



# 2023 NATIONAL WEEK OF ACTION FOR MMIW

## 2023 National Week of Action for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW)

### Social Media Toolkit

#### QUICK LINKS

- [Shareable Graphics](#)
- [Sample Posts](#)
- [Download Restoration Special Edition on MMIW](#)

#### BACKGROUND

What is the National Week of Action for MMIW?	2
<i>Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA)</i>	3
<i>Bridging Agency Data Gaps (BADGES) for Native Communities Act</i>	4

#### SOCIAL MEDIA

Hashtags to Use	6
Shareable Graphics Folder	6
Sample Post/Tweet Language	7
MMIW Awareness	7
FVPSA	8
BADGES	9



## **BACKGROUND**

### ***What is the National Week of Action for MMIW?***

In response to the family's actions and demands for justice following the disappearance and murder of Hanna Harris at the Northern Cheyenne Reservation in 2013, the Montana Congressional Delegation led the work to pass the first Senate resolution declaring May 5th as the National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Native Women and Girls (MMIWG) in 2017.

Despite this declaration on May 5th, 2017, Native women continue to go missing and are murdered at alarming rates. The ongoing injustice of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW) is the culmination of a spectrum of violence and neglect perpetrated disproportionately against Indigenous women—it reflects the intersection of genocide, colonization, and violence against women, including but not limited to domestic violence, sexual assault, forced sterilization, and trafficking. These crimes occur due to a long history of government laws, policies, practices, and programs that continue to this day and create conditions that increase Indigenous women's vulnerability.

In response, Native families and Indigenous communities across Alaska, the lower 48 states, and Hawaii are calling for justice and reforms to dismantle the systemic barriers impacting the safety of Native women and to increase support for protections as defined by Indigenous voices, languages, and teachings. These Indigenous calls against such violence date as far back as first contact with Western governments and are reflected in Indigenous acts of resistance and self-defense throughout history. Turning our grief into action, we call upon federal, state, Tribal, local, and international policymakers to address the foundational reforms required to address MMIW beyond individual cases.

We urge the United States, Tribal, state, and local governments to reaffirm and support Indigenous protective systems outlined by our national partner collective in our [\*6-Point Action Plan: Restoring Safety of Indigenous Women\*](#). The crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women must continue to be brought into the public's awareness to increase the accountability of social, health, educational, military, religious, political, economic, and government systems and responses.

We call on the mainstream and local media to avoid harm and be culturally sensitive and transparent when building relationships with families impacted by MMIW. If they cause harm unintentionally, we call on the media to take immediate steps to apologize and change so as not to repeat harmful practices. Indigenous women and girls deserve to have their humanity respected when the media share their stories, and their families must be treated with the utmost respect and compassion. Missing and murdered Indigenous women and their families deserve justice and to have their truths told.

The National Partners Work Group on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW) and the MMIW Family Advisors have organized a National Week of Action (May 1-May 7, 2023) to call the nation and the world to action in honor of missing and murdered Indigenous women. This week-long campaign provides a process for inspiring public healing and compelling accountability for this injustice and honors those who have gone missing or been murdered. It is essential on the broadest level to acknowledge the historic and ongoing, current human suffering and death that global colonization has brought to Indigenous women.

Systemic changes are needed across all systems and sectors of societies—including the public (governmental), private (business/corporations), nonprofit, educational, military, religious, health care, and mainstream media sectors.

We must tell policymakers at the federal, Tribal, state, local, and international levels and communities around the world that enough is enough. Join our united call to action and help grow the groundswell of our grassroots movement to hold ourselves and all systems and sectors of our societies accountable!

Violence against Indigenous women is preventable. We call on all those concerned for the safety of Native women to organize at the local, Tribal, state, national, and international levels to support the [2023 National Week of Action for MMIW](#) culminating in a National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women on May 5, 2023.

*(Adapted from “A Call to Action”, [Restoration Special Edition on MMIW](#).)*

## ***Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA)***

Administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, FVPSA is the only federal funding source supporting immediate shelter and supportive services and is the primary source of funding for these services for federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native Tribes. FVPSA mandates that “not less than 10 percent” of the annual appropriation shall be used to support Indian tribes to achieve the purposes of the legislation.

FVPSA provides core funding for Indian Tribes to offer a spectrum of services, including shelter, safety planning, counseling, legal services, childcare and services for children, career planning, life skills training, community education and public awareness, and other necessities for victims of domestic violence, such as clothing, food, and transportation. And yet, the critical needs of survivors continue to outpace FVPSA-funded services’ capacity and reach, particularly in Tribal communities where Native women face a disproportionate rate of domestic violence. Currently, fewer than half of all federally recognized Tribes receive FVPSA funding.

Since 2015, a coalition of national Native organizations—including the National Indigenous Women’s Resource Center, Alaska Native Women’s Resource Center, National Congress of American Indians, StrongHearts Native Helpline, and the Alliance of Tribal Coalitions to End Violence (ATCEV)—has worked closely with congressional champions to draft and introduce an enhanced version of a bill to reauthorize FVPSA.

On April 13, 2023, the *Family Violence Prevention and Services Improvement Act* was reintroduced in the House. It has yet to be reintroduced in the Senate. We urge Congress to swiftly reintroduce and reauthorize FVPSA this year.

The FVPSA reauthorization bill would expand grant programs and make many needed improvements so that more survivors have access to support and safety, including:

- Given the unique federal trust responsibility to Indian Tribes, adjustment of the funding distribution formula to increase the amount that Tribes receive from 10% to 12.5%;
- Dedicated funding for nonprofit Tribal coalitions to provide culturally-appropriate technical assistance and training to Tribes;
- Permanent funding for the national Indian domestic violence hotline;

- Permanent funding for the Alaska Native Tribal Resource Center on Domestic Violence to reduce disparities facing Native victims; and
- Permanent funding for the Native Hawaiian Resource Center on Domestic Violence.

### *How To Take Action:*

During the 2023 Week of Action for MMIW, we must call on the House and Senate to enact meaningful change through the reauthorization of FVPSA with the crucial Tribal improvements.

[Take Action Here](#) by urging your Representatives to reauthorize FVPSA!

## ***BADGES for Native Communities Act***

Tribes and Tribal law enforcement face significant barriers in their efforts to address the crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women and ensure public safety, including a significant lack of access to resources and criminal databases. The *Bridging Agency Data Gaps (BADGES) for Native Communities Act* (S. 465/H.R. 1292) would help to assist Tribal law enforcement who are working to make Native communities safer by promoting recruitment and retention of federal law enforcement, addressing inefficiencies in and Tribal access to federal missing persons data systems, and improving coordination efforts on MMIW cases.

The bipartisan *BADGES for Native Communities Act* includes provisions to do the following:

- Increase Tribal access to the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs) by requiring Tribal facilitators to conduct ongoing Tribal outreach and serve as a point of contact for Tribes and law enforcement agencies, as well as conduct training and information gathering to improve the resolution of missing persons cases.
- Require a report on Tribal law enforcement needs, including staffing, replacement, and repairs for corrections facilities, infrastructure and capital for tribal police and court facilities, and emergency communication technology.
- Allow the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) to conduct its own background checks for law enforcement officer applicants in order to improve officer recruitment.
- Establish a grant program to support states, Tribes, and Tribal organizations in the coordination of efforts related to missing and murdered persons cases and sexual assault cases.

- Evaluate federal law enforcement evidence collection, handling, and processing crucial to securing the conviction of violent offenders.
- Ensure BIA officers and Tribal police have access to culturally appropriate mental health and wellness programs.

### *How To Take Action:*

During the 2023 Week of Action for MMIW, we must call on the House and Senate to enact meaningful change through the swift passage of the *BADGES for Native Communities Act*.

### **NIWRC's Quorum: BADGES Campaign**

Tell Congress to act swiftly to pass the *BADGES for Native Communities Act* to ensure Tribal justice systems have the resources and support needed to protect Tribal communities.

## »» **Social Media / Web**

NIWRC maintains social media accounts on the following platforms:

- Facebook: [facebook.com/niwrc](https://facebook.com/niwrc)
- Twitter: [@niwrc](https://twitter.com/niwrc)
- Instagram: [@niwrc](https://www.instagram.com/niwrc)
- 2023 National Week of Action: [www.niwrc.org/mmiwnatlweek23](https://www.niwrc.org/mmiwnatlweek23)

### ***Hashtags to use throughout the week:***

[#MMIWActionNow](#)

[#NoMoreStolenSisters](#)

[#MMIW](#)

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### ***Shareable Graphics***

[Public Google Folder](#)

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## Sample Post/Tweet Language

### MMIW Awareness

<p>1. Thursday, May 5th is the National Day of Awareness for #MMIW. Wear RED and share your photo with us!</p> <p>Make sure to use hashtags #MMIW, #MMIWActionNow and #NoMoreStolenSisters and tag @niwrc in your posts!</p> <p> niwrc.org/mmiw</p>
<p>2. May 1 - May 7, 2023 is the National Week of Action for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW). How are you taking action this week?</p> <p>See NIWRC's calendar of virtual events for ways to participate: niwrc.org/mmiwnatlweek23</p> <p> #MMIW, #MMIWActionNow and #NoMoreStolenSisters</p>
<p>3. Want to learn more about the crisis of Missing and Murdered Women and how to take action?</p> <p>Download Restoration Magazine's Special Edition on MMIW: <a href="https://n8ve.net/MTWPD">https://n8ve.net/MTWPD</a></p> <p>#MMIW #MMIWActionNow #NoMoreStolenSisters</p>
<p>4. The crisis of violence against Indigenous communities must end. It's time to stand up for Native families and relatives who are constantly left behind.</p> <p>Register for the virtual or in-person 5k, 10k, or Half Marathon! GO TO: <a href="https://events.elitefeats.com/23justice">events.elitefeats.com/23justice</a></p> <p>#MMIW #MMIWActionNow #NoMoreStolenSisters</p>
<p>5. May 1 - May 7, 2023 is the National Week of Action for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW). Join us in saying enough is enough. No more stolen sisters.</p> <p>GO TO: <a href="https://niwrc.org/mmiw">niwrc.org/mmiw</a></p> <p>#MMIW #MMIWActionNow #NoMoreStolenSisters</p>



## FVPSA Related

1. More than 1 in 3 Native female victims of violence face unmet service needs. The current #FVPSA funding formula leaves many smaller Tribes unable to provide culturally-based advocacy and supportive services for Native women.

The crisis of #MMIW is an effect of the reality that Native women are disproportionately impacted by violence but receive inadequate support during crisis situations. It is crucial we reauthorize #FVPSA to ensure Native victims have increased access to life-saving services.

Tell your Representatives to #PassFVPSA and increase the Tribal set-aside.

#MMIWActionNow #MMIW #NoMoreStolenSisters #TribalFVPSA  
#FVPSAReauthNow

2. Indigenous women face some of the highest rates of domestic violence, yet there is a distinct gap in the number of culturally based services available for Native women. This gap contributes to the high rates of missing and murdered Indigenous women.

The Family Violence and Prevention Services Act (FVPSA) provides essential funding for advocacy, safe shelter and supportive services, yet fewer than half of 574 federally recognized Indian Tribes receive FVPSA funding.

Congress must reauthorize FVPSA with dedicated funding for Tribal coalitions so that Native women can access the critical resources they need! Take action: <https://niwrc.quorum.us/campaign/47536/>

#MMIWActionNow #MMIW #NoMoreStolenSisters #TribalFVPSA  
#FVPSAReauthNow

3. The availability of a Native-centered resource can make the difference between a relative seeking safety or going missing.

#FVPSA must pass with permanent funding for culturally-specific services, including the national Indian domestic violence hotline, the Alaska Native Tribal Resource Center on Domestic Violence, and the Native Hawaiian Resource Center on Domestic Violence.

Tell Congress to #PassFVPSA! <https://niwrc.quorum.us/campaign/47536/>

#MMIWActionNow #MMIW #NoMoreStolenSisters #TribalFVPSA  
#FVPSAReauthNow

## BADGES Related

<p>1. Tell Congress to act swiftly to pass the BADGES for Native Communities Act to ensure Tribal justice systems have the resources and support needed to protect Tribal communities. <a href="https://niwrc.quorum.us/campaign/45991/">https://niwrc.quorum.us/campaign/45991/</a></p> <p>#PassBADGES #NoMoreStolenSisters</p>
<p>2. The BADGES for Native Communities Act would address the barriers to justice in Indian Country by improving data sharing and communication between Tribal, federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies, providing resources to address the crisis of #MMIW.</p> <p>#PassBADGES #NoMoreStolenSisters</p>
<p>3. The unmet public safety needs in Indian Country cause Tribal communities and citizens to be even more vulnerable to violence and leave Tribal law enforcement without the resources necessary to pursue justice.</p> <p>We must #PassBadges. Enough is enough.</p>