

# Looping in Native Communities

## SB312

Prepared for the State-Tribal Relations Interim Committee  
March 5, 2020

### **Current Montana Missing Indigenous Persons Task Force (MMIPTF) Members:**

1. Presiding Officer: Melissa Schlichting
2. Fort Peck: Patt Iron Cloud Runs Through
3. Fort Belknap: Vacant
4. Blackfeet: Mark Pollock
5. Rocky Boy: Vacant
6. Confederated Salish & Kootenai: LeEllen Bundy McLeod
7. Little Shell: Iris Kill Eagle
8. Northern Cheyenne: Brandi Beckman
9. Crow: Valerie Falls Down
10. Indian Health Services: Dr. Steve Williamson
11. U.S. Attorney's Office: Jared Cobell
12. Montana Highway Patrol: Derek Werner
13. Montana Dept. of Justice: Misty LaPlant
14. Coordinator: Tina Chamberlain

### **Activities of the MMIPTF**

- June 10, 2019 – Helena - Initial Task Force Meeting
- August 10, 2019 – Great Falls – Task Force Meeting
- September 27, 2019 – Billings - Task Force Meeting
- October 15, 2019 – Task Force Conference Call
- November 15, 2019 – Great Falls – Task Force Meeting
- December 19, 2019 – Task Force Conference Call
- February 6-7, 2020 – Billings – Task Force Meeting

### **Community Listening Sessions:**

- October 15, 2019 – Crow Agency
- November 12, 2019 – Crow Agency
- November 20, 2019 – Northern Cheyenne, Lame Deer
- December 3, 2019 – Blackfeet
- December 5, 2019 – Little Shell
- January 15, 2020 – Confederated Salish & Kootenai
- January 22, 2020 – Missoula Urban Indian Center/Payne Center
- February 6, 2020 – Billings Urban Indian/DOJ Event/Billings City College

### **Trainings/Events:**

- June 12, 2019 – Helena – Missing Persons Training
- October 16, 2019 – Billings - Missing Persons Training
- October 24, 2019 – American Indian Tribal Education Consortium Meeting – Great Falls
- November 6, 2019 – Diverse U/University of Montana - Tabled MMIW event
- November 20, 2019 – Gallatin Co HT Task Force Meeting – Bozeman

### **Concerns from Community Listening Sessions:**

1. Limited law enforcement resources – lack of adequate personnel

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2. Lack of standardized protocols when person is reported missing
3. Lack of communication:
  - a. Between law enforcement and families
  - b. Between agencies – law enforcement and child protective services
4. Lack of accountability of system-based agencies

### **Proposed recommendations for solutions:**

1. Missing Persons Response Teams – similar to child abduction response teams
  - a. Team Coordinator – understands the tribal/non-tribal agencies involved; connection to law enforcement with ability to determine scope of how the person went missing and when to call in appropriate resources
  - b. Family Liaison – acts as buffer with media, communicates any information from law enforcement, provides resources and referrals (i.e. mental health services, tribal healer, spiritual leader)
  - c. Search and Rescue
    - i. Volunteer Search Coordinator
    - ii. Mobile Command Unit
    - iii. Resources: ATVs, drones, dogs, helicopters, safety officers, thermal imaging equipment
    - iv. Food and lodging, clothing and gear
2. Implement Missing Persons Investigators to assist on the ground
3. Missing Indigenous Person Review Team – based on Montana Domestic Violence Fatality Review Commission and Native American Domestic Violence Fatality Review Commission
  - a. Identify gaps in Montana’s state and tribal systems for finding missing Native Americans
  - b. Identify ways to improve multi-agency coordination
  - c. Identify recommendations to the Legislature to improve results in missing person cases
4. Continue the work of the MMIP Task Force and continued funding for the LINC program

### **Looping in Native Communities Grant Program**

1. Incorporated language from SB312 to ensure project meets statutory requirements in RFP
2. Informed Tribal College Presidents of funding opportunity
3. Task Force approved solicitation language on October 15, 2019
4. Released solicitation on November 1, 2019
5. Application deadline on December 13, 2019 – received no applications
6. Task Force approved extended deadline on December 19, 2019
7. Revised application deadline on January 25, 2010 – received one application
  - a. Blackfeet Community College
8. Task Force reviewed and scored application; voted to award grant funds to the applicant

### **Next steps:**

1. Meet with the project team at the tribal college; provide any essential training; provide technical assistance for grant implementation and management
2. Disburse funds to Blackfeet Community College by March 15, 2020
3. Required monthly reporting from BFCC to Montana DOJ
4. Development of database and website by June 1, 2020
5. Marketing, outreach, and training by August 30

Prepared by Tina Chamberlain, MDOJ/DCI, LINC Coordinator