



OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS

# Office for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives Office for Missing and Murdered Black Women and Girls

Minnesota Department of Public Safety Local Government Convening

Wednesday, April 29, 2026 | 11:10am – 11:55am | Auditorium

Ana Negrete | Office for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives Community Planner

Taylor Wencil | Office for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives Intelligence Specialist

Rebecca Rabb | Office of Justice Programs Deputy Director of External Relations

April Bryant | Office of Justice Programs Director of Community and Victim Specialists Team



Minnesota  
**Missing and Murdered  
Indigenous Relatives**  
Office

---



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY  
OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS

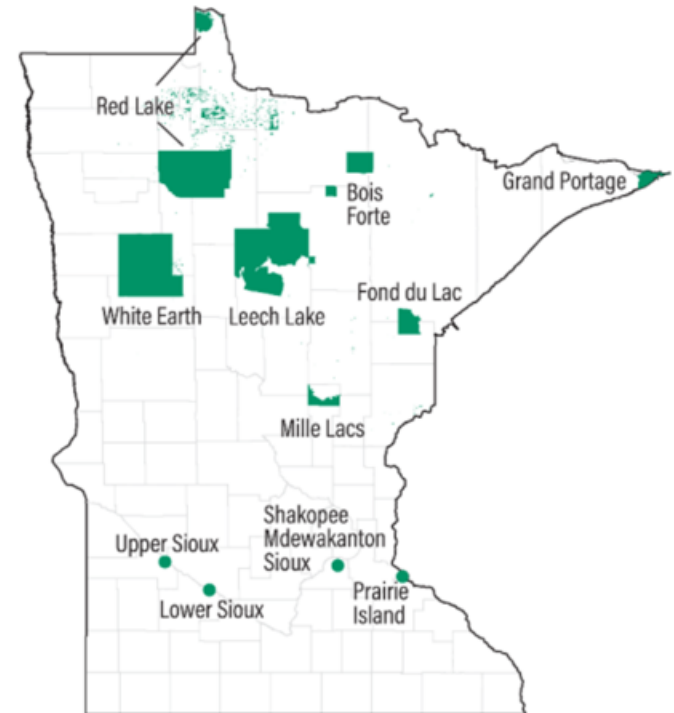
# Office of Missing Murdered Indigenous Relatives Office

## Staff:

- Director- Guadalupe Lopez
- Community Planner- Ana Negrete
- Violence Prevention Coordinator- Tawny Savage
- Intelligence Specialist- Taylor Wencel
- Victim Service Specialist- Open

## Services:

- Supportive services to families
- Educational and awareness presentations
- Community events
- Statewide data analysis
- Technical Assistance to law enforcement



# OFFICE LEADERSHIP AND STAFF

---



Guadalupe Lopez  
Director



Ana Negrete  
Community Planner



Tawny Smith Savage  
Violence Prevention Coordinator



Taylor Wencel  
Intelligence Specialist

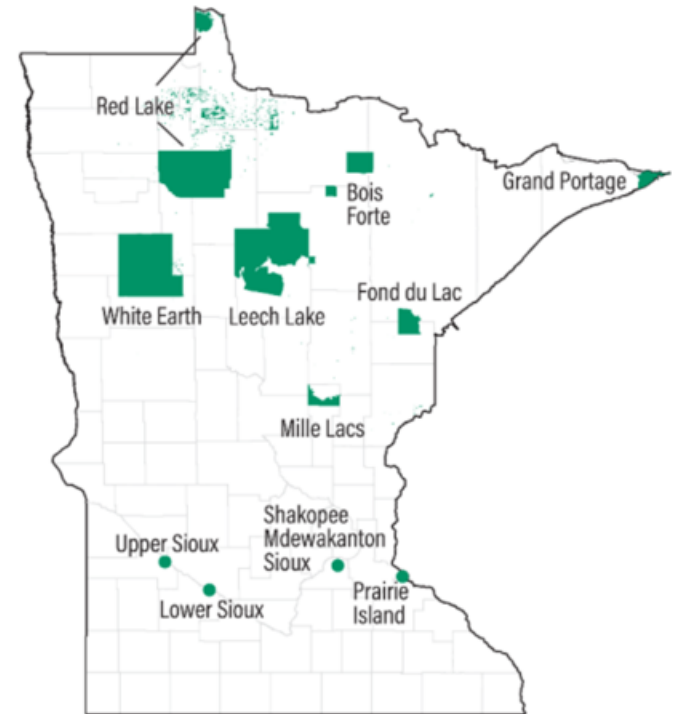
# Office of Missing Murdered Indigenous Relatives Office

## Staff:

- Director- Guadalupe Lopez
- Community Planner- Ana Negrete
- Violence Prevention Coordinator- Tawny Savage
- Intelligence Specialist- Taylor Wencel
- Victim Service Specialist- Open

## Services:

- Supportive services to families
- Educational and awareness presentations
- Community events
- Statewide data analysis
- Technical Assistance to law enforcement





# OUR VISION

**Vision:** A future where all Indigenous relatives in Mni Sota are safe, honored, and heard. This future is grounded in sovereignty, guided by community, and free from all violence, including the epidemic of missing and murdered Indigenous relatives.



# OUR MISSION

**Mission:** The Office of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives (MMIR) is part of a collaborative response to end the epidemic of missing and murdered Indigenous relatives to support families, educate communities, and help shift public systems that have too often failed to protect Indigenous lives.

# Supporting Families After a Critical Incident

## Office of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives (MMIR)

- Septically after critical incident our role within the office is to connect families with or provide compassionate, culturally responsive support to families .
- Early interactions include more listening than speaking
- Coming to understand the needs that may not be spoken allowed and then connect the families to the support they need.



# Supporting Law Enforcement

- Offer technical assistance to law enforcement agencies
- Support case coordination and information-sharing
- Assist in strengthening responses to MMIR cases



# Preparing Families for Engagement

- Help families prepare for meetings with law enforcement and what they can expect
- Provide guidance on key questions to ask including understanding who is involved, identifying key contacts during the investigation
- Support families in identifying who their primary contact will be and how information will be shared with others.
- Empower families to participate confidently in the process and understand the limitations of what may or may not be shared as the investigation begins. (managing expectations)

# MMIR Technical Assistance

- MMIR a Non-law enforcement agency providing technical assistance to a law enforcement agency on a case refers to the collaboration in which a non-policing organization offers specialized expertise, tools, or resources to aid law enforcement in solving a specific case or assisting with investigating. These organizations typically bring niche skills or technical capabilities.
- Key aspects of this type of assistance include:
  1. **Specialized Expertise:** Providing knowledge in areas to missing murdered, Human trafficking, etc.
  2. **Technology and Resources:** Offering access to resources for victims and their families, other law enforcement contacts, tribal contacts, data and open-source analysis
  3. **Training or Consultation:** Guiding law enforcement on how to approach complex issues
  4. **Operational Support:** Direct involvement in case-specific tasks such as recovering data, holding MDT meetings, assisting with investigations, resources and contacts.

## Who can request TA:

- ❖ Any law enforcement agency or medical examiners offices



For TA request reach out to: *Taylor Wencel, Intelligence Specialist*  
Email: [Taylor.Wencel@state.mn.us](mailto:Taylor.Wencel@state.mn.us)  
Phone: 651-373-2591



## MMIR Reward Fund

- Ensure law enforcement agencies are aware that some cases may qualify for the reward fund.
- Eligible cases can be supported with rewards up to \$10,000 based on the impact of the information provided by a tipster.
- This impact of the information is designated by the lead law enforcement agency and then reviewed by the MMIR Director and BCA representative for final payout.
- The fund was created to support advancement of investigations with a financial incentive where a case may have gone cold.
- The fund also supports other office functions including awareness campaigns such as the billboard projects and other state days of remembrance. ( Feb 14<sup>th</sup> and May 5<sup>th</sup>)

# Navigating Complex Systems

- Clarify roles across agencies:
  - Law Enforcement (investigation updates)
  - Medical Examiner (cause and manner of death)
  - County Attorney (charging decisions & prosecution)
- Help families' direct questions to the appropriate entities
- Assist with applications for the Crime Victims Reimbursement Program or other programs that they may qualify for as victims of crime.
  - Connection with local grief support
  - Connection with burial support through their Tribes or county.



Minnesota  
**Missing and Murdered  
Indigenous Relatives**  
Office

# System Advocacy

- Advocate for families throughout investigations and prosecution
- Ensure families' voices are heard within the justice system
- Ensure questions are answered fully using plain language
- Provide ongoing support as cases move forward as directed by the family.

# Commitment to Families

- Centering dignity, respect, and cultural awareness
- Walking alongside families at every stage
- Committed to accountability, transparency, and justice



**Minnesota**  
**Missing and Murdered**  
**Indigenous Relatives**  
**Office**

Thank You,  
Pidamaya,  
Miigwech

Questions?

**For Technical Assistance:** Contact Taylor Wencel

[Taylor.Wencel@state.mn.us](mailto:Taylor.Wencel@state.mn.us) or 651-373-2591

**For Awareness Events or Support for Impacted Families**

Contact Ana Negrete

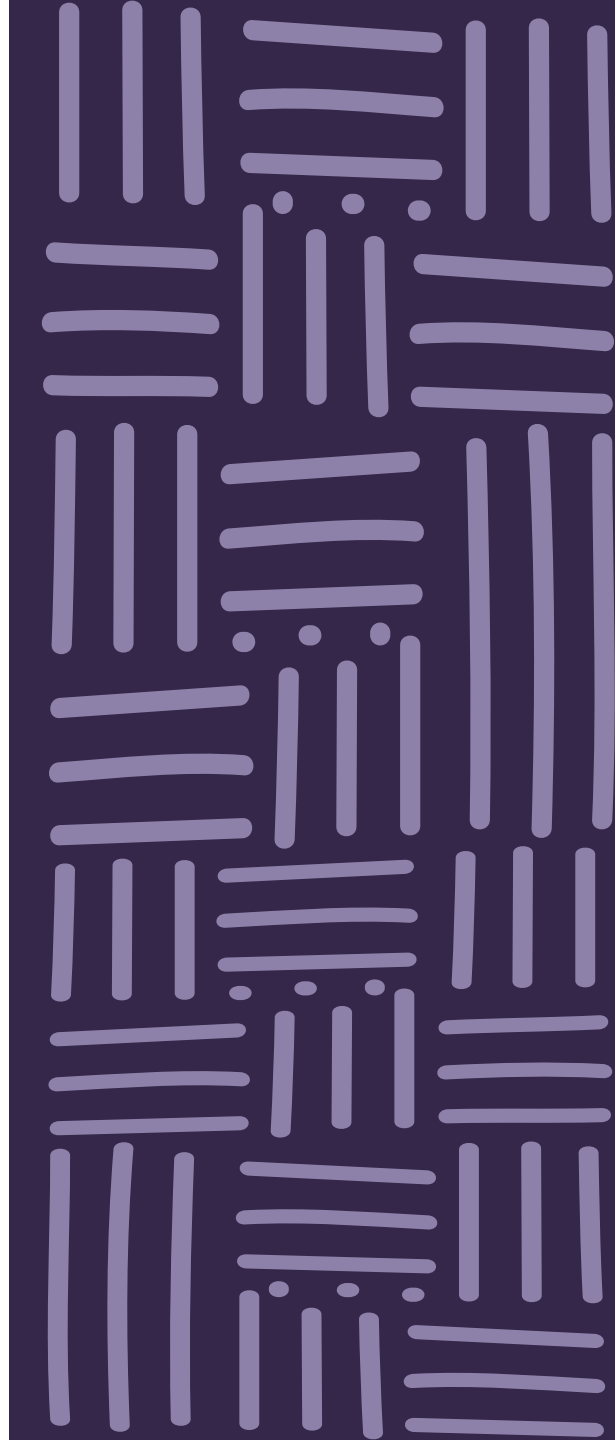
[Ana.G.Negrete@state.mn.us](mailto:Ana.G.Negrete@state.mn.us) or 651-428-3084



**Minnesota**  
**Missing and Murdered**  
**Indigenous Relatives**  
**Office**



**MINNESOTA OFFICE FOR  
MISSING AND  
MURDERED  
BLACK WOMEN  
AND GIRLS**





# OUR

---

# HISTORY

Rep. Richardson introduced a bill during the 2022 Session while the work of the Task Force was in process but was not signed into law.

---

The final Task Force report in December 2022 included a recommendation for an ongoing office. DPS-OJP worked to include this recommendation into the State's 2023 Budget Proposal following the parameters of the report.

---

DPS-OJP worked closely to align both Office proposals and the bill was signed into law at the end of the 2023 Legislative Session.



# OUR

---

# HISTORY

The Office for Missing and Murdered Black Women and Girls was established in 2023 by the Minnesota legislature with bipartisan support.

---

Minnesota became the first state in the U.S. to to reduce and prevent violence against Black women and girls.

---

MN DPS and elected officials advocated for the creation of this office.

# OUR

---

# PURPOSE

- Systemic causes and contributing factors
- Appropriate methods for tracking and collecting data
- Policies and institutions that impact violence and the investigation and prosecution of this violence
- Intervention strategies to reduce violence
- Prevention healing strategies

# WHAT OUR OFFICE OFFERS THE STATE

---

- Background knowledge & expertise on the social contexts that most Black women and girls in Minnesota are living in
- Advocacy for Black women and girls experiencing interpersonal and systemic violence
- Investigatory support and intelligence analyst expertise in case support of Black women and girls

# WHAT OUR OFFICE OFFERS THE STATE

---

- Violence prevention and education, including trainings
- Connecting organizations and institutions focused on the wellbeing and support of Black women and girls

# OUR TEAM

---

**KALEENA  
BURKES**

---



**LUANA NELSON-  
BROWN** *HEAD OF ADVOCACY  
AND VICTIM SUPPORT*

---



**ADRIANNE  
ROCHA** *CASE REVIEW AND  
SYSTEMS SPECIALIST*

---



# OUR TEAM

---

**LESLEY**

**SCHEIDER**  
*JUSTICE AND ADVOCACY  
RESEARCH ANALYST*

---



**ALLA HASSAN**

*VIOLENCE PREVENTION  
AND TRAINING  
COORDINATOR*

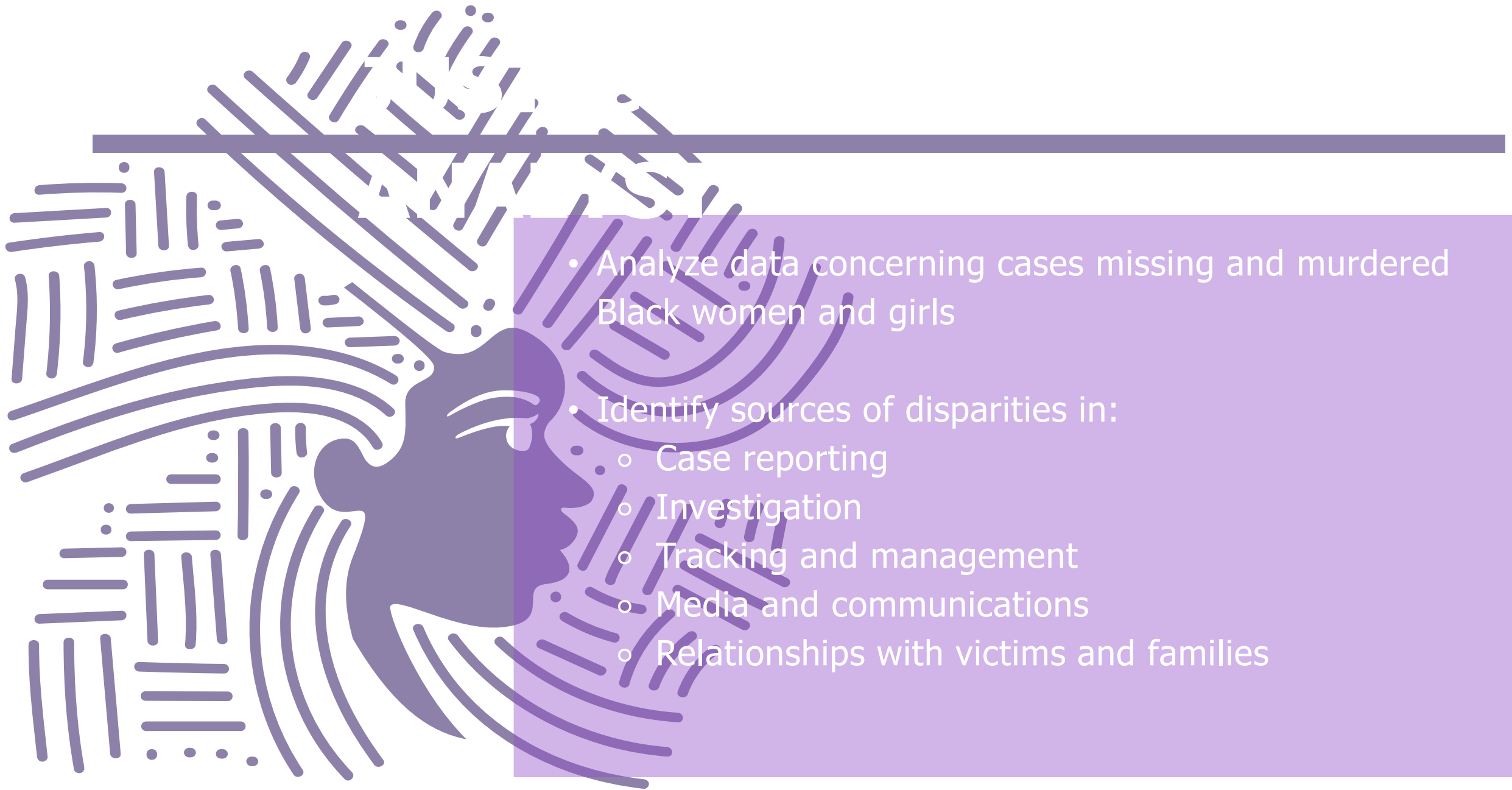


**WHITNEY**

**TERRILL**  
*PRINCIPAL PLANNER*

---





- Analyze data concerning cases missing and murdered Black women and girls
- Identify sources of disparities in:
  - Case reporting
  - Investigation
  - Tracking and management
  - Media and communications
  - Relationships with victims and families



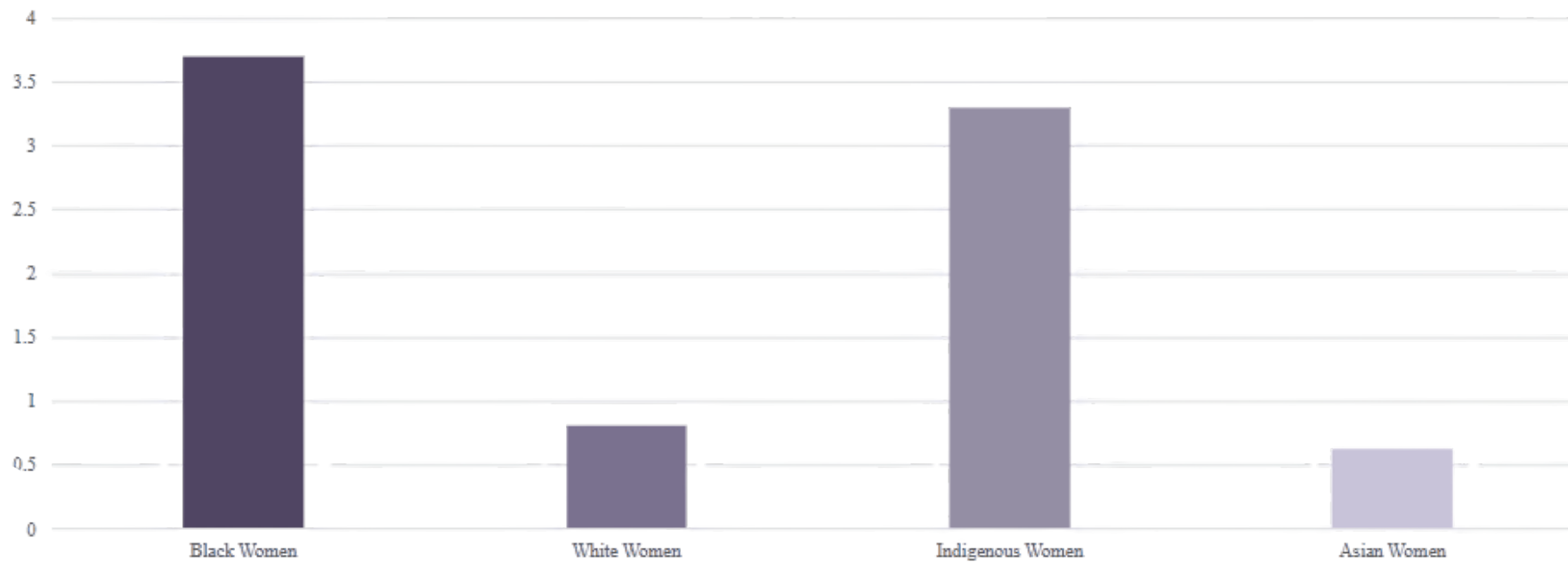
- Examine how social contextual factors lead to heightened risk of violence against Black women and girls
- Help develop dashboard for cases involving missing and murdered Black women and girls

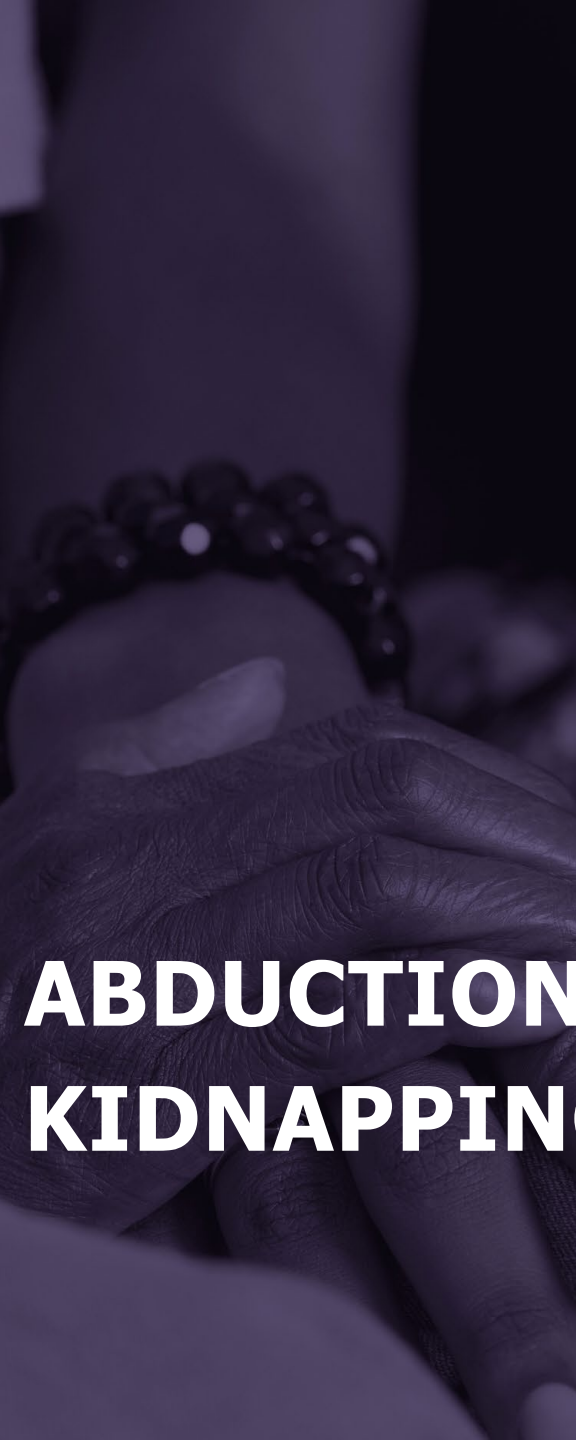


# HOMICIDE

## 2024 HOMICIDE - MINNESOTA CRIME DATA EXPLORER

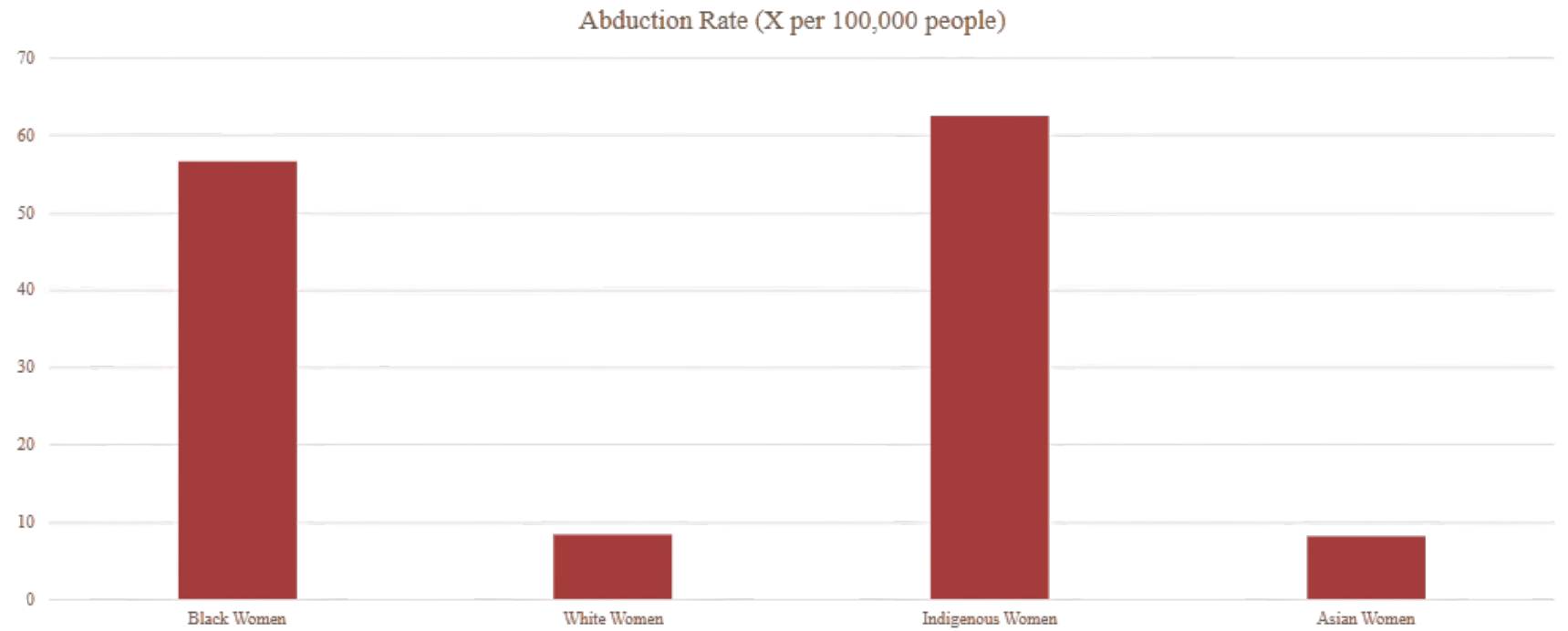
Homicide Rate (X per 100,000)





# ABDUCTION KIDNAPPING

## 2024 ABDUCTION RATE - MINNESOTA CRIME DATA EXPLORER





Black women in Minnesota are nearly three times more likely to be killed than their white peers.

---

**20%**

Domestic violence victims

**21%**

Abduction/kidnapping victims

**21%**

Rape victims

---

# GAPS AND

# DISPARITIES

## OUR FOCUS

Gaps and disparities we see consistently - and how they create disproportionate vulnerability

## SYSTEM RESPONSES

- Investigation and system response gaps
- Media coverage disparities
- How perpetrators exploit these gaps and disparities



## OUR SCOPE

- How our office responds
- The reality Black women navigate daily
- What families face alone

---

## ASSUMPTIONS AND BIASES



# INVESTIGATION

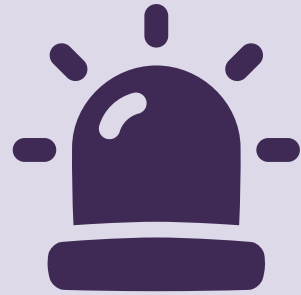
**GAPS**



**LACK OF  
DETAILS**

---

Incomplete documentation of  
critical details



**LIMITED  
FOLLOW  
UP**

---

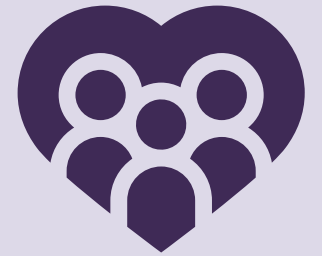
Limited follow-up with families  
and communities



**CRITICAL  
RESPONS**

---

**E**  
Critical window for investigation  
often lost



**LIMITED  
RESOURC**

---

**ES**  
Investigative resources limited  
or reduced

# MEDIA COVERAGE



**VIEWED AS  
LESS  
COMPELLING**

Family dysfunction is a less "compelling" story to media outlets



**LACK OF  
COVERAG  
E**

Lack of coverage deprives the general public of opportunities:

- See themselves in the story (empathy)
- Provide support
- Share tips and information



**LACK OF  
INFORMAT  
ION**

Since employees or response systems are ALSO part of the general public, they too are deprived of information that would help them do their jobs effectively.



**VICIOUS  
CYCLE**

A vicious cycle that feeds itself

---

## GAPS CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR PERPETRATORS





# BLACK WOMEN AND GIRLS

## Lived Experience

- Higher risk of domestic violence
- Higher risk of trafficking
- Higher risk of abduction
- Living with the knowledge of being more vulnerable
- Watching friends, family members, and neighbors disappear or die

# RESOURCES BEYOND STATE

---

FUNDING



## CRITICAL BASIC NEEDS

By the time families reach us, 73% of cases require resources beyond state funding capabilities, including food, clothing and transportation



## NAVIGATING SYSTEMS

Navigating all of the above is taxing and expensive



## ADVOCACY RESPONSE

---

As a result, we've shaped our advocacy response around what we see in real time



# BLACK WOMEN AND

# CHILDREN

## FAMILY NEEDS

- Dedicated victim advocate (from day one, not after weeks)
- Coordinated multi-agency response (one point of contact, clear communication)
- Financial assistance (for search efforts, time off work, basic needs)
- Immediate investigative action (not waiting 24 hours, minus assumptions)
- Regular updates (even when there's no news)



# BLACK WOMEN AND GIRLS

# DEDICATE

# D

# RESPONSE

- Provide dedicated advocacy to connect families to resources and organizations
- Establish a vast network of partners who can respond quickly



# BLACK WOMEN AND

# GRIS

# COMMUNI TY

# ACTIVATIO

Builds and maintains  
relationships with:

# N

- Community organizations
- Faith-based groups
- Service providers
- Businesses
- Individual donors



**CASE**



- Core Functions
  - Case analysis and documentation
  - Review of specific case types
  - Sentencing review and recommendations
- Technical Assistance:
  - Case support and consultation
  - Intelligence and information gathering
  - Agency coordination and nexus

# FROM OPEN TO CLOSED: CASE

## REVIEW

### Case Status:

- Open
- Cold
- Closed
- Solved
- MMBWG Cases

### Case Type:

- Missing
- Homicide
- Trafficking
- Domestic Violence
- Suspicious (OD/Suicide)

### What are we looking for?

- Investigative gaps (reporting and response)
- System gaps and oversight issues
- Subject history and prior system contact
- Early warning indicators (e.g., stalking, OFP violations)
- Sentencing outcomes



# STRENGTHENING INVESTIGATIONS

## RATION

- Direct collaboration with law enforcement & partner systems
- Analytical & technical support
  - Subject & lead development
  - Property & phone analysis
  - Database queries
  - Case organization & work product support
- Supportive role without assuming investigative authority





---

**MISSING**

**IN**

**CUSTOD**

• Deconfliction

**Y** Collaboration with  
systems partners

• MP located under  
alias

---



---

# MISSIN

# G

---

# JUVENI

- Inaccurate information

# LE

- Coordinated correction with LE
  
  - Updated information redistributed
-



---

**UNSOLV  
ED**

**HOMICI**

- In-depth case examination

**DE**

- Multi-subject analysis
  
  - Internal workup for external advisement
-



---

**INTIMAT**

**E**

**PARTNE**

---

**R** Parental abduction

- Multi-jurisdiction and  
M/T collaborative

**VIOLENC**

- History of violence

**E** Prevention

---



**RECONCEPT**



- Lead prevention and training initiatives to reduce violence impacting Black women and girls.
- Deliver culturally responsive, trauma-informed training for agencies, service providers, and community partner;
- Provide technical assistance and build capacity for prevention strategies statewide.
- Monitor, evaluate, and report on training effectiveness to guide future programming.



- 
- Ensure programming reflects equity, healing, and survivor-centered approaches;
  - Strengthens community safety and resilience.
  - Improves culturally specific responses to violence.
  - Reduces systemic gaps that place Black women and girls at risk



# PREVENTION, TRAINING

- **Joint Training:** Cross-train staff on trauma-informed, survivor-centered, and culturally specific responses as it relates to missing, murdered Black Women and Girls.
- **Policy Alignment:** Collaborate on reviewing and strengthening policies related to missing persons and trafficking.
- **Information Sharing:** Establish transparent, timely, and accurate data-sharing pathways.

**BLACK WOMEN AND**

**GRLS**



# PREVENTION, TRAINING

- **Community Engagement:** Host joint listening sessions with impacted communities to build trust and accountability.
- **Specialized Collaboration:** Work directly with you on Missing Persons and Human Trafficking units to identify prevention opportunities.
- **Evaluation Together:** Develop shared metrics to track progress in prevention and response.

**BLACK WOMEN AND**

**GRIS**

# PREVENTION

---

## GROUNDING PARTNERSHIP

Ground all partnerships in transparency, accountability, and equity.

## SEEKING HOLISTIC OUTCOME

Ensure strategies address racial and gender disparities.

## CENTER VICTIMS & SURVIVORS

Uphold survivor voices and community oversight in all joint initiatives.



# CONTACT US

Email: [MMBWG.Office.DPS@state.mn.us](mailto:MMBWG.Office.DPS@state.mn.us)

Phone: (651) 201-7326

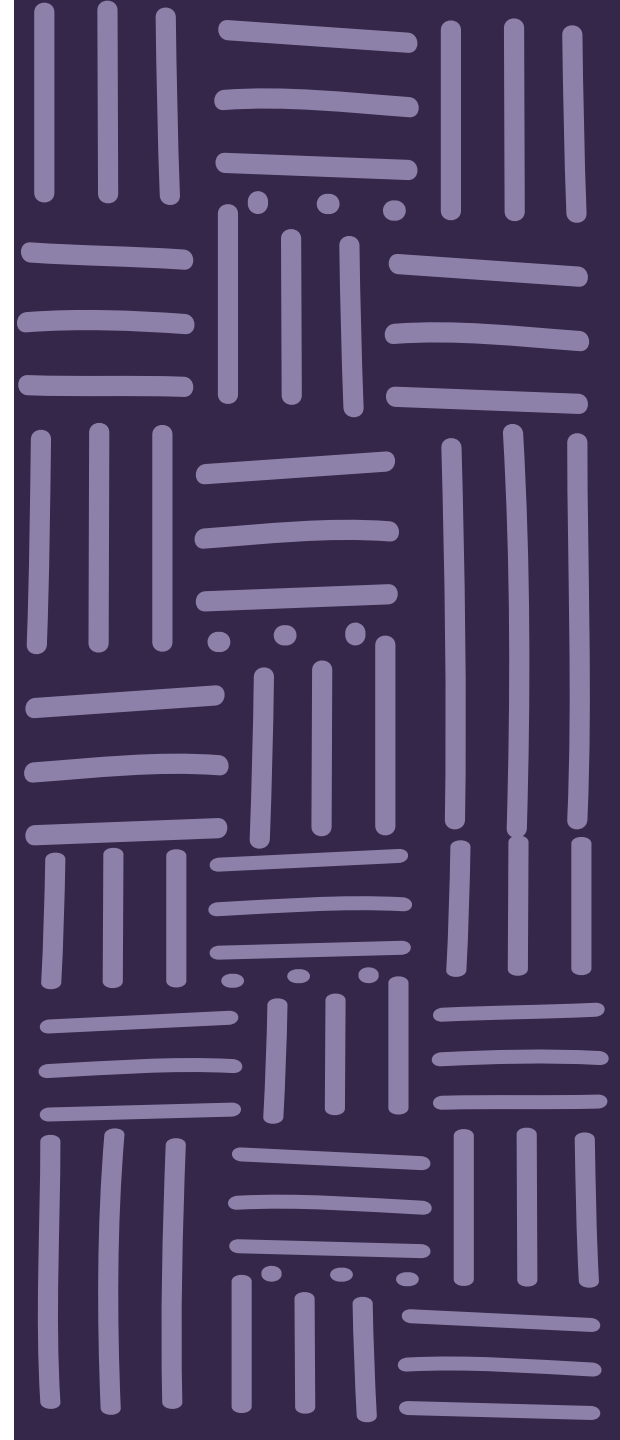
Website: [dps.mn.gov/mmbwg](https://dps.mn.gov/mmbwg)

---



**MINNESOTA OFFICE FOR  
MISSING AND  
MURDERED  
BLACK WOMEN  
AND GIRLS**

**THANK YOU**





# Thank You!

Becky Rabb: [Rebecca.Rabb@state.mn.us](mailto:Rebecca.Rabb@state.mn.us) | 651-xxx-xxxx (cell)

April Bryant: [April.Bryant@state.mn.us](mailto:April.Bryant@state.mn.us) | 651-xxx-xxxx (cell)

Ana Negrete: [Ana.Negrete@state.mn.us](mailto:Ana.Negrete@state.mn.us) | 651-xxx-xxxx (cell)

Taylor Wencel: [Taylor.Wencel@state.mn.us](mailto:Taylor.Wencel@state.mn.us) | 651-xxx-xxxx (cell)