



Office of the Liaison for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives (OMMIR) Meeting Notes

Community Volunteer Advisory Board (CVAB) Quarterly Meeting
Friday, April 11th, 10:00am - 12:00pm

In attendance:

Amy Barcenas
Chief Mike Barrow
Daisy Bluestar
Phillip Gover
Cindy Hayes
Jenifer Lewis
Raven Payment
Gina Roanhorse

Monycka Snowbird
Brian Wadsworth
Rick Waters
Brett Williams
Jae Dee Wood
Meskee Yatsayte
Josh Player
Koralene Tapoof
Reycita Billie

Division of Criminal Justice (DCJ) Staff in attendance:

Melody Delmar, OMMIR Director
Matt Lunn, DCJ Director
Chris Lobanov-Rostovsky, DCJ Deputy Director
Ben Nichols, DCJ Director of Operations
Leah Swenson, OMMIR Program Assistant

Meeting Convened: 10:00 am

Invocation | *Cindy Hayes*

Cindy Hayes, the sister of Leon N. Hayes, shared the story of Leon's case and how she has advocated for him along the way. Leon, a member of the Diné (Navajo) Nation, was last seen in Shiprock, NM on Feb. 1, 2022. Leon's clan is Naakai (Mexican), born for Ta'neesahnii (Tangle); his maternal grandfathers are Naakai (Mexican), and his paternal grandfathers are To aheadliinii (Water Flow Together). Cindy continues to advocate for justice for Leon.

Welcome and DCJ Updates | *Matt Lunn*

DCJ Director Matt Lunn gave a brief overview of the new strategic plan for DCJ which is comprised of three strategic pillars:

- Elevating the voices of, and being responsive to, all who call Colorado home
- Focusing on recruitment and retention of staff
- Enhancing collaboration in public safety

Director Lunn also shared an update on federal funding for the division, noting that at this time, DCJ's federal funding has not been negatively impacted by recent federal grant restrictions stemming

from the current presidential administration. The legislative session is underway, and despite a constricted state budget this year, DCJ is advocating for necessary funding and is hopeful regarding the budget. No questions or comments were posed from the group.

National MEP Alert Presentation | *Brian Wadsworth*

Brian Wadsworth, Native Public Media COO, presented updates about the Missing and Endangered Persons (MEP) event code. Brian provided an overview of how current state alerts work, along with the Integrated Public Alert Warning System (IPAWS) and how it communicates alerts with the FCC, FEMA, and local (Tribal, federal, state, or territorial) authorities.

- The new MEP code was adopted by the FCC in August 2024, and will be activated by Fall 2025.
- While the code was designed to address the MMIR crisis, the code can be used for anyone who has been reported missing.
- Native Public Media has developed an MEP working group, whose focus is to coordinate the launch of the MEP code, propose criteria for States and Tribes, and work with Tribes to become alerting authorities.

Brian fielded questions from the group.

- Question from Monycka Snowbird: Colorado has the MIPA (Missing Indigenous Person Alert) code currently. Would the MEP alert code be activated in Colorado in addition to the MIPA, or would the MEP not be activated in Colorado because the MIPA is already in place?
 - Answer: Since Colorado already has an alert code, the MEP would be mostly duplicative. One challenge that would arise from not activating the MEP code would be data collection.
- Question from Melody Delmar: What other states, task forces, or MMIR offices are included in the MEP conversation, given that states have their own alert systems, and sometimes missing individuals travel across state lines into states that may or may not have alerts?
 - Answer: National Public Media is spreading the word as far as possible. For example, a presentation was given to the Cheyenne Arapaho MMIP Chapter, and at the National Amber Alert Symposium, along with other conferences. It will take all the word of mouth possible to get the word out about MEP.

For more information, visit www.nativepublicmedia.org or email Brian at bwadsworth@nativepublicmedia.org

Community Presentation | *MMIR Task Force of Colorado*

MMIR Task Force of Colorado members Monycka Snowbird (Ojibwe, Program Director Haseya Advocate Program), Raven Payment (Ojibwe/Kanien'keha:ka, Co-Chair Denver Indian Commission), and Daisy Bluestar (Southern Ute, Executive Director Native Love) outlined searches, events, partnerships, and other work they have been engaged in at the community level.

- HB 25-1036, if passed, will create an MMIR awareness Colorado license plate. In addition to raising awareness and visibility for MMIR issues, any funds generated from the license plate will be used to support families of missing or murdered Indigenous relatives in Colorado. On May 5th - National Awareness Day for Missing or Murdered Indigenous Women & Girls - a call for designs for the license plate will be released.
- Events surrounding National Awareness Day for MMIR:
 - May 3: Walk / Run & Prayer Vigil in Durango

- May 4: Walk / Run & Prayer Vigil in Colorado Springs
 - Other events:
 - Apr 27: Nahui Ollin Spiritual Run Pozole Fundraiser in Denver
 - Jul 11: MMIP Walk and Gathering in Towaoc
 - [Flyers for the events can be found on the MMIR Task Force of Colorado website.](#)
- The Task Force participated in a search for the missing Indigenous woman known as Lil' Bit.
- Task Force members have been boothing/tabling at powwows and events.
- Research has been a focus for the Task Force recently, and therefore updating data and statistics along with newly added cases.
- The Denver Police Department was able to correct incorrect information regarding MMIR cases at the request of the Task Force and CBI.
- The Task Force has been collaborating with MMIR leaders and grassroots groups across states to help with cases.
- 4 Corners K-9 Search and Rescue will be hosting a training for the community on Apr. 19th in Ignacio to help families understand and engage in the search process.

Community Volunteer Advisory Board (CVAB) Report Update | Melody Delmar

Melody shared that the CVAB legislative report has been completed and is awaiting being finalized by executive leadership, and highlighted a few key points in the report:

- The OMMIR was able to be engaged in over 100 events in the past year, and hopefully even more in the coming year as the office is staffed
- The OMMIR has been gathering input from CVAB members to build a three-year strategic plan specific to the OMMIR office. Those conversations will continue and more opportunities to share thoughts with the office are forthcoming.
- Additionally, initial conversations regarding MMIR Peace Officer Standards & Training (POST) have begun, with plans to collaborate on this with retired tribal prosecutor and founder of Native Search Solutions Mark Pooley.

Melody fielded questions from the group.

- Question from Monycka Snowbird: Since the existing POST training is questionable, and many officers have already completed it, is there a way to ensure that all officers take the “new and improved” POST training when it is available? Or will it be given only to new officers?
 - Answer: POST training is for new cadets, usually. However, Melody is engaged mostly with the MMIR aspect of the updated training, and there may still be a way to get that portion to existing officers.
- Question from Chief Mike Barrow: Would it be possible for Chief Barrow to be involved in endorsing the training and ensuring that the investigative responsibilities of officers and their responsibilities to families are made very clear?
 - Answer: Yes, Chief Barrow’s expertise and insights would be welcome and greatly appreciated.
- Question from Reycita Billie: POST training is crucial, but another aspect is the lack of easy access to Victim’s Advocates, leaving families to navigate systems on their own

without funds. Could this be worked into the training, along with empathy training for the officers?

- The POST training updates will aim to be culturally appropriate, instilling empathy for families and an understanding of how complicated the cases can be.

Other Announcements & Closing | *Melody Delmar*

- Melody shared that the OMMIR partnered with CU Denver in March to host an MMIR awareness event that featured a panel discussion featuring Melody, Jolene Holgate (Diné, Executive Director of the Denver Indian Family Resource Center), and Mattee Jim (Zuni People Clan and born for the Towering House people clan, Diné, Advocate & Activist for LGBT rights and HIV Prevention). The event was attended by both CU students and the public, and closed with a powerful speech by Vice Chancellor of the Center for Campus Access and Engagement at CU Denver, Antonio Farias.
- The legislative report will be released as soon as it is approved.
- National Awareness Day for MMIR is on May 5th, 2025.
- An overview of this meeting will be sent to the group within a week via email. If there are any other updates that have not been shared, please let Melody know so that it can be included in that communication.
- The next quarterly meeting will be held on Friday, July 11th, 2025 at 10:00 am to 12:00 pm. To sign up and receive meeting materials and updates, [please fill out the short meeting request form using this link.](#)

With no further questions or updates, Melody closed the meeting with gratitude to everyone for their patience with technical difficulties during the call.

Meeting Adjourned: 11:20 am