

Missing and Murdered Indigenous People (MMIP) and the Gila River Indian Community's Response



GILA RIVER INDIAN COMMUNITY
VICTIM SERVICES
DEPARTMENT



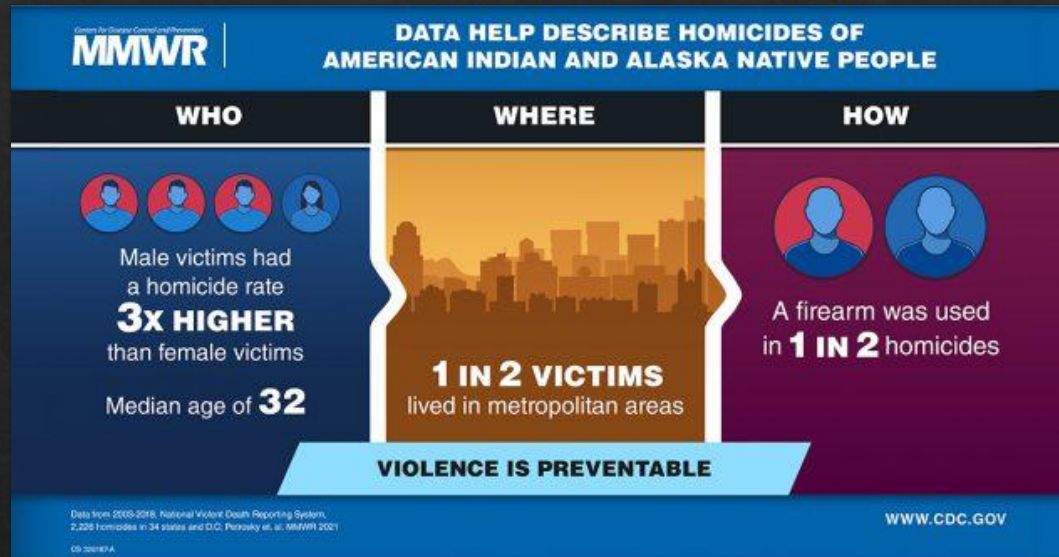
Violence Against AI/AN Women and Men

- ◆ More than 4 in 5 AI/AN adults have experienced some form of violence in their lifetime.
- ◆ AI/AN women and men have been victimized at similar rates.
 - 84.3% for women
 - 81.6% for men
- ◆ AI/AN women are 1.2 times more likely to experience violence in their lifetime compared to non-Hispanic White women.
- ◆ AI/AN men are 1.3 times more likely to experience violence than non-Hispanic White men (Rosay, 2016).



Source: Courtesy [NIJ.gov](https://www.nij.gov). Percentages of American Indian and Alaska Native people who have experienced violence in their lifetimes.

Homicide Data



- ◇ In 2020, homicide was the third leading cause of death for AI/AN youth ages 1-24 (CDC).
- ◇ AI/AN males had a **three times higher** homicide rate compared to AI/AN females (Petrosky et al, 2021).
- ◇ Homicide was the **third highest** cause of death among AI/AN girls aged 15 to 19 and AI/AN women aged 20 to 24 in 2019 (Heron, 2021).
- ◇ Homicide was the **fourth highest** cause among AI/AN women 25 to 34 in 2019 (Heron, 2021).

Missing Person Statistics

- ◆ 10,240 AI/AN persons were entered as missing in the FBI's National Crime Information Center (NCIC) Missing Person File in 2024.
 - 72% of those cases were people under the age of 21
 - 55% of those cases were female
 - 15% of those cases remained active at the end of 2024
- ◆ According to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), 2,966 Native American children were reported missing from 2012-2021.
 - 80% were missing from foster care or group homes
 - Children missing from non-tribal territories had an average missing duration of 56 days.
 - Not all children that are missing or abducted are reported to NCMEC

What is the Gila River Indian
Community doing to respond
to this crisis?



MISSING & MURDERED INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

“Remembering our lost O’otham & Pee-Posh Relatives”



MMIP Response Team

- ◆ On March 4, 2019 the Health and Social Standing Committee (HSSC) directed the formation of the GRIC Missing and Murdered Indigenous People Response Team (MMIP Response Team).
- ◆ The mission was to create a collaborative multi-department effort with the appropriate Community departments and to respond to issues involving missing and murdered Community members of all ages.
- ◆ The team aims to improve responses by fostering team support and collaboration while expanding on the efforts of the surrounding jurisdictions, and tailor the community's responses utilizing community resources and the existing workforce.

MMIP Response Team

- ◆ In 2021, Governor Stephen Lewis and Lt. Governor Monica Antone signed an official proclamation declaring May 5 as Missing and Murdered Indigenous People Awareness Day in the Community.
- ◆ In the proclamation, the Executive Office supported the HSSC's motion to create a MMIP Response Team to collect data, address departmental policies, and to review current Community laws regarding the missing and murdered.

Departments

- ◆ Gila River Police Department (GRPD)
- ◆ Victim Services Department (VSD)
- ◆ Tribal Social Services (TSS)
- ◆ Protective Services Offices (PSO)
- ◆ Office of the Prosecutor (OOP)
- ◆ Communication of Public Affairs Office (CPAO)
- ◆ Office of the Community Manger (OCM)
- ◆ Office of the General Counsel (OGC)
- ◆ Gila River Health Care Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners team (SANE)
- ◆ Gila River Health Care Behavioral Health Services (BHS)
- ◆ Executive Office

Multidisciplinary Approach

- ◆ Missing Adults and Children (MAC) meetings – leverages a multidisciplinary approach from different service providers to assist with the recovery of missing persons
 - VSD, GRPD, TSS, and GRHC SANE
 - GRPD Civilian Investigator is designated to search for missing persons
 - GRPD Cold Case Unit: investigate cold cases, including long-term missing person cases
- ◆ In 2024, the MMIP Response Team coordinated the rescue and recovery for two missing children cases, in which the children traveled out of state.
 - MMIP Specialist and 2 GRPD detectives traveled to locate and recover children
- ◆ The Community entered into an MOU with the Arizona Child Abduction Response Team (AZCART) in February of 2025.

Missing Person Identification Project

- ◆ In 2023, Victim Services began working with GRPD, our federal partners, including the FBI, BIA, National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs), and other agencies for the Missing Person Identification Project (MPIP).
- ◆ Two events have been hosted in the Community.
- ◆ The project helps families navigate filing a missing persons report, meet with multiple agencies in one location, access resources needed to find a missing person, and provide records and DNA to help agencies find the missing.



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