: www.atcev.org

Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Office of Justice Services (OJS), Missing and Murdered Unit

BIA's Missing and Murdered Unit works with Tribal, federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies, and other stakeholders to analyze and solve missing and murdered cases involving American Indians and Alaska Natives.

Phone: 833-560-2065 • Email: ojs_mmu@bia.gov

Tipline: Text keyword BIAMMU and your tip to 847411

Website: www.bia.gov/bia/ojs/missing-murdered-unit

BIA, OJS, Victim Assistance Program

The Victim Assistance Program offers on-call, 24/7 response, crisis intervention, referrals, information on mental and emotional health and other specialized responses, emergency services, and transportation for victims of crime in Indian Country. Receive help to understand the investigative process, court accompaniment, and follow-up assistance. There are also victim specialists located in certain Tribal communities.

Phone: 505-563-3420 • Website: www.bia.gov/bia/ojs/victim-assistance

FBI Victim Service Division

The FBI Victim Service Division is responsible for ensuring that victims of crimes investigated by the FBI are given the opportunity to receive services and notification as required by federal law and the *Attorney General Guidelines on Victim and Witness Assistance*.

Phone: 877-236-8947 • Website: www.fbi.gov/resources/victim-services

NamUs Regional Program Specialists

NamUs offers investigative support for a long-term, missing loved one. Friends, family, or the general public can use the NamUs database to share updates, access case information, and connect with criminal justice professionals.

Phone: 833-872-5176 • Email: namus@usdoj.gov • Website: www.namus.gov

National Indigenous Women's Resource Center (NIWRC)

NIWRC is a Native-led, nonprofit organization dedicated to ending violence against Native women and children through national leadership, advocacy, and culturally grounded resources. The organization can also connect individuals with a Tribal coalition in your local area.

Phone: 406-477-3896 • Website: www.niwrc.org

StrongHearts Native Helpline

StrongHearts is a 24/7 safe, confidential, and anonymous domestic, dating, and sexual violence helpline. Call, text, or chat online to receive support.

Phone: 844-7NATIVE (762-8483) • Website: www.strongheartshelpline.org

The Tribal Resource Tool

The Tribal Resource Tool is a searchable directory of services available for all American Indian and Alaska Native survivors of crime and abuse in Indian Country. Find contact information for service providers in your area.

Website: www.tribalresourcetool.org

OVC Directory of Crime Victim Services

The directory assists crime victims and service providers with finding non-emergency crime victim service programs in the United States.

Website: www.ovc.ojp.gov/directory-crime-victim-services

Victim Service Providers

A list of contact information for thousands of local victim service providers is available on the Office on Violence Against Women's website. These are grouped by state to easily see what is available in your area.

Website: www.justice.gov/ovw/local-resources

Appendix — Missing Person Flyer

MISSING

IF YOU HAVE INFORMATION ABOUT (MISSING PERSON'S NAME) CALL (LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY & PHONE NUMBER) OR TIP LINE

(PERSON'S FULL NAME)

Missing from: (where)

Date missing: (full date)

Date of birth: (month/day/year)

Age: (in years)

Gender/sex: (male/female)

Height: (feet and inches)

Weight: (pounds)

Build: (thin, medium, heavy, etc.)

Eyes: (color)

Hair: (color, length, wavy or straight, style he/she wears it in)

Race: (American Indian, Alaska Native, Hispanic, African American, etc.)

Complexion: (fair, olive, etc.)

Clothing: (Describe what the individual was wearing at time of disappearance. Include any jewelry or personal belongings.)

(Add any other descriptive information such as tattoos, body piercings, scars, health problems, etc.)

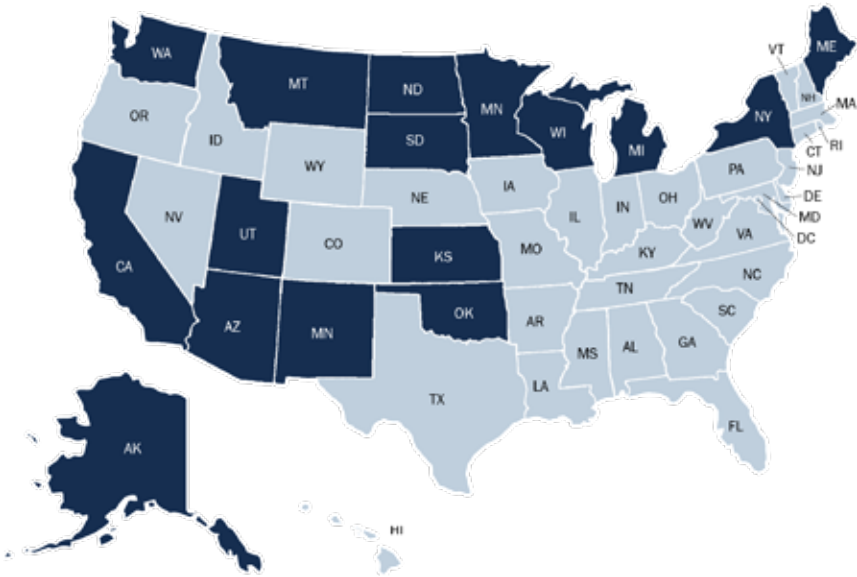
Circumstances: (Add information about when person was last seen, if they were seen with anyone else, etc., as guided by law enforcement.)

RECENT PHOTO

MISSING PERSON'S
FULL NAME HERE

Appendix — Map of Tribal Coalitions

There are 19 Tribal coalitions operating in Indian Country shaded on the map below. Tribal coalitions serve the Tribal communities where the services are being provided and were created for the specific region. Tribal coalitions provide education, support, and training assistance to member Indian service providers and Tribes enhancing their response to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and sex trafficking.



List of Tribal coalitions current as of November 2021.

Contact the Alliance of Tribal Coalitions to End Violence at 888-577-0940 to connect with a Tribal coalition in your area. The ways Tribal coalitions serve their regions is constantly growing and developing. To find out more about these organizations, visit www.atcev.org/tribal-coalitions.

Appendix — Law Enforcement and Jurisdiction

In an adult missing person case, the circumstances around the individual's disappearance determine the law enforcement response.

When a person is reported missing or a crime occurs in Indian Country, there may be a multi-jurisdictional response to the investigation, the victim, and the families. Jurisdiction determines the role law enforcement agencies take in investigating the missing person case. Depending on the situation, the following law enforcement agencies may be involved in the search.

Tribal Law Enforcement

Tribally operated law enforcement agencies provide a broad range of public safety services. They respond to calls for service, investigate crimes, enforce traffic laws, execute arrest warrants, serve process, provide court security, and conduct search and rescue operations. When a missing loved one goes missing off of Tribal land, Tribal law enforcement may assist families by referring them to the appropriate law enforcement agency.

Local Law Enforcement

The county sheriff's office and city police departments are considered to be local law enforcement responsible for crimes and activities in their area. Some agencies have dedicated missing person investigators. Find local law enforcement agencies in your state at golawenforcement.com/state-law-enforcement-agencies.

Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)

When the loved one goes missing from a Tribal community where BIA provides law enforcement services, BIA may be involved in the search. A local law enforcement agency may also ask BIA to assist in a missing person case. The general public can submit anonymous tips about missing or murdered Indigenous people through Tip411. Text keyword BIAMMU and your tip to 847411. Or call 833-560-2065 or email ojs_mmu@bia.gov.

Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)

The FBI may be involved in the investigation when the loved one goes missing from Tribal lands and evidence leads local law enforcement to suspect foul play. Sometimes Tribal, state, or local law enforcement may request FBI expert assistance during an investigation, such as evidence response or intelligence support. The FBI also receives tips from members of the general public (at www.fbi.gov/tips) and shares the information with local law enforcement.

State Law Enforcement

In some states, Public Law 280 expanded state law enforcement responsibilities in Indian Country. Therefore, in some Tribal communities and in cases arising outside of Tribal lands, state law enforcement, instead of the FBI, may be involved in a missing person case when there is suspicion or evidence of foul play. State law enforcement may include state highway patrols, state troopers, or state bureaus of investigation.

