



MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS PERSONS

*Understanding
the Needs of
Oklahoma's
Tribal Nations.*

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Context and Overview

• From the Desk of the Attorney General	3
• Attorney General Drummond's MMIP Subcommittee	4
• Subcommittee Listening Sessions	6
• Family & Advocate Listening Session Findings	7
• Criminal Justice Listening Session Findings	8
• Family & Advocate and Criminal Justice Listening Sessions' Overlaps	9

Subcommittee Recommendations

• MMIP Subcommittee Recommendation #1 – Ranking Key Priority Areas	11
• MMIP Subcommittee Recommendation #2 – Task Force vs. Working Group	14
• MMIP Subcommittee Recommendation #3 – Purpose and Scope	15
• MMIP Subcommittee Recommendation #4 – Membership	17

Appendix	19
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CONTEXT & OVERVIEW



From the Desk of the Attorney General

Thank you, members of the MMIP subcommittee, for your commitment in addressing the crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous people in Oklahoma. Your expertise, insight and recommendations are essential to strengthening our state's response and ensuring the voices of Tribal communities and families are heard. The sobering reality is that Indigenous people continue to experience disproportionately high rates of violence and remain at increased risk of going missing or being murdered. The work of this group remains vital as we strive to improve coordination, strengthen accountability, support families, and advance meaningful solutions to prevent these tragedies and ensure that no person is forgotten.

Gentner Drummond
Oklahoma Attorney General
August 2026



Attorney General Drummond's MMIP Subcommittee

Recognizing Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons (MMIP) has impacted Oklahoma tribal communities for generations, Attorney General Gentner Drummond established the first Oklahoma Attorney General (OAG)-based MMIP Subcommittee. The group aimed to convene tribal partners, community members, and other stakeholders dedicated to addressing MMIP to further elevate the issue, strengthen support systems, and advance meaningful solutions for Oklahoma Indigenous communities.

Listening sessions across the State deepened the OAG's understanding of the barriers faced in MMIP cases, identified the most pressing challenges, and showed how tribal, local, state, and federal partners can collaborate better, alongside families impacted by these tragedies, to tackle this crisis head-on. Attorney General Drummond's commitment to the work was guided by his desire to recognize, listen, and act on behalf of Indigenous families, so they receive the attention and support they deserve.

This report captures the main themes of the most pressing MMIP challenges facing our State in the words of the tribes, families, advocates, and other government entities impacted by, and working to address, the issue.

The recommendations drawn from these listening sessions require a long-term, sustainable commitment to improving Oklahoma's response to MMIP. Central to this commitment is a recognition of the need to improve coordination, communication, and collaboration between all stakeholders.



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The Office of the Oklahoma Attorney General is deeply grateful to our tribal, federal, state, and local partners for their partnership and collaboration. We also honor the MMIP families and advocates who have shared their experiences with courage and grace. Their voices strengthen our resolve to work together to prevent future families from experiencing the same devastating loss.

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Subcommittee Listening Sessions

Listening sessions were organized at four different sites over a seven-month period. A total of eight listening sessions were hosted at sites covering the central, western, northeastern, and southeastern areas of the State.

Each site hosted two listening sessions, one dedicated to families and advocates and one for criminal justice professionals. These were referred to individually as the Family & Advocate and Criminal Justice tracks.

Listening Session #1 – Oklahoma City, OK (Oklahoma County)

- Date: December 5, 2025
- Tribal Host: Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes
- Location: Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribal Services



Listening Session #2 – Lawton, OK (Comanche County)

- Date: February 19, 2026
- Tribal Host: Comanche Nation
- Location: Comanche Nation Tribal Complex



Listening Session #3 – Durant, OK (Bryan County)

- Date: March 26, 2026
- Tribal Host: Choctaw Nation
- Location: Choctaw Nation Headquarters



Listening Session #4 – Miami, OK (Ottawa County)

- Date: April 9, 2026
- Tribal Host: Quapaw Nation
- Location: Northeastern Tribal Health System





Family & Advocate Listening Session Findings

The Family & Advocate Listening Sessions provided a space for loved ones of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons to come together and share their experiences. Many of these individuals have spent years seeking answers regarding the disappearance or death of their loved one.

In many cases, their concerns and recommendations overlapped with those discussed during the Criminal Justice Listening Sessions, though they were shared from a different perspective. Four major themes emerged across these Family & Advocate sessions:

1. **Victim Blaming and Stigma:** Responsibility was often shifted away from perpetrators and onto victims, with victim circumstances or behaviors influencing case prioritization and response efforts.
2. **Bearing the Burden:** Many families were left without answers, leading them to rely on their own resources to raise awareness for their loved ones through social media campaigns, billboards, community outreach, and other grassroots efforts.
3. **Communication Standards:** Case numbers were not consistently assigned, calls often went unanswered, cases were closed without notification, and investigations were transferred between agencies as a result of jurisdictional complexities.
4. **Centralized Reporting System:** There is a need for a centralized, statewide MMIP case management system in Oklahoma that remains current and accessible across all agencies involved in a case.



Criminal Justice Listening Session Findings

The Criminal Justice Listening Sessions invited field professionals to share their experiences with MMIP cases across Oklahoma. Many of these individuals have worked on MMIP cases for a substantial period of time and brought valuable insight into the challenges within the current system.

Their perspectives helped identify areas where processes, coordination, and resources could be strengthened to better support the investigation and resolution of these cases. Four major themes emerged across these Criminal Justice track sessions:

1. **Jurisdictional Complexity:** Jurisdictional “checkerboard” challenges, sovereignty considerations, limited operational training, and unclear agency responsibilities continue to create barriers in MMIP case response and coordination.
2. **DNA Collection & Education:** A lack of accessible DNA repositories and inconsistent DNA collection practices highlighted the need for increased education and awareness for loved ones on available DNA collection resources and processes.
3. **MMIP Training:** Additional law enforcement training is needed on MMIP laws and best practices, including cross-agency coordination, NamUs¹ utilization, alert systems, DNA collection, report writing, and investigative response.
4. **Need for Cross-Deputization:** Some local agencies have demonstrated success through cross-deputization efforts. However, stronger collaboration and communication are still needed among local, tribal, state, and federal partners.

¹ National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs) - A free, nationwide database funded by the U.S. Department of Justice that helps law enforcement, medical examiners, coroners, and the public find missing people and identify unidentified human remains by comparing records.



Family & Advocate and Criminal Justice Listening Sessions' Overlaps

The Family & Advocate and Criminal Justice listening sessions, revealed overlapping and recurrent issue areas between both tracks across the state. A total of eight overlapping issue areas were identified across both tracks (Table 1).

Issue Area	Family & Advocate	Criminal Justice	Alignment Insight
Central Reporting System	Strong need for a central reporting location, hotline, and website.	Same need identified (central hub, hotline, public-facing system.)	Full Alignment - Top Priority
Collaboration Across Jurisdictions	Frustration with jurisdictional barriers and lack of coordination.	Jurisdictional "checkerboard," sovereignty issues, and taskforce.	Full Alignment - Structural Issue
Runaway Classification	Concern runaways are dismissed.	LE acknowledges under-prioritization.	Full Alignment - Risk Factor Recognized
Data Accuracy (NamUS, NCIC ²)	Concerns about accuracy and lack of updates.	Detailed system limitations identified.	Full Alignment - Technical & Procedural Issue
Resources and Attention	Perception that cases are not prioritized.	Agencies cite lack of resources and capacity.	Aligned - Supply vs. Demand Gap

² National Crime Information Center (NCIC) - A nationwide database maintained by the FBI that allows law enforcement agencies to securely share and access crime-related information, including records on missing persons, wanted individuals, and stolen property.



Issue Area	Family & Advocate	Criminal Justice	Alignment Insight
Information Sharing	Families want transparency and to know who is working cases.	Agencies report lack of cross-jurisdictional data sharing.	Critical Systemic Breakdown
Follow-up & Communication	Families report poor follow-up, lack of updates, LE not returning calls.	Need improved follow-up on leads and coordination between agencies.	Shared Issue, Different Impact Points
Media Utilization	Families want more media engagement.	Agencies cautious but acknowledge value.	Partial Alignment - Needs Protocol

Table 1. Family & Advocate & Criminal Justice Listening Sessions - Issue Areas and Alignment



SUBCOMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

MMIP Subcommittee Recommendation #1 - Ranking Key Priority Areas

Background

Eight issue areas were presented to the MMIP Subcommittee for their consideration. A total of 28 Subcommittee members ranked issue areas to delineate key priorities.

Recommendation

The top four priorities as determined by the Subcommittee members were: 1) Data Accuracy (NamUs, NCIC), 2) Collaboration Across Jurisdictions, 3) Central Reporting System, and 4) Resources and Attention.

Four additional areas were ranked as less critical: 5) Information Sharing, 6) Follow-Up & Communication, 7) Runaway classification, and 8) Media Utilization. (Table 2)

MMIP Subcommittee Top 4 Priority Areas				
Subcommittee Priority Vote	Issue Area	Family & Advocate	Criminal Justice	Alignment Insight
1st	Data Accuracy (NamUS, NCIC)	Concerns about accuracy and lack of updates.	Detailed system limitations identified.	Full Alignment - Technical & Procedural Issue



Subcommittee Priority Vote	Issue Area	Family- Advocate	Criminal Justice	Alignment Insight
2nd	Collaboration Across Jurisdictions	Frustration with jurisdictional barriers and lack of coordination.	Jurisdictional “checkerboard,” sovereignty issues, and taskforce.	Full Alignment - Structural Issue
3rd	Central Reporting System	Strong need for a central reporting location, hotline, and website.	Same need identified (central hub, hotline, public- facing system.)	Full Alignment - Top Priority
4th	Resources and Attention	Perception that cases are not prioritized.	Agencies cite lack of resources and capacity.	Aligned - Supply vs. Demand Gap
Subcommittee Priority Areas 5-8				
5th	Information Sharing	Families want transparency and to know who is working cases.	Agencies report lack of cross- jurisdictional data sharing.	Critical Systemic Breakdown



Subcommittee Priority Vote	Issue Area	Family- Advocate	Criminal Justice	Alignment Insight
6th	Follow-up & Communication	Families report poor follow-up, lack of updates, LE not returning calls.	Need improved follow-up on leads and coordination between agencies.	Shared Issue, Different Impact Points
7th	Runaway Classification	Concern runaways are dismissed.	LE acknowledges under- prioritization.	Full Alignment - Risk Factor Recognized
8th	Media Utilization	Families want more media engagement.	Agencies cautious but acknowledge value.	Partial Alignment - Needs Protocol



MMIP Subcommittee Recommendation #2 - Task Force vs. Working Group

Background

OAG Staff advised the Subcommittee membership that either a Task Force or a Working Group should be established in the interest of ensuring long-term focus on this important work. Both options were discussed and the membership was briefed on the key differences between a Task Force and a Working Group (Table 3).

Recommendation

A total of 30 Subcommittee members voted on whether they preferred an MMIP Task Force or Working Group. Overall, a total of 16 (53%) members voted for the Working Group option, while another 14 (47%) voted for a Task Force.

Table 3. Task Force and Working Group Definitions

Task Force	Working Group
Formally organized group created to address a specific issue or objective. It is typically action-oriented, with defined leadership, responsibilities, and goals.	Collaborative group formed to discuss issues, share expertise, and develop recommendations related to a specific topic or area of focus



MMIP Subcommittee Recommendation #3 - Purpose and Scope

Background

OAG Staff advised the Subcommittee membership that, in the interest of ensuring this new MMIP group serves its full purpose effectively, it was important to clearly define both its purpose and scope from the beginning. Having this foundation would assist in creating alignment, clarify expectations, and guide future decision-making. It also ensures members understand the group's role, priorities, responsibilities, and intended outcomes.

The Subcommittee's membership was briefed on the types of questions that can help delineate the new group's purpose and scope. They were advised on the importance of specifying the priorities and deliverables expected from the group's work (Table 4).

Subcommittee Recommendation

Subcommittee members agreed the Working Group's purpose and scope would be to focus on the top four priorities ranked by the membership. This includes working on issues related to:

- 1.Data Accuracy (NamUs, NCIC)
- 2.Collaboration Across Jurisdictions
- 3.Central Reporting System
- 4.Resources and Attention

The Working Group will work together and with other stakeholders to affect change, including by suggesting legislative changes; improving data systems and training; improving coordination, communication, and collaboration across governments, non-profits, and family members to better address MMIP in Oklahoma.



Purpose-Focused Questions		Scope-Focused Questions	
• Why does this group exist? • What problems are we trying to solve? • What impact do we want this group to have? • What would success look like a year from now?		• What issues or topics fall within this group's scope? • Should this group focus on strategy, implementation, coordination, or all three? • What responsibilities belong to partner agencies or other groups instead?	
Priorities and Deliverables			
• What deliverables or products should come from this group? • What measurable goals should we establish? • What are the most urgent needs we should address first?			

Table 4. Defining Purpose, Scope, Priorities, and Deliverables



MMIP Subcommittee Recommendation #4 - Membership

Background

The Subcommittee emphasized the importance of creating a diverse and well-rounded Working Group. Members identified tribal partners, family members, prosecutors, law enforcement, medical personnel, and victim service providers as important participants in this discussion. They also stressed the importance of meaningfully including family members and assembling the most purpose-driven group possible.

The Subcommittee also discussed how to ensure adequate representation across all stakeholder groups. Members asked whether the selection of tribal partners would account for differences in tribal size, noting that larger and smaller tribes often face unique challenges. They raised similar questions about law enforcement representation, including whether the working group would include tribal, local, state, and federal agencies. Finally, members asked whether victim service representation would include both tribal programs and Oklahoma Attorney General-Certified victim service providers.

Subcommittee Recommendation

Subcommittee members discussed the importance of narrowing down what membership entails, as that will play a role in determining who should be a member and why. As a result, it was recommended:

- To require prospective Working Group members to complete training to be a part of the Working Group. This would ensure everyone has a similar base of knowledge on what MMIP is and is not. The training should set a foundation on MMIP issues, membership expectations, and aim to keep members aligned with the Group's purpose and scope.



- To require prospective Working Group members to complete cultural competency or cultural sensitivity training due to the Group's work with tribal members.
- That the Working Group should include representation from all three Oklahoma U.S. Attorney's Offices (e.g. AUSAs, tribal liaisons, law enforcement coordinators, etc.), as well as the Chief of the Missing and Murdered Unit at the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Oklahoma State Bureau of Indian Affairs (OSBI), and the Oklahoma Office of the Chief Medical Examiner.
- That the Working Group membership should aim to serve as a resource to tackle and advocate for MMIP-related issues and policy changes.
- That the Working Group membership include personnel dedicated to advocating for legislation. Staff informed the membership this would be the responsibility of the OAG Government Affairs team.



Appendix I - MMIP Subcommittee Membership

Name	Agency
Amber Fortney	University of Central Oklahoma
Amber Silverhorn-Wolfe	Wichita Affiliated Tribes
Amy Pierce	Choctaw Nation Judicial Branch
Angela Berg	Oklahoma Chief Medical Examiner's Office
Arvo Mikkanen	Department of Justice - Western District of Oklahoma
Brian Wahanee	Bureau of Indian Affairs
Claudia Choney	Comanche Nation
Carmen Harvie	Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribe
Dale Fine	Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation



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Comanche Nation

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Michael Hall

Choctaw Nation

Nathan Coleman

Quapaw Nation

Randy Wesley

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Roxe Large	Comanche Nation
Sandy Crosslin	Cherokee Nation Attorney General's Office
Shelley Harrison	Chickasaw Nation
Tim Gocha	Oklahoma Chief Medical Examiner's Office
William Dill	Department of Justice
William Horton	Bureau of Indian Affairs