



TRIBAL LAW AND POLICY INSTITUTE

Serving Native Communities Since 1996

8229 Santa Monica Blvd., Suite 201 West Hollywood, CA 90046

Telephone: 323.650.5467 | Fax: 888.233.7383

Tribal Law and Policy Institute - www.home.TLPI.org | Tribal Court Clearinghouse - www.TLPI.org

Tribal Law Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/tlpiorg>

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President

Abby Abinanti (*Yurok*)

Vice President

David Raasch (*Stockbridge-Munsee*)

Secretary/ Treasurer

Margrett Oberly Kelley (*Osage/Comanche*)

Lucille Echohawk (*Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma*)

Michael Jackson (*Tlingit/Haida*)

Naomi Miguel (*Tohono O'odham*)

Ed Reina (*Pima/Maricopa*)

MANAGEMENT

Executive Director

Jerry Gardner (*Cherokee*)

Deputy Director

Heather Valdez Freedman

Operations Director

Jessica Harjo (*San Carlos Apache*)

Program Director

Heather Torres (*San Ildefonso Pueblo/Diné*)

PROGRAMMATIC STAFF

Stephanie Autumn (*Hopi/Irish*)

Nan Benally (*Dine*)

Jeremy Braithwaite

Grace Carson (*Yavapai*)

Bonnie Clairmont (*Ho-Chunk*)

Chantel Cloud (*Southern Ute*)

Chiara Cournoyer Bruguier

Elizabeth Deserly (*Kickapoo*)

Suzanne Garcia

Jordan Gibson

Chia Halpern Beetso (*Spirit Lake Dakota*)

Alyssa Harrold

Ethleen Iron Cloud-Two Dogs (*Oglala Sioux/Crow*)

Angie Juárez-Monger

Cori Matthew (*Salish/Blackfeet*)

Teresa Nord (*Diné*)

Kristina Pacheco (*Laguna Pueblo*)

Catherine Retana (*Embera/Pomo*)

Patricia Sekaquaptewa (*Hopi*)

Lonna Stevens (*Tlingit/ Sisseton Wahpeton Dakota*)

Kelly Stoner (*Cherokee*)

Laura Smith

Erin Thin Elk (*Rosebud Sioux Tribe*)

Deb Tobacco (*Oglala Sioux*)

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

Maria Alidio

Chelsea Begay (*Diné*)

Abby Chavez

Hannah Ellman

Marlon Footracer (*Diné*)

Antonia Medina (*Diné*)

Janice Thompson (*Diné*)

Cindy Wlasowich (*Sincagu/Oglala*)

FINANCIAL STAFF

Chad Jackson (*Cocopah*)

Uno Lawthong

COMPUTER TECH/WEBMASTER

Lou Sgroi

April 30, 2024

To Our Circle of Supporters,

For this May 5th, [National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous People](#), the [Tribal Law and Policy Institute](#) (TLPI) writes to express our deepest condolences to the families of all those who continue to be impacted by the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Peoples (MMIP) epidemic. TLPI stands in solidarity with all those calling for peace and justice for their missing and murdered loved ones and the [National Week of Action \(April 29 - May 5, 2024\) to call the nation and the world to action in honor of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Relatives](#).

TLPI is a Native American operated and owned non-profit organized to design and deliver education, research, training, and technical assistance programs that promote the enhancement of justice in Indian country. Our mission is to enhance and strengthen tribal sovereignty and justice while honoring community values, protecting rights, and promoting well-being. Our vision is to empower Native communities to create and control their own institutions for the benefit/welfare of all community members now and for future generations. We believe that all governments must be accountable for the safety of their citizens and that protection of citizens should be honored and upheld by all governments. Although not all issues can be solved by collaboration, there is no denying that all problems can be improved upon by collaboration including responses to the MMIP epidemic.

In this spirit of collaboration, TLPI uplifts a few selected recommendations from the Not Invisible Act Commission captured in the recent November 2023 report, "[Not One More](#)."

- Federal government to declare a Decade of Action and Healing dedicated to addressing this crisis effectively. This Decade of Action and Healing should involve partnership with Tribal communities, Tribal governments, and relevant organizations, focusing on improving safety, justice, prevention, support services, and healing for American Indian/Alaska Native communities through increased funding, policy reform, action-oriented programs, and training and technical assistance.

- The federal government must honor its trust and treaty obligations by funding Tribal programs at levels appropriate to meet the needs in Tribal communities for criminal justice, public safety, victim services, public health, and other key infrastructure.
- To bring much needed stability, federal funding for Tribal governments should be made mandatory rather than discretionary and should transition away from competitive grants in favor of more flexible, and reliable formula funding.
- The federal government must provide consistent and predictable public safety and Tribal justice funding for all Tribes, whether located in states where PL-280 or similar laws are in effect or not.
- PL-280 must be amended to allow any Tribe, upon their choice, to choose to opt out of state jurisdiction.
- The Bureau of Indian Affairs must develop a plan to end its long-standing policy of not providing certain Public Safety & Justice funding to Tribes in PL-280 jurisdictions without reducing funding to other Tribes.
- Congress must take decisive action to overturn the *Oliphant* decision and address the sentencing limitations of the Indian Civil Rights Act.
- Congress must enact legislation addressing the *Castro Huerta* decision.
- Department of Justice, through Savanna's Act authorities, must develop best practices for local, state, and Tribal law enforcement on how to engage with other jurisdictions and be responsive to missing persons reports wherever they might be filed, wherever the missing person may have been last seen, and whoever the missing person may be.
- Department of Justice must create an interstate, interjurisdictional cold case network for the purposes of identifying unidentified, deceased Native peoples and missing Native peoples wherever the body is found and regardless of where the missing persons' report was filed.
- Department of Justice must support the expansion of state and local level anti-trafficking task forces to include Tribal MMIP and human trafficking chapters, other community groups, and Tribal law enforcement.
- The Bureau of Indian Affairs Missing and Murdered Unit must annually compile, maintain, update, and distribute to the Tribes a listing of all Native individuals who are actively missing and known to the Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs), National Crime Information Center, and any other sources. It shall also be distributed to tribally based and Native-led community organizations, U.S. Attorneys' Offices, state law enforcement, and others as appropriate.

TLPI encourages you to read the full report to learn more about the depth and scope of the Not Invisible Act Commission's recommendations. Additional information on the topic of addressing the MMIP epidemic and promoting the safety of Native people can be found at:

- Indian Law and Order Commission, "[A Roadmap for Making Native America Safer](#)" (November 2013)
- Attorney General's Advisory Committee on American Indian/Alaska Native Children Exposed to Violence: [Ending Violence so Children Can Thrive](#) (November 2014)

- Seattle Indian Health Board, Urban Indian Health Institute, “[Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Report: A snapshot of data from 71 urban cities in the United States](#)” (November 2018)
- Presidential Task Force on Missing and Murdered American Indians and Alaska Natives, “[When a Loved One Goes Missing: Resources for Families of Missing American Indian and Alaska Native Adults](#)” (November 2021)
- [Section 4\(c\)\(2\)\(C\) Response of the Departments of Justice and the Interior to Not One More: Findings and Recommendations of the Not Invisible Act Commission Pursuant to Public Law 116-166](#) (March 2024)
- [Monthly NamUs Case Reports](#) including Tribal cases ([March 2024](#))

In community,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jerry Gardner', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jerry Gardner
Executive Director