



STRATEGIC PLAN AND TOOLKIT

# MMIW TASK FORCE WORK



**WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP  
COHORT MMIW**

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# Summary

"To our families, survivors, and future Indigenous matriarchs we dedicate this body of work to you. We acknowledge those who came before us, whose resilience, prayers, and strength are the foundation of all we do and strive to become."

When we begin to think about Missing Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW) across Turtle Island (North America), and how to address the issue, we must always acknowledge our right to self-determine as Indigenous Peoples. Long before the concept of Tribal sovereignty, we recognized this right as our Indigenous Theory of Existence and held intact our own systems of development and governance. The larger problem of MMIW is also not exclusive to reservation boundaries or Indigenous people, it reaches beyond constructs of stereotypes, jurisdiction, and Tribal governance/reservations. It is the responsibility of society to protect life, especially those populations who are targeted through systemic violence, under representation, and lack of resources. The true history of the colonization of the original peoples of Wisconsin and their unceded lands unveils evidence of settlers and the US Government's acts of violence against Indigenous peoples, especially women, girls, and two-spirit people. These acts such as Termination, Boarding Schools, and land-grabbing, have yet to be acknowledged as root causes of MMIW that continue to operate today. They have merely changed names to foster care, public schools, and resource extraction. Society has a direct responsibility to not only accept these truths, but actively work to find meaningful solutions to address this violence.

The solution must be led and driven by Indigenous peoples with the support of the institutions and Governments through meaningful consent, collaboration, and respect for Tribal sovereignty. It is not enough to simply craft a solution led by the very institutions that have perpetuated the violence, and then ask Indigenous peoples to have a seat at the table. We are advocating for an entire systems change, one that creates an Ecosystem of Care for all within every stage of development, from brainstorming to execution, to policy and movement of bills driven by and with Indigenous grassroots leaders, legislatures, communities, and survivors. We are "in a critical moment in history", Grand Chief Eddie Benton Benaise explained, "and we must do everything we can to protect life, all life...protect the earth." This is how we understand what an Ecosystem of Care means, that issues are not siloed but interwoven much like our individual health is connected to the overall well-being of society. The protection of all life, the earth, and Indigenous women-are the same issues; and it is the responsibility of all to protect them.

This report is dedicated to creating an Ecosystem of Care to address the underlying issues of MMIW. It is the collective work of all our grandmothers, mothers, families, survivors, tribal leaders (legislative and traditional), allies, and partners that have brought this to a working model. It acknowledges we are in fact the Indigenous solution to the problem of colonization; we are the protectors of life.



# MISSING & MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN- PREVENTION, REPRESENTATION, JUSTICE

## MENĪKĀNAEHKEM INC.

### WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP COHORT - MMIW

Indigenous led Women's Cohort dedicated to the prevention, healing, and advocacy of issues that lead up to the larger problem of MMIW.

## THE PROJECT

- Utilizing Indigenous led efforts to establish a MMIW Task Force in WI that :
  - Holds legislatures accountable and keeps them engaged in process
  - Utilizes best practices for gathering indigenous voice on issues of MMIW
  - Host public hearing sessions
  - Ensures Indigenous grassroots, advocates, survivors and legislatures are engaged in strategic planning on all stages



## THE STAGES

01

### ENGAGING TRIBAL VOICE AND CONSENT

Establishing Indigenous voice in all stages of planning from creation to execution

02

### CREATION OF TASK FORCE

Utilizing collaborative efforts of legislatures, agencies, grassroots, and tribal leaders to ensure full representation on the issues of MMIW

03

### FINDING SOLUTIONS

Execution of MMIW Task Force and Reporting

04

### KEY CONTACTS

People to engage



# Engaging Tribal Voice and Consent

The issues that lead up to the larger problem of MMIW are vast, layered, and complex. The original experts in preventing, healing from, and ensuring justice to families and survivors are Indigenous people. In order to create a task force that reflects transparency, best practices for consent/collaboration with tribal nations, and engages grassroots movements we have outlined some key people, practices, and starting points below.

Key Peoples To Engage: \*additional contacts /key peoples attached at end of document

- Tribal Legislatures
- Traditional Knowledge Holders/Elders
- Indigenous Led Grassroots
- Indigenous Urban Centers

Best Practices:

- In all stages planning, intelligence gathering, execution, reporting, and proposed legislature/policy Indigenous peoples must be engaged and actively recruited
- Because WI has 11 Federally recognized and 1 non-federally recognized tribes with diverse cultures, languages, resources, and territories, each one must have their community voice represented
  - Regional Listening Session held to host community listening session on best practices in creation of task force
    - These listening sessions should be co-led and created by/with Indigenous peoples as to how to best present this type of listening session in Indigenous communities urban, rural, and reservation
- Co-present (DOJ/Indigenous peoples) to Tribal Leadership with proposed strategic plan (created in conjunction with indigenous peoples) at GLITC to get feedback, approval, and note concerns that may hinder/help work of task force
- Create a living strategic plan that allows for additional changes and key people to be added as we get further into work
- Utilize indigenous governance and organizing systems like clans to execute and create MMIW Task Force
- Tend to the entire being- Mind, Body, Spirit, Emotion in all parts of the process
  - Healing and advocacy are critical pieces to implementing and tending to all the issues of MMIW



The job of the MMIW Task Force WI will be extensive and far reaching. To attain the most representative voice of the diverse Indigenous peoples of WI, each nation and major urban area will create localized MMIW Task Forces to guide and inform the larger state Task Force. We will use the intelligence and data gathered (qualitative/quantitative) from the initial regional listening session to create the State MMIW Task Force and guide the strategic plan.

## **Initial Information Session/s- held via Webinar and/or In person Regional Sessions**

- Gather from indigenous nations and urban areas
  - Whom they feel should be represented on State Task Force WI
  - Share proposed strategic plan for MMIW Task Force WI
    - Budget overview
    - Resources-time/people
    - Regional Listening sessions held by State MMIW Task Force
    - Reporting
    - **Local/community task force- created to guide State task force AND remain permanent structure for community while strengthening tribal collaboration with state agency**
      - Determined by each nation/urban area- we have a suggested list of key people to engage on those task forces
        - Number and whom is the communities choice
      - Will then select 1-2 main reps to communicate with State task force
      - Will have quarterly meetings (via zoom) to network, share info, and continue working on issues of MMIW Task Force
        - STATE AGENCY, DOJ, AG, AND LEGISLATURES ALSO NEED TO BE ENGAGED IN THE QUARTERLY MEETINGS
      - ONCE A YEAR ALL MMIW LOCAL TASK FORCE, STATE LEGISLATURES, DOJ, AG, AND OTHER ENGAGED AGENCIES WILL MEET VIA IN PERSON CONFERENCE AROUND PROGRESS, NEEDS, AND ISSUES TO ADDRESS IN EFFORTS TO CREATE ONGOING MEANINGFUL COLLABORATION WITH TRIBAL NATIONS AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES-will continue after MMIW Task Force is dissolved
      - Resources should be provided to implement and maintain local task forces
        - Funding for initial set up and maintenance
        - Staffing

How the Task Force will execute its strategic plan must be connected to national and international work around MMIW, as it is a global issue that affects us locally. We must not only think in short-term efforts but also long-range efforts that solidify solutions to prevent violence against Indigenous women for the next 7 generations. Data collection can be used to help us find the scope of the issues, determine gaps, and guide preventative efforts. Data Sovereignty and ensuring that Tribal nations and Indigenous peoples control the data narrative are critical to addressing systemic issues that have caused and perpetuated the violence against Indigenous women.

While Data collection is a part of addressing the problem of MMIW it is certainly not the whole purpose in the creation of a task force. The creation of an Ecosystem of Care that addresses: root causes of MMIW, preventative measures to eliminate violence against Indigenous women, and responsive measures to violent crimes against indigenous women are key outcomes of the work of the task force.

An Ecosystem of Care will use indigenous models of care, explore institutional and Tribal relationships, and voice that MMIW is a crisis for all, not simply Indigenous peoples. So, both preventative systems and responsive systems that tend to (or have neglected to tend to) Indigenous women who experience gender-based violence; must be fully funded, sourced, strength-based, and respectful of Indigenous sovereignty. It is a model of care that holds legislatures, agencies, and institutions of power accountable to afford Indigenous women the same access to care, quality of care, justice, and protections to live a full and complete life across the life-span that the rest of society enjoy.

In addition to the asks of the MMIW Task Force Bill we must analyze the relationships between State/County/Tribal/Federal supportive systems such as: emergency response, safe spaces for DV/SA, access to legal representation for survivors, and grassroots and formal supportive services. Recruiting Indigenous led grassroots efforts addressing these issues that have working models in place are critical to successful task force creation. Law enforcement issues of non-responsiveness, respect of Tribal sovereignty, collaborative efforts of BIA and Tribal police, and jurisdictional issues of county/tribal/federal agency must also be examined within the Ecosystem of Care. The formation of an Ecosystem of Care, and exploration of the key components within it, are strategies to address the many issues that lead to the larger problem of MMIW. The state MMIW Task Force could rely on the local MMIW Task Forces (with funding) to thoroughly examine these areas of an Ecosystem of Care to ensure full representation of each area, whether urban, rural, or reservation. Reports generated from the local task forces, with guidance from Indigenous data efforts, would present recommendations to the State Task force that provide an accurate snapshot of all areas affected by MMIW. The State MMIW Task Force could then introduce:

- “Proposed institutional policies and practices that are effective in reducing gender violence and increasing the safety of indigenous women and girls”
- “Recommendations to eliminate violence against indigenous women and girls
- “Recommendations to help victims and communities heal from gender violence and against indigenous women and girls”

\*changed tribal woman and girls to indigenous women and girls—AB 548

## Key Components of an Ecosystem of Care:

### **Data Sovereignty -Indigenous Data Specialist to guide initial planning, collecting, and reporting of task force findings**

- The initial listening sessions could utilize real time data and survey to use community voice to drive the initiative and creation of solutions
- Collection Efforts
- Reporting to Tribal Nations and urban areas findings of the Task Force
- Use collective data to report to local and state task forces
- Use combined data to present solutions/report to tribal legislatures and task forces

### **Ecosystem of Care Issues-Examined through MMIW Task Force Work**

#### **Survivor response/preventative services- (grassroots and formal agency)**

- Safe spaces- safe homes
- Crisis response- crime victims, DV shelters, Police Dept., recovery support
- Grassroots efforts-mentors, elders, sweat lodge, support groups
- Advocacy-formal and informal
- Indigenous Wellness Groups – non-profits
- Access to original lands, foods, and languages for Indigenous Peoples
- Culture leaders, elders, traditional healers

#### **Policies, Institutions, Issues impacting violence against indigenous women**

- Incarcerated women-violence within system
- Foster care/child welfare
- Policing-funding – resourcing-
- Data tracking-storage -reporting
- Historical violence against Indigenous women
- Social Determinants of Health-access to /barriers to care
- DV/SA services-resources/ access to/ responsiveness
- Legal Representation- access to
- BIA/Tribal relationship
- Local/county/state police systems and relationships- under sourced
- Court Systems
- Human Trafficking
- Resource Extraction
- Training for Tribal and non-tribal courts around trauma, jurisdiction, and mental health

### **National Work Around MMIW**

- National listening sessions for Executive Task Force
- Planning for how our state/local task force findings will be influenced by National Efforts
- How can our voice/findings be heard at national level-engaging partners
- Data/reporting/prevention
- Justice/advocacy
- Creating a model that engages local, tribal, state, national , and international MMIW Work





### Tribal Rights to Self-Determine and Protect Indigenous Women, Water, and Mother Earth

The foundation of a successful Ecosystem of Care is each Tribal Nations right to self-determine through creating tribal codes, resolutions, and procedures that honor and protect Water, Mother Earth, and Indigenous women. Indigenous women are seed carriers, are acknowledged as caring for the water, and bringing forth the next generation. Water is our first home, it feeds us in mind, body, and spirit. The Earth is recognized as our First Mother, how she is treated is directly connected to the treatment of Indigenous women. Indigenous people's health is measured in connection to land and expressed in the well-being of Indigenous Matriarchs. It is then our responsibility to support efforts of Tribal Nations in the creation of efforts to protect Indigenous Women, Water, and Mother Earth to guarantee the health of Indigenous peoples 7 generations from now. Suggested actions for Tribal Nations to investigate, gather data on, check the current status of, and make plans for implementation are:

- Creation of tribal codes to prevent, protect, and serve survivors of violence
- Creation of Human Trafficking Tribal Codes, Services, and Preventative measures founded in culturally relevant actions
- Acknowledge and defend sacred sites, places of MMIW, and Waters
- Recognizing Rights of Nature
- Creation of legal representation codes for survivors of trafficking and gender-based crimes within reservation boundaries and unceded territories
- Creation of inter-tribal agreements to respect other nations rights to self-determine, codes, and resolutions
- Creation of codes to protect Indigenous women against non-native offenders within tribal courts
- Creation of codes to denounce resource extraction within tribal lands, due to increased acts of violence against Indigenous women and girls in these areas
- Support of Indigenous led grassroots efforts in the prevention, healing from, data collection, and research around issues of MMIW
- Creation of codes, services, and procedures for reducing, eliminating, and healing of trauma survivors of violence experience within the system, that can be founded in culture and utilizes land-based places of healing
- Support of Tribal Nations in State, National, and International efforts to effectively combat issues of MMIW
- Support the development of tribal codes to protect tribal communities and protocols for collaboration between tribal law enforcement and legal systems, state and county authorities.

### Outline of State Task Force- Created by State Legislatures/Agency-

- Who-determined by tribal information session/s and state legislatures/agency
- What-issues addressed
- When-timeline
- Purpose-outcomes desired
- Resources (staff and funding) provided by state legislatures
- Follow the recommendations of an Ecosystem of Care
- Indigenous consultation and consent





# Key Contacts

Listed Below are key grassroots, agencies, tribal advocates, legislatures, elders, and organizations to contact whom are actively engaged in this work. Tribal contacts must help to advise on when /how to engage key peoples, and proper protocols during those meetings. We have also listed some critical resources and efforts already underway addressing the issues of MMIW.

## Grassroots Leaders

Women's Leadership Cohort MMIW

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Woodland Women Group

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Bad River

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Oneida

Wise Youth

Kwin Smith

Phone: (920) -490-0627

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Family/Survivor

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Red Cliff

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Phone: 715-913-0055





# Key Contacts Continued

## Tribal Elders/Knowledge Holders

Determined and Recognized by each community

### Urban Areas

Milwaukee

Siobhan Marks

Email: smarks@ics-edu.org

Phone: (414)-719-0531

Madison

Native American Center for Health (UW-Madison)

Danielle Yancey

Email: dlyancey@wisc.edu

Phone: (608)-262-09802

Oneida

Kah^ta (Laura) Cornelius

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Wunk Sheek

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Website: <https://win.wisc.edu/organization/wunksheek>

Eau Claire- UW-Stout

Barbra Miller

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### Resources

MMIW Learning Collaborative

Kristin Welch

Email: kwelch@menomineerebuilders.org

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AIAI- American Indians Against Abuse

Pam Johnson

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Wise Women Oneida

Julia Mclester

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Phone: (920)- 490-0627

NOA - Native Organizers Alliance

Judith Le Blanc

Website: <http://nativeorganizing.org/>

SBI- Sovereign Bodies Institute

Website: <https://www.sovereign-bodies.org/>

### Tribal Legislatures

GLITC

Great Lakes Inter tribal Council

Report Accredited to the Collaborative Efforts of :  
Author: Kristin Welch

## Past, Present, and Future Indigenous Matriarchs

My mother Jamie Carroll, Grandmother Josephine Mandamin, my daughters Katelyne, Jamie, and Leilah

## Families and Survivors of MMIW and Gender Based Violence

## Women's Leadership Cohort MMIW

Cherie Thunder, Sara Wescott, Maria Haskins, Mary Webster, Colleen Dodge, Beth Waukechon

Renee Gralewicz and Lisa Hurst MMIW WI Bill Authors

Woodland Women's Group  
Rachel Fernandez

Allies and Partners  
WCASA

Hannah Schmidt -ESTER

Wisconsin Women's Policy Network

NOA Native Organizer Alliance- Judith Le Blanc

MMIW Art Work  
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Edited by:  
Gregory Hitch & Cherie Thunder

We also thank our Indigenous men and young men who are dedicated to reclaiming their role in protecting life, and whom have encouraged and supported us every step of the way.  
Anahkwet (Guy Reiter) , Tony Brown, Meingun Pamp, Hunter Peters, David Turney,  
and my son Waylon Welch





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