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New Mexico's Ongoing Commitment to Addressing Missing or Murdered Indigenous Persons Crisis

SANTA FE – The Missing or Murdered Indigenous Persons (MMIP) response initiative in New Mexico, spearheaded by the Indian Affairs Department (IAD), remains steadfast in its commitment to addressing the MMIP state response. The state's response is directed by the State Response Plan drafted by the MMIWR Task Force pursuant to Governor Michelle Lujan-Graham's [Executive Order 2021-13](#).

Contrary to some misconceptions, the Governor did not terminate or disband the task force. As intended, the group fulfilled the directives outlined in the Executive Order, which included the development of the [MMIWR State Response Plan](#).

The Governor also took pride in endorsing and signing legislation (Senate Bill 12) [establishing an MMIWR division](#) within the Attorney General's Office and creating New Mexico's inaugural "Missing in New Mexico Day" resource event (Senate Bill 13). Missing in New Mexico Day is available to all New Mexicans with missing loved ones, and IAD eagerly anticipates supporting the 2nd Annual Missing Persons Day in early December 2023.

The Task Force's accomplishments remain foundational and crucial for both the IAD and the Executive Branch in determining ongoing strategies and objectives to address how the state can effectively respond. The completion of these tasks does not signify a halt in efforts; instead, it marks a transition to the implementation phase.

Currently, Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham and the leadership under IAD Secretary Designate Mountain are actively working to implement the recommendations to the state. IAD is actively developing avenues to involve all families, advocates, and partners at tribal, local, state, and federal levels. This engagement will be facilitated through

ongoing meetings, events, a dedicated web page, and regular communications disseminated by the department.

Melody Delmar, IAD's MMIWR Lead, continues to play a pivotal role, contributing significantly to MMIWR initiatives both locally and nationally. Collaborating with leadership, Melody is outlining the State Response Plan's **six objectives and related strategies** to guide the state's response in the short term (1-2 years), mid-term (2-3 years), and long term (over 3 years). Notably, IAD will seek funding for **four full-time staff positions** in the 2024 legislative session, totaling an additional 8,000 hours of dedicated work time, to implement the recommendations, with a particular focus on strategy 5c.

New Mexico actively maintains close communication and coordination with a range of partners, extending its efforts on a national scale. This past summer, IAD worked in collaboration with the planning committee of the Not Invisible Act Commission. As part of this collaboration, we provided panelists who testified before two subcommittees on vital recommendations to the federal response, including the recruitment and retention of BIA and Tribal Law Enforcement and the necessary legislative and administrative changes.

Note for reporters: Four members of the Task Force wrote an [op-ed](#) published in the Albuquerque Journal.

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Since 2003 the New Mexico Indian Affairs Department (IAD) has implemented groundbreaking state-tribal policies intended to improve the quality of life for the state's Native citizens. Our initiatives are designed to strengthen Tribal and state relations and address the challenges we face in our communities: economic development, infrastructure improvement, the protection of our cultures and languages, health care accessibility, and educational opportunities for our most precious resource— our children. Learn more at www.iad.state.nm.us.