



**Identifying the Scope and Context of Missing and/or Murdered Indigenous Persons  
(MMIP) in New Mexico and Improving MMIP Data Collection, Analysis, and Reporting**

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***This final report complies with all Presidential Executive Orders as of June 19, 2025. Please see  
<https://vvsrlab.org/past-projects/> for more information on the study and additional resources.***

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want to acknowledge New Mexico's missing persons and loved ones: We wish you a safe journey home.

## Executive Summary

The current project is a replication and extension of a National Institute of Justice (NIJ) funded 2019 tribal-researcher partnership project between the University and the Nebraska Commission on Indian Affairs and Nebraska State Patrol (NIJ Grant ID 2019-75-CX- 0014), which conducted a pilot study on the scope of missing and murdered Native persons in Nebraska and *provided a replicable model for other states* to employ. Here, the study involved a new partnership between the New Mexico Indian Affairs Department (NMIAD) and researchers at the University of Nebraska Omaha and the Urban Institute, along with support from the Coalition to End Violence Against Native Women.

### Project Goals

The current study addressed two broad goals: 1) to use the “Nebraska Model” developed in the earlier NIJ-funded study to examine the scope and context of missing and murdered Indigenous persons (MMIPs) in New Mexico and 2) to extend our prior research by identifying gaps in current data collection and provide recommendations for improving long-term data collection and sustainable data reporting for cases of MMIP in New Mexico.

### Research Methods

To understand the scope of missing Indigenous persons in New Mexico, a count of the total number of all missing persons in the state needed to be established. Due to the dynamic nature of missing persons cases, the count of missing individuals should be interpreted as a “point-in-time” count on a given date. This means that as missing persons are located and cases are resolved, the count of missing persons may fluctuate depending on when the data are accessed. The data examined in this study represents the reported missing cases active on the date of each point-in-time count. Point-in-time counts were conducted on the third Wednesday of each month from May 2023 to April 2024.

To replicate the Nebraska model, we collected data from four sources: (1) the National Crime Information Center (NCIC), (2) the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs), (3) the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC), and (4) the New Mexico Missing Persons Information Clearinghouse (NMCH). To extend the model for New Mexico, data were collected from an additional three data sources: (5) the Navajo Nation Missing Person List, (6), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) New Mexico and Navajo Nation Missing Persons’ List (further referred as the New Mexico & Navajo Nation FBI List or FBI List), and (7) Open-source platforms, including Facebook groups/pages and specific missing persons websites.<sup>1</sup> National and state-level missing persons data sources do not report

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<sup>1</sup> The National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (<https://www.namus.gov/MissingPersons/Search>), the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (<https://www.missingkids.org/gethelpnow/search>), the New Mexico Missing Persons Information Clearinghouse (<http://missingpersons.dps.state.nm.us/mpweb/>), the Navajo Nation Missing Person List (<https://npd.navajo-nsn.gov/Home/Display-Community-Announcements/category/navajo-nation-missing-persons>), and the open-source platforms are all public-facing websites. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Albuquerque Field Office produces a public facing list of all missing Native American persons in New Mexico and the Navajo Nation (i.e., which includes New Mexico, Utah, and Arizona) <https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/violent-crime/indian-country-crime/missing-or-murdered-indigenous-persons-list>. The National Crime Information Center is

information on tribal affiliation/s, tribal enrollment/s, or tribal citizenship. This is an intrinsic challenge to this work. To address this challenge, “Indigenous missing persons” were identified in data sources by the race code “I” (Native American) (NCIC Code Manual, 2023, p. 22) or “AI or AN” (American Indian or Alaska Native) depending on the data source. A local researcher from the Coalition to Stop Violence Against Native Women crosschecked our consolidated missing persons list developed from these seven sources each month to capture any unreported missing persons from Native communities in New Mexico. The University of Nebraska Institutional Review Board reviewed the study design and deemed it not human subjects research

## Results

### *Goal 1: Replicate (and extend) the Nebraska Model*

The first set of analyses focused on the results of the point-in-time counts using the Nebraska Model: a model inclusive of **four data sources** (1) NamUs, (2) NCMEC, (3) NMCH, and (4) NCIC.<sup>2</sup> The main findings from this dataset include:

- When averaged over the 12 time points, the average missing persons rate in New Mexico was 3.8 persons per 10,000 – AI and AN persons had the highest average missing persons rate (5.0 per 10,000), followed by Black/African American persons (4.5 per 10,000), and Asian/Pacific Islanders having the lowest missing persons rate (0.7 per 10,000). Thus, **a disproportionate number of reported missing persons in New Mexico were Black/African American and American Indian or Alaska Native, 1.18 and 1.30 times their representation in the population**, respectively, while fewer missing persons than expected were White, Hispanic, and Asian or Pacific Islander given their representation in the population.
- While the majority of AI and AN missing persons were adults (18 years or older), 22.1% on average were minors, while, on average, the percentage of missing female minors was about 2 to 3 times the percentage of male minors. The overall average resolution rate was 15% of cases from one time period to the next time period.

The second set of analyses focused on the results of the point-in-time counts using the Extended Model: a model inclusive of **seven data sources** for New Mexico and the Navajo Nation, 1) NCIC, (2) NamUs, (3) NCMEC, (4), NMCH, (5), the Navajo Nation Missing Person List, (6) the New Mexico & Navajo Nation FBI List, and cross-checked with (7) Open-source data. The main findings were as follows:

- Over the 12-month study period, the average missing persons rate for New Mexico was 4.5 per 10,000 persons.

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not a public facing website; data used in this study was obtained through a partnership with the New Mexico Department of Public Safety.

<sup>2</sup> Reporting adult missing persons to NCIC, NamUs, NCMEC, NMCH, the Navajo Nation Missing Person List, and the New Mexico & Navajo Nation FBI List by law enforcement is voluntary except; reporting missing minors by law enforcement to NCIC and NMCH is required by law enforcement agencies that have access to these data systems (i.e., some tribal agencies do not have access); NamUs is often reserved for long-term missing cases.

- When averaged over the 12 time points, a **disproportionate number of reported missing persons were Native American (about 2 times their population)** and slightly more Black/African American missing persons than expected (.05 times their population), while fewer than expected were White, Hispanic, and Asian or Pacific Islander given their representation in the population.
- While most missing persons were adults and males, there were more missing minor girls than missing minor boys on average. A disproportionate number of reported missing minors were American Indian or Alaska Native, while fewer than expected were White, Black/African American, Hispanic, and Asian or Pacific Islander, given their representation in the population.
- Most AI and AN missing persons were listed on the New Mexico & Navajo Nation FBI List (90.8% of cases on average over the study period) compared to the NMCH (36.0% of cases on average over the study period) or national databases (28.2% of cases on average from NamUs, 17.1% on NCIC).
- Almost 20% of missing AI and AN persons were minors (under 18 years old), with 74% of these being girls. On average, most AI and AN missing minors – 66.6% on average – had been missing for less than 1 year.
- The overall average resolution rate for missing Native New Mexicans was 13.8% from one time period to the next time period: this average resolution rate was lower than that of the New Mexico missing persons overall.

Using both Models, we found that most Indigenous missing persons were adults (i.e., age 18 years and older), more Indigenous males were missing than females (but for minors, more AI and AN missing minors were girls rather than boys), and about 40% of missing Indigenous persons had been missing for less than a year. However, the Extended Model for New Mexico and the Navajo Nation identified many more missing persons overall and Indigenous missing persons specifically, than would have been identified if we had only relied on the state Missing Person Clearinghouse, NamUs, NCMEC, and NCIC (i.e., sources for the Nebraska Model).

We also conducted **focus groups with tribal members who have had loved ones go missing**. The Coalition to Stop Violence Against Native Women (CSVANW) hosted two in-person focus groups while two members of the research team attended virtually to take notes. We posed four questions, asking participants to provide information about the context of missing AI and AN persons in New Mexico, including why Native people go missing at a higher rate than people of other groups, what challenges they perceived in reporting missing loved ones, and having them found, as well as the strengths and supportive services they have for addressing the issue of MMIP in New Mexico. Focus groups identified the following answers to these questions:

Issues related to missingness:

- Systemic issues resulting in few resources (e.g., poverty, lack of employment/educational opportunities, housing insecurity/displaced/unsheltered).
- Untreated alcohol and drug use and abuse and mental health challenges.
- Victimization experiences, such as domestic violence and child abuse/neglect.
- Family members' and elders' lack of awareness and/or discomfort talking about difficult issues (e.g., alcohol/drug use and abuse, domestic violence).

#### Challenges in reporting missing loved ones:

- Questions about how and when to report a loved one as missing, to whom, and what information to provide.
- Challenges getting a loved one classified as a “missing person.”
- Poor interactions/communication with law enforcement when reporting a loved one as missing.
- Jurisdictional issues regarding which agency is responsible for taking a report and investigating the case.

#### Challenges in having missing Native relatives “found and loved”:

- Need for more people in law enforcement and social services; more resources.
- Need for law enforcement to take Native missing persons cases seriously.
- Need for substance abuse and mental health treatment.

#### Strengths and Supportive Services for Missing Native People in New Mexico:

- Tribal Coalitions, Tribal health care services, and Tribal agencies.
- New Mexico state agencies and non-profits.
- Social media.
- Other impacted families.
- Using their [the loved ones of missing persons] voices.

#### ***Goal 2: Identify gaps in current data collection, data analysis, and data reporting for cases of MMIP in New Mexico.***

In addition to developing a descriptive profile of the scope and context of missing Native persons in New Mexico, we were also interested in examining framework(s) for *sustained* data collection, analysis, and reporting. In March 2024, as mandated by Senate Bill 12 (2022), the New Mexico Department of Justice launched the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Peoples (MMIP) Portal for New Mexico to provide “...a comprehensive database for reporting and searching for missing persons.” Researchers collected qualitative information from five ( $n = 5$ ) key tribal and non-tribal professionals (e.g., from local and federal law enforcement, state government, and human services/advocacy) regarding the current strategies for MMIP data collection in New Mexico including data analysis, data reporting, and the New Mexico MMIP Portal. Specifically, they were asked about awareness of the New Mexico MMIP Portal, whether it is sufficient to meet New Mexico’s needs regarding MMIP, recommendations for raising awareness and use of the Portal, and how data/information on MMIP is best reported to the community. Interviewees reported the following themes:

#### Familiarity with the NM MMIP Portal:

- Most interviewees were knowledgeable about the Portal and reported using it, though it varied by their job.

#### Limitations of the NM MMIP Portal:

- Respondents identified the positive aspects of the New Mexico MMIP Portal as the collaborative efforts by various departments and agencies to maintain it, the inclusion of zip codes and tribal affiliation of the missing persons, and search features by sex

- and date of disappearance.
- Interviewees noted the limitations of the New Mexico MMIP Portal, including duplicate efforts from the FBI and NamUs, the Portal's inability to connect to national nonprofits that work on missing persons cases, and the lack of recent (and non-mugshot) photographs of all missing persons.

Information necessary to collect about Native missing persons:

- Respondents suggested that vital information to record and collect for Native missing persons in New Mexico includes: demographic information (e.g., sex, eye color, hair color, photos, tribal affiliation), event information (e.g., location, date last seen), case information (e.g., DNA collected, dental records, contact information for law enforcement departments handling the case), and resources (e.g., anonymous tip function, or website for additional services).

Raising awareness about the New Mexico MMIP Portal:

- Suggestions included increasing social media campaigns and links to agency website postings on the Portal website.
- Interviewees noted raising awareness among people who have limited internet access, including the elders, the homeless, and the transient populations, via digital billboards, radio ads, local news stations, and community forums.
- Interviewees suggested connecting directly to families (e.g., through advocates, law enforcement) and outreach to grassroots organizations about the Portal.

Reporting data and information to the Native community:

- Respondents similarly suggested more posts on social media pages and agency websites, hosting community forums/meetings, using digital billboard messages, and regularly providing updates on cases of missing persons on local television news programs.
- Interviewees noted the success of “Missing in New Mexico Day” and suggested more community awareness events like it.



## Recommendations for Improving Data on MMIP in New Mexico and Future Steps

The results of this study **first** suggest that the more agencies which take a missing person report and the more tribes which share their tribal missing persons list with other agencies will likely yield a more accurate count of the total number of people who are missing in a given area. Additionally, our research continues to suggest that open-source websites are vital places to look for missing person reports as well – it appears that Native Americans in New Mexico continue to post reports of their missing loved ones on these sources, and New Mexico cannot neglect collecting this information. **Second**, it is encouraged to continue to share tribal missing person data and public reports about MMIP to the community for transparency and accuracy purposes. **Third**, the public must trust that law enforcement will do something when they report an Indigenous person as missing, so it is recommended that law enforcement policies and procedures emphasize the importance of timely reporting and swiftly entering them into NCIC and public-facing portals. **Fourth**, this report provides several specific recommendations for improving the New Mexico MMIP Portal. In addition, it is strongly suggested that New Mexico DOJ consider a public awareness campaign to help educate the public about the Portal and how to use it. **Fifth**, the efforts thus far taken by New Mexico DOJ regarding MMIP are commendable. A missing Indigenous persons specialist as supported by the New Mexico legislature would further these ongoing efforts and improve New Mexico’s prevention of and response to MMIP. **Finally**, regarding this area of research overall, at present, national and state-level missing persons data sources do not report information on tribal affiliation/s, tribal enrollment/s, or tribal citizenship. As such, “Indigenous missing persons” must be identified using race codes (e.g., “American Indian or Alaska Native alone or in combination with another race/ethnicity”; U.S. Census, 2023a).

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## Chapter 1: Project Background

Missing persons cases involving Indigenous persons<sup>3</sup> and/or missing persons in Indigenous communities has gained significant attention. In 2025, the Office for Victims of Crime identified state-mandated reports on missing Native American women and/or children and relatives from 12 states, as well as additional reports from Alaska and Hawaii that include information on missing Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian people, respectively (Office for Victims of Crime, n.d.). At the same time, we contend that studying the scope of missing Indigenous persons in a state cannot be completed in a vacuum but instead requires the *study of all missing persons in the state*. Further, studying the scope of missing persons, or counting missing persons, is challenging for myriad reasons (see Biehal et al., 2003; Chakraborty, 2019; Newiss, 2005), notably the absence of the requisite data.

In accordance with Title 34, United States Code (U.S.C.), Section 41307(a), agencies are required to enter records into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) Missing Person File for missing individuals under the age of 21. This fulfills requirements as set forth in the Crime Control Act of 1990, Pub. L. No. 101-647, 104 Stat. 4789, which requires the Attorney General to publish a statistical summary of reports of missing children. In 2003, Suzanne's Law amended this Act by changing the age of mandatory missing person record entry from under 18 to under 21 years of age (See 34 U.S.C. § 41307 [a]). However, tribal agencies do not fall under this requirement. Also, while law enforcement officers are required to report missing persons under 21 to NCIC, there's no federal law mandating the same for missing adults (21 and older), unless there's a reasonable concern for their safety or other specific circumstances. Further, not all tribal law enforcement agencies have access to NCIC (U.S. Department of Justice, 2025a).

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<sup>3</sup> For this report, Indigenous, Native American, and American Indian and Alaska Native (AI and AN) are used interchangeably.

Supplementing federal law, sixteen states have passed legislation mandating the use of National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs) for reporting missing and unidentified person cases; however, most states only provide data on long term missing persons to NamUS and the level of utilization of NamUs by tribal law enforcement departments is unclear<sup>4</sup>. Thus, the existing national data from NCIC and NamUs on missing adults is limited overall, and may be particularly limited regarding persons missing from Indian country<sup>5</sup>.

The current project is a replication and extension of a NIJ-funded 2019 tribal-researcher partnership project between the University of Nebraska at Omaha and the Nebraska Commission on Indian Affairs and Nebraska State Patrol (NIJ Award ID 2019-75-CX-0014), which conducted a pilot study on the scope of missing and murdered Native persons in Nebraska and *provided a replicable model for other states* to employ. This study comprised a new partnership between the New Mexico Indian Affairs Department (NMIAD) and researchers at the University of Nebraska Omaha (UNO) and the Urban Institute with support from the Coalition to End Violence Against Native Women. The current study addressed two broad goals: 1) to use the “Nebraska Model” developed under the 2019 NIJ-funded study to examine the scope and context of MMIP in New Mexico and 2) to extend the prior research by identifying gaps in current data collection and provide recommendations for improving long-term data collection and sustainable data reporting for cases of MMIP in New Mexico.

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<sup>4</sup> We could find no information on NamUs access to tribes or on the scope of NamUs utilization by tribal law enforcement departments. However, NamUs “captures information specific to tribal communities and employs tribally enrolled liaisons to support data collection, information sharing, training, and case assistance for missing or murdered indigenous persons cases” (NamUs, 2024, para 15).

<sup>5</sup> “Indian country” is defined as all land within the limits of any Indian reservation, dependent Indian communities, and all Indian allotments within the borders of the United States as defined by 18 U.S.C. § 1151.

## The Challenges of Counting Missing People

Accurately counting the number of “missing and murdered” people – Indigenous or non-Indigenous – is no easy task. However, it is important not to confuse the two issues of going missing and being murdered, as not every person who is missing has been or will be a victim of a violent crime or be murdered. In fact, most persons, including Indigenous persons, who are reported as missing are missing for a brief period and found alive (Hafner et al., 2022; Richards, et al., 2024). Further, missing persons cases are dynamic and thus the number of missing persons cases and who is missing in any jurisdiction may change daily (Hafner et al., 2022; Richards, et al., 2024). Therefore, any count of missing persons must be understood as a point-in- time count that is only accurate at the time that the count is conducted.

Ascertaining an accurate picture of the number of missing persons in the United States is also riddled by challenges in reporting, policies, and definitions. Chakraborty (2019) synthesizes these challenges to include: (1) the right to go missing among adults, (2) whether “going missing” is a result of criminal or noncriminal behavior, (3) a lack of policies mandating the entry of missing persons into national data systems, (4) a lack of standardized definitions of missing persons, and (5) variation in the age of what constitutes adult status across states and jurisdictions. First, going missing (among adults) is not a crime. In fact, doing so is a right established by the 1995 U.S. Supreme Court decision *McIntyre v. Ohio Elections Commission*, whereby adults can remain anonymous by “going missing.” By extension, not all missing persons are missing unintentionally and not all missing persons cases are related to criminal activity (Bonny et al., 2016). For example, someone with an untreated substance use disorder or mental health challenge may leave home without notifying family or friends (Bonny et al., 2016; Sowerby & Thomas, 2017). While these missing persons are missing unintentionally, they are not missing because they are victims of crime, such as kidnapping, trafficking, and so forth.

At the same time, law enforcement officers are responsible for responding to reports of missing persons, and so the data on missing persons is largely collected by law enforcement agencies. Law enforcement departments' missing persons data may vary in reliability as there are no standardized definitions of a "missing person" nor are their standardized protocols and/or policies for reporting and investigating cases (Chakraborty, 2019). In fact, a review of Nebraska law enforcement agencies' missing persons policies by Richards and colleagues (2022) found that among agencies that have a missing persons policy, there is wide variability regarding whether the policy specifies that it applies to juveniles only or both juveniles and adults. There are also differences in the specificity of information that should be collected when taking a report – some policies provide a list of demographics, and some policies simply indicate that the officer should obtain "a physical description" of the missing person and/or that a picture or video should be obtained if possible. Further, law enforcement agencies' policies and tribal and state laws vary regarding their mandates for entering missing persons information into tribal, state and national databases. For example, while all state and local law enforcement officers may enter missing persons information into the National Criminal Information Center (NCIC) database (i.e., the national law enforcement database), not all tribal law enforcement agencies have access to NCIC. Further, some, but not all, states have a state-wide missing persons clearinghouse and/or mandate that missing persons information be entered into the National Missing and Unidentified Persons Data System (NamUs). Finally, in some instances where exploitation or abduction of a child is suspected, law enforcement might enter cases of missing children into the NCMEC database.

Importantly for the current study, *the challenges regarding reporting and investigating missing persons may be exacerbated regarding Indigenous missing persons cases*, primarily due to (1) jurisdictional issues, (2) a lack of coordination and relationships between tribal and non-tribal

law enforcement agencies, and (3) not collecting/recording tribal affiliation/enrollment when entering the cases into databases. First, jurisdictional issues between tribal and non-tribal law enforcement agencies may complicate the reporting process, where Native American community members must decide to whom they should report the case. The complex jurisdictional relationships between tribal and non-tribal law enforcement agencies (i.e., local, state, and federal agencies) may create a “jurisdictional maze” (Castillo, 2015, p. 314) that leaves Native community members unclear about the agency to which they should report a missing persons case. Richards and colleagues (2022) found that many Native community members reported confusion about who (e.g., law enforcement, social service agency, tribal or non-tribal) to report missing persons cases to, as well as when to do so. This issue is strongly tied to a second problem, which is that tribal and non-tribal law enforcement agencies may not agree on which agency should investigate the missing person case. For example, an agency’s jurisdiction might depend on whether: (1) the missing person is a member of a tribe, (2) the reporter is a member of a tribe, (3) the missing person was living on tribal lands, and/or (4) the missing person is suspected to be on or off tribal lands (see Castillo, 2015). In many cases, it may be that tribal and non-tribal law enforcement agencies need to jointly coordinate the case investigation, but the informal or formal relationships (e.g., Memorandums of Understanding, cross-deputization) are not in place to facilitate the communication and coordination that is needed to accomplish this collaboration (see Richards et al., 2022). Reporters may be sent to multiple agencies and/or give up out of frustration or a sense that nothing can or will be done to help (Urban Indian Health Institute, 2018). Among reported cases, these jurisdictional complications may result in a report “falling through the cracks” whereby valuable information on the missing person is not collected and reported in the missing persons databases. Finally, the tribal affiliation/s, tribal enrollment/s, or tribal citizenship/s of the missing person may be unclear, uncollected, or unreported. Indeed,



national and state-level missing persons data sources do not report information on tribal affiliation/s, tribal enrollment/s, or tribal citizenship. As such, “Indigenous missing persons” must be identified by a race code, often the Census Bureau’s code, “American Indian or Alaska Native” (AI/AN). The use of race codes may lead to potential underreporting (e.g., if race is left blank) or misclassification of Native missing persons (e.g., if a Native person was classified as “Hispanic” or “Caucasian” in a data system) (Richards et al., 2022; Urban Indian Health Institute, 2018). Given the potential undercounting of Indigenous missing persons in any given missing persons database, triangulation of these data – or using multiple datasets to cross-check missing persons – is likely to lead to a better estimate of the true number of Indigenous missing persons and more accurate identification of who is missing at any given point- in-time.

### **The “Nebraska Model” for Counting Missing Persons**

In 2019, the research team developed a model (hereafter the “Nebraska Model”) to examine the scope of missing Native persons in the state of Nebraska, utilizing several sources of data to identify the missing persons rate in the state, whether Native persons were disproportionately represented as missing persons, the context of their cases (e.g., whether they were associated with criminal charges, whether they were found, etc.), and the trends in these cases over four points-in-time (Richards et al., 2022). The Nebraska Model culled data from publicly available missing persons datasets: the Nebraska Missing Persons List, NamUs, NCMEC, and then were crossed-checked with the NCIC database at four points in time to develop a list of the unique missing persons from Nebraska at each time point. These data allowed for the development of a state missing persons rate as well as rates for different groups and a presentation of demographic and case context for missing persons at each point-in-time and across time.

Using the Nebraska Model, we found that the state missing persons rate and the rates

across demographic groups fluctuated only slightly over the four points-in-time and that the rank orders of groups were consistent: Native American Nebraskans were consistently overrepresented as missing persons – from about 3 to 4.5 times their representation in the state population (Richards et al., 2022). In addition, most missing Native persons were only listed on the state clearing house (i.e., using only the national data systems would not result in an accurate count of missing Native Nebraskans), and most were boys and men; boys ages 13-18 were particularly at-risk for going missing (in Nebraska the age of majority is 19 years old). In addition, almost 10% of Native American missing persons cases in Nebraska were identified as *repeatedly* missing over the four points-in-time (Richards et al., 2022). We also found that Nebraska's Native children were more than twice as likely to be involved in foster care as White children, and that a higher percentage of Native children in foster care were identified as having run away from their foster placement than other children. At the same time, the resolution rates (i.e., identified as missing at one point-in-time and then not at the subsequent point-in-time) for Native American missing persons in Nebraska were higher than for Nebraska's overall missing persons and none of the Native American missing persons cases were linked to an investigation for any crime, including homicide (Richards et al., 2022).

Our findings emphasized the importance of gathering data about missing persons cases (a) from multiple sources, and (b) at different points-in-time to best approximate the scope of the problem in any jurisdiction or state; (c) that missing persons cases are dynamic so that any study of Native missing persons (or non-Native missing persons) must be understood as a point-in-time count, and (d) that missingness among Native children and the context of their going missing is an important area for continued research (Richards et al., 2022). Overall, findings suggested that the Nebraska Model provides a comprehensive strategy for identifying the scope and context of Native missing persons in a state using multiple sources of data; however, replication is necessary

to increase confidence in the generalizability of the Model for use across states.

### **“Replicating and Extending the Nebraska Model in New Mexico”**

New Mexico has approximately 252,000 Indigenous persons (i.e., identified as American Indian or Alaska Native alone or in combination with another race/ethnicity; U.S.

Census, 2023a), which represents 12% of the state’s population. There are 23 tribes located in New Mexico – nineteen Pueblos, three Apache tribes (the Fort Sill Apache Tribe, the Jicarilla Apache Nation, and the Mescalero Apache Tribe), and the Navajo Nation, and a considerable urban Indian population. Each Tribe is a sovereign nation with its own government, lifeways, traditions, and culture.

New Mexico House Bill 278, passed in 2019, established the “Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women Task Force” (later renamed the New Mexico Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Relatives [MMIWR] Task Force) with the intent of creating a task force to address “jurisdictional gaps and resource gaps, and bring attention to this crisis [missing and murdered Indigenous persons] in New Mexico” (New Mexico MMIWR report, 2020, p. 6). Additionally, the bill mandated the task force to create recommendations for how the state could increase resources for reporting and identifying cases of MMIP (denoted MMIWR – Missing and murdered Indigenous Relatives – by the Task Force), determine the scope of the problem and barriers to addressing MMIP, create partnerships to improve the response to these cases, and to collaborate with tribal government and communities as well as the Department of Justice to share the findings and recommendations (New Mexico MMIWR report, 2020).

The Task Force held public meetings for community members and heard similar concerns to those we heard in Nebraska regarding underlying community challenges that might lead to violence and victimization, confusion over how to report missing persons cases, and concerns that cases of missing Native persons and violence against Native persons were not prioritized by

law enforcement. In addition, law enforcement officers across New Mexico reported that they often do not have sufficient staff and workforce capacity to complete investigations of missing persons, and that the NCIC forms do not have dedicated fields for entering tribal affiliation into a missing person's report. The Task Force also attempted to gather data from the 23 state law enforcement agencies from counties with tribal land and/or counties that had greater than 4% of the population who identified as American Indian or Alaska Native (AI/AN) alone. The Task Force submitted Inspection of Public Records Act (IPRA) and Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests to each agency requesting department/agency policies for missing persons, blank copies of incident report forms and data counts from 2014-2019 for solved and unsolved missing persons cases, homicides, suspicious deaths, and deaths in custody. Of the 23 agencies, eight submitted policies and procedures, and five departments submitted at least some of the requested data on missing persons, suspicious deaths, and homicides; however, differences across the submitted variables and formats severely limited their utility for the Task Force.

Finally, the Task Force worked with the New Mexico Missing Persons Information Clearinghouse to obtain information on the *total number* of missing persons from 2014-2019 across groups. Findings showed that there were 986 total missing persons cases in New Mexico over the four-year period and that 9.8% of those cases involved Native American New Mexicans. The report also noted that most cases (96.8%) were resolved. However, due to limited research capacity, the report did not provide information on sex, age, time missing, type of case resolution, or other important case contexts for these missing persons cases, nor did it present missing persons rates for the number of *unique* missing persons for the state or across different groups. There were also no strategies to cross-check data with the national missing persons datasets or tribal communities to ensure that all Native missing persons were included and/or identified as Native American in the data (i.e., 15.5% of cases were identified as unknown race).

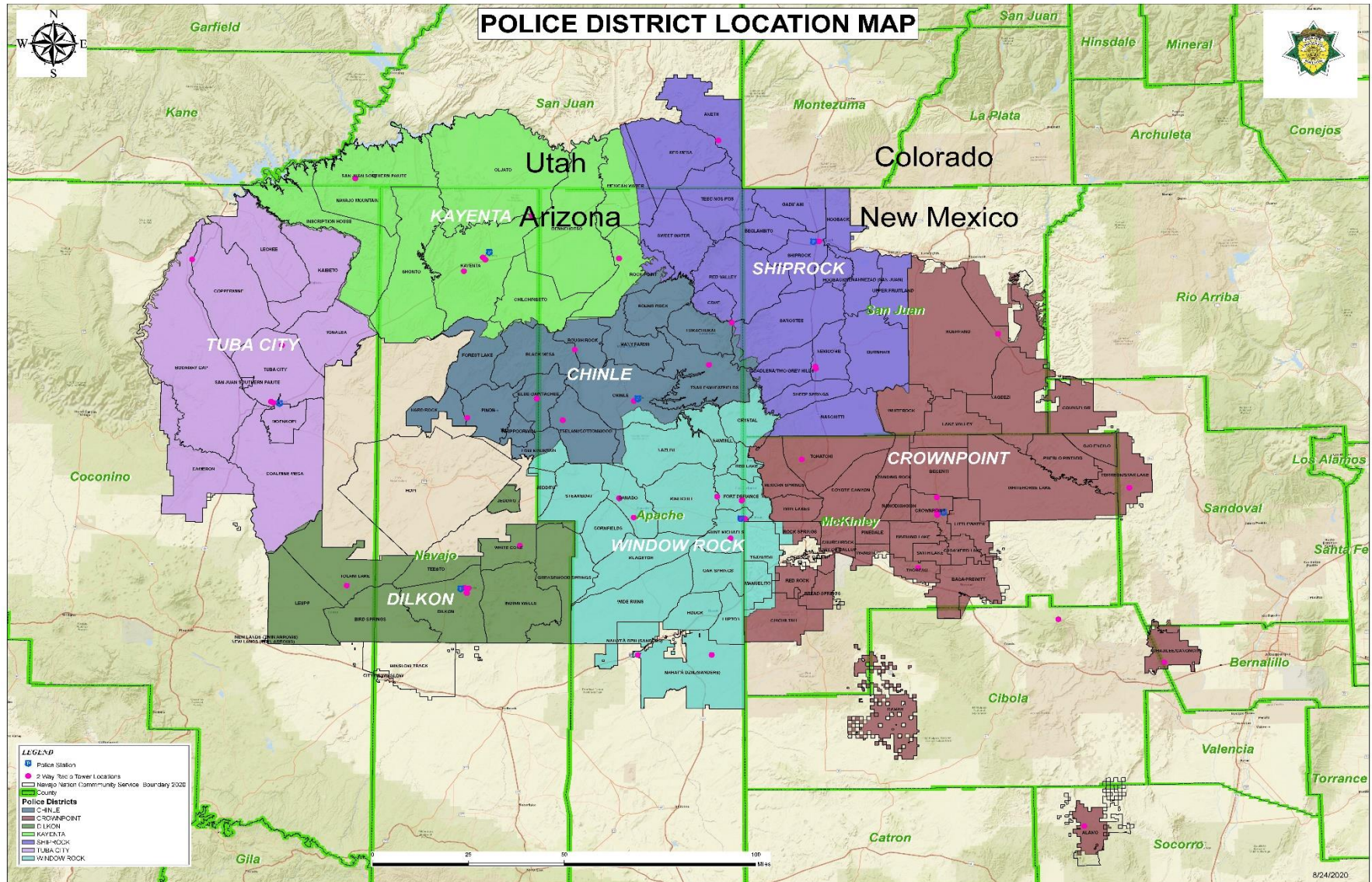
**The New Mexico MMIWR Task Force’s 2020 report provided priorities for next steps regarding their work: the first/main priority was to improve data collection, data analysis, and data reporting on cases of MMIP in New Mexico.** The Task Force also recognized that it would need additional research capacity and funding support to address these data collection, data analysis, and data reporting gaps. Upon reading the Task Force Report, UNO researchers reached out to Lynn Trujillo, then Secretary of the New Mexico Indian Affairs Department (IAD) and Stephanie Salazar, then IAD General Counsel. From August 2021 to December 2021, UNO researchers met with IAD (virtually) six times to discuss this new tribal-researcher partnership, and with the Task Force (virtually) to share ideas and seek feedback on this collaboration (i.e., priorities, specific opportunities, and challenges in New Mexico) and corresponded with IAD staff via email numerous times to develop this proposal. Through this strong researcher-practitioner partnership, the UNO research team learned of several data considerations and additional data sources on missing AI/AN persons in New Mexico that are relevant to the current project and further highlight the intrinsic challenges of this work.

First, while the Navajo Nation Division of Public Safety does report missing persons to the NCIC (i.e., a non-public facing national law enforcement database), it does not report to the state clearinghouse (i.e., New Mexico’s public facing missing persons database). Instead, the Navajo Nation Division of Public Safety creates its own missing persons list each month and develops a monthly flier (i.e., with name, age at missing, date missing, last known height and weight, police district in charge, and a picture if available) which it posts on Facebook and Twitter (now X); it also lists each missing person on its website. Per our understanding, the Navajo Nation Division of Public Safety draws data for their list from their own missing person cases (i.e., missing persons cases reported to Navajo Nation Division of Public Safety), and thus, their list does not include Navajo Nation members who are reported missing to other investigating agencies (e.g., the

Albuquerque Police Department or Gallup Police Department) (written personal communication with FBI Albuquerque Field Office, 2022). Further, the Navajo Nation List may include persons missing from *Arizona and Utah* as well as New Mexico as the Navajo Nation spans all three states and some individual jurisdictions include more than one state within its borders or are directly adjacent to a state line. For example, the city of Window Rock – the capital of the Navajo Nation government – is in Arizona but it shares its eastern border with New Mexico. Some of Window Rock, Arizona’s town buildings are located only meters away from the New Mexico state line and the village of Tse Bonito, New Mexico. Both Window Rock, Arizona and Tse Bonito, New Mexico are served by the same Navajo Nation Division of Public Safety Police District. As shown in the Navajo Nation Division of Public Safety Police District’s map below, there are many other border communities spanning New Mexico and Utah or Arizona (Figure 1; Navajo Land Department, n.d; U.S. state names added by the first author). As such, it is likely some missing persons from these border cities in Arizona and Utah are listed on the Navajo Nation List, and equally, that missing persons from New Mexico would be excluded from a count of missing persons if missing persons on the Navajo Nation List was excluded.



**Figure 1. Navajo Nation Division of Public Safety District Map**



Secondly, after the researchers received the award, the National Institute of Justice Scientist assigned to the project connected the research team to several FBI intelligence personnel from the FBI's Albuquerque Field Office who were conducting analysis and developed a list of missing Indigenous persons in New Mexico and the Navajo Nation and thus had relevant information and experience. The research team met virtually with the FBI personnel and the NIJ Scientist in December 2023 to learn about their MMIP initiative. The research team learned that over many months in early 2022, the FBI conducted extensive data collection efforts to cull a wide-range of source material including: every New Mexico law enforcement agency submitting data into NCIC, NamUs, NCMEC, the New Mexico Missing Persons Clearinghouse, United States Attorney's Offices, Bureau of Indian Affairs Missing and Murdered Unit, tribal law enforcement agencies, and open-source information (e.g., Facebook pages, Charlie Project, Reddit pages, etc.) to identify a comprehensive list of missing Native American persons in New Mexico and the Navajo Nation (i.e., the New Mexico & Navajo Nation FBI List; personal communication with FBI Albuquerque Field Office, 2022). In July 22, the FBI first published a publicly available list of missing persons with race code "I" in NCIC (i.e., Native American) (NCIC Code Manual, 2023, p. 22) in New Mexico and the Navajo Nation (see <https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/violent-crime/indian-country-crime/missing-or-murdered-indigenous-persons-list>) and have maintained and updated the list at least monthly thereafter.

The FBI Intelligence Analysts also explained the importance of open-source data in their data collection for missing Native American persons New Mexico and the Navajo Nation, and thus, the research team felt it prudent to search these data sources in their study of missing persons in New Mexico across all groups. **Thus, the current study first utilized the Nebraska Model to identify the scope and context of MMIP in New Mexico and then extended the Model to include additional data sources relevant to New Mexico and the Navajo Nation.**



## **Chapter 2: Study Site, Research Questions, and Methods**

### **Project Goals and Methods**

#### **Goal 1: Replicate (and extend) the Nebraska Model**

**RQ1: What is the scope of missing AI/AN persons in New Mexico using the Nebraska Model?**

**RQ2: What is the scope of missing AI/AN persons in New Mexico using the Nebraska Model plus additional data sources?**

**RQ3: What is the context of missing AI/AN persons in New Mexico?**

As discussed above, accurately counting the number of missing people is difficult, and this issue is made even more difficult when focusing on Indigenous missing persons. Drawing from methodologies used to identify the number of persons within other hidden populations such as persons experiencing homelessness or housing instability, the Nebraska Model relies on multiple point-in-time counts of unique missing persons from multiple data sources. These data are used to first determine the number and rate of all missing persons in New Mexico and then the scope and context of missing Native American persons specifically, at each point-in-time count and over the study period (i.e., trends and 12- month averages). In addition, consistent with the Nebraska Model, focus groups with Tribal community members and interviews with tribal and non-tribal professionals were held to gain insight in the context of missing Indigenous persons in New Mexico.

### **Methods for Goal 1**

#### **Point-in-Time Counts**

##### ***Missing Persons Data***

**National Crime Information Center.** NCIC is a national database of crime data that is accessible

to state, local, and *some* tribal law enforcement agencies (Federal Bureau of Investigation, n.d.).

The NCIC also collects missing person cases, which are not crimes. The NCIC is administered by the FBI and allows law enforcement personnel to query multiple state and federal databases. Law enforcement personnel can submit inquiries in the NCIC and get a response immediately (Federal Bureau of Investigation, n.d.). When a child is reported missing to law enforcement, federal law (Missing Children's Act, 1982) and state law – in New Mexico Statute § 29-15.7.1 (2001) – requires that the child's case be entered into the NCIC within two hours of receiving the report.

Select federally recognized Tribes were provided access to NCIC in 2015 through the Tribal Access Program (TAP) (U.S. Department of Justice, 2019). TAP is managed by the Office of the Chief Information Officer and the Office of Tribal Justice and funded by the Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering, and Tracking (SMART), the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS), the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC), and the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW). As of late 2024, 149 Tribes with over 460 tribal agencies participate in TAP (U.S. Department of Justice, 2025a). At the time of writing, nine of New Mexico's 23 Tribes and Pueblos were participating in TAP including the Mescalero Apache Tribe of the Mescalero Reservation, Navajo Nation, Ohkay Owingeh, Pueblo of Acoma, Pueblo of Isleta, Pueblo of Pojoaque, Pueblo of Santa Clara, Pueblo of Taos, and Zuni Tribe of the Zuni Reservation (U.S. Department of Justice, 2025b). For each missing person in NCIC, data fields capture the missing person's name, date of birth, sex, race (i.e., Asian, Black, Indigenous, White, Unknown), law enforcement agency, date missing, date entered into NCIC, and date located, if applicable. Information for the missing person's tribal affiliation (if applicable) is also included in NCIC. NCIC is not publicly available, monthly NCIC data for this project was obtained through a partnership with the New Mexico Department of Public Safety.

**National Missing and Unidentified Persons System.** The NamUs databases serve as a national information repository for missing, unidentified, and unclaimed person case information (NamUs, 2024). NamUs is an asset that is funded and administered by the National Institute of Justice, the research, evaluation, and technology agency of the U.S. Department of Justice. However, as noted by NamUs (para 15, 2021), “NamUs is not federally mandated, therefore, the NamUs database only contains information on individuals who have been voluntarily reported as missing, unidentified, or unclaimed to NamUs. As such, the NamUs database does not include information on all missing, unidentified, and/or unclaimed persons nationwide.” The database is searchable by anyone, including the public; however, law-enforcement sensitive case information is accessible only to registered, vetted professional users, which includes law enforcement officers, medicolegal death investigators, and allied forensic professionals (NamUs, 2024). Anyone can enter a new missing person case into NamUs, including family members of the missing, but all cases are verified with the jurisdictional criminal justice agencies prior to publication in the system to protect the safety and privacy of individuals reported missing to NamUs (NamUs, 2024). Unidentified and unclaimed person cases are entered only by medical examiner/coroner offices or their designees. At the time of writing this report, no data sharing occurs between the NamUs and NCIC systems.<sup>6</sup> For each missing person in the NamUs, data fields capture the missing person’s name, age, sex, race/ethnicity (i.e., American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, White, Uncertain, Not Provided, Other), tribal affiliation (yes/no), date missing, location missing from,

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<sup>6</sup> As part of Billy’s Law or the Help Find the Missing Act (Public Law No: 117-327), Congress directed several requirements to facilitate data sharing between the NCIC database and the NamUs databases concerning missing and unidentified persons. Specifically, the act requires the DOJ to provide the NIJ with access to the NCIC records of missing persons and unidentified individuals to validate cases and reconcile data with NamUs. Additionally, the act requires the DOJ to assess the NCIC and NamUs systems, as well as their governing statutes, policies, and procedures, and create a plan for NCIC to automatically transmit certain records to NamUs. Due to interoperability issues, the DOJ has conducted an initial assessment of what is needed to achieve these directives, with implementation pending appropriations to allow for this data sharing.

and name of the investigating agency, among other data fields.

**National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.** NCMEC was founded by child advocates as a private, non-profit organization dedicated to finding missing children, reducing child sexual exploitation, and preventing child victimization (NCMEC, n.d.a). NCMEC is intended to serve as a national clearinghouse for information regarding missing children and to provide a coordinated national response to issues regarding missing and exploited children. NCMEC receives reports of missing children from parents, guardians, child welfare professionals, and law enforcement (NCMEC, 2023). NCMEC houses a public-facing dashboard to search for missing children (NCMEC, n.d.b). For each child in the NCMEC, data fields capture the missing person's name, sex, and race/ethnicity (i.e., American Indian, Asian, Biracial, Black, Pacific Islander, White, Unknown), date missing, and location missing from, among other data fields.

**New Mexico Missing Persons Information Clearinghouse.** The New Mexico Missing NMCH is New Mexico's state clearinghouse for missing persons cases in the state. The NMCH "is a central repository of information on missing persons and shall be used by all law enforcement agencies, including tribal agencies, in this state" (2023, para B). The NMCH is managed by the New Mexico Department of Public Safety, but the database is accessible online to everyone. Missing persons can be searched by name or city, or users can choose to see the full list of missing persons in the entire state where names are hyperlinked to the missing person's information. For each missing person in the NMCH, data fields capture the missing person's name, date missing, place missing from, personal characteristics including date of birth, height, hair color, eye color, sex, weight, and race (i.e., American Indian/Alaska Native, Black, White, Asian, Unknown/Missing), a field for the missing person's clothing, and the name and contact information for the reporting agency. In 2019, New Mexico House Bill 16 – known as the Mark

Daniel Aguilar Information Sharing Requirement – mandated that within thirty days, the New Mexico’s Department of Public Safety shall share with NamUs (1) all information in the NMCH; and (2) all information regarding the identification and location of missing and unidentified persons or human remains.

**Navajo Nation Missing Person List.** The Navajo Nation Division of Public Safety creates its own missing persons list each month (i.e., with name, age at missing, date missing, last known height and weight, police district in charge, and a picture if available). This list includes missing person cases reported to the Navajo Nation Division of Public Safety; however, not all missing persons who are members of the Navajo Nation (personal communication with FBI Albuquerque Field Office, 2022). The Navajo Nation Missing Person List is published as a poster on Facebook and Twitter/X (i.e., <https://x.com/Navajopd>), and a list of each missing person with hyperlinks to download missing persons fliers for each missing individual is also on its website (<https://npd.navajo-nsn.gov/Home/Display-Community-Announcements/category/navajo-nation-missing-persons>).

**The New Mexico & Navajo Nation FBI List.** In an initiative specific to the FBI field office in Albuquerque, New Mexico, intelligence personnel collect monthly data on Native American missing persons in New Mexico and the Navajo Nation; data collection began in early 2022 and was published on a public-facing website on July 25, 2022 (see <https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/violent-crime/indian-country-crime/missing-and-murdered-indian-persons-list>). The New Mexico & Navajo Nation FBI List stems from numerous sources including those listed above – NCIC, NamUs, NCMEC, NMCH, the Navajo Nation Missing Person’s List – as well as the Bureau of Indian Affairs’ Missing and Murdered Unit website, the District of New Mexico United States Attorney’s Office, tribal law enforcement agencies not reporting to NCIC, and open-source information (e.g., Facebook pages, Charlie Project, Reddit

pages, etc.). These data sources are checked monthly for missing persons with the race code “AI/AN” (i.e., American Indian or Alaska Native) or “I” (i.e., Native American). The resulting list of missing Native American persons in New Mexico and the Navajo Nation includes the following data fields for each person: name, year of birth, sex, date of last contact, and a picture if available. While the New Mexico & Navajo Nation FBI List is publicly available, these data were obtained through a partnership with the FBI Albuquerque field office. Each month, as the FBI published their data publicly, FBI personnel sent the same data via a spreadsheet to the research team and worked collaboratively with the team to answer questions about their data.

**Open-Source Data.** Missing persons data were also gathered from publicly available online sources (i.e., websites and Facebook groups). These online platforms provide varying details on missing persons (e.g., differing data fields such as age, race, place last seen, etc.); some platforms were “Native-specific,” while others included missing persons from New Mexico across different groups. Native-specific sources included three Facebook groups/pages: Missing and Murdered Native Americans and Lost and Missing in Indian Country, as well as the website <https://www.justicefornativepeople.com/>. Non-Native sources comprised of four Facebook groups/pages: ALERT New Mexico and New Mexico Missing Persons Alerts, in addition to websites such as [blackandmissinginc.com](http://blackandmissinginc.com) and [uncovered.com](http://uncovered.com).

## **Data Collection Procedures**

To understand the scope of missing Indigenous persons in New Mexico, a count of the total number of all missing persons in the state needed to be established. Due to the dynamic nature of missing persons cases, the count of missing individuals should be interpreted as a “point-in-time” count on a given date. This means that as missing persons are located and cases are resolved, the count of missing persons may fluctuate depending on when the data are accessed. The data provided in this study does not encompass all missing individuals ever

reported in the state of New Mexico, or all missing individuals reported in the state of New Mexico over the 12-month study period. Instead, the data represents the reported missing cases that were active on the date of each point-in-time count. Point-in time counts were conducted on the third Wednesday of each month from May to April 2024 (i.e., Time 1: May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023; Time 2: June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2023; Time 3: July 19<sup>th</sup>, 2023; Time 4: August 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023; Time 5: September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2023; Time 6: October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023; Time 7: November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023; December 20<sup>th</sup>, 2023; January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024; February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2024; March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024; April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024). Indigenous missing persons were identified using the race code “American Indian or Alaska Native” (AI/AN) or “Indigenous” (I) and compared to other groups as used in the data sources (i.e., Asian, Black, Hispanic, White, and Unknown, as defined by the U.S. Census, 2023a).

First, **to replicate the Nebraska model, we collected data from four sources: (1) NCIC, (2) NamUs, (3) NCMEC, and (4) NMCH.** Then, **to extend the model for New Mexico and the Navajo Nation, data were collected from an additional three data sources: (5) the Navajo Nation Missing Person List, (6), the New Mexico & Navajo Nation FBI List, and (7) Open-source platforms.** At Time 1, a list of each unique missing person from the 7 data sources listed above was developed to create a master file including all study variables. Then for each subsequent point-in-time count, the missing persons data sources were re-reviewed, and the data was crosschecked with the master file. A local researcher with the Coalition to Stop Violence Against Native Women crosschecked the missing persons list each month in an attempt to capture any unreported missing persons from Native communities in New Mexico. Data collection was conducted by three Ph.D. level graduate assistants. SPSS 21 was used for dataset development and cleaning and R 4.3.1 was used for data analysis. The study design was reviewed by the University of Nebraska Institutional Review Board and deemed not human subject’s research.

## ***Measures***

For each case, the *first and last name*, *age at missing*, *sex* (male/female), *race* (American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian or Pacific Islander, Black, White, or Unknown/Other), and *missing date* was recorded. Whether the case was retrieved from *NCIC*, *NamUs*, *NCMEC*, *NMCH*, *Navajo Nation Missing Person List*, *New Mexico & Navajo Nation FBI List*, or *Open-source* platforms was also identified (each coded 0=no, 1=yes); these were not mutually exclusive: cases could be cross-listed on more than one data source (i.e., on both NCIC and NMCH). Then, a series of variables were created - *NCIC only*, *NamUs only*, *NCMEC only*, *NMCH only*, *Navajo Nation list only*, *New Mexico & Navajo Nation FBI List only*, or *Open-source only* (each coded 0=no, 1=yes) – to distinguish the cases that were exclusively listed on each respective data source (i.e., not cross-listed on any other data source). *Years missing* was calculated by subtracting the date the person went missing from the date of data collection (e.g., Time 1: May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023). A missing person's case was identified as *resolved* (0=no, 1=yes) if a missing person identified at one time point had been removed from the missing persons list or lists from which they were identified at a previous time-point. A missing person was identified as *repeatedly missing* (0=no, 1=yes) if they were identified as missing at one time point, the case was resolved at a second time point, and then the person was reported missing again at a third time point. *Missing persons* rates per 10,000 persons were calculated using U.S. Census estimates for New Mexico's total population and population across racial/ethnic groups either alone or in combination (U.S. Census Bureau, 2023a).

## ***Data analysis***

To understand the scope and context of missing Indigenous persons in New Mexico, the scope and context of *all* missing persons in the state must first be established. To this end, descriptive statistics for the point-in-time counts for New Mexico's missing persons and missing



persons rates for the state overall, and then across different groups are presented. Next, descriptive statistics for New Mexico's Native missing persons are presented and compared to the state's overall missing persons and other groups. Based on previous results from Nebraska showing that juveniles (Richards et al., 2022) – and Native and Black juveniles in particular – are disproportionately represented as missing persons (see analysis in Nystrom et al., 2022), descriptive statistics for juveniles compared to adults (overall and by groups) are also presented separately.

### **Focus Group Procedures**

The Coalition to Stop Violence Against Native Women (CSVANW) hosted two in-person focus groups in Albuquerque and Farmington, New Mexico. Albuquerque, the state's largest city, is characterized as urban with a population exceeding 560,000 people; approximately 4% of the population identify as American Indian/Alaska Native (U.S. Census, 2023b). Farmington, New Mexico spans more than 5,500 square miles, borders the Navajo Nation, and has a population of nearly 46,000 people; 27% of the population in Farmington identify as American Indian/Alaska Native (U.S. Census, 2023c). Focus group one was held at the CSVANW, included ten participants (family member[s] or loved ones with missing AI/AN persons), and was followed by a healing circle and dinner (see Appendix A). Focus group two was held in a private space at the Farmington Public Library, included seven participants, and was followed by a grounding exercise and remarks from CSVANW (see Appendix B). No focus groups were held on tribal lands. Focus groups were moderated by two staff from the

CSVANW; a CSVANW advocate was also in attendance for support as needed. A representative from the New Mexico Indian Affairs Department attended focus group two. Two doctoral-level graduate students and the principal investigator from the University of Nebraska at Omaha, and the co-principal investigator, a senior research fellow from the Urban Institute, attended the focus groups virtually (via zoom) as note takers. Three note takers were present at each focus group; note takers could hear, but not see participants (i.e., no cameras were used), and participants could hear but not see the note takers. No identifying information about participants was recorded by the note takers. Note takers did not attend the post-focus groups events facilitated by CSVANW (i.e., healing circle, grounding exercise, closing remarks).

The CSVANW solicited participants through their listservs and networks. Participants were enrolled, affiliated, or descendants of a tribal community member in New Mexico or lived/ worked on Tribal lands; all participants were 18 years old or older. Before beginning the focus groups, one moderator reviewed the study information sheet with participants explaining the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, the minimal risks of participation, and the \$30 honorarium for participation (see Appendix C). The CSVANW facilitated participants' honorariums to preserve their anonymity from the research team members. Focus group one included ten ( $n = 10$ ) participants and focus group two included seven ( $n = 7$ ) participants, for a total of seventeen ( $n = 17$ ) participants. Focus group one was approximately one hour and 30 minutes in length, while focus group two was approximately one hour in length.

Focus groups centered on the following questions developed collaboratively by the research partners and staff at the New Mexico Indian Affairs Department and the Coalition to Stop Violence Against Native Women:

1. What issues do you believe lead to Native people in New Mexico “going missing”?
2. What challenges do you believe Native people in New Mexico face in reporting their loved ones as missing?
3. What challenges do you believe Native people in New Mexico face in their journey to have their relatives “found and loved” when they do go missing?
4. What are strengths or supportive services for Missing Native people in New Mexico?

### ***Coding***

The focus group notes were independently coded by two research team members using an inductive coding strategy. Each coder read their focus group notes and identified and recorded each unique theme in a Word document; the coders then met and reviewed the themes for disagreements. Disagreements were resolved through discussion and input from the third note taker. A draft document was then reviewed by the moderators and the representative from the New Mexico Indian Affairs Department for a final reliability check. Themes were organized under the four focal points of the focus groups (i.e., issues that lead to missingness, challenges in reporting missing loved ones, challenges in finding missing loved ones, and strengths or supportive services for missing Native people).

### **Goal 2: Identify gaps in current data collection, data analysis, and data reporting for cases of MMIP in New Mexico.**

In addition to developing a descriptive profile of the scope and context of missing Native persons in New Mexico, the study was designed to examine framework(s) for *sustained* data

collection, analysis, and reporting. In their report (2020), the Task Force identified a range of potential data strategies: developing a MMIP data institute, establishing a new staff position dedicated to MMIP, and/or directing the NMMPIC clearinghouse to provide MMIP-specific work products; however, the feasibility of these strategies and partners' preferred strategies had not yet been determined.

### ***Missing and Murdered Indigenous Peoples (MMIP) Portal for New Mexico***

In 2022, Senate Bill 12 was passed and signed into law by the Governor of New Mexico. Senate Bill 12 added a new section to the Missing Persons Information and Reporting Act (1978) mandating that the attorney general shall (1) “assist, with the consent of an Indian nation, tribe or pueblo, with the investigation and prosecution of all missing persons cases in which one or more indigenous persons are reasonably believed to be victims”, (2) “create the position of “missing indigenous persons specialist,” and (3) employ one or more missing Indigenous persons specialists, who shall work in collaboration with local, state, federal and tribal law enforcement agencies on missing indigenous persons cases” (N.M. Stat. § 8-5-19, 2022; N.M. Stat. § 8-5-20, 2022). It also created the “Partnership in Native American Communities Grant Program,”

The "partnership in Native American communities network grant program" is created within the office of the attorney general. The purpose of the program is to create a network to support the efforts by the state's Indian nations, tribes and pueblos to identify, report and find Native Americans who are missing. The "partnership in Native American communities network" shall be developed and operated by *the office of the attorney general as an online Portal with a database to securely upload information regarding missing Indigenous persons* (emphasis added, Senate Bill 12, 2022, p.4).

In March 2024, as mandated by Senate Bill 12 (2022), the New Mexico Department of Justice launched the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Peoples (MMIP) Portal for New Mexico as a “dedicated online resource...[which] serves as a central hub for information, advocacy, and support related to MMIP cases, providing a comprehensive database for reporting and searching for missing persons” (New Mexico Department of Justice, 2024, para 1). According to the New Mexico Department of Justice, “the Portal will address the data-sharing and public-facing aspects of the MMIP crisis in New Mexico. It provides real-time, public access to active cases across the state” (KOB, 2024, para 2). The MMIP Portal is public facing (i.e., anyone can assess and use it) and allows users to search for missing persons by “name”, “age”, “date last seen”, and “last seen before date” (see Figure 2 below; New Mexico Department of Justice, 2024).

**Figure 2. Home screen for the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Peoples (MMIP) Portal for New Mexico**

[Home](#) [About the Initiative](#) [Data Dashboard](#) [Report a Missing Person](#)



# Missing or Murdered Indigenous People

## For New Mexico and the Surrounding Regions

The Missing and Murdered Indigenous Peoples (MMIP) portal in New Mexico is a vital source of hope and support, addressing the critical issues of violence and disappearance in Indigenous communities. This initiative offers essential resources for families and friends seeking answers, highlighting a deep commitment to healing and justice.

[Report a Missing Person](#) [Search for a Missing Person](#)

### Search for a Missing or Murdered Indigenous Person

Whether you're seeking information, looking to contribute to the awareness of MMIP cases, or hoping to find leads in an ongoing search, your efforts are a valuable part of the collective endeavor to bring attention and resolution to these critical cases.

Filter by Name

Filter by Name...

Filter by Age

Please make a selection

Last Seen After

mm / dd / yyyy

Last Seen Before

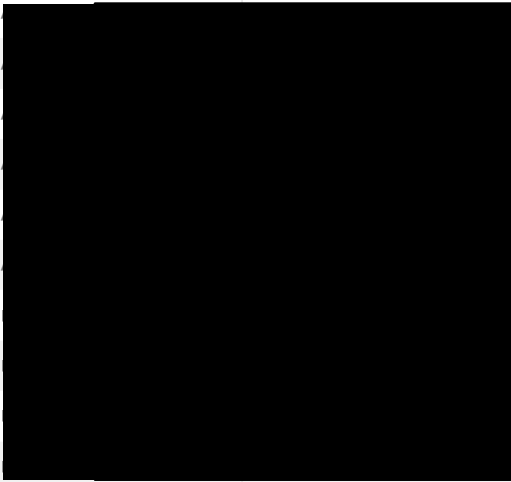
mm / dd / yyyy

28

It also provides a hyperlinked list of missing persons alphabetically by last name with a “view detail” button for each missing person (See Figure 3 below, note that names have been covered to protect privacy).

**Figure 3. List of Missing Persons on the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Peoples (MMIP) Portal for New Mexico**

Viewing all missing persons

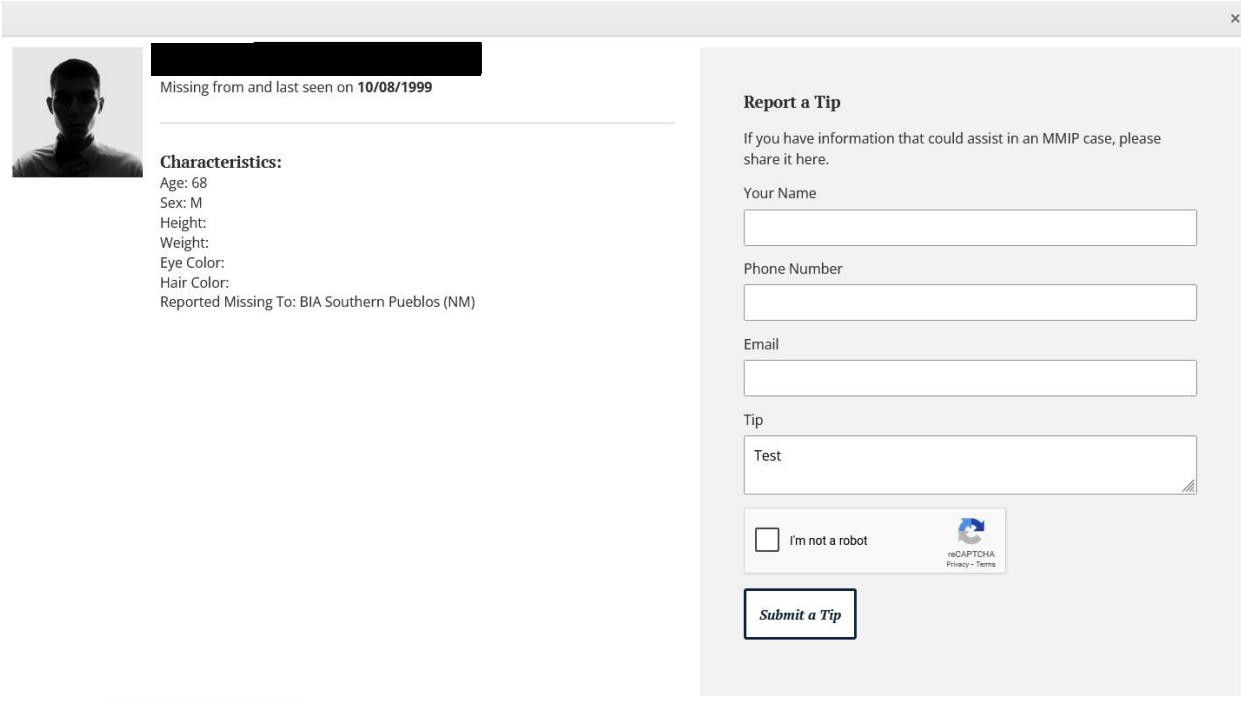
Last Name	Given Name	Age	Last Seen	
		68	10/08/1999	<a href="#">View Details</a>
		59	9/02/2016	<a href="#">View Details</a>
		41	6/29/2024	<a href="#">View Details</a>
		67	12/07/1996	<a href="#">View Details</a>
		40	3/01/2024	<a href="#">View Details</a>
		73	1/14/2021	<a href="#">View Details</a>
		36	7/23/2024	<a href="#">View Details</a>
		78	11/27/2002	<a href="#">View Details</a>
		61	1/07/2025	<a href="#">View Details</a>
		53	11/26/2024	<a href="#">View Details</a>

Upon clicking “view detail” a user will see a picture of the missing person (if provided), as well as their age, sex, height, weight, eye color, hair color, and agency where the person what reported missing, respectively, – again if provided (See Figure 4 below, name has been covered for privacy and no picture was provided). The research team examined the first 25 missing persons reports for completeness across the nine potential data elements including picture, date last seen, age, sex, height, weight, eye color, hair color, and agency where the person what reported missing. Across these 25 cases, 45.3% of these data elements were missing (e.g., 123 data elements of a possible 225 were provided). All reports included a date last seen, age, sex,

and agency reported to, but height, weight, eye and hair color were only reported sporadically; 32% of these reports did not include a picture.

There is also a “report a tip” option that allows users to report a tip about the missing person; however, the user must also include their name, phone number, and email address. The research team tested this function to see if including name and contact information with a tip was optional, and it would not allow the team member to submit “test” in the fillable “tip” box without also including something in the “name”, “phone number”, and “email boxes” (i.e., these three boxes highlighted in red when the team member attempted to submit); we did not fill in these boxes in and submit “test” in the tip box.

**Figure 4. Detail Screen for Missing Person on the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Peoples (MMIP) Portal for New Mexico**

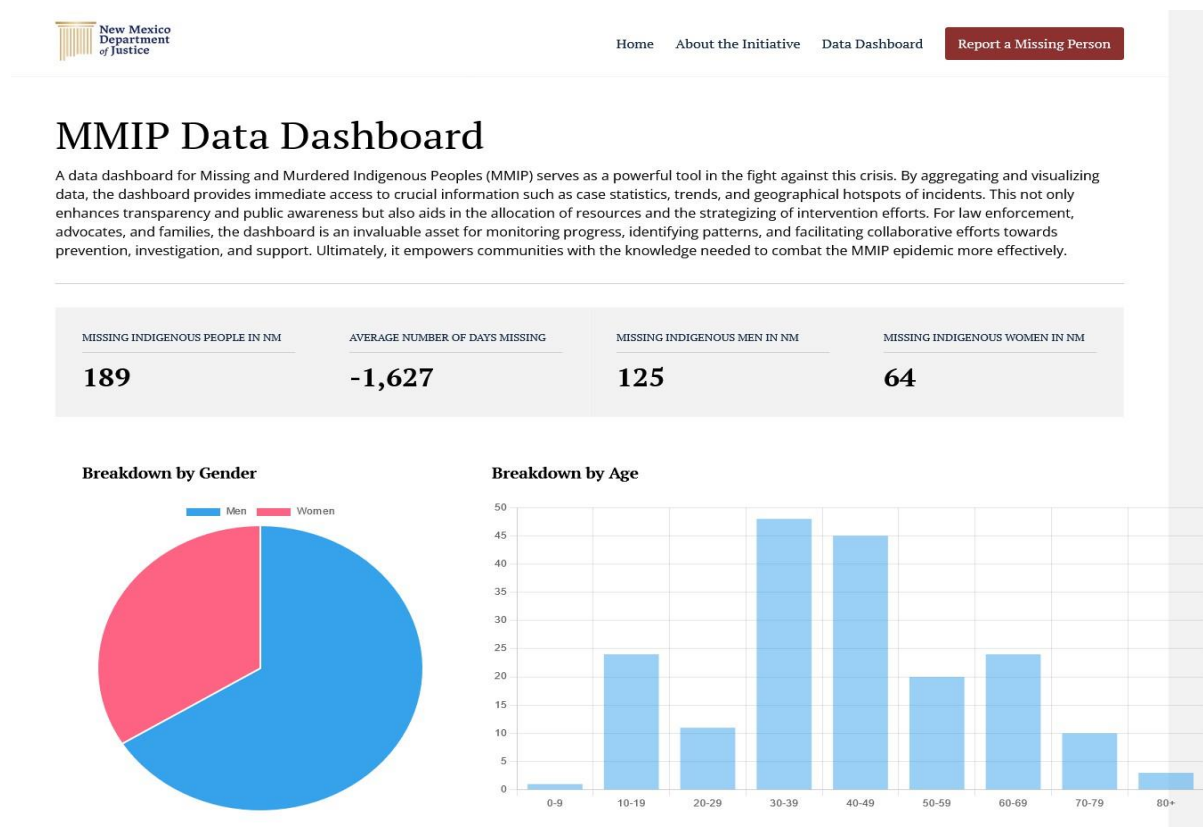


The screenshot displays the 'Detail Screen for Missing Person' on the MMIP Portal for New Mexico. The interface is divided into two main sections. On the left, there is a profile card for a missing person. It features a black and white headshot of a man, a redacted name, and the text 'Missing from and last seen on 10/08/1999'. Below this, under the heading 'Characteristics:', the following details are listed: Age: 68, Sex: M, Height:, Weight:, Eye Color:, Hair Color:, and Reported Missing To: BIA Southern Pueblos (NM). On the right, there is a 'Report a Tip' section. It begins with the instruction 'If you have information that could assist in an MMIP case, please share it here.' and contains four input fields: 'Your Name', 'Phone Number', 'Email', and 'Tip'. The 'Tip' field contains the text 'Test'. Below these fields is a reCAPTCHA verification area with a checkbox labeled 'I'm not a robot' and a reCAPTCHA logo. At the bottom of this section is a button labeled 'Submit a Tip'.



The NM MMIP Portal also includes a data dashboard that provides a visualization of the cases of missing persons included in the Portal by demographics using pie and bar charts. It also lists the total number of missing Indigenous people in NM, average number of days missing, number of missing Indigenous men, and number of missing Indigenous women (See Figure 5 below); however, based on our review of the data, it seems that there was an error in the data being utilized to calculate “average number of days missing” as the number of days presented was a negative number (i.e., -1,627 days). In addition, there was no name or contact information provided for questions or technical support regarding the Portal, nor was there any public-facing information about how the data was collected for the sources used to pull the data.

**Figure 5. Data Dashboard on the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Peoples (MMIP) Portal for New Mexico**



### ***Interviews with Professionals***

Qualitative information from key tribal and non-tribal professionals (e.g., from local and federal law enforcement, state government, and human services/advocacy) was collected regarding the current strategies for MMIP data collection, data analysis, and data reporting, including the Portal. Specifically, the NMIAD was asked to identify tribal and non-tribal practitioners (e.g., government officials, law enforcement officers, victim service providers), and the research team leveraged working relationships developed over the course of this project to identify sources with insight into MMIP data collection and reporting efforts. Across these sources, names/contact information for 15 potential participants was provided. Upon review of the list (e.g., potential participants professional roles) and considering resources constraints, seven potential participants were contacted via email; and five agreed to participate (71.4% response rate).

Project investigators conducted the interviews virtually using zoom; a note taker – either one of the investigators or a doctoral level research assistant – was also present at each interview. No identifying information about participants was recorded by the note taker. The interviews lasted approximately 30 minutes. Questions and an informational statement about the study (i.e., explaining the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, the minimal risks of participation) was shared with interviewees via email in advance of the interview (see Appendix D). The informational statement was then reviewed with the interviewee prior to starting the interview. Interviews centered on the following questions developed collaboratively by the research partners and staff at the New Mexico Indian Affairs Department.:

1. Are you familiar with the NM Department of Justice MMIP Portal (see <https://mmip.nmdoj.gov/>)?

2. From your perspective, is the Portal sufficient to meet NM's needs regarding collecting data on missing Indigenous person?
  - a. What types of information or data points are most important to collect on missing Indigenous persons in New Mexico?
  - b. Do you see any limitations in the current data collection efforts? (e.g., any Tribes/Pueblos excluded)?
3. Do you have any thoughts on how to raise awareness about the Portal so that community members know about and use it?
4. What other ways should data on missing Indigenous persons be reported out to the community?

### ***Coding***

The interview notes were synthesized by the notetaker (i.e., the PI or a doctoral-level research assistant) directly after each interview and shared with the research team member who served as the interviewer for them to review for reliability. Synthesized notes were then shared back with the interviewee via email for a further reliability check. Final interview notes were used to identify themes organized under the focal points listed above.

## Chapter 3: Replication and Extension of the Nebraska Model for Counting Missing Persons

### **RQ1: What is the scope of missing AI/AN persons in New Mexico using the Nebraska Model?**

The first set of analysis focuses on the results of the point-in-time counts using the Nebraska Model: a model inclusive of **four data sources** (1) NamUs, (2) NCMEC, (3) NMCH, and (4) NCIC.

Using these four data sources, the results of the overall point-in-time counts and counts by group for New Mexico's missing persons are presented in Table 1. The total number of missing persons and the rates for Time 1 (5/17/2023) are presented in the second column with the totals and rates for Times 2 (6/21/2003) to 12 (4/17/2024) presented in columns 3-13; an average rate over the 12-month study period is presented in column 14.

At Time 1, a total of 577 unique missing persons in New Mexico were identified. In comparison, at Time 12, 944 unique missing persons were identified – the highest number of missing persons at any time point. There was a total number of 2,381 unique missing persons over the 12-month study period. Using 2023 U.S. Census data for the total population of New Mexico (i.e., 2,114,371), New Mexico's overall missing person rate was calculated at 2.7 per 10,000 persons at Time 1 and 4.5 per 10,000 persons at Time 12; the highest rates, 4.5 per 10,000 persons, was identified at Time 6 and Time 12. **Over the 12-month study period, the average missing persons rate for New Mexico was 3.8 per 10,000 persons.**

Next, we examined the missing person rates for New Mexico across different groups. Using the population of total people in New Mexico who identify with a particular group (U.S. Census, 2023a), at Time 1, the missing persons rate for Whites was 2.7 per 10,000 White persons in New Mexico, compared to a rate of 2.8 for Black/African American persons per 10,000

Black/African American persons, 4.1 AI/AN persons per 10,000 AI/AN persons, 1.0 Hispanic persons per 10,000 Hispanic persons, and 0.5 Asians or Pacific Islanders per 10,000 Asians or Pacific Islanders. After Time 1, the rates of missing persons were highest among Black/African American persons – from 2.8 to 6.7 per 10,000 Black/African American persons ( $M = 4.5$  per 10,000) – followed by AI/AN persons – from 4.1 to 5.6 per 10,000 AI/AN persons ( $M = 5.0$  per 10,000), at each point-in-time. When averaged over the 12 time points, **the average missing persons rate in New Mexico was 3.8 persons per 10,000 – AI/AN persons had the highest average missing person rate (5.0 per 10,000), followed by Black/African American persons (4.5 per 10,000), and Asian/Pacific Islanders having the lowest missing persons rate (0.7 per 10,000).** Additionally, there were 163 unique missing persons (6.8%) across the 12-month study period whose identity was identified as “unknown”.

**Table 1. Rates for New Mexico’s Reported Missing Person Cases: Comparison Over Twelve Points-in-Time using the Nebraska Model**

	Time 1 (5/17/2023) <i>n</i> = 577	Time 2 (6/21/2023) <i>n</i> = 692	Time 3 (7/19/2023) <i>n</i> = 706	Time 4 (8/16/2023) <i>n</i> = 741	Time 5 (9/20/2023) <i>n</i> = 834	Time 6 (10/18/2023) <i>n</i> = 940
NM Missing Persons Rate	2.7	3.3	3.3	3.5	3.9	4.5
Missing Persons Rate for Whites	2.1	2.5	2.6	2.7	2.9	3.4
Missing Persons Rate for Blacks/African Americans	2.8	3.7	3.4	3.7	5.1	6.7
Missing Persons Rate for American Indians/Alaska Natives	4.1	4.5	4.4	4.7	5.2	5.1
Missing Persons Rate for Hispanics	1.0	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.6	1.8
Missing Persons Rate for Asians/ Pacific Islanders	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.8

Notes: NM = New Mexico; Rates were calculated per 10,000 persons using 2023 U.S. Census estimates for New Mexico for race/ethnicity either alone or in combination with another race/ethnicity; 163 missing persons were identified as “unknown”.

**Table 1 cont. Rates for New Mexico’s Reported Missing Person Cases: Comparison Over Twelve Points-in-Time using the Nebraska Model**

	Time 7 (11/15/2023) <i>n</i> = 806	Time 8 (12/20/2023) <i>n</i> = 825	Time 9 (1/17/2024) <i>n</i> = 873	Time 10 (2/21/2024) <i>n</i> = 891	Time 11 (3/20/2024) <i>n</i> = 904	Time 12 (4/17/2024) <i>n</i> = 944	Combined Averages Time 1-12 <i>n</i> = 812
NM Missing Persons Rate	3.8	3.9	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.5	<b>3.8</b>
Missing Persons Rate for Whites	2.7	2.7	2.8	2.9	2.9	3.0	<b>2.8</b>
Missing Persons Rate for Blacks/African Americans	4.8	4.3	4.3	4.5	5.6	4.9	<b>4.5</b>
Missing Persons Rate for American Indians/Alaska Natives	4.9	4.9	5.3	5.4	5.5	5.6	<b>5.0</b>
Missing Persons Rate for Hispanics	1.8	1.9	2.2	2.2	2.1	2.3	<b>1.7</b>
Missing Persons Rate for Asians/ Pacific Islanders	0.8	0.9	0.6	0.6	0.8	0.8	<b>0.7</b>

Notes: NM = New Mexico; Rates were calculated per 10,000 persons using 2023 U.S. Census estimates for New Mexico for race/ethnicity either alone or in combination with another race/ethnicity; 163 missing persons were identified as “unknown”.

As shown in Table 2 (column 14), over the study period, the average number/percentage of missing persons was highest for White persons ( $n = 425.0$ ; 52.7) compared to Black/African American persons ( $n = 32.7$ ; 4.0%), American Indian/Alaska Native persons ( $n = 125.3$ ; 15.5%), Hispanic persons ( $n = 177.6$ ; 21.7%), or Asians or Pacific Islanders ( $n = 4.3$ ; 0.5%). In comparison, in 2023, using “race/ethnicity alone or in combination with another race/ethnicity”, 73.0% of New Mexico’s population was White, 3.4% was Black/African American, 12.0% was American Indian/Alaska Native, 48.6% was Hispanic, and 3.2% was Asian or Pacific Islander (U.S. Census, 2023a). **Thus, a disproportionate number of reported missing persons in New Mexico were Black/African American and American Indian/Alaska Native, 1.18 and 1.30 times their representation in the population, respectively. In contrast, fewer missing persons than expected were White, Hispanic, and Asian or Pacific Islander given their representation in the population.** Additionally, the racial/ethnic identity for 5.6% of missing persons on average was identified as “unknown.” Also of note, the majority of cases (79%) were found on NMCH, over 60% of missing persons in New Mexico were over 18 years old, were primarily male (55%), were missing less than 1 year (51%), and just under one-fifth of cases (18.8%) were resolved during the study period.



**Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for New Mexico’s Reported Missing Person Cases: Comparison Over Twelve Points-in-Time using the Nebraska Model**

	Time 1 (5/17/2023) <i>n</i> = 577		Time 2 (6/21/2023) <i>n</i> = 692		Time 3 (7/19/2023) <i>n</i> = 706		Time 4 (8/16/2023) <i>n</i> = 741		Time 5 (9/20/2023) <i>n</i> = 834		Time 6 (10/18/2023) <i>n</i> = 940	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Whites	322	55.8	389	56.2	395	55.9	412	55.6	450	54.0	524	55.7
Blacks/African American	20	3.5	27	3.9	25	3.5	27	3.6	37	4.4	49	5.2
American Indians/Alaska Natives	103	17.9	113	16.3	111	15.7	118	15.9	131	15.7	129	13.7
Hispanics	107	18.5	125	18.1	134	19.0	142	19.2	161	19.3	181	19.3
Asians/ Pacific Islanders	3	0.5	4	0.6	3	0.4	4	0.5	4	0.4	5	0.5
Unknown or Other	22	3.8	34	4.9	38	5.4	38	5.1	51	6.1	52	5.5
On NMCH	72.3%		76.9%		78.2%		78.7%		81.7%		83.7%	
On NamUs	42.3%		35.7%		35.0%		33.6%		29.6%		26.8%	
On NCMEC <sup>a</sup>	7.1%		6.8%		6.4%		6.3%		5.8%		5.0%	
On NCIC	13.7%		17.8%		21.7%		24.8%		28.9%		30.9%	
NMCH only	42.8%		45.4%		42.4%		41.2%		41.0%		42.5%	
NamUs only	18.0%		15.3%		14.9%		14.3%		12.5%		11.4%	
NCMEC only <sup>a</sup>	1.2%		0.9%		1.0%		0.9%		0.8%		0.5%	
NCIC only	6.9%		5.6%		4.7%		4.9%		4.0%		3.4%	

Age at Missing	<i>M</i> = 34; <i>SD</i> = 19; Range = 0-97	<i>M</i> = 33; <i>SD</i> = 19; Range = 0-97	<i>M</i> = 33; <i>SD</i> = 19; Range = 0-97	<i>M</i> = 33; <i>SD</i> = 18; Range = 0-97	<i>M</i> = 32; <i>SD</i> = 18.5; Range = 0-97	<i>M</i> = 32; <i>SD</i> = 18.5; Range = 0-97
12 - younger	3.1%	3.6%	3.3%	2.7%	3.2%	3.2%
13 to 15	10.1%	12.6%	13.0%	13.0%	15.0%	16.5%
16 to 17	14.0%	16.0%	15.9%	16.6%	17.3%	16.5%
18 and older	72.3%	67.1%	67.3%	67.2%	64.0%	63.5%
Sex						
Female/ Female minors <sup>b</sup>	45.2% / 16.3%	44.3% / 18.0%	44.3% / 18.6%	44.4% / 18.0%	42.8% / 19.1%	42.9% / 19.2%
Male/ Male minors <sup>b</sup>	54.8% / 10.9%	55.6% / 14.1%	55.7% / 13.6%	55.6% / 14.3%	57.2% / 16.4%	57.1% / 17.0%
Years Missing	<i>M</i> = 8; <i>SD</i> = 13; Range = 0-76	<i>M</i> = 7; <i>SD</i> = 12; Range = 0-76	<i>M</i> = 7; <i>SD</i> = 12; Range = 0-76	<i>M</i> = 7; <i>SD</i> = 12; Range = 0-76	<i>M</i> = 6; <i>SD</i> = 11; Range = 0-76	<i>M</i> = 5; <i>SD</i> = 11; Range = 0-76
<1	41.8%	48.6%	48.6%	49.1%	54.4%	59.2%
1-3	18.0%	16.3%	16.0%	16.5%	14.8%	13.1%
4-6	9.4%	8.4%	9.2%	9.0%	7.9%	7.1%
7-9	6.4%	5.6%	5.5%	5.1%	4.7%	4.0%
10+ years	24.4%	20.9%	20.7%	20.1%	18.1%	16.5%
Cases Resolved	-	14.0%	18.6%	16.4%	15.0%	12.6%

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Notes. NMCH = New Mexico Clearinghouse, NamUs = National Missing and Unidentified Persons System, NCMEC = National Center for Missing and Exploited Children; NCIC = National Crime Information Center; <sup>a</sup>Percentage of cases involving minors; <sup>b</sup>Minors include persons 17 years and younger as the age of majority in New Mexico is 18 years old.

**Table 2 cont. Descriptive Statistics for New Mexico’s Reported Missing Person Cases: Comparison Over Twelve Points-in-Time using the Nebraska Model**

	Time 7 (11/15/2023) <i>n</i> = 806		Time 8 (12/20/2023) <i>n</i> = 825		Time 9 (1/17/2024) <i>n</i> = 873		Time 10 (2/21/2024) <i>n</i> = 891		Time 11 (3/20/2024) <i>n</i> = 904		Time 12 (4/17/2024) <i>n</i> = 944		Combined Averages Time 1-12 <i>n</i> = 812	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Whites	415	51.5	416	50.4	427	48.9	440	49.4	449	49.7	461	48.8	425	52.7
Blacks/African Americans	35	4.3	31	3.8	31	3.6	33	3.7	41	4.5	36	3.8	33	4.0
American Indians/Alaska Natives	125	15.5	124	15.0	133	15.2	136	15.3	138	15.3	142	15.0	126	15.6
Hispanics	183	22.7	199	24.1	227	26.0	223	25.0	214	23.7	235	24.9	178	21.6
Asians/ Pacific Islanders	5	0.6	6	0.7	4	0.4	4	0.4	5	0.6	5	0.5	5	.5
Unknown or Other	43	5.3	49	5.9	51	5.8	55	6.2	57	6.3	65	6.9	47	5.6
On NMCH	81.9%		80.5%		80.6%		81.3%		83.0%		78.2%		79.7%	
On NamUs	31.3%		30.6%		28.6%		28.4%		27.8%		26.6%		31.4%	
On NCMEC <sup>a</sup>	5.3%		5.6%		5.4%		5.7%		5.6%		5.4%		5.9%	
On NCIC	35.2%		41.1%		46.5%		46.2%		45.7%		49.1%		33.5%	
NMCH only	34.1%		29.2%		25.5%		26.4%		27.7%		25.5%		35.3%	
NamUs only	13.0%		12.7%		11.9%		11.8%		11.4%		10.8%		13.2%	
NCMEC only <sup>a</sup>	0.5%		0.4%		0.3%		0.2%		0.2%		0.2%		0.6%	
NCIC only	3.5%		5.2%		5.8%		5.3%		4.2%		9.6%		5.3%	

Age at Missing	<i>M</i> = 32; <i>SD</i> = 18.5; Range = 0-97	<i>M</i> = 32 <i>SD</i> = 19; Range = 0-94	<i>M</i> = 32; <i>SD</i> = 19; Range = 0-100	<i>M</i> = 32; <i>SD</i> = 19; Range = 0-97	<i>M</i> = 32; <i>SD</i> = 19; Range = 0-97	<i>M</i> = 32; <i>SD</i> = 19; Range = 0-97	<i>M</i> = 32; <i>SD</i> = 19; <b>Range = 0-97</b>
12 -younger	3.1%	3.6%	3.4%	4.0%	4.0%	4.0%	<b>3.4%</b>
13 to 15	15.9%	16.6%	16.6%	16.7%	16.7%	17.2%	<b>15.0%</b>
16 to 18	16.9%	17.6%	17.1%	17.0%	16.4%	16.7%	<b>16.4%</b>
18+	63.5%	62.7%	62.4%	62.0%	62.6%	61.4%	<b>64.7%</b>
Sex							
Female/ Female minors <sup>b</sup>	43.8% / 19.6%	44.5% / 20.0%	45.5% / 20.5%	45.8% / 20.9%	45.5% / 20.8%	46.0% / 21.5%	<b>44.6% / 19.4%</b>
Male/ Male minors <sup>b</sup>	56.2% / 16.3%	55.5% / 16.9%	54.5% / 16.6%	54.2% / 16.8%	54.5% / 16.3%	54.0% / 16.4%	<b>55.4% / 15.5%</b>
Years Missing	<i>M</i> = 6; <i>SD</i> = 11.5; Range = 0-76	<i>M</i> = 6; <i>SD</i> = 11; Range = 0-76	<i>M</i> = 6; <i>SD</i> = 11; Range = 0-76.5	<i>M</i> = 6; <i>SD</i> = 11; Range = 0-77	<i>M</i> = 6; <i>SD</i> = 11; Range = 0-77	<i>M</i> = 6; <i>SD</i> = 11; Range = 0-77	<i>M</i> = 6.5; <i>SD</i> = 11.5; <b>Range = 0-76</b>
<1	51.5%	51.4%	53.3%	52.1%	51.7%	53.1%	<b>51.2%</b>
1-3	15.5%	15.5%	14.7%	15.2%	15.4%	14.5%	<b>15.5%</b>
4-6	9.2%	9.9%	9.7%	9.8%	10.1%	10.1%	<b>9.2%</b>
7-9	4.8%	4.6%	4.6%	5.1%	5.0%	4.6%	<b>5.0%</b>
10 +	19.0%	18.6%	17.8%	18.0%	17.9%	17.8%	<b>19.1%</b>
Cases Resolved	26.9%	17.5%	13.2%	18.0%	13.9%	15.0%	<b>18.8%</b>

Notes. NMCH = New Mexico Clearinghouse, NamUs = National Missing and Unidentified Persons System, NCMEC = National Center for Missing and Exploited Children; NCIC = National Crime Information Center; <sup>a</sup>Percentage of cases involving minors; <sup>b</sup>Minors include persons 17 years and younger as the age of majority in New Mexico is 18 years old.

The detailed results of the point-in-time count for New Mexico's American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) missing persons using the Nebraska Model (i.e., four data sources) are presented in Table 3. The total number of AI/AN missing persons and the rates for Time 1 (i.e., 5/17/2023) are presented in the second column, with the totals and rates for Times 2 (i.e., 6/21/2003) to 12 (i.e., 4/17/2024) presented in columns 3-13; an average rate over the 12-month study period is presented in column 14.

At Time 1, 103 unique missing AI/AN persons in New Mexico were identified (for a rate of 4.1 per 10,000 AI/AN persons); at Time 12, 142 unique missing persons were identified (for a rate of 5.6 per 10,000 AI/AN persons). There was a total of 334 unique AI/AN missing persons over the 12-month study period.

Using the Nebraska Model, most AI/AN missing persons were listed on the New Mexico Clearinghouse (65.8% of cases on average over the study period) compared to the national databases (51.9% of cases on average in NamUs, 31.3% in NCIC). Further, examination across the missing person lists determined that fewer AI/AN missing persons cases than New Mexico's missing person cases overall were listed on the New Mexico Clearinghouse (65.8% vs. 79.7% on average) or NCIC (31.3% versus 33.5% on average) but more AI/AN missing persons were cross listed on NamUs (25.9% versus 17.3% on average). Further, fewer AI/AN minors were cross listed on NCMEC than in New Mexico overall: 3.0% on average versus 4.1% on average.

Findings showed that AI/AN missing persons ranged in age from 3 to 74 years old, with an average age of 32.1 years. While **the majority of AI/AN missing persons were adults (18 years or older), 22.1%, on average, were minors.** In addition, over half of AI/AN missing persons at each time point were male compared to female (54.6% on average); however, the percentage of missing female minors was higher than the percentage of missing male minors at

each time point – **on average the percentage of missing female minors was about 2 to 3 times the percentage of male minors.**

On average, 41.3% of AI/AN missing persons were missing for less than one year, while 22.2% of AI/AN missing persons were missing for 10 years or more. The average length of time for an AI/AN missing person case over the study period was 7.4 years ( $SD = 11.5$ ). Regarding case resolution, 13.6% of the AI/AN missing person cases identified at Time 1 were resolved and no longer listed by Time 2. The highest resolution rate occurred between Time 5 and Time 6, where 19.1% of the cases missing at Time 5 were no longer listed as missing at Time 6. These resolution rates fluctuated between time periods with an **overall average resolution rate of 15% of cases from one time period to the next time period.**

**Table 3. Descriptives for New Mexico's Reported Missing Person Cases involving AI/AN Persons: Comparison Over Twelve Points-in-Time using the Nebraska Model**

	Time 1 (5/17/2023) <i>n</i> = 103	Time 2 (6/21/2023) <i>n</i> = 113	Time 3 (7/19/2023) <i>n</i> = 111	Time 4 (8/16/2023) <i>n</i> = 118	Time 5 (9/20/2023) <i>n</i> = 131	Time 6 (10/18/2023) <i>n</i> = 129
Missing Persons Rate	4.1	4.5	4.4	4.7	5.2	5.1
On NMCH	58.3%	62.0%	64.0%	61.9%	66.4%	66.7%
On NamUs	63.1%	59.3%	60.4%	57.6%	49.6%	50.4%
On NCMEC <sup>a</sup>	6.8%	6.2%	6.3%	7.6%	5.3%	4.7%
On NCIC	13.6%	18.6%	19.8%	22.9%	25.2%	28.7%
NMCH only	21.4%	22.1%	19.8%	20.3%	26.0%	22.5%
NamUs only	31.1%	29.2%	28.8%	28.0%	23.7%	24.0%
NCMEC only <sup>a</sup>	1.0%	0.0%	0.9%	0.9%	0.8%	0.8%
NCIC only	6.8%	6.2%	3.6%	6.8%	6.9%	6.2%
Age at Missing	<i>M</i> = 33; <i>SD</i> = 15; Range = 9-74	<i>M</i> = 33; <i>SD</i> = 15; Range = 9-74	<i>M</i> = 34; <i>SD</i> = 15; Range = 9-76	<i>M</i> = 32; <i>SD</i> = 14; Range = 9-74	<i>M</i> = 32; <i>SD</i> = 15; Range = 8-74	<i>M</i> = 32; <i>SD</i> = 14; Range = 9-74
12 - younger	1.0%	0.9%	0.9%	0.9%	2.3%	1.6%
13 to 15 years old	6.8%	7.1%	6.3%	9.3%	10.7%	10.9%
16 to 17 years old	12.6%	12.4%	9.9%	11.0%	13.0%	11.6%
18 and older	78.6%	78.8%	82.0%	78.0%	73.3%	75.2%

Sex						
Female/ Female minors <sup>b</sup>	41.7% / 13.6%	41.6% / 14.2%	42.3% / 13.5%	44.9% / 17.0%	41.2% / 16.8%	45.7% / 17.8%
Male/ Male minors <sup>b</sup>	58.3% / 6.8%	58.4% / 6.2%	57.7% / 3.6%	55.1% / 4.2%	58.8% / 9.2%	54.3% / 6.2%
Years Missing	<i>M</i> = 8; <i>SD</i> = 12;	<i>M</i> = 8; <i>SD</i> = 12;	<i>M</i> = 8; <i>SD</i> = 12;	<i>M</i> = 8; <i>SD</i> = 12;	<i>M</i> = 7; <i>SD</i> = 11;	<i>M</i> = 7; <i>SD</i> = 11;
	Range = 0-66	Range = 0-67	Range = 0-67	Range = 0-67	Range = 0-67	Range = 0-67
<1	34.0%	37.2%	33.3%	36.4%	43.5%	43.4%
1-3	18.4%	18.6%	18.9%	19.5%	17.6%	17.1%
4-6	13.6%	12.4%	14.4%	12.7%	9.9%	10.1%
7-9	8.7%	8.9%	9.0%	7.6%	6.9%	7.0%
10 or more	25.2%	23.0%	24.3%	23.7%	22.1%	22.5%
Cases Resolved	-	13.6%	16.8%	9.0%	16.1%	19.1%

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Notes. NMCH = New Mexico Clearinghouse, NamUs = National Missing and Unidentified Persons System, NCMEC = National Center for Missing and Exploited Children; NCIC = National Crime Information Center; <sup>a</sup>Percentage of cases involving minors; <sup>b</sup>Minors include persons 17 years and younger as the age of majority in New Mexico is 18 years old.



**Table 3 cont. Descriptives for New Mexico's Reported Missing Person Cases involving AI/AN Persons: Comparison Over Twelve Points-in- Time using the Nebraska Model**

	Time 7 (11/15/2023) <i>n</i> = 125	Time 8 (12/20/2023) <i>n</i> = 124	Time 9 (1/17/2024) <i>n</i> = 133	Time 10 (2/21/2024) <i>n</i> = 136	Time 11 (3/20/2024) <i>n</i> = 138	Time 12 (4/17/2024) <i>n</i> = 142	Combined Averages Time 1-12 <i>n</i> = 126
Missing Persons Rate	4.9	4.9	5.3	5.4	5.5	5.6	<b>5.0</b>
On NMCH	66.4%	64.5%	67.0%	69.1%	73.9%	69.0%	<b>65.8%</b>
On NamUs	51.2%	51.6%	47.4%	45.6%	44.2%	43.0%	<b>51.9%</b>
On NCMEC <sup>a</sup>	4.8%	4.0%	4.5%	4.4%	5.8%	7.0%	<b>5.6%</b>
On NCIC	30.4%	36.3%	43.6%	45.6%	43.5%	47.2%	<b>31.3%</b>
NMCH only	20.0%	14.5%	11.3%	11.0%	14.5%	12.7%	<b>18.0%</b>
NamUs only	24.0%	24.2%	21.8%	21.3%	20.3%	19.0%	<b>24.6%</b>
NCMEC only <sup>a</sup>	0.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	<b>0.4%</b>
NCIC only	6.4%	8.9%	9.0%	8.1%	4.4%	10.6%	<b>7.0%</b>
Age at Missing	<i>M</i> = 32; <i>SD</i> = 14; Range = 9-74	<i>M</i> = 32.5; <i>SD</i> = 15; Range = 9-74	<i>M</i> = 31.5; <i>SD</i> = 14; Range = 3-74	<i>M</i> = 32; <i>SD</i> = 14; Range = 6-74	<i>M</i> = 32; <i>SD</i> = 14; Range = 6-74	<i>M</i> = 31; <i>SD</i> = 14; Range = 9-74	<i>M</i> = 32; <i>SD</i> = 14; Range: 8-74
12 and younger	0.8%	0.8%	1.5%	2.2%	1.5%	0.7%	<b>1.2%</b>
13 to 15 years old	10.4%	9.7%	9.0%	7.4%	8.0%	12.0%	<b>9.0%</b>
16 to 17 years old	11.2%	12.1%	14.3%	11.0%	12.3%	11.3%	<b>11.9%</b>
18 and older	75.2%	75.8%	73.7%	78.7%	77.5%	73.2%	<b>76.7%</b>

Sex							
Female/Female minors <sup>b</sup>	46.4% / 16.0%	46.8% / 16.9%	47.4% / 16.5%	47.1% / 14.7%	47.1% / 15.2%	50.7% / 19.7%	<b>45.2% / 16.0%</b>
Male/Male minors <sup>b</sup>	53.6% / 6.4%	53.2% / 5.7%	52.6% / 8.3%	52.9% / 5.9%	52.9% / 6.5%	49.3% / 4.2%	<b>54.8% / 6.1%</b>
Years Missing							
	<i>M</i> = 7; <i>SD</i> = 11.5; Range = 0-67	<i>M</i> = 7; <i>SD</i> = 11.5; Range = 0-67	<i>M</i> = 7; <i>SD</i> = 11; Range = 0-67	<i>M</i> = 7; <i>SD</i> = 11; Range = 0-67	<i>M</i> = 7; <i>SD</i> = 11; Range = 0-67	<i>M</i> = 7; <i>SD</i> = 11; Range = 0-67	<i>M</i> = 7; <i>SD</i> = 11.5; <b>Range = 0-67</b>
<1	42.4%	41.9%	45.1%	45.6%	46.4%	46.5%	<b>41.3%</b>
1-3	16.0%	15.3%	14.3%	15.4%	14.5%	14.1%	<b>16.6%</b>
4-6	12.0%	12.9%	12.0%	11.0%	10.1%	10.6%	<b>11.8%</b>
7-9	7.2%	7.3%	6.8%	7.4%	8.0%	7.8%	<b>7.7%</b>
10 or more	22.4%	22.6%	21.8%	20.6%	21.0%	21.1%	<b>22.2%</b>
Cases Resolved	14.7%	15.2%	11.3%	18.8%	14.0%	15.9%	<b>15.0%</b>

Notes. NMCH = New Mexico Clearinghouse, NamUs = National Missing and Unidentified Persons System, NCMEC = National Center for Missing and Exploited Children; NCIC = National Crime Information Center; <sup>a</sup>Percentage of cases involving minors; <sup>b</sup>Minors include persons 17 years and younger as the age of majority in New Mexico is 18 years old.

**RQ2: What is the scope of missing AI/AN persons in New Mexico and the Navajo Nation using the Nebraska Model plus additional data sources?**

The second set of analyses focus on the results of the point-in-time counts using the Extended Model: a model inclusive of **seven data sources** (1) NCIC, (2) NamUs, (3) NCMEC, (4), NMCH, (5), Navajo Nation Missing Person List, (6) New Mexico & Navajo Nation FBI List, and cross-checked with (7) Open- source data.

Using these seven data sources, the results of the overall point-in-time counts and counts by race/ethnicity for New Mexico and the Navajo Nation’s missing persons are presented in Table 4. The total number of missing persons and the rates for Time 1 (i.e., 5/17/2023) are presented in the second column with the totals and rates for Times 2 (i.e., 6/21/2003) to 12 (i.e., 4/17/2024) presented in columns 3-13; an average rate over the 12-month study period is presented in column 14.

At Time 1, a total of 688 unique missing persons in New Mexico and the Navajo Nation were identified. In comparison, at Time 12, 1,098 unique missing persons were identified. The total number of missing persons was highest at Time 12 (04/17/2024). There was a total number of 2,743 unique missing persons over the 12-month study period. Using 2023 U.S. Census data for the total population of New Mexico (i.e., 2,113,344), New Mexico’s overall missing person rate was calculated at 3.3 per 10,000 persons at Time 1 and 5.2 per 10,000 persons at Time 12; the highest rate, 5.2 per 10,000 persons was at Time 12. **Over the 12-month study period, the average missing persons rate for New Mexico was 4.5 per 10,000 persons.**

Next, we examined the missing persons rates for New Mexico across different groups. Using the population of total people in New Mexico who identify as each group (i.e., “race/ethnicity either alone or in combination with another race/ethnicity” U.S. Census, 2023a), at Time 1 the missing persons rate for White persons was 2.1 per 10,000 White persons in New

Mexico, compared to a rate of 2.8 for Black/African American persons per 10,000 Black/African American persons, 8.4 American Indian/Alaska Native persons per 10,000 American Indian/Alaska Native persons, 1.1 Hispanic persons per 10,000 Hispanic persons, and a rate of 0.5 Asians or Pacific Islanders per 10,000 Asians or Pacific Islanders. After Time 1, the rates of missing persons were highest among AI/AN persons – from 8.4 to 9.9 per 10,000 AI/AN persons ( $M = 9.1$  per 10,000) – followed by Black/African American persons – from 2.8 to 7.0 per 10,000 Black/African American persons ( $M = 4.7$  per 10,000). Additionally, there were 169 unique missing persons (6.2%) across the 12-month study period whose racial/ethnic identity was identified as “unknown”.

**Table 4. Rates for New Mexico’s Reported Missing Person Cases: Comparison Over Twelve Points-in-Time using the Extended Model**

	Time 1 (5/17/2023) <i>n</i> = 688	Time 2 (6/21/2023) <i>n</i> = 813	Time 3 (7/19/2023) <i>n</i> = 835	Time 4 (8/16/2023) <i>n</i> = 869	Time 5 (9/20/2023) <i>n</i> = 965	Time 6 (10/18/2023) <i>n</i> = 1076
NM Missing Persons Rate	3.3	3.9	4.0	4.1	4.6	5.1
Missing Persons Rate for Whites	2.1	2.6	2.6	2.7	3.0	3.5
Missing Persons Rate for Blacks/African Americans	2.8	4.0	3.6	3.9	5.4	7.0
Missing Persons Rate for American Indians/Alaska Natives	8.4	8.7	8.7	8.8	9.3	9.2
Missing Persons Rate for Hispanics	1.1	1.2	1.4	1.5	1.7	1.9
Missing Persons Rate for Asians/ Pacific Islanders	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.8

Notes: NM = New Mexico; Rates were calculated per 10,000 persons using 2023 U.S. Census estimates for New Mexico for race/ethnicity either alone or in combination with another race/ethnicity; 169 missing persons race/ethnicity was identified as “unknown”.

**Table 4 cont. Rates for New Mexico’s Reported Missing Person Cases: Comparison Over Twelve Points-in-Time using the Extended Model**

	Time 7 (11/15/2023) <i>n</i> = 952	Time 8 (12/20/2023) <i>n</i> = 971	Time 9 (1/17/2024) <i>n</i> = 1017	Time 10 (2/21/2024) <i>n</i> = 1038	Time 11 (3/20/2024) <i>n</i> = 1052	Time 12 (4/17/2024) <i>n</i> = 1098	Combined Averages Time 1-12 <i>N</i> = 948
NM Missing Persons Rate	4.5	4.6	4.8	4.9	5.0	5.2	<b>4.5</b>
Missing Persons Rate for Whites	2.8	2.9	2.9	3.0	3.1	3.2	<b>2.9</b>
Missing Persons Rate for Blacks/African Americans	5.1	4.5	4.5	4.8	5.9	5.4	<b>4.7</b>
Missing Persons Rate for American Indians/Alaska Natives	9.1	8.8	9.1	9.3	9.3	9.9	<b>9.1</b>
Missing Persons Rate for Hispanics	1.9	2.1	2.4	2.3	2.3	2.4	<b>1.9</b>
Missing Persons Rate for Asians/ Pacific Islanders	0.8	0.9	0.6	0.6	0.8	0.8	<b>0.7</b>

Notes: NM = New Mexico; Rates were calculated per 10,000 persons using 2023 U.S. Census estimates for New Mexico for race/ethnicity either alone or in combination with another race/ethnicity; 169 missing persons race/ethnicity was identified as “unknown”.

As shown in Table 5, over the study period, the average number/percentage of missing persons was highest for White persons ( $n = 444$ ; 46.9%) compared to Black/African American persons ( $n = 35$ ; 3.6%), American Indian/Alaska Native persons ( $n = 229$ ; 24.5%), Hispanic persons ( $n = 191$ ; 19.8%), or Asians or Pacific Islanders ( $n = 5$ ; 0.5%). In comparison in 2023, 73.0% of New Mexico's population was White, 3.4% is Black/African American, 12.0% was American Indian/Alaska Native, 48.6% was Hispanic, and 3.2% was Asian or Pacific Islander (U.S. Census, 2023a) — thus, **a disproportionate number of reported missing persons were Native American (about 2 times their population) and slightly more Black/African American missing persons than expected (.05 times their population), while fewer than expected were White, Hispanic, and Asian or Pacific Islander given their representation in the population.** Additionally, the racial/ethnic identity for 4.9% of missing persons on average was identified as “unknown”.

Trends for race/ethnicity, reporting source, age at missing, sex, years missing, and case resolution for missing persons in New Mexico can be found in columns 2-12, while the combined average across the 12 monthly point-in-time counts can be found in column 13. As seen in column 13, most missing persons were listed on NMCH (68.2% of cases on average over study period) while less than one third of cases on average were listed on NamUs (26.8% of cases on average over study period) and NCIC (26.8% of cases on average over study period) and an average of 5% of cases involving missing minors were listed on NCMEC. Further, 22.2% and 8.7% of cases on average were listed on the New Mexico & Navajo Nation FBI List and Navajo Nation website, respectively. **More than 40% of cases on average were listed on Open-Source platforms.** Most cases were listed across multiple sources; however, 25% of cases on average were only listed on NMCH, 3.7% only on NCIC, 3.3% only on the New Mexico & Navajo Nation FBI List, and 4.1% only on Open-Source platforms.

Findings also showed that missing persons in New Mexico were 33 years old on average, but ranged from less than 1 year old to more than 98 years old. While **most missing persons were adults and males** – 66% and 56.8% on average, respectively – **there were more missing minor girls than missing minor boys on average** (18.2% compared to 13.9% on average). On average, 49.4% of missing persons in New Mexico had been missing for less than one year, while 19.2% had been missing for 10 years or more. The average time missing was 7 years, but missing persons had been missing for as many as 90 years. Regarding case resolution from one point-in-time to the next point-in-time, an average of 19.4% of cases were resolved from one point-in-time to the next (i.e., in about 30 days).



**Table 5. Descriptive Statistics for New Mexico’s Reported Missing Person Cases: Comparison Over Twelve Points-in-Time using the Extended Model**

	Time 1 (5/17/2023) <i>n</i> = 688		Time 2 (6/21/2023) <i>n</i> = 813		Time 3 (7/19/2023) <i>n</i> = 835		Time 4 (8/16/2023) <i>n</i> = 869		Time 5 (9/20/2023) <i>n</i> = 965		Time 6 (10/18/2023) <i>n</i> = 1076	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Whites	323	46.9	401	49.3	405	48.5	422	48.6	461	47.8	538	50.0
Blacks/African Americans	20	2.9	29	3.6	26	3.1	28	3.2	39	4.0	51	4.7
American Indians/Alaska Natives	212	30.8	219	26.9	220	26.3	223	25.7	236	24.5	233	21.7
Hispanics	108	15.7	126	15.5	143	17.1	154	17.7	174	18.0	197	18.3
Asians/ Pacific Islanders	3	0.4	4	0.5	3	0.4	4	0.5	4	0.4	5	0.5
Unknown or Other	22	3.2	34	4.2	38	4.6	38	4.4	51	5.3	52	4.8
On NMCH	60.6%		65.4%		66.1%		67.1%		70.6%		73.1%	
On NamUs	35.5%		30.4%		29.6%		28.7%		25.6%		23.4%	
On NCMEC <sup>a</sup>	6.0%		5.8%		5.4%		5.4%		5.0%		4.4%	
On NCIC	11.5%		15.1%		18.3%		21.2%		25.0%		27.0%	
On FBI	28.6%		25.3%		24.7%		23.4%		21.2%		19.5%	
On Navajo Nation	12.2%		10.3%		10.2%		9.9%		8.3%		7.3%	
On Open-source	45.5%		45.0%		44.6%		43.3%		40.4%		36.6%	
NMCH only	29.4%		30.3%		30.1%		29.7%		29.5%		32.4%	
NamUs only	0.4%		0.5%		0.5%		0.5%		0.4%		0.6%	

NCMEC only <sup>a</sup>	0.7%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.5%	0.3%
NCIC only	5.2%	4.1%	3.4%	3.5%	2.9%	2.4%
FBI only	5.4%	4.4%	3.8%	3.5%	3.1%	2.8%
Navajo Nation only	0.2%	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
Open-source only	0.6%	2.0%	3.0%	3.3%	3.6%	3.8%
Age at Missing	<i>M</i> = 34; <i>SD</i> = 18; Range = 0-97	<i>M</i> = 33; <i>SD</i> = 18; Range = 0-97	<i>M</i> = 33; <i>SD</i> = 18; Range = 0-97	<i>M</i> = 33; <i>SD</i> = 17.5; Range = 0-97	<i>M</i> = 32; <i>SD</i> = 18; Range = 0-97	<i>M</i> = 32; <i>SD</i> = 18; Range = 0-97
12 and younger	2.8%	3.3%	3.0%	2.5%	3.0%	3.1%
13 to 15 years old	9.7%	12.2%	12.0%	12.0%	14.0%	15.1%
16 to 17 years old	13.7%	15.0%	14.6%	15.1%	16.0%	15.2%
18 and older	73.3%	68.9%	69.7%	69.4%	65.9%	65.5%
Sex						
Female/Female minors <sup>b</sup>	43.5% /16.3%	43.5% /17.8%	43.0% /17.6%	43.2% /16.8%	41.6% /18.1%	41.8% /17.9%
Male/Male minors <sup>b</sup>	56.5% /9.9%	56.5% /12.7%	57.0% /12.0%	56.8% /12.8%	58.4% /14.8%	58.2% /15.3%
Years Missing	<i>M</i> = 8; <i>SD</i> = 12.5; Range = 0-76	<i>M</i> = 7; <i>SD</i> = 12; Range = 0-76	<i>M</i> = 7; <i>SD</i> = 12; Range = 0-93	<i>M</i> = 7; <i>SD</i> = 12; Range = 0-93	<i>M</i> = 6; <i>SD</i> = 12; Range = 0-93	<i>M</i> = 6; <i>SD</i> = 11; Range = 0-93
<1	41.3%	47.2%	46.0%	47.1%	52.2%	56.9%
1-3	20.4%	18.8%	18.6%	18.2%	16.4%	14.5%
4-6	8.7%	7.9%	8.7%	8.6%	7.7%	7.0%
7-9	6.3%	5.7%	5.6%	5.4%	5.0%	4.4%

10 or more years	23.4%	20.4%	21.0%	20.5%	18.6%	17.0%
Cases Resolved	-	13.5%	18.7%	16.3%	14.5%	12.1%

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Notes. NMCH = New Mexico Clearinghouse, NamUs = National Missing and Unidentified Persons System, NCMEC = National Center for Missing and Exploited Children; FBI = Federal Bureau of Investigation; <sup>a</sup>Percentage of cases involving minors; <sup>b</sup>Minors include persons 17 years and younger as the age of majority in New Mexico is 18 years old.

**Table 5 cont. Descriptive Statistics for New Mexico’s Reported Missing Person Cases: Comparison Over Twelve Points-in-Time using the Extended Model**

	Time 7 (11/15/2023) <i>n</i> = 952		Time 8 (12/20/2023) <i>n</i> = 971		Time 9 (1/17/2024) <i>n</i> = 1017		Time 10 (2/21/2024) <i>n</i> = 1038		Time 11 (3/20/2024) <i>n</i> = 1052		Time 12 (4/17/2024) <i>n</i> = 1098		Combined Averages Time 1-12 <i>n</i> = 948	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Whites	436	45.8	445	45.8	452	44.4	468	45.1	479	45.5	489	44.5	<b>444</b>	<b>46.9</b>
Blacks/African Americans	37	3.9	33	3.4	33	3.2	35	3.4	43	4.1	39	3.6	<b>35</b>	<b>3.6</b>
American Indian/Alaska Native	229	24.1	223	23.0	231	22.7	235	22.6	236	22.4	249	22.7	<b>229</b>	<b>24.4</b>
Hispanics	199	20.9	214	22.0	246	24.2	240	23.1	231	22.0	250	22.8	<b>191</b>	<b>19.8</b>
Asians/Pacific Islanders	5	0.5	6	0.6	4	0.4	4	0.4	5	0.5	5	0.5	<b>5</b>	<b>0.5</b>
Unknown or Other	46	4.8	50	5.1	51	5.0	56	5.4	58	5.5	67	6.1	<b>47</b>	<b>4.9</b>
On NMCH	69.3%		68.4%		69.2%		69.8%		71.3%		67.2%		<b>68.2%</b>	
On NamUs	26.5%		26.0%		24.6%		24.4%		23.9%		22.9%		<b>26.8%</b>	
On NCMEC <sup>a</sup>	4.5%		4.7%		4.6%		4.9%		4.9%		4.6%		<b>5.0%</b>	
On NCIC	29.8%		34.9%		39.9%		39.7%		39.3%		42.2%		<b>28.7%</b>	
On FBI	22.1%		21.0%		20.4%		19.9%		20.5%		20.1%		<b>22.2%</b>	
On Navajo Nation	8.7%		8.1%		8.0%		7.4%		7.1%		7.2%		<b>8.7%</b>	
On Open-source	42.0%		41.2%		39.8%		39.6%		39.5%		37.6%		<b>41.3%</b>	
NMCH only	24.6%		21.5%		19.1%		19.9%		20.5%		19.1%		<b>25.5%</b>	
NamUs only	0.6%		0.5%		0.5%		0.6%		0.6%		0.6%		<b>0.5%</b>	

NCMEC only <sup>a</sup>	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	<b>0.4%</b>
NCIC only	1.9%	3.4%	4.1%	3.6%	3.0%	7.0%	<b>3.7%</b>
FBI only	2.9%	2.8%	2.4%	2.6%	2.5%	2.9%	<b>3.3%</b>
Navajo Nation only	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.2%	0.0%	0.1%	<b>0.1%</b>
Open-source only	5.4%	5.5%	5.2%	5.5%	5.6%	5.1%	<b>4.1%</b>
Age at Missing	<i>M</i> = 32; <i>SD</i> = 18; Range = 0-100	<i>M</i> = 32; <i>SD</i> = 19; Range = 0-100	<i>M</i> = 32; <i>SD</i> = 19; Range = 0-100	<i>M</i> = 32; <i>SD</i> = 18.5; Range = 0-100	<i>M</i> = 32.5; <i>SD</i> = 19; Range = 0-100	<i>M</i> = 32; <i>SD</i> = 18.5; Range = 0-100	<b><i>M</i> = 33; <i>SD</i> = 18; Range = 0-98.5</b>
12 and younger	2.8%	4.2%	3.4%	3.6%	3.4%	3.5%	<b>3.2%</b>
13 to 15 years old	14.3%	14.7%	15.0%	14.9%	14.9%	15.2%	<b>13.7%</b>
16 to 17 years old	15.4%	15.2%	15.9%	15.9%	15.4%	15.8%	<b>15.3%</b>
18 and older	65.7%	64.3%	64.4%	64.0%	64.7%	63.6%	<b>66.6%</b>
Sex							
Female/Female minors <sup>b</sup>	42.4% /18.1%	43.0% /18.7%	43.9% /19.2%	43.9% /19.1%	43.8% /19.2%	44.5% /19.9%	<b>43.2%/18.2%</b>
Male/Male minors <sup>b</sup>	57.6% /14.5%	57.0% /15.5%	56.1% /15.1%	56.1% /15.3%	56.2% /14.5%	55.5% /14.6%	<b>56.8%/13.9%</b>
Years Missing	<i>M</i> = 6.5; <i>SD</i> = 12; Range = 0-93	<i>M</i> = 6; <i>SD</i> = 12; Range = 0-93	<i>M</i> = 6; <i>SD</i> = 11.5; Range = 0-93	<i>M</i> = 6; <i>SD</i> = 12; Range = 0-93	<i>M</i> = 6; <i>SD</i> = 12; Range = 0-94	<i>M</i> = 6; <i>SD</i> = 11.5; Range = 0-94	<b><i>M</i> = 7; <i>SD</i> = 11.8; Range = 0-90</b>
<1	50.2%	50.2%	51.1%	50.2%	49.5%	51.2%	<b>49.4%</b>
1-3	16.8%	16.8%	16.5%	16.9%	17.4%	16.5%	<b>17.3%</b>
4-6	8.6%	9.3%	9.1%	9.3%	9.5%	9.4%	<b>8.6%</b>
7-9	5.3%	5.0%	5.0%	5.4%	5.3%	4.9%	<b>5.3%</b>

10 or more years	19.0%	18.6%	18.1%	18.2%	18.2%	17.9%	<b>19.2%</b>
Cases Resolved	24.9%	17.1%	13.7%	17.3%	13.4%	14.2%	<b>19.4%</b>

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Notes. NMCH = New Mexico Clearinghouse, NamUs = National Missing and Unidentified Persons System, NCMEC = National Center for Missing and Exploited Children; FBI = Federal Bureau of Investigation; <sup>a</sup>Percentage of cases involving minors; <sup>b</sup>Minors include persons 17 years and younger as the age of majority in New Mexico is 18 years old.

The detailed results of the point-in-time counts for New Mexico's American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) missing persons using the Extended Model (i.e., seven data sources) are presented in Table 6. The total number of AI/AN missing persons and the rates for Time 1 (i.e., 5/17/2023) are presented in the second column with the totals and rates for Times 2 (i.e., 6/21/2003) to 12 (i.e., 4/17/2024) presented in columns 3-13; an average rate over the 12-month study period is presented in column 14.

At time 1, 212 unique missing AI/AN persons in New Mexico were identified (for a rate of 8.4 per 10,000 persons); at Time 12, 249 unique missing persons were identified (for a rate of 9.9 per 10,000 persons). The total number of AI/AN missing persons was highest at Time 12 (04/17/2024). Using the Extended Model, we identified 598 unique AI/AN missing persons over the 12-month study period.

Using the Extended Model, **most AI/AN missing persons were listed on the New Mexico & Navajo Nation FBI List** (90.8% of cases on average over the study period) compared to the NMCH (36.0% of cases on average over the study period) or national databases (28.2% of cases on average on NamUs, 17.1% on NCIC). Further examination across the missing person lists determined that fewer AI/AN missing persons cases than New Mexico's missing persons cases overall were on NMCH (from 28.3% to 43.2%,  $M=36.0\%$  compared to 60.6% to 73.1%,  $M=68.2\%$  of cases). Findings showed that AI/AN missing persons, ranged in age from 3 to 100, and were on average 33.3 years old. While **the majority of AI/AN missing persons were 18 years or older, 19.2% on average were minors**. In addition, over half of AI/AN missing persons at each time point were male compared to female (60.3% on average); however, the percentage of missing female minors was higher than the percentage of missing male minors at each time point – on average the

percentage of missing female minors was almost 3 times the percentage of male minors (14.2% versus 5.0%).

On average, 38.7% of AI/AN missing persons were missing for less than one year (from 34.6% at Time 3 to 42.9% at Time 6). In comparison, **20.8% of AI/AN missing persons were missing for 10 years or more** (from 20.1% at Time 12 to 21.5% at Time 4). The average length of time for an AI/AN missing person case over the study period was 7 years ( $SD = 11.4$ ). Regarding case resolution, 12.3% of the AI/AN missing person cases identified at Time 1 were resolved and no longer listed by Time 2. The highest resolution rate occurred between Time 9 and Time 10, where 15.6% of the cases missing at Time 9 were no longer listed as missing at Time 10. These resolution rates fluctuated between time periods with an **overall average resolution rate of 13.8% of cases from one time period to the next time period: an average resolution rate that was lower than that of the New Mexico missing persons overall** (19.4% on average).



**Table 6. Descriptives for New Mexico’s Reported Missing Person Cases involving AI/AN Persons: Comparison Over Twelve Points-in-Time using the Extended Model**

	Time 1 (5/17/2023) <i>n</i> = 212	Time 2 (6/21/2023) <i>n</i> = 219	Time 3 (7/19/2023) <i>n</i> = 220	Time 4 (8/16/2023) <i>n</i> = 223	Time 5 (9/20/2023) <i>n</i> = 236	Time 6 (10/18/2023) <i>n</i> = 233
<b>Missing Persons Rate</b>	<b>8.4</b>	<b>8.7</b>	<b>8.7</b>	<b>8.8</b>	<b>9.3</b>	<b>9.2</b>
On NMCH	28.3%	32.0%	32.3%	32.7%	36.9%	36.9%
On NamUs	30.7%	30.6%	30.5%	30.5%	27.5%	27.9%
On NCMEC <sup>a</sup>	3.3%	3.2%	3.2%	4.0%	3.0%	2.6%
On NCIC	6.6%	9.6%	10.0%	12.1%	14.0%	12.5%
On FBI	92.9%	94.1%	93.6%	91.0%	86.9%	90.1%
On Navajo Nation	38.7%	37.4%	38.2%	38.1%	33.5%	33.5%
On Open-source	53.3%	56.2%	61.4%	60.1%	59.3%	59.2%
NMCH only	0.9%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	3.0%	1.7%
NamUs only	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
NCMEC only <sup>a</sup>	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
NCIC only	1.9%	1.4%	0.0%	1.8%	2.1%	1.7%
FBI only	17.5%	16.4%	14.6%	13.5%	12.7%	12.9%
Navajo Nation only	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	0.4%	0.4%
Open-source only	1.9%	1.4%	2.7%	3.1%	4.2%	4.3%

Age at Missing	<i>M</i> = 33; <i>SD</i> = 14; Range = 9-74	<i>M</i> = 33; <i>SD</i> = 14; Range = 9-74	<i>M</i> = 34; <i>SD</i> = 14; Range = 9-76	<i>M</i> = 33; <i>SD</i> = 14; Range = 9-74	<i>M</i> = 33; <i>SD</i> = 15; Range = 8-77	<i>M</i> = 33; <i>SD</i> = 14; Range = 7-77
12 and younger	0.9%	0.9%	1.4%	1.4%	1.7%	1.7%
13 to 15 years old	7.6%	7.8%	6.8%	8.5%	9.8%	9.0%
16 to 17 years old	12.3%	10.5%	9.1%	9.0%	10.6%	9.0%
18 and older	78.3%	79.9%	81.8%	79.4%	75.9%	77.7%
Sex						
Female/Female minors <sup>b</sup>	38.2% / 15.1%	38.8% / 14.6%	39.1% / 13.6%	40.4% / 14.4%	37.3% / 15.3%	40.8% / 15.0%
Male/Male minors <sup>b</sup>	61.8% / 5.7%	61.2% / 4.6%	60.9% / 3.6%	59.6% / 4.5%	62.7% / 6.8%	59.2% / 4.7%
Years Missing	<i>M</i> = 7; <i>SD</i> = 12; Range = 0-67	<i>M</i> = 7; <i>SD</i> = 12; Range = 0-67	<i>M</i> = 7; <i>SD</i> = 12; Range = 0-67	<i>M</i> = 7; <i>SD</i> = 11.5; Range = 0-67	<i>M</i> = 7; <i>SD</i> = 11; Range = 0-67	<i>M</i> = 7; <i>SD</i> = 11; Range = 0-67
<1	36.3%	35.6%	34.6%	37.2%	42.4%	42.9%
1-3	25.9%	26.9%	27.3%	25.1%	22.9%	21.9%
4-6	9.4%	9.1%	9.6%	9.0%	7.6%	7.7%
7-9	6.6%	7.3%	7.3%	7.2%	6.8%	6.9%
10 or more years	21.0%	21.0%	21.4%	21.5%	20.3%	20.6%
Cases Resolved	-	12.3%	15.1%	13.2%	14.8%	14.8%

Notes. NMCH = New Mexico Clearinghouse, NamUs = National Missing and Unidentified Persons System, NCMEC = National Center for Missing and Exploited Children; FBI = Federal Bureau of Investigation; <sup>a</sup>Percentage of cases involving minors; <sup>b</sup>Minors include persons 17 years and younger as the age of majority in New Mexico is 18 years old.

Sex							
	Female/Female minors <sup>b</sup>	38.2% / 15.1%	38.8% / 14.6%	39.1% / 13.6%	40.4% / 14.4%	37.3% / 15.3%	40.8% / 15.0%
	Male/Male minors <sup>b</sup>	61.8% / 5.7%	61.2% / 4.6%	60.9% / 3.6%	59.6% / 4.5%	62.7% / 6.8%	59.2% / 4.7%
Years Missing							
		<i>M</i> = 7; <i>SD</i> = 12; Range = 0-67	<i>M</i> = 7; <i>SD</i> = 12; Range = 0-67	<i>M</i> = 7; <i>SD</i> = 12; Range = 0-67	<i>M</i> = 7; <i>SD</i> = 11.5; Range = 0-67	<i>M</i> = 7; <i>SD</i> = 11; Range = 0-67	<i>M</i> = 7; <i>SD</i> = 11; Range = 0-67
	<1	36.3%	35.6%	34.6%	37.2%	42.4%	42.9%
	1-3	25.9%	26.9%	27.3%	25.1%	22.9%	21.9%
	4-6	9.4%	9.1%	9.6%	9.0%	7.6%	7.7%
	7-9	6.6%	7.3%	7.3%	7.2%	6.8%	6.9%
	10 or more years	21.0%	21.0%	21.4%	21.5%	20.3%	20.6%
Cases Resolved		-	12.3%	15.1%	13.2%	14.8%	14.8%

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Notes. NMCH = New Mexico Clearinghouse, NamUs = National Missing and Unidentified Persons System, NCMEC = National Center for Missing and Exploited Children; FBI = Federal Bureau of Investigation; <sup>a</sup>Percentage of cases involving minors; <sup>b</sup>Minors include persons 17 years and younger as the age of majority in New Mexico is 18 years old.

**Table 6 cont. Descriptives for New Mexico’s Reported Missing Person Cases involving AI/AN Persons: Comparison Over Twelve Points-in- Time using the Extended Model**

	Time 7 (11/15/2023) <i>n</i> = 229	Time 8 (12/20/2023) <i>n</i> = 223	Time 9 (1/17/2024) <i>n</i> = 231	Time 10 (2/21/2024) <i>n</i> = 235	Time 11 (3/20/2024) <i>n</i> = 236	Time 12 (4/17/2024) <i>n</i> = 249	Combined Averages Time 1-12 <i>n</i> = 229
<b>Missing Persons Rate</b>	<b>9.1</b>	<b>8.8</b>	<b>9.1</b>	<b>9.3</b>	<b>9.3</b>	<b>9.9</b>	<b>9.0</b>
On NMCH	36.2%	35.9%	38.5%	40.0%	43.2%	39.4%	<b>36.0%</b>
On NamUs	28.0%	28.7%	27.3%	26.4%	25.9%	24.5%	<b>28.2%</b>
On NCMEC <sup>a</sup>	2.6%	2.2%	2.6%	2.6%	3.4%	4.0%	<b>3.1%</b>
On NCIC	16.6%	20.2%	25.1%	26.4%	25.4%	26.9%	<b>17.1%</b>
On FBI	91.7%	91.5%	89.6%	88.1%	91.5%	88.8%	<b>90.8%</b>
On Navajo Nation	35.8%	35.0%	34.6%	32.3%	31.4%	31.3%	<b>35.0%</b>
On Open-source	62.5%	63.7%	61.9%	59.2%	63.1%	60.6%	<b>60.0%</b>
NMCH only	0.4%	0.5%	0.0%	0.4%	0.4%	0.8%	<b>0.79%</b>
NamUs only	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	<b>0.0%</b>
NCMEC only <sup>a</sup>	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	<b>0.0%</b>
NCIC only	0.4%	2.2%	3.0%	3.0%	1.3%	2.4%	<b>1.8%</b>
FBI only	12.2%	12.1%	10.4%	11.5%	11.0%	12.9%	<b>13.1%</b>
Navajo Nation only	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%	0.9%	0.0%	0.4%	<b>0.3%</b>
Open-source only	4.4%	3.1%	3.5%	4.3%	4.2%	4.0%	<b>3.4%</b>

	<i>M</i> = 33;	<i>M</i> = 34;	<i>M</i> = 33;	<i>M</i> = 33;	<i>M</i> = 34;	<i>M</i> = 33;	<i>M</i> = 33;
Age at Missing	<i>SD</i> = 15;	<i>SD</i> = 15;	<i>SD</i> = 15;	<i>SD</i> = 14.5;	<i>SD</i> = 15;	<i>SD</i> = 14.5;	<i>SD</i> = 14;
	Range = 9-100	Range = 9-100	Range = 3-100	Range = 6-100	Range = 6-100	Range = 9-100	Range = 8-88
12 and younger	0.9%	0.9%	1.3%	1.3%	0.9%	0.4%	1.1%
13 to 15 years old	8.3%	8.1%	8.2%	6.4%	5.9%	8.4%	7.9%
16 to 17 years old	8.7%	9.4%	12.1%	10.2%	11.0%	10.4%	10.2%
18 and older	78.2%	78.0%	76.2%	78.3%	79.2%	75.9%	78.2%
Sex							
Female/Female minors <sup>b</sup>	39.7% / 13.1%	39.9% / 13.5%	40.3% / 14.7%	39.6% / 12.3%	39.8% / 12.7%	43.0% / 16.1%	39.7% / 14.2%
Male/Male minors <sup>b</sup>	60.3% / 4.8%	60.1% / 4.9%	59.7% / 6.9%	60.4% / 5.5%	60.2% / 5.1%	57.0% / 3.2%	60.3% / 5.0%
	<i>M</i> = 7;	<i>M</i> = 7;	<i>M</i> = 7;	<i>M</i> = 7;	<i>M</i> = 7;	<i>M</i> = 7;	<i>M</i> = 7;
Years Missing	<i>SD</i> = 11;	<i>SD</i> = 11.5;	<i>SD</i> = 11;	<i>SD</i> = 11;	<i>SD</i> = 11;	<i>SD</i> = 11;	<i>SD</i> = 11;
	Range = 0-67	Range = 0-67	Range = 0-67	Range = 0-67	Range = 0-67	Range = 0-67	Range = 0-67
<1	41.5%	39.5%	38.5%	38.7%	37.7%	39.8%	38.7%
1-3	21.8%	22.4%	23.8%	24.3%	25.0%	24.1%	24.3%
4-6	8.7%	9.4%	9.1%	8.9%	8.5%	8.4%	8.8%
7-9	7.4%	7.6%	7.4%	7.7%	8.1%	7.6%	7.3%
10 or more years	20.5%	21.1%	21.2%	20.4%	20.8%	20.1%	20.8%
Cases Resolved	13.7%	14.0%	12.6%	15.6%	13.2%	12.3%	13.8%

Notes. NMCH = New Mexico Clearinghouse, NamUs = National Missing and Unidentified Persons System, NCMEC = National Center for Missing and Exploited Children; FBI = Federal Bureau of Investigation; <sup>a</sup>Percentage of cases involving minors; <sup>b</sup>Minors include persons 17 years and younger as the age of majority in New Mexico is 18 years old.

When we compare the results of the point-in-time counts using the Nebraska Model (i.e., 4 data sources) versus the Extended Model (i.e., 7 data sources), we see that the additional data sources identified unique missing persons, increasing the total number of missing persons from 2,381 to 2,743. As expected, given the focus of two of these additional data sources on missing Native people (i.e., the New Mexico & Navajo Nation FBI List and the Navajo Nation Missing Person list), the number of unique AI/AN missing persons identified was significant, growing from 334 unique AI/AN missing persons over the 12-month study period identified from NCIC, NamUs, NCMEC, and NMCH to 598 when cases from the New Mexico & Navajo Nation FBI List, Navajo Nation Missing Person List, and Open-Source platforms were added. Further examination shows that among all missing persons, an average of 3.3% of missing persons identified were *only* listed on the New Mexico & Navajo Nation FBI List, an average of 0.1% were only listed on the Navajo Nation list, and an average of 4.1% were only listed on Open-Source platforms (See Table 5). Among AI/AN missing persons, an average of 13.1% of the AI/AN missing persons identified were *only* listed on the New Mexico & Navajo Nation FBI List, an average of 0.3% were only listed on the Navajo Nation Missing Person List, and an average of 3.4% were only listed on Open-Source platforms (See Table 6).

Next, using the Extended Model, we examined the sub-sample of missing persons in New-Mexico who were minors (i.e., 17 years and younger). As shown in Table 7, there were 1,101 **unique** missing minors identified during the 12 monthly point-in-time counts; the **total** number/percentage of missing minors was highest for White persons ( $n = 535$ ; 48.6%) compared to Black/African American persons ( $n = 63$ ; 5.7%), American Indian/Alaska Native persons ( $n = 162$ ; 14.7%), Hispanic persons ( $n = 242$ ; 22.0%), or Asians or Pacific Islanders ( $n = 1$ ; >1%). As previously noted, in 2023, 73.0% of New Mexico's population was White, 3.4% was Black, 12.0% was American Indian/Alaska Native, 48.6% was Hispanic, and 3.2% was Asian or Pacific Islander (U.S. Census, 2023a) — thus, **a disproportionate number of reported missing minors were American Indian/Alaska Native while fewer than expected were White, Black/African American, Hispanic, and Asian or Pacific Islander given their representation in the population.** Additionally, the racial/ethnic identity for 8.9% of missing minors was identified as “unknown.”

Table 7 also provides the **average** percentages for reporting source, age at missing, sex, years missing, and case resolution for missing minors overall (column 2) and among each race/ethnicity (columns 3-6); note that there was only one missing minor who was Asian/Pacific Islander during the 12 monthly point-in-time counts. As seen in column 2, most missing minors were listed on NMCH (79.7% of cases on average over the study period) while nearly half (48.13% of cases on average over the study period) were listed on NCIC; however, percentages varied across race/ethnicity: nearly 90.0% of Black/African American minors on average were listed on NMCH compared to 50.78% of American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) minors on average while 74.7% of Hispanic minors on average were listed on NCIC compared to 38.31% of AI/AN minors on average. In contrast, 15.5% of AI/AN missing minors on average were listed on the Navajo Nation Missing Person List compared to an average of 2.4% of missing minors

overall, while 43.4% of AI/AN missing minors on average were listed on Open-Source platforms compared to an average of 11.5% of missing minors overall.

Findings also showed that missing minors were 15 years old on average, among all missing minors and across most race/ethnicities; missing Hispanic minors were 14 years old on average as was the single missing minor who was Asian/Pacific Islander. In addition, **missing minors were predominantly girls, 56.8% on average among all missing minors, however there was variability across race/ethnicity; 74.0% of missing AI/AN minors were girls** compared to 45.0% of missing Black/African American minors. On average, most missing minors – 74.7% on average – had been missing for less than 1 year (from 66.6% on average among missing AI/AN minors to 74.8% on average among missing Black/African American minors). However, again there was wide variation. Regarding length of time missing, Black/African American minors and minors of unknown race had been missing for up to 4 years, while AI/AN minors had been missing for up to 38 years, and White and Hispanic minors had been missing up to 54 years; the missing Asian/Pacific Islander minor had been missing for 37 years. Regarding case resolution from one point-in-time to the next point-in-time, an average of 22.9% of cases involving missing minors were resolved from one point-in-time to the next (i.e., in about 30 days), however, case resolution ranged from an average of 16.0% cases among Hispanic minors to an average of 28.9% of cases among Black/African American minors



**Table 7. Descriptives for New Mexico’s Reported Missing Person Cases involving Minors: Twelve Month Averages using the Extended Model**

	All minors ( <i>N</i> = 1,101)	Whites ( <i>n</i> = 535) (49%)	Blacks/African Americans ( <i>n</i> = 63) (6%)	AIIs/ANs ( <i>n</i> = 162) (15%)	Hispanics ( <i>n</i> = 242) (22%)	Asians or Pacific Islanders ( <i>n</i> = 1) (>1%)	Unknown race ( <i>n</i> = 98) (9%)
On NMCH	79.7%	85.1%	89.5%	50.8%	81.2%	100.0%	89.1%
On NamUs	11.0%	8.7%	0.0%	8.6%	22.0%	100.0%	4.4%
On NCMEC	13.8%	8.2%	20.4%	16.0%	27.0%	100.0%	0.0%
On NCIC	48.1%	40.0%	46.5%	38.3%	74.7%	0.0%	39.3%
On FBI	12.5%	0.0%	0.0%	84.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
On Navajo Nation	2.4%	0.0%	0.0%	15.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
On Open-source	22.5%	16.7%	20.5%	43.4%	28.2%	100.0%	5.9%
NMCH only	28.2%	46.3%	36.0%	1.0%	0.5%	0.0%	55.1%
NamUs only	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.2%	0.0%	0.0%
NCMEC only	0.6%	0.6%	0.0%	0.0%	1.3%	0.0%	0.0%
NCIC only	5.3%	5.2%	6.8%	4.0%	6.5%	0.0%	5.0%
FBI only	3.5%	0.0%	0.0%	22.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Navajo Nation only	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Open-source only	2.0%	2.5%	3.7%	2.2%	0.9%	0.0%	1.2%
Age at Missing	<i>M</i> = 15; <i>SD</i> = 3; Range = 0-17	<i>M</i> = 15; <i>SD</i> = 3; Range = 0-17	<i>M</i> = 15; <i>SD</i> = 2; Range = 0-17	<i>M</i> = 15; <i>SD</i> = 2; Range = 3-17	<i>M</i> = 14; <i>SD</i> = 3; Range = 1-17	<i>M</i> = 14.00; <i>SD</i> = 0.00; -	<i>M</i> = 15; <i>SD</i> = 2.5; Range = 0-17

12 and younger	10.0%	10.5%	4.7%	5.9%	15.1%	0.0%	3.7%
13 to 15	42.3%	41.5%	34.0%	41.0%	44.8%	100.0%	43.4%
16 to 17	47.6%	47.9%	61.3%	53.1%	40.1%	0.0%	52.9%
Sex							
Female	56.8%	56.2%	45.0%	74.0%	46.7%	100.0%	70.0%
Male	43.1%	43.7%	55.0%	26.0%	53.3%	0.0%	30.0%
Years Missing	<i>M</i> = 3; <i>SD</i> = 9; Range = 0-54	<i>M</i> = 3; <i>SD</i> = 9; Range = 0-54	<i>M</i> = 1; <i>SD</i> = 1; Range = 0-4	<i>M</i> = 3; <i>SD</i> = 8; Range = 0-38	<i>M</i> = 5; <i>SD</i> = 12; Range = 0-54	<i>M</i> = 37; <i>SD</i> = 0.00; -	<i>M</i> = 1; <i>SD</i> = 1; Range = 0-4
< 1	74.6%	73.7%	74.8%	66.6%	80.7%	0.0%	71.8%
1-3	12.6%	13.5%	22.0%	16.3%	3.4%	0.0%	26.8%
4-6	3.4%	3.4%	3.3%	8.9%	1.1%	0.0%	1.4%
7-9	0.63%	1.42%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
10 or more	8.54%	7.81%	0.00%	8.19%	14.85%	100.00%	0.00%
Cases Resolved	22.9%	25.4%	28.9%	23.9%	16.0%	0.0%	20.1%

Notes. NMCH = New Mexico Clearinghouse, NamUs = National Missing and Unidentified Persons System, NCMEC = National Center for Missing and Exploited Children; FBI = Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Finally, using the Extended Model, we examined the sub-sample of AI/AN missing minors in New-Mexico (i.e., 17 years and younger) across each monthly point-in-time count (columns 2-11) and on average across the twelve points-in-time (column 13). As previously shown in Table 7, there were **162 unique** missing AI/AN missing minors identified across the 12 monthly point-in-time counts. As shown in Table 8, the number of missing AI/AN minors at each point in time (i.e., not unique counts) fluctuated from 38 in Time 3 (7/19/2023) to 52 in Time 5 (9/20/2023), for an **average of 44 missing AI/AN minors across point-in-time counts**. Regarding reporting source, there was wide variation regarding the percentage of missing AI/AN minors reported to each reporting source across points in time; however, on average, the most comprehensive sources for missing AI/AN minors were NMCH (50.8% on average), the FBI list (84.0% on average), and Open-source platforms (43.4% on average), compared to NamUs (8.6% on average), NCMEC (16.0% on average), NCIC (38.3% on average), or Navajo Nation (15.5% on average).

Findings showed little variation in the average age for missing AI/AN minors; they were 15 years old on average at each point in time, but the age range changed over the points in time as younger and/or older children were found and went missing, respectively. For example, at most points-in-time, the youngest missing AI/AN child was 9 years old, but at Time 9, a 3-year-old went missing; that child was found before Time 10, and at Time 10, the youngest child missing was 6 years old. In addition, **missing AI/AN minors were predominantly girls across each point in time** (68.0% at Time 9 to 83.3% at Time 12; 74.0% on average). On average, **most AI/AN missing minors – 66.6% on average – had been missing for less than 1 year** (from 57.9% at Time 3 to 73.1% at Time 5). Regarding case resolution from one point in time to the next point in time, an average of 23.9% of cases involving missing AI/AN minors were

resolved from one point-in-time to the next (i.e., in about 30 days), however, case resolution ranged from 11.9% of cases at Time 12 to 32.7% of cases at Time 6.

**Table 8. Descriptives for New Mexico's Reported Missing Person Cases involving AI/AN Minors: Twelve Month Averages using the Extended Model**

	Time 1 (5/17/2023) <i>n</i> = 44	Time 2 (6/21/2023) <i>n</i> = 42	Time 3 (7/19/2023) <i>n</i> = 38	Time 4 (8/16/2023) <i>n</i> = 42	Time 5 (9/20/2023) <i>n</i> = 52	Time 6 (10/18/2023) <i>n</i> = 46
On NMCH	34.1%	42.9%	39.5%	42.9%	53.9%	54.4%
On NamUs	9.1%	9.5%	10.5%	9.5%	7.7%	8.7%
On NCMEC	15.9%	16.7%	18.4%	21.4%	13.5%	13.0%
On NCIC	18.2%	26.2%	18.4%	28.6%	28.9%	39.1%
On FBI	88.6%	90.5%	86.8%	81.0%	78.9%	84.8%
On Navajo Nation	18.2%	16.7%	21.1%	19.1%	13.5%	15.2%
On Open source	31.8%	40.5%	50.0%	42.9%	36.5%	39.1%
NMCH only	2.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	7.7%	0.0%
NamUs only	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
NCMEC only	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
NCIC only	4.6%	2.4%	0.0%	7.1%	3.9%	4.4%
FBI only	36.4%	31.0%	31.6%	23.8%	19.2%	19.6%
Navajo Nation only	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.4%	0.0%	0.0%
Open source only	2.3%	0.0%	0.0%	2.4%	1.9%	2.2%
Age at Missing	<i>M</i> = 15; <i>SD</i> = 2; Range = 9-17	<i>M</i> = 15; <i>SD</i> = 2; Range = 9-17	<i>M</i> = 15; <i>SD</i> = 2; Range = 9-17	<i>M</i> = 15; <i>SD</i> = 2; Range = 9-17	<i>M</i> = 15; <i>SD</i> = 2; Range = 8-17	<i>M</i> = 15; <i>SD</i> = 2; Range = 7-17

12 and younger	4.6%	4.8%	7.9%	7.1%	7.7%	8.7%
13 to 15	36.4%	40.5%	39.5%	45.2%	44.2%	45.7%
16 to 17	59.1%	54.8%	52.6%	47.6%	48.1%	45.7%
Sex						
Female	72.7%	76.2%	79.0%	76.2%	69.2%	76.1%
Male	27.3%	23.8%	21.1%	23.8%	30.8%	23.9%
Years Missing	<i>M</i> = 3; <i>SD</i> = 8; Range = 0- 37	<i>M</i> = 3.5; <i>SD</i> = 8; Range = 0- 37	<i>M</i> = 4; <i>SD</i> = 9; Range = 0-37	<i>M</i> = 3; <i>SD</i> = 8; Range = 0-37	<i>M</i> = 3; <i>SD</i> = 7.5; Range = 0-37	<i>M</i> = 3; <i>SD</i> = 8; Range = 0-37.5
< 1	63.6%	59.5%	57.9%	66.7%	73.1%	71.7%
1-3	18.2%	21.4%	23.7%	14.3%	11.5%	10.9%
4-6	9.1%	9.5%	7.9%	9.5%	7.7%	8.7%
7-9	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
10 or more	9.1%	9.5%	10.5%	9.5%	7.7%	8.7%
Cases Resolved	-	27.3%	23.8%	21.1%	21.4%	32.7%

Notes. NMCH = New Mexico Clearinghouse, NamUs = National Missing and Unidentified Persons System, NCMEC = National Center for Missing and Exploited Children; FBI = Federal Bureau of Investigation.

**Table 8 cont. Descriptives for New Mexico's Reported Missing Person Cases involving AI/AN Minors: Twelve Month Averages using the Extended Model**

	Time 7 (11/15/2023) <i>n</i> = 41	Time 8 (12/20/2023) <i>n</i> = 41	Time 9 (01/17/2024) <i>n</i> = 50	Time 10 (02/21/2024) <i>n</i> = 42	Time 11 (03/20/2024) <i>n</i> = 42	Time 12 (04/17/2024) <i>n</i> = 48	Combined Averages Time 1-12 <i>n</i> = 44
On NMCH	58.5%	53.7%	52.0%	57.1%	64.3%	56.3%	<b>50.8%</b>
On NamUs	9.8%	9.8%	8.0%	7.1%	7.1%	6.3%	<b>8.6%</b>
On NCMEC	14.6%	12.2%	12.0%	14.3%	19.1%	20.8%	<b>16.0%</b>
On NCIC	34.2%	46.3%	52.0%	52.4%	57.1%	58.3%	<b>38.3%</b>
On FBI	90.2%	82.9%	78.0%	81.0%	85.7%	79.2%	<b>84.0%</b>
On Navajo Nation	17.1%	17.1%	16.0%	11.9%	9.5%	10.4%	<b>15.5%</b>
On Open source	0.0%	2.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	<b>1.0%</b>
NMCH only	41.5%	48.8%	44.0%	45.2%	50.0%	50.0%	<b>43.4%</b>
NamUs only	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	<b>0.0%</b>
NCMEC only	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	<b>0.0%</b>
NCIC only	0.0%	4.9%	8.0%	4.8%	2.4%	6.3%	<b>4.0%</b>
FBI only	19.5%	17.1%	16.0%	16.7%	19.1%	18.8%	<b>22.4%</b>
Navajo Nation only	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	<b>0.2%</b>
Open source only	0.0%	0.0%	4.0%	7.1%	2.4%	4.2%	<b>2.2%</b>
Age at Missing	<i>M</i> = 15; <i>SD</i> = 2;	<i>M</i> = 15; <i>SD</i> = 2;	<i>M</i> = 15; <i>SD</i> = 2.5;	<i>M</i> = 15; <i>SD</i> = 2;	<i>M</i> = 15; <i>SD</i> = 2;	<i>M</i> = 15; <i>SD</i> = 2;	<i>M</i> = 15; <i>SD</i> = 2;

	Range = 9-17	Range = 9-17	Range = 9-17	Range = 9-17	Range = 9-17	Range = 9-17	Range = 8- 17
12 and younger	4.9%	4.9%	6.0%	7.1%	4.8%	2.1%	<b>5.9%</b>
13 to 15	46.3%	43.9%	38.0%	35.7%	33.3%	43.8%	<b>41.0%</b>
16 to 17	48.8%	51.2%	56.0%	57.1%	61.9%	54.2%	<b>53.1%</b>
Sex							
Female	73.2%	73.2%	68.0%	69.1%	71.4%	83.3%	<b>74.0%</b>
Male	26.8%	26.8%	32.0%	31.0%	28.6%	16.7%	<b>26.0%</b>
Years Missing	<i>M</i> = 3; <i>SD</i> = 8; Range = 0-38	<i>M</i> = 3; <i>SD</i> = 8; Range = 0-38	<i>M</i> = 3; <i>SD</i> = 8; Range = 0-38	<i>M</i> = 3; <i>SD</i> = 8; Range = 0-38	<i>M</i> = 3; <i>SD</i> = 8; Range = 0-38	<i>M</i> = 3; <i>SD</i> = 8; Range = 0-38	<i>M</i> = 3; <i>SD</i> = 8; <b>Range = 0- 38</b>
< 1	70.7%	65.9%	70.0%	66.7%	66.7%	66.7%	<b>66.6%</b>
1-3	12.2%	17.1%	14.0%	16.7%	16.7%	18.8%	<b>16.3%</b>
4-6	9.8%	9.8%	8.0%	9.5%	9.5%	8.3%	<b>8.9%</b>
7-9	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	<b>0.0%</b>
10 or more	7.3%	7.3%	8.0%	7.1%	7.1%	6.3%	<b>8.2%</b>
Cases Resolved	19.6%	22.0%	19.5%	38.0%	26.2%	11.9%	<b>23.9%</b>

Notes. NMCH = New Mexico Clearinghouse, NamUs = National Missing and Unidentified Persons System, NCMEC = National Center for Missing and Exploited Children; FBI = Federal Bureau of Investigation.



### **RQ3: What is the context of missing AI/AN persons in New Mexico?**

Below, we provide a detailed discussion of the primary themes identified for each of the four focus group questions. In addition, Tables 9-12 provide a list of themes that emerged across the focus groups, along with the focus groups that identified each theme.

#### **Issues related to Missingness**

Focus group participants were first asked about their insights into why Native people go missing in New Mexico. There was considerable overlap in participants' reports across focus groups; however, some unique themes were also uncovered by each group. Prominent themes – those identified by multiple participants in one or both focus groups – are listed and explained below, while a comprehensive list of themes is presented in Table 9.

1. Systemic issues resulting in few resources (e.g., poverty, lack of employment/educational opportunities, poor/no housing).
  2. Untreated alcohol use, drug use, and mental health challenges.
  3. Victimization experiences, such as domestic violence and child abuse/neglect.
  4. Family members' and elders' lack of awareness and/or discomfort talking about difficult issues (e.g., alcohol/drug use, domestic violence).
- **Systemic issues stemming from few resources** in Native communities (e.g., poverty, lack of employment/educational opportunities, poor/no housing). Participants described a **lack of jobs and proper housing for Native people** and suggested that these issues are contributing factors that lead people to go missing. Participants noted that many Native Americans in the area struggle to attain or maintain employment and may be at risk for housing instability as a result; this combination may make these individuals more at risk of going missing. For example, participants explained that community members may be

living in homeless encampments or “fall to the streets” (i.e., living on the streets because they do not have housing) which makes them vulnerable to violence, victimization, and going missing.

- **Untreated alcohol abuse, drug abuse, and mental health challenges.** Participants discussed how alcohol and drug abuse and other mental health challenges are prevalent in their communities and that there are few treatment options. Participants also noted that Native “traditional ways” of healing (and access to “medicine men/women”) were not widely available to Native Americans, especially those living off the reservation. This meant that Native people may be forced to turn to more “Western” ways of coping with challenges or mental health problems, such as substance use. In fact, alcohol abuse was a reoccurring topic, with participants noting that alcohol was “how people handle their pain.” Participants noted that alcohol leads to “fights, arguments, going to the streets” and “People getting their anger out on people” (i.e., alcohol may lead to violent victimization and/or perpetration of violence). The lack of available services in the community likely compounds these problems, leading many people to self-medicate. One participant suggested that community members may hide their alcohol/drug abuse from family members and then may turn to the streets to wean themselves off alcohol/drugs because they have nowhere else to turn to for help.
- **Experiencing victimization, such as domestic violence or child abuse.** Participants noted that current or prior trauma can lead to leaving home and going missing. People in violent households may turn to the streets or may simply run away to escape the violence – and this means they are more vulnerable to going missing. Additionally, unaddressed prior trauma in families can also create environments that are susceptible to missingness. For

instance, participants emphasized that Native people's trauma is intergenerational. They noted that tribal community members are taught by elders not to speak up about trauma, such as sexual abuse, and therefore, the victimization goes unaddressed, victims are not able to heal, and perpetrators are not held accountable. The sense of injustice and the lack of support can lead people to turn again to maladaptive coping, such as substance use, additional violence, or running away, all of which can impact their likelihood of going missing. One participant explained, "It won't stop because we aren't willing to speak up for ourselves and talk about it with future generations." Several participants in both focus groups noted that they are trying to use their voices/stories to teach the younger generation and stop the cycle of violence.

- **Family members' and elders' lack of awareness and/or discomfort talking about difficult issues (e.g., alcohol/drug use, domestic violence).** Participants also noted a lack of knowledge/awareness by family and elders regarding violence and life challenges that can increase one's vulnerability to going missing. One participant explained that there is a "lack of knowledge about these issues among the families too – maybe they don't know the problems their loved one is facing," while another noted, "Elders don't know when their children are on drugs or in a violent situation, because they don't want to talk about it or acknowledge it because they are embarrassed by it." In this way, there appears to be some hesitation among Native families to acknowledge and address the problems that some of their family members may be facing, and doing so can paradoxically lead to more problems (e.g., increased vulnerability to going missing) rather than fewer.

Other themes that were discussed included Native folks being targeted for violence due to racism and/or human trafficking. One participant specifically noted that adolescents are targeted by

online predators who look for teens living in vulnerable home environments. They explained that Native home environments may be vulnerable because of the poverty, violence, or substance use discussed above, and predators are aware of this and begin grooming youth early. Other participants noted the sheer size of reservations and rural communities and that community members can go missing without their loved ones knowing for days or weeks. They suggested that perpetrators know that law enforcement is stretched thin on reservations and specifically target Native people in or close to reservations for this reason. Finally, some participants discussed the loss of traditions in terms of respect for others and sanctioning community members as reasons why Native people may be more at risk of going missing in New Mexico. They noted that traditional ways of living emphasized strong family ties and community support and that the community often stepped in to offer support or appropriate sanctioning when youth misbehaved. They felt that youth were more respectful of their elders, thus choosing not to disappoint them by engaging in misbehavior. Now, however, those cultural traditions seem frayed and weaker and no longer appear to be as protective against crime or victimization.

**Table 9. What Issues do you Believe Lead to Native People in New Mexico “Going Missing”?**

	<b>Focus Group 1</b>	<b>Focus Group 2</b>
Systemic issues stemming from few resources in Native communities (e.g., poverty, lack of employment/educational opportunities, poor/no housing).	X	X
Untreated alcohol abuse, drug abuse, mental health problems.	X	X
Victimization experiences such as domestic violence and child abuse.	X	X
Family members and elders lack awareness and/or are uncomfortable talking about difficult issues (e.g., alcohol/drug use, domestic violence).	X	X
Being targeted for human/sex trafficking.		X
Living in border towns that support racism/racist attitudes towards Native people.		X
Large land area of reservations (e.g., not realizing someone is even missing for days).	X	
Loss of tradition and spiritual ways to take care of each other; lack of support from medicine people.	X	

## **Challenges in Reporting Missing Loved Ones**

Next, focus group participants were asked about their perceptions of challenges faced by Native people in New Mexico when reporting their loved ones as missing. Both overlapping and unique themes were identified at each focus group. A comprehensive list of themes is presented in Table 10 and prominent themes are described below. In general, Native community members voiced concerns over the following issues:

1. Questions about how and when to report a loved one as missing, to whom, and what information to provide.
  2. Challenges getting a loved one classified as a “missing person.”
  3. Poor interactions/communication with law enforcement when reporting a loved one as missing.
  4. Jurisdictional issues regarding which agency is responsible for taking a report and investigating.
- **Questions about how and when to report, to whom, and what information to provide.**

Participants noted confusion about how/where to report, when to report, and what information they needed to provide. This theme appears to be consistent in Indian country, as our prior study in Nebraska (Richards et al., 2022) also found that tribal members were unsure if they should report a loved one as missing to their tribal law enforcement or to nontribal law enforcement (e.g., local Sheriff’s office), as well as the jurisdictional complications that can arise in and around reservations (see Richards et al., 2022). Here, one participant noted that different agencies may tell family members different time frames for when to report – for instance, 24, 28, 48, or 72 hours after they suspect their loved one is “missing.” Other agencies encourage immediate reporting, so if someone files a report after 48 hours, then “[they] feel judged for filing late.” Several participants noted that they

know now that they can report right away, but this is possibly a lesson they have learned through the process of reporting their loved ones as missing, and not necessarily something they knew beforehand.

- **Challenges getting a loved one classified as a “missing person.”** Participants expressed feeling as though they were not taken seriously by law enforcement when they reported their loved one as missing. Others also noted that they were perceived as over exaggerating when they tried to report a loved one as missing. Participants noted experiencing two reactions from law enforcement – first, that it is perceived that when Native adults go missing, they are often labeled an “addict” (i.e., having an alcohol or drug problem) or a “frequent flier” (i.e., someone who has frequent contact with law enforcement and/or the court system) to the justice system. Second, participants suggested that law enforcement officers say “they are an adult, and going missing is not a crime” – indeed, going missing for adults is not a crime, but participants argued that families “know” when someone is missing because of the circumstances around their disappearance (e.g., they were affiliating with potential criminals, they were using drugs and thus more susceptible, etc.); missing minors, on the other hand, cannot go missing legally, and are often labeled as runaways. In both of these instances, participants expressed frustration that their loved one’s case was not being taken as seriously as it should have been. Participants explained that loved ones must convince law enforcement to take the missing persons report, and that it often results in delays in the missing person’s information being entered into the National Crime Information Center database. One participant shared that her sister was labeled as a runaway and law enforcement made her mom wait three days to file the police report; she is still missing 20 years later.

- **Poor interactions/communication with law enforcement when reporting a loved one as missing.** Law enforcement officers were described as poorly trained, not trauma-informed, not caring or sympathetic, and impatient when collecting information on a missing person. As noted above, participants shared that loved ones with alcohol or drug abuse challenges and those experiencing homelessness were particularly dehumanized, and their missingness was often suggested to be a result of their criminal lifestyle or addictions. Another participant explained that it may be difficult to recall what a loved one looks like (e.g., what clothes they were wearing when they last saw them) when filling out a missing person's report, especially if they are being rushed by an officer. Participants also noted frustration that they rarely receive updates from law enforcement officers regarding ongoing missing person cases. One participant noted, "One officer takes the report, and then they switch it up, and no one tells you. There is no communication." In these cases, participants' stories suggest that their experiences of reporting a loved one as missing could be greatly improved through better communication (both at the reporting stage and via regular updates when possible) and a more open willingness to take these reports. These findings suggest that changes on the part of law enforcement will go a long way in improving tribal members' trust in the system as well as its response.
- **Jurisdictional issues regarding which agency is responsible for taking a report/investigating.** Jurisdictional challenges were a major concern for focus group participants. They noted confusion regarding whether tribal, local, state, and/or federal agencies are responsible for protecting Native people and should, therefore, get involved in helping them. Participants believed that county and local agencies in the jurisdictions bordering the reservations do not think they can get involved. Participants also had



questions about whether every tribe would take missing person reports seriously (e.g., would they help, could they help). Overall, participants expressed frustration that no specific officer or agency appears to take Indigenous missing person cases seriously or take responsibility for cases when they are reported. One participant whose brother had gone missing and who had helped other impacted families explained that “Investigators are failing aspects of each case – there is a lot of back and forth, and nobody takes responsibility.”

**Question 10. What Challenges do you Believe Native People in New Mexico Face in Reporting their Loved Ones as Missing?**

	Focus Group 1	Focus Group 2
Challenges with getting a loved one classified as a missing person (e.g., a minor will be labeled as a runaway, adult will be labeled as an addict, going missing as an adult is not a crime).	X	X
Being told to wait to file a missing person's report; being judged/questioned when they wait.	X	X
Not knowing where to go or what information to provide.		X
Reservations are often large land areas/in rural areas, and it may take days to notice when someone goes missing.	X	
Jurisdictional issues (e.g., which agency is responsible for taking report/investigating missing person cases, protecting Native people).	X	X
Law enforcement takes a long time to respond to missing person cases.	X	X
Law enforcement officers are poorly trained and not trauma-informed.	X	
Law enforcement officers are impatient/rush those filing a report.	X	
Law enforcement officers have stereotypes about Native people (e.g., drug addicts, homeless) or exhibit racism that impacts response.	X	X
Poor communication between law enforcement and other agencies and law enforcement and community members.	X	
The missing person is a "frequent flier" (aka known to law enforcement), so their <u>missingness is not taken seriously.</u>		X

## **Challenges in having Missing Native Relatives “Found and Loved”**

Focus group participants were also asked about their perceptions of challenges faced by Native people in New Mexico on their journey to have missing relatives found and loved. The discussions about the journey – searching and investigations - often overlapped with the discussions on reporting, but some unique themes were also identified. A comprehensive list of themes is presented in Table 11 and prominent themes are described below.

1. Need for more people in law enforcement and social services; more resources.
  2. Need for law enforcement to take Native missing persons cases seriously.
  3. Need for substance abuse and mental health treatment.
- **Need for more people in law enforcement and social services.** Participants cited a **shortage of law enforcement officers to investigate cases and victim advocates and social workers** to support them while their loved ones were missing. Further, participants noted the size of reservations as a barrier to supportive services: “the ‘rez’ [reservation] is just too big to provide coverage everywhere.” Participants shared that the loved ones of missing persons often take on multiple roles, such as being the caseworker, therapist, detective, healer, and mental health provider for their families. Participants indicated that loved ones must check in with law enforcement to receive updates on the case, and they often have to serve as their own detectives to move the case forward or suggest new avenues of investigation to law enforcement. They suggested that many times, one main family member emotionally takes care of the others by serving as an informal therapist, healer, or counselor to the family. These roles are responsibilities that require full-time commitment. Another participant noted, “The police don’t have the resources, they tell us they can’t help us. They tell us to hire a private investigator.”

- **Need for law enforcement to take Native missing persons cases seriously.** Participants noted that law enforcement officers (often) do not take Native missing persons cases seriously. Participants noted that law enforcement officers do not think the loved one is really missing, and that they “will just come back” so they do not put effort into finding them. In this way, it was suggested that law enforcement officers were relying on stereotypes about the person who was missing – for instance, that they were out high on drugs, or that they were somewhere doing something illegal – but that they would return eventually. Again, as noted in discussions on reporting above, participants noted that law enforcement officers were not trauma-informed and did not seem to care about finding their missing loved one. Participants repeated their frustrations regarding failure to take responsibility and communicate with families on the progress of missing persons cases.
- **Need for substance abuse and mental health treatment.** Because of the connection between substance use and mental health problems discussed above, participants recognized the need for affordable, high-quality substance abuse and mental health treatment in their communities. They believed that having these services would potentially prevent their loved ones from going missing in the first place but lamented the lack of traditional health and medical options for Native people. For example, one participant noted the cost of traditional Medicine people (i.e., “they cost an arm and leg nowadays”) as well as fear about Western medicine (i.e., “mental health facilities just put people on medication and put them in a padded room do not help) as barriers to receiving necessary services in the community.

**Question 11. What Challenges do you Believe Native People in New Mexico Face in their Journey to have their Relatives “Found and Loved” When they do “Go Missing”?**

	<b>Focus Group 1</b>	<b>Focus Group 2</b>
Lack of staffing in victim services, law enforcement, and the criminal justice system	X	X
Lack of resources	X	X
Reservations are too large to provide resources	X	
Law enforcement is not trauma informed	X	X
Law enforcement falsely believes the missing person does not want to be found	X	
Law enforcement does not take responsibility		X
Lack of communication from law enforcement		X
Financial cost of medicine people for mental health and substance use	X	
Lack of proper care from Western medicine for mental health and substance use	X	
The missing person does not want to be found	X	
Not knowing who to trust	X	X

## **Strengths and Supportive Services for Missing Native People in New Mexico**

Focus group participants were asked about what was going well in New Mexico regarding services for missing Native people. They were prompted to think about the strengths and supportive services they could think of in the reporting of, investigations for, and response to missing Native people.

Participants identified the themes below.

1. Tribal Coalitions, Tribal health care services, and Tribal agencies.
2. New Mexico state agencies and non-profits.
3. Social media.
4. Other impacted families.
5. Using their [the loved ones of missing persons] voices.

- **Tribal Coalitions, Tribal health care services, and Tribal agencies.** Participants identified the Coalition to Stop Violence Against Native Women (aka the Coalition) as one of the strongest support providers/supportive services regarding missing Native persons in New Mexico. Participants noted that the staff members are devoted to supporting the loved ones of missing people. One participant noted, “they [Coalition staff] let loved ones know that things are okay, it gets better, and there is always hope.” The Coalition has supported loved ones’ lodging/travel and expenses to attend rallies and events, and it assists with mental health services. Participants also noted the First Nations Health Authority's traditional wellness and healing program, which utilizes traditional methods (i.e., without Western medication), and the Utah Navajo Health Systems, which offers comprehensive supportive services for families of missing persons and victims of violence in the Four Corners region. Participants also named Four Corners Search and Rescue, a Native American search and rescue firm, as a primary source of investigative support.

- **New Mexico state agencies and non-profits.** Participants also noted state victim compensation programs, advocates at police departments, and peer support programs at a local jail as useful support providers. Regarding victim compensation programs, participants indicated that some funding was available for families of loved ones who were missing. Although there was limited discussion on this, participants suggested that other service programs (e.g., First Nations Health Authority) may provide some temporary support, such as housing, for families with missing loved ones. Similarly, non-tribal non-profits such as housing assistance programs and mental health services were helpful, but again, limited in availability to the families of missing loved ones.
- **Social media.** Participants explained that social media was helpful to them in two ways: (1) it connected them to other people who were going through the same thing (e.g., other impacted families) and (2) it was helpful for getting the word out about a missing loved one. One participant noted that “Facebook is the place that is the most updated. If they [the loved one of a missing person] has one or two people that they can count on [on Facebook], they can use their network to help find people real quick.”
- **Other impacted families.** Participants also noted the importance of finding and building relationships with other impacted families. One participant noted “Find a family who knows how you feel, it gives you a sense of security,” while another explained, “Getting involved with the families, they let us know what else we can access for services or advocates.” One impacted family member in the focus group mentioned another impacted family member who was a supportive voice in their journey to search for their missing loved one. Both participants are MMIP activists now and have become close friends. Thus, these connections build support and offer a sense of community and belonging. Finally,

focus group participants indicated that the families of missing people are the best resource for police departments to fill advocate positions. One participant explained ‘They [loved ones of missing people] have “crossed that line” and they know what to do, how to start. They want to stand together. WE need to fix this.’ In other words, participants suggested that Native people who have experienced a loved one going missing would be good advocates to employ in the local police department, as they would likely be empathetic and would know the emotional terrain of journey.

- **Using their voices.** Throughout the focus groups, participants noted the power of using their voices, for strength, support, healing, awareness raising, and more. Participants discussed the importance of talking circles and writing circles: one participant noted that “[we] need more of it” while another explained, “the more we continue to do these talking circles, the more we can help each other.” Other participants talked about the growth of podcasts to raise awareness about MMIP and also offer an avenue for families to share their stories.



**Question 12. What are Strengths or Supportive Services for Missing Native People in New Mexico?**

	<b>Focus Group 1</b>	<b>Focus Group 2</b>
The Coalition to Stop Violence Against Native Women	X	X
Utah Navajo Health Systems		X
Life Link		X
Peer support group through local jail		X
Victim advocate at local police department		X
First Nations Health Authority		X
Social media	X	X
New Mexico victim compensation program	X	
Other impacted families	X	X
Personal contacts or tribal community members		X
Four Corners Search and Rescue		X

## **Chapter 4: Gaps in current data collection, data analysis, and data reporting for cases of MMIP in New Mexico**

Recall that we collected qualitative information from five key tribal and non-tribal professionals (e.g., from local and federal law enforcement, state government, and human services/advocacy) regarding the current strategies for MMIP data collection in New Mexico including data analysis, data reporting, and the New Mexico MMIP Portal. Specifically, we asked about participants' awareness of the Portal, whether it is sufficient to meet New Mexico's needs regarding MMIP, recommendations for raising awareness and use of the Portal, and how data/information on MMIP is best reported out to the community. We provide a discussion of the primary themes identified for each of the four interview questions ( $n = 5$ ) below.

1. Are you familiar with the New Mexico Department of Justice MMIP Portal (see <https://mmip.nmdoj.gov/>)?
2. From your perspective, is the Portal sufficient to meet New Mexico's needs regarding collecting data on missing Indigenous person?
  - a. What types of information or data points are most important to collect on missing Indigenous persons in New Mexico?
  - b. Do you see any limitations in the current data collection efforts? (e.g., any Tribes/Pueblos excluded)?
3. Do you have any thoughts on how to raise awareness about the Portal so that community members know about and use it?
4. What other ways should data on missing Indigenous persons be reported out to the community?

- **Familiarity with New Mexico MMIP Portal.** Interviews began by asking participants if they knew about the New Mexico Department of Justice MMIP Portal. All participants reported knowledge about the portal and reported using it in their work as law enforcement or as support providers for the families/loved ones of missing persons in New Mexico. Most participants had engaged with the Portal multiple times, since they actively entered missing persons information into the Portal. Some used the data it generated to provide information to law enforcement officers about case progress. At least one participant had not directly used it but was aware of it through their position as an advocate.
- **Limitations of the Portal.** Respondents had **mixed perspectives** regarding whether the Portal meets New Mexico’s needs for collecting data on missing Indigenous persons. They noted positive aspects of the portal, including that the New Mexico Department of Justice was collaborating with the FBI, tribal agencies, and local law enforcement to gather the data. They also appreciated that the Portal included zip codes and tribal affiliations, which help users connect to the correct agency to report a tip. Finally, interviewees liked that the interface allowed users to sort by sex and date of disappearance, which they see as important data points to enter for missing person cases. However, respondents perceived the New Mexico Portal to be duplicative of the lists maintained by the FBI Albuquerque office and/or NamUs. One respondent also noted that unlike NamUs, the New Mexico Portal was not connected to “national collaborators like the DOE Network or the Charlie Project” [both of which are nonprofits that work on missing person cases]. Further, several respondents noted that the Portal did not provide photos of many of the missing persons listed, and if they did, they were often not photos that were provided by or approved by the families/loved ones. One law enforcement

respondent noted, “I haven’t had them contact me about any type of photos” while another respondent who supported loved ones and families suggested that “posting appropriate photos is respectful, such as using family photos or recent photos rather than mugshots.”

- **Information Necessary to Collect about Native Missing Persons.** Related to the above discussion, respondents suggested that vital information to record and collect for Native missing persons in New Mexico included: demographic information (sex, eye color, hair color, photos, tribal affiliation), event information (e.g., location, date last seen), case information (e.g., DNA collected, dental records, contact information for law enforcement department handling the case), and resources (e.g., anonymous tip function, or website for additional services). Respondents noted that the Portal collected many important data points such as eye and hair color and date last seen, but that other information such as place last seen and additional physical descriptors like clothing, tattoos, piercing, and scars would be helpful to add to the Portal. Additionally, respondents noted the importance of including pictures of missing persons. Respondents were mixed regarding the inclusion of tribal affiliation, with most noting that it was an important data point to include, as community members often want to be involved, especially with their tribes, to see what they are doing on their own level to help with missing persons. However, one respondent noted that including tribal affiliation could “get messy” if the missing person was a member of multiple tribes (i.e., the reporting mechanism would need to allow for multiple tribal affiliation) and that there had been instances of tribal shaming regarding missing persons being “a problem” for specific tribes. Several respondents noted that it was critical for information to be checked by family or loved ones to ensure accuracy and timeliness (i.e.,

recent photos that depict the missing person's appearance at the time they went missing). Other feedback on improving data collection/reporting through the New Mexico Portal included adding information about whether DNA or dental records had been collected and including the full names of police departments/agencies (i.e., not abbreviations) and contact numbers to make it easier for users to report information on cases. Further, one respondent noted that requiring users to include their name and contact information to submit a tip through the Portal could be a deterrent for some individuals and suggested an anonymous tip function be added. Several respondents also suggested that the homepage for the New Mexico Portal should include names and contact information for federal resources such as NamUs and NCMEC as well as local and Tribal programs that support missing persons and their loved ones (e.g., advocates). Finally, one respondent noted that the Portal's background picture of Shiprock or Tsé Bit'a'í, in Navajo – a monadnock with Navajo religious significance – could make users feel that the Portal was only for Navajo people.

- **Raising Awareness about the New Mexico MMIP Portal.** Respondents overwhelmingly reported **that a range of mechanisms should be used** given individuals' varied access to and utilization of technology. They noted that some Native family members, especially elders, may not engage with websites, portals, clearinghouses, and so forth, so they suggested additional avenues for raising awareness among people who have limited internet access (including, homeless and transient populations as well). Suggestions included social media campaigns, agency website postings, digital billboards, radio ads, local news stations, and community forums. They also noted that the families of missing loved ones are often well connected to each other and support new families, so messaging

directly to families (e.g., through advocates, law enforcement) about the Portal was essential. Another respondent recommended direct outreach to the grassroots organizations in each community and noted that “these are the folks who are getting stuff done, doing the street outreach, they are the Moccasins on the ground.”

- **Reporting data and information to the Native community.** Finally, respondents were asked about other ways data and information on missing persons be reported out to the community. Similar to their ideas about raising awareness about the Portal, respondents suggested: more posts to social media pages and agency websites, hosting community forums/meetings, and regularly providing updates on missing persons cases on local television news programs. One respondent also noted that digital billboard campaigns might focus on missing juveniles. Several respondents noted the success of the 2024 “Missing in New Mexico Day:” an interagency-community event to raise awareness about missing persons cases in the state (see Appendix E). Specifically, law enforcement and NamUs attended and worked together to collect DNA swabs, and a panel of experts answered questions about DNA sharing and how it can and would help find missing and unidentified relatives. The families of missing loved ones also shared their experiences at the event. Respondents saw events like Missing in New Mexico Day as an effective way of educating the community about missing persons and ways to help bring missing persons home but also bridging that gap between agencies and the public.

## Chapter 5: Summary of Project Findings and Recommendations

Missing Indigenous persons and/or missingness associated with homicide (aka MMIP) is a complicated emotional and legal issue and fully addressing it will take a multi-agency and long-term effort. Policy makers, practitioners, and researchers are only now beginning to understand all the issues involved. Further, identifying, collecting, and analyzing information/data on this issue is just now being fully actualized to help answer basic questions such as “how many Indigenous persons go missing in a given area;” “are Indigenous people missing at disproportionate rates compared to other groups;” and “how can we improve the reporting and investigation of missing Indigenous persons?” This study was able to address some of these questions and provide recommendations for practitioners and policy makers in New Mexico, specifically, and those working on the issue of MMIP nationwide.

First, the findings using both the Nebraska Model and the Extended Model for New Mexico and the Navajo Nation showed that American Indian/Alaska Natives in New Mexico are missing at the highest rates of any other group and at rates disproportionate to their representation in the population (results consistent with findings from Nebraska, Richards et al., 2022; Idaho, Gillespie & Filmore, 2024). **Using both Models, it was found that most Indigenous missing persons were adults (i.e., age 18 years and older), more Indigenous men/boys were missing than women/girls, and about 40% of missing Indigenous persons had been missing for less than a year. However, the Extended Model identified many more missing persons overall and Indigenous missing persons specifically, than would have been identified if we had only relied on the New Mexico state clearinghouse, NamUs, NCMEC, and NCIC (i.e., sources for the Nebraska Model).**

Second, it is important to understand what the point-in-time models (i.e., Nebraska model and Extended Model) and data presented here can tell a user, and what it cannot. The comparison

of the Nebraska Model and the Extended Model (which includes the Navajo Nation Missing Person list, the New Mexico & Navajo Nation FBI List, and open-source data) clearly shows the **importance of understanding location and local data when designing a way to count missing persons – and missing Indigenous persons – at the state level.** If we had omitted these data sources, the model would have omitted 362 missing persons reported to one or more of these other data sources, and undercounted missing Indigenous persons by nearly 50%. This means that the more agencies which take a missing person report and the more tribes which share their tribal missing persons list with other agencies will likely yield a more accurate count of the total number of people who are missing in a given area. Additionally, our research continues to suggest that open-source websites are vital places to look for missing person reports as well – it appears that Native Americans in New Mexico continue to post reports of their missing loved ones on these sources, and researchers cannot neglect collecting this information.

The point-in-time count data also **highlights the need for tribes to publicly share missing persons information** either directly (e.g., like the Navajo Nation) or by entering their missing tribal members into the state databases (e.g., NMCH, NM MMIP Portal) so that **the public has a complete picture of missing Native people in the state.** Furthermore, **any work to develop counts of missing persons in other states or at the national level must consider location-specific differences in official data as well as the growing utilization of open-source data.** Finally, these **point-in-time counts cannot account for missing persons who are not reported to these data sources; and researchers and policymakers must be transparent about how data are collected and the data parameters** (e.g., data sources, data collection methods, reliability checks, included time frames, etc.).



Secondly, focus group data showed that some tribal members in New Mexico (and in Nebraska, see Richards et al., 2022) are hesitant to report their loved ones as missing and/or that law enforcement are cautious to take reports (e.g., encouraging them to wait to report) and point-in-time count data shows significant utilization of open-source data in reporting missing persons by Indigenous persons. While open-source data is a fundamental resource for spreading information and should be utilized, it is recommended that community members should not feel obligated to or forced to rely *only* on open-source data in lieu of reporting to law enforcement. Also, **law enforcement training must emphasize the importance of taking a timely report of missing persons and swiftly entering reports in NCIC and public facing Portals like NMCH and NamUs.** Law enforcement officers in New Mexico receive seven hours of training on missing persons during their training academy (see New Mexico Law Enforcement Academy - Training and Recruiting Division, 10.29.9.8 (E)(11), 2009), so the avenue to provide this information to new law enforcement officers already exists and could be leveraged immediately. For existing officers, a statewide campaign from the Department of Public Safety using credible messengers (e.g., Chiefs, Sheriffs) could be utilized, as this would open more avenues for people to report. Further, law enforcement leaders, elected officials, and community-based practitioners must work together to communicate to the public that reports of missing persons will be taken seriously. Reporting missing persons is key: **law enforcement and policymakers need complete information to create better responses and investigation procedures, assign resources, and provide services to address the problem of missingness across communities.** At the same time, we recognize that tribal law enforcement agencies are woefully underfunded and that large tribal nations such as the Navajo Nation (e.g., spanning more than 27,000) experience particular challenges. In addition, **community members deserve to be heard and supported by law enforcement when their loved ones go missing.**

Third, and somewhat related, **the results indicate that New Mexico is not fully using the New Mexico Clearinghouse (NMCH)**, especially when it comes to missing Native persons. Study data show via the Extended Model that most AI/AN missing persons were listed on the New Mexico & Navajo Nation FBI List (90.8% of cases on average over study period) rather than the NMCH (36.0% of cases on average over study period). In fact, the NMCH captured only a few more missing AI/AN persons than did the national databases (28.2% of cases on average on NamUs, 17.1% on NCIC). This indicates **an underutilization of the NMCH for Native missing persons**. The data cannot explain whether this underutilization is due to a law enforcement training issue (e.g., not receiving training on the NMCH), a policy issue (e.g., differences in departmental policy about when and how to enter a report into the NMCH), or capacity issue (e.g., not enough staff to enter reports in the NMCH). Moving forward, it is suggested that New Mexico state authorities (such as IAD) confer with law enforcement leadership to discuss the barriers to entering reports of missing persons, especially missing Indigenous persons, into the NMCH.

Regarding the New Mexico MMIP Portal, no public facing information is provided regarding how these data are collected or how they are checked for reliability; however, information from our interviews with professionals suggested that these data are pulled from the same sources as the New Mexico & Navajo Nation FBI List, and that the New Mexico DOJ and Albuquerque FBI field office collaborate regarding reports of missing Indigenous persons in New Mexico. **It is suggested that information on data sources and methods be listed on the New Mexico MMIP Portal website to increase transparency, accountability, and trust.** This is especially important because missing person lists are dynamic, meaning they can change daily if and when missing persons are found. The findings indicate that most Native missing persons are found within a year of disappearing – underscoring the importance of updating the New

Mexico MMIP Portal so that resolved cases are quickly taken down.

The public's trust in the Portal likely hinges on its accuracy, which means that the list must be maintained, updated, and case information reflected should be as correct as possible at all times.

As previously noted, **the New Mexico MMIP Portal is public facing and easy to navigate, allowing users to search for missing persons multiple ways** (e.g., by name, age). However, when research team members used the “view detail” buttons of a random sample of 25 cases, **much (45.3%) of the detailed information (e.g., pictures, height, weight, etc.) was not listed and acronyms were used for law enforcement departments which might not be familiar to users.** Further, while users **could easily report a tip associated with each missing person, it required that the user submit their contact information, which may deter utilization.** As noted in the previous chapter that key stakeholders see the vital information to collect regarding Native missing persons in New Mexico as: demographic information (sex, eye color, hair color, photos, tribal affiliation), event information (e.g., location, date last seen), case information (e.g., DNA collected, dental records, contact information for law enforcement department handling the case), and resources (e.g., anonymous tip function, or website for additional services). As such, it is suggested that these details be provided in the NM MMIP Portal, but before making final changes, **it is recommended that the New Mexico DOJ leverage the expertise of its Missing and Murdered Peoples Task Force to review the New Mexico Portal and make final recommendations for improvement.**

Through our focus groups, it was found that **relatively few tribal community members knew about or have used the New Mexico MMIP Portal, and interviews highlighted that few professionals/practitioners have fully integrated the New Mexico MMIP Portal into their work** with community members on MMIP. To maximize the Portal's utility to find missing Indigenous relatives and close open cases, it must be widely utilized as both a source for

reporting missing

Indigenous persons and searching for missing Indigenous persons. As such, in addition to our above recommendations on updates for useability, **it is suggested that the New Mexico DOJ consider avenues for increasing public awareness (and likely use) of the Portal.** Ideas generated through interviews included direct outreach to tribal members through community forums, outreach through television, social media, and radio campaigns; the integration of information on the New Mexico MMIP Portal into any news stories highlighting specific missing persons cases; and direct outreach to grassroots tribal organizations. The Portal depends on users for accuracy and will only be used in as much as the public knows about it and trusts it. Therefore, it is strongly advised a public awareness campaign be targeted to New Mexico residents who are both Native and non-Native.

Lastly, while beyond the scope of the current study, Senate Bill 12 (2022) which mandated and funded the New Mexico MMIP Portal, also **mandated that the New Mexico DOJ create a missing indigenous persons specialist and employ one or more missing Indigenous persons specialists, to work in collaboration with local, state, federal and tribal law enforcement agencies on missing Indigenous persons cases.** The research team could find no information on the missing Indigenous persons specialists on the New Mexico DOJ website or by searching for press releases or news articles. This missing Indigenous person specialist or specialists could play a critical role in the NM MMIP Portal's maintenance and awareness building campaigns as well as the institutionalization of these larger collaborative efforts over time. **As such, we recommend swiftly hiring and widely advertising the missing Indigenous persons specialist mandated by Senate Bill 12 (2022) and codified in New Mexico Statute § 8-5-20.**

While the research presented here provides a comprehensive review of missing persons

reported to official systems and open-source platforms as well as the perspectives of tribal members and professionals, the authors acknowledge the limitations of this study and offer some avenues for addressing them in the future. There is always a possibility that the research conducted did not capture all missing persons in New Mexico; this “hidden figure” is simply unknown – there may be missing people who have not been reported to law enforcement, entered into any of the local or national databases examined, or reported on open-source platforms. On the other hand, the Extended Model includes data sources from the Navajo Nation which spans New Mexico, Arizona, and Utah, and thus likely includes some persons missing from Arizona and Utah. However, as discussed extensively on pages 14-17 excluding data from the Navajo Nation would omit missing persons from New Mexico. This research is comprehensive in its methodology and transparent regarding data collection procedures. It is strongly recommended that future research continue to replicate the Nebraska Model in other states using extensions of the methodology that are responsive to individual state’s and tribe’s specific data sources and procedures. Further, future point-in-time counts across multiple years are also needed to examine whether missing person cases and case resolution are subject to seasonal trends or change over time.

Regarding the qualitative data on perspectives of tribal members and Native and non-Native professionals, the present analyses rely on a convenience sampling design and small samples which limit the generalizability of the findings. These data should be viewed as key examples from a larger universe of responses to the questions posed here. It is also important to recognize that the New Mexico Indian Affairs Department, the Coalition to Stop Violence Against Native Women, the numerous tribal advocates and professionals, and tribal community members who supported this project, were working to understand, prevent, and respond to missing persons before this project and will continue doing this work after the completion of this project.

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## Appendix A

# MMIWR FOCUS GROUP & TALKING CIRCLE

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2024 | 1PM - 5:30PM

*CSVANW has partnered with School of Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO) to hold a focus group with AI/AN community members to better understand the context of the missing persons crisis among Indigenous people in New Mexico and the challenges in reporting missing persons and supporting loved ones. No identifying information will be linked with participants. Focus groups will be moderated by staff from CSVANW and center on questions developed collaboratively by the research partners and staff at CSVANW.*

## AGENDA

1:00pm	<b>Welcome &amp; Opening</b> Registration check in, Welcome & Housekeeping items
1:30pm	<b>Focus Group</b> Facilitation: Alegria Roybal (Clinical Social Work/Therapist) & Patrick Gallegos (CSVANW Staff) Advocate Onsite: Deiandra Reid (CSVANW Staff)
2:45pm	<b>Break - 10 Minutes</b>
3:00pm	<b>Talking/Healing Circle</b> Facilitation: Reyes Devore
4:30pm	<b>Closing Remarks &amp; Thanks by CSVANW</b>
4:35pm	<b>Dinner &amp; Desert Served</b> Three Sisters Kitchen

### MENU

Three Sisters Cobb Salad  
Chicken Salad Sandwich on Rye  
Green Chile BLT  
Biscochitto Pudding



## Appendix B

# MMIWR FOCUS GROUP #2

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2024 | 1PM - 2:30PM

*CSVANW has partnered with School of Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO) and the Indian Affairs Department to hold a focus group with AI/AN community members to better understand the context of the missing persons crisis among Indigenous people in New Mexico and the challenges in reporting missing persons and supporting loved ones. No identifying information will be linked with participants. Focus groups will be moderated by staff from CSVANW and center on questions developed collaboratively by the research partners and staff at CSVANW.*

## AGENDA

12:30pm	<b>Welcome &amp; Opening</b> Registration check in, Welcome & Housekeeping items
1:00pm	<b>Focus Group</b> Facilitation: Deiandra Reid & Patrick Gallegos (CSVANW Staff) Advocate Onsite: Becky Martinez
2:15pm	<b>Break</b>
2:30 pm	<b>Grounding Exercise</b> (CSVANW Staff)
3:30 pm	<b>Closing remarks from CSVANW and Indian Affairs Dept.</b> (CSVANW Staff)



COALITION to STOP  
VIOLENCE AGAINST  
NATIVE WOMEN



## Appendix C

### **University of Nebraska Omaha Research Study New Mexico Missing and/or Murdered Indigenous Persons Project**

**Title of Study:** Identifying the Scope and Context of Missing and/or Murdered Indigenous Persons (MMIP) in New Mexico and Improving MMIP Data Collection, Analysis, and Reporting

**What this study is about and why you are being asked to participate:** This study is funded by the National Institute of Justice (Grant # 15PNIJ-22-GG-01625-REVA). The purpose of this research is to understand scope and context of MMIP in New Mexico and to provide recommendations for improving data collection and reporting for MMIP cases in New Mexico. You are being asked to participate in a focus group regarding this issue because you are an enrolled, affiliated, or descendent of a tribal community member in New Mexico or live or work on tribal lands and are over 18 years old; we would like to better understand your perceptions of the context/s of missingness among Indigenous persons in New Mexico.

**If you participate, here is what will happen in this study:**

- We will ask you to participate in a focus group with others that will last approximately one hour. A facilitator will lead the group discussion and a note taker will record notes on a notepad. The note taker will not record any names on the notepad.
- Results of the study may be published, but your name will not be reported.

**What are the risks and benefits of your participation?** Risks include the possibility of emotional distress when talking about missing and/or murdered Indigenous persons. We hope to use the information learned to benefit community members and professionals across the state; the information we learn in this study may be used to inform recommendations for improvements regarding state and local level reporting of/and investigation into the cases of missing and murdered Indigenous persons in New Mexico.

**Please understand that:**

- Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may choose not to participate. You may stop participating at any time. You may choose not to answer specific questions.
- Your information will be confidential. The researchers will not have access to identifying information about you, nor will they keep records of any such information (e.g., name, date of birth).
- Choosing not to participate in this study or withdrawing at any time will not impact your relationship with the research team or your community.
- The researchers do not expect or intend to profit from the findings of this study. We make no guarantees or assurances about the results of the study.
- You will be compensated \$30 for your participation in this focus group.
- This research has been deemed not human subjects research by the University of Nebraska Medical Center Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the Human Subjects Protection Officer at the National Institute of Justice **but has not been reviewed by individual Tribal IRBs.**
- Focus groups may be conducted virtually or in-person, but no focus groups will occur on tribal lands.
- De-identified, summary and/or themed data from the focus group(s) will be archived with the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data.
- There are no serious risks involved in this study.

If you have questions about the research, or would like additional information, you may contact:

**Tara Richards, Ph.D., Professor, School of Criminology & Criminal Justice, University of Nebraska Omaha; [tararichards@unomaha.edu](mailto:tararichards@unomaha.edu); Phone 402.554.2092.**

**Delilah Tenorio, General Counsel, New Mexico Indian Affairs Department, [delilah.tenorio@iad.nm.gov](mailto:delilah.tenorio@iad.nm.gov); Phone 505.469.7599.**

## Appendix D

### University of Nebraska, Omaha Research Study New Mexico Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons Project

**Title of Study:** Identifying the Scope and Context of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons (MMIP) in New Mexico and Improving MMIP Data Collection, Analysis, and Reporting

**What this study is about and why you are being asked to participate:** This study is funded by the National Institute of Justice (Grant # 15PNIJ-22-GG-01625-REVA). The purpose of this research is to understand the scope and context of MMIP in New Mexico, to identify gaps in current data collection and provide recommendations for improving data collection and sustainable data reporting for MMIP cases in New Mexico. You are being asked to participate in an interview regarding this issue because you are a professional responder (e.g., tribal and nontribal law enforcement officer, victim service provider, staff from social service agencies) to this issue; we would like to understand (a) current data collection efforts for cases of MMIP, (b) gaps in current data collection efforts for cases of MMIP, and (c) your recommendations for a long-term data collection framework for MMIP in New Mexico.

**If you participate, here is what will happen in this study:**

- We will ask you to participate in an interview that will last approximately thirty minutes. An interviewer will ask you questions, and a note taker will record notes on a notepad. The note taker will not record any names or other identifiers on the notepad.
- Results of the study may be published, but neither your name nor your agency will be reported.

**What are the risks and benefits of your participation?** Risks include the possibility of emotional distress when talking about missing and/or murdered Indigenous persons. We hope to use the information learned to benefit community members and professionals across the state. The information we learn in this study may be used to inform recommendations for improvements regarding state and local level reporting of and investigation into the cases of missing and/or murdered Indigenous persons in New Mexico.

**Please understand that:**

- Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may choose not to participate. You may stop participating at any time. You may choose not to answer specific questions.
- Your information will be confidential and no identifiers (e.g., name, Tribe/Tribal affiliation, agency name) will be reported.
- Choosing not to participate in this study or withdrawing at any time will not impact your relationship with the research team, your agency, or your community.
- The researchers do not expect or intend to profit from the findings of this study. We make no guarantees or assurances about the results of the study.
- This research has been deemed not human subjects research by the University of Nebraska Medical Center Institutional Review Board (IRB) **but has not been reviewed by individual Tribal IRBs.**
- Interviews will be conducted virtually; no researchers will come on tribal lands.
- De-identified, summary, and/or themed data from the interviews will be archived with the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data.
- There are no serious risks involved in this study.

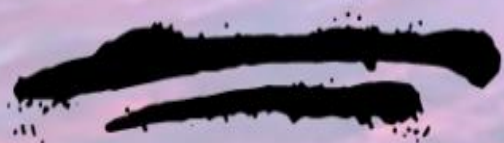
If you have questions about the research, or would like additional information, you may contact:

**Tara Richards, Ph.D., Distinguished Professor, School of Criminology & Criminal Justice, University of Nebraska Omaha; [tararichards@unomaha.edu](mailto:tararichards@unomaha.edu); Phone 402.554.2092.**

**Delilah Tenorio, General Counsel, New Mexico Indian Affairs Department, [delilah.tenorio@iad.nm.gov](mailto:delilah.tenorio@iad.nm.gov); Phone 505.469.7599.**



# SAVE THE DATE



Shiprock High  
School Gymnasium

October 19, 2024  
from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

- File or update missing persons reports
- Meet with investigators and
- Access support services.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE  
CONTACT:

DPS.MissingPerson@dps.nm.gov  
1-800-457-3463

Octavian Valencia, Staff Manager  
505-500-9310



NEW  
MEXICO  
MISSING  
PERSONS  
DAY

Register below:

<https://form.jotform.com/242346506448156>

