

NEWSLETTER

JULY/AUGUST 2025


<https://www.facebook.com/MMIRofColorado/>

<http://mmirtaskforceco.com/>


Community Outreach and Awareness

Our Task Force has historically faced challenges in gaining permission from pow wow committees to display MMIR (Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives) posters and active Missing Indigenous Person Alerts during events, even when we have a dedicated booth. We understand that this reluctance stems from various factors, including the involvement of extractive industries in funding these events, which often contribute to the crisis, or committees wishing to avoid highlighting sensitive topics within our communities. However, we recently had a more positive response from the Welcome Home Pow Wow at Tall Bull during Labor Day, where we were encouraged to post flyers. Steve LaPointe, the MC, even highlighted our Task Force and directed attendees to our website for more information and ways to get involved. Additionally, the security team was provided with a spreadsheet of identified American Indian registered sex offenders, as some have attended past events. While these measures should be standard, we were hopeful that this indicated a shift in approach.

Despite these positive developments, a deeply distressing incident occurred. A family member unexpectedly saw a poster detailing her mother's murder. This experience was understandably triggering and upsetting, and we acknowledge that our efforts to raise awareness inadvertently caused her harm, which is unacceptable. This incident has prompted us to re-evaluate our methods. We are seeking guidance on how to effectively raise awareness and encourage the sharing of crucial details that could lead to breakthroughs in cold cases, without inadvertently causing further pain or re-opening old wounds for families. As a Task Force, we are committed to being accountable to families and honoring the stories of their missing and murdered relatives. We are eager to find answers, but never at the cost of causing more harm. We are open to any suggestions on how we can improve our approach.



CrimeCon 2025 in Denver

Our Task Force was invited to participate in CrimeCon 2025!. Task Force members Raven Payment and Lynnette Grey Bull will be presenting on the crisis of MMIR and our work in Colorado at this years CrimeCon! We will also have an info booth during the event. CrimeCon's mission is to bring together the true crime community for a weekend filled with education, empathy, understanding and advocacy. CrimeCon is an immersive, weekend-long event dedicated to all things true crime and mystery. Last year over 6,000 people attended this conference so we are hopeful highlighting some of the Cold Cases we are advocating for here in CO can help to bring national attention to their stories.



Search for Christina Gibbs

Our Task Force coordinated a search for Christina Gibbs on July 6th in JeffCo. Over a dozen people came to help search for her, including a Denver City Councilwoman. They split into 2 teams; one focusing on the W Line of the Lightrail based on a credible sighting and the other team canvased downtown Golden. They were able to distribute approximately 500 posters and were hopeful that leads will be forthcoming. Thankfully, Christina was located safely later in July.



**MISSING
INDIGENOUS
RELATIVE
COLORADO**



**CHRISTINA
GIBBS**

Height: 5'8"
Weight: 240 lbs
Age: 28
Hair: Brown
Eyes: Brown
Last Seen: July 1, 2025
Tribal Affiliation: Navajo

Christina "Tina" Gibbs was last seen in Golden at the Department of Human Services. She may be experiencing a mental health crisis and requires medication that she does not have access to.

**PLEASE CALL ARVADA
POLICE DEPARTMENT WITH
ANY INFORMATION
(720) 898-6900
CASE # AR25-011259**

Pioneers Museum Collaboration

Our Task Force approached Leah Davis Witherow, Curator of History at the Pioneer's Museum in Colorado Springs, to discuss possible ways to highlight the history of MMIR work in Colorado. We met on August 21st to plan a collaboration for the National Day of MMIR Awareness in 2026.



Issues With MIPAs

In July, two Native individuals went missing, and law enforcement did not initially request a MIPA from CBI. Our Task Force contacted Denver missing persons detectives to inquire about the delay. Fortunately, the relative was located safely before a response was received. Additionally, the Arvada Police Department incorrectly informed a family that they needed to wait three days to file a missing person report. Our Task Force contacted the CBI and the Department of Public Safety to report these inconsistencies. We then issued our own flyer and collaborated with the family to organize a search. We hope that the need for such grassroots interventions will decrease throughout the remainder of the year.

Active Updates

NamUs- We entered multiple cases into their database that law enforcement had again not yet submitted; Sierra, Nightwalker
Seawalker: Sentencing again delayed until end of Sept.
St John: Follow up with Bent County to see if we could help coordinate a search with drones or K9 groups.
Begay: Case info forwarded to CBI thanks to collaboration with MMDRC

Update Provided to FBI

Our Task Force helped to connect a community member to a Victims Specialist with the FBI on a new lead for a decades old case. We are keeping this information confidential as part of an ongoing investigation but are hopeful this leads to answers and even justice!



COLORADO
Division of Criminal Justice
Department of Public Safety

Task Force Attendance at State Meetings

Task Force member Monycka Snowbird attended the Office of Victims Program's Human Trafficking Council on July 25th. We will continue to attend these meetings as Native people are disproportionately represented in human trafficking statistics which contributes to the MMIR crisis. Nationally, Native women and girls make up less than 1.1% of the population but account for nearly 25% of human trafficking victims.

Monycka also attended the Governor's Community Corrections Advisory Council. This Council advises and assists the Division of Criminal Justice in analyzing and identifying problems or needs, recommend policy modifications or procedural changes and develops strategies for the community corrections system. This is intended to support clients as well as persons impacted by crime.

August Searches

The Task Force organized searches for Heather Rae Janis on August 23rd in Denver and Mary Checketts on August 20th in Colorado Springs. 100s of flyers were distributed, service agencies were notified and trails were walked hoping to bring these 2 women home safe.

OMMIR Advisory Meeting

Several of our Task Force members attended the quarterly OMMIR meeting on July 11th. Attorney David Adams, Ojibwe, presented on the work he has been doing in New Mexico. We reached out to potentially collaborate with him on some of the similar challenges we face in CO, particularly regarding inaccurate determinations of death by coroner's offices and less than thorough investigations by law enforcement. We shared some recent legislation that we have worked on that could also impact the communities that he serves.



Request for ICWA Collaboration

We sent a request in July to help facilitate the collaboration between the Colorado Department of Human Services and the Colorado Bureau of Investigation. We see the intersectionality of child welfare and circumstances that can lead to our young people going missing. We requested that the ICWA Specialist for the state of CO review the list of MIPAs that were issued for children in 2024 and share back strictly nonconfidential data regarding the percentage of those youth that had DHS involvement or an active ICWA case. This data is vital to being able to develop new preventative programs or advocating for expansion of existings available resources. 60 MIPAs for minors have been issued since the alerts inception.



Meeting with Two Spirit Native Center for Equity

We had the pleasure of meeting with Elton Naswood , Executive Director of the Two Spirit Native LGBTQ+ Center for Equity on August 13th. One of the many topics we discussed was how MMIR groups could be more inclusive of our Two Spirit relatives nationally. This is one of the primary reasons we do not use the MMIW acronym, we know that this crisis does not just impact our women and girls. In CO, there are more male identifying relatives in our database. We are aware of the profound violence our Two Spirit relatives face nationally, with over 80% experiencing violence and they face the highest of hate violence of any other LGBT group.



Training with CSPD

Task Force member, Monycka Snowbird, was able to again train with the current group of Police Cadets, which will also be graduating the 2nd Native Police Officer in Colorado Springs. During these trainings we discuss the MIPA, how it was created and how accurate data entry can expedite the alert going out timely. This group of cadets had recently attended the mandatory POST training on MMIR which our Task Force has been asking to have overhauled for almost 2 years. It was consensus that the POST Training, as it currently exists, provides inaccurate data, promotes some stereotypes and is overall problematic. Our Task Force has repeatedly addressed this with the OMMIR and hope it revised as soon as possible.

Financial Assistance Provided


On July 14th there was a one year memorial anniversary of Clarinda Blackburn's life which was taken by violence in Glendale. We were happy to help with some financial assistance for this event that was planned by our partner organization, Not Our Native Daughters. We pray for healing and justice for Clarinda's family.




Arrests Made

An arrest was made in the August 12th murder of Destiny Whiteman in Towaoc.

Nykhona Holiday and Robert Salt Jr were arrested in the homicide and 2 attempted homicides that took place on August 20th in Cortez.



HOW CAN POW WOW COMMITTEES HELP SPREAD MMIR AWARENESS?



DISPLAY LOCAL MMIR FLYERS THROUGHOUT POW WOW GROUNDS

THE MC ANNOUNCES NAMES OF ACTIVELY LOCAL MISSING RELATIVES

ADD "NO PREDATORS OR OFFENDERS" TO THE STANDARD "NO ALCOHOL OR DRUGS" STATEMENT AT THE BOTTOM OF ALL FLYERS

IDENTIFY PEOPLE THAT CHILDREN OR WOMEN CAN APPROACH FOR HELP IF SOMEONE IS MAKING THEM UNCOMFORTABLE

ASK VENDORS SELLING MMIR MERCH TO VERIFY PROCEEDS ACTUALLY GO TO THE WORK OR FAMILIES

CREATE ACCEPTING AND SAFE SPACES FOR TWO SPIRIT RELATIVES

HOLD HARMFUL COMMUNITY MEMBERS PUBLICLY ACCOUNTABLE

for more info: <https://mmirtaskforceco.com>

July and August Anniversaries

These are the actively missing or unsolved murders for each month. We will honor and remember our missing and murdered relatives by sharing their flyers on social media throughout the year, marking the anniversary of when they were last seen or taken too soon.

MISSING INDIGENOUS PERSON COLORADO



PLEASE CALL COLORADO
SPRINGS PD WITH ANY INFO
719-444-7000



FRANCIS JOSEPH HOULE

Height: 5'9"
Weight: 180 lbs
DOB: 1933
Hair: White
Eyes: Brown
Last Seen: 8/1/1979
Tribal Affiliation: Turtle Mountain Chippewa

Francis was last known working on a ranch or at the Broadmoor Hotel in Colorado Springs, CO. He wrote a letter to his family in August of 1979 and not been heard from since. He has the name "Rose" tattooed on one arm and the word "Sweet" above one nipple, "sour" over the other.

MURDERED INDIGENOUS PERSON - UNSOLVED -



PLEASE CONTACT UTE
MOUNTAIN UTE POLICE
DEPARTMENT WITH ANY INFO
(970) 565-8473
CASE 00-3169



Odell Vest



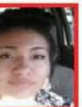
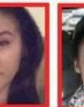




DOB: 12/01/1978
Murdered: 2000
Hair: Black
Eyes: Brown
Tribal Affiliation: Ute Mountain Ute

Odell was reportedly last seen at a residence in Towaoc, Colorado, where a party was taking place between July 10-11, 2000. He has not been heard from since and his family feels this is a homicide case.

The FBI is offering a \$10,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of individuals response for Vest's murder.

MISSING PERSON

GUARDIAN VOICE OF THE MISSING



SHACALAH BLUE HARDING

MISSING FROM: BILLINGS, MONTANA	HEIGHT: 5'4"
MISSING SINCE: JULY 23, 2018	WEIGHT: 125 lbs
AGE AT TIME OF DISAPPEARANCE: 19	HAIR: BLACK
AGE NOW: 25	EYES: BROWN

Shacalah Blue Harding went missing from Billings, Montana on July 3, 2018.

Shacalah was 19 at the time of her disappearance and is now 25 years old. She is 5'4" tall and weighs 125 lbs. She has black hair and brown eyes. Her ears are pierced.

Shacalah may go by the name "Blue" or spell her name "Shacalah" or "Haughtyng".

Shacalah has a history of mental illness and substance abuse.

Shacalah is enrolled in the Northern Cheyenne Tribe of the Northern Cheyenne Reservation.

Shacalah was last seen at the Tumbleweed Runaway Center and was walking on Buena Vista Drive in Billings, Montana at 4 pm on July 23, 2018. It is reported that she had been living homeless on and off for the spring and summer, however, she did keep in touch with her loved ones. She was reported missing on August 20th after she had not been seen or heard from for about a month. It is reported that a bus ticket that was purchased in her name supposedly going to Grand Junction, Colorado at the downtown Billings, but there is no evidence that she ever used that bus ticket. It is unusual for her to not be in contact in more than a week.

Shacalah has ties to Fort Riley, Kansas, New Mexico, Fort Belknap, and Billings, Montana. There have been reports of her being seen in the Phoenix, Arizona area, but not confirmed. Family is concerned for her safety and welfare.

If you have any information regarding Shacalah's disappearance or know her whereabouts, please call Yellowstone County Montana Sheriff's Office at 406-256-2929.

Case #: 18-720473
Namus #: MP52378

Flyer made by: Tatum Gray-Founder/Creator-Guardian Voice of the Missing