

**Operation Lady Justice January 28, 2021 Meeting**  
**Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons Initiative Tribal Community Response Plan Pilot**  
**Project**

Lisa Mantel:

Okay, we're going to go ahead and get started. Everybody and welcome to the first in a series of discussions on the crisis of missing or murdered American Indians and Alaska Natives. Again, my name is Lisa Mantel and I'm the Deputy Director of Technical Assistance at the Police Executive Research Forum, and I'll be helping to facilitate today's session.

Lisa Mantel:

I know many of us have been using Zoom for the past several months, but I would like to review the logistics before we start today's presentation. Many of you joined with your camera off and your audio muted. If you do unmute yourself at any time, please remember to remute yourself after speaking, so we can keep background noise to a minimum. If you're joining through your phone and you don't have a dedicated mute button, press star six. Please keep your phone muted during the presentation. And if you have to leave a us for any reason, please don't put us on hold. If you do, we might hear hold music if your organization has that.

Lisa Mantel:

To avoid an echo, please use headphones or a headset if you're able to. If you're on the phone, please turn your computer speakers all the way down to avoid an echo. To see your control panel, hover your mouse at the bottom of the screen, and there you can see chat and the other participants using those controls. If you have a question, please type it into the chat window and we will be monitoring this throughout the call. You can also click the raise hand tool, which is accessed by opening the participants window.

Lisa Mantel:

This presentation is being recorded and we plan to share the video and audio on the Operation Lady Justice website in the near future. If your computer audio isn't working or it's cutting out or skipping, it's possibly due to an unstable internet connection. If this happens, we recommend that you connect using the phone option instead of your computer audio, and I've added the call in information to the chat window for folks who need to switch their audio. If the presentation slides freeze or they don't advance, again, this might be caused by an unstable or slow internet connection, so try leaving the room and then reentering. If you're joining by audio only, you can follow along with the presentation slides that were emailed earlier today. I also uploaded the file to the chat window for those who might not have received it.

Lisa Mantel:

And now, I'd like to welcome our first speaker, Matt Lysakowski from the Department of Justice Community Oriented Policing Services. Matt.

Matt Lysakowski:

Thanks, Lisa. Welcome everyone. On behalf of our Acting Director of the COPS Office, Rob Chapman, I want to welcome everyone to this session. I see some familiar names and faces out there, so welcome to those folks who joined us last year for our Tribal law enforcement engagement sessions around this issue. For those who weren't able to join us last year, we hosted four sessions over the summer to talk about the crisis of missing and murdered indigenous persons, including a section on the challenges, a discussion of the model protocols and procedures. And we also had discussions with the NamUs folks and some victims services presentations was our last session last year. So we're looking forward to engagements again this year and want to do some brief introductions here for those that are going to be presenting on the call.

Matt Lysakowski:

In addition to myself, we have Marcia Good from Operation Lady Justice. And we have Ernie Weyand from the Attorney General's MMIP initiative, and he is the MMIP coordinator for the U.S. Attorney's Office in Montana. And I think we probably have a few more folks than we could probably get to in attendee introductions. So I see over 56 or so people now. So I think probably the most efficient way is to just introduce yourself in the chat, if you are using your computer to join. And if you do wish to ask a question at any point, just let us know who you are and before you ask your question, and I think that will probably be the most efficient way to do introductions. Go ahead and do the next slide, Lisa. Thanks.

Matt Lysakowski:

So today this is our first session. We're going to do four of these sessions again this year. This is our first one, and we're going to cover a few different things today. Sort of a recap of Operation Lady Justice and the Attorney General's MMIP initiative. So what we've done over the last year in 2020, and a little bit about where we're headed in 2021, Ernie is going to talk about the Tribal community response plan pilot sites that are ongoing, that he and his other coordinators are implementing at the present time. And then we'll have some open time at the end for discussion and Q&A. Next slide, Lisa.

Matt Lysakowski:

So the purpose of our Tribal engagements, obviously the COPS office is supporting Tribal law enforcement through not only our grants and technical assistance opportunities, but through engagements like this, where we like to bring Tribal law enforcement together with our Federal and other partners and discuss important issues of the day. And for these sessions, we're focusing on the missing murdered American Indians and Alaska Natives issues. And as I mentioned, we're going to have four sessions throughout the course of this year, with today's on Operation Lady Justice and the MMIP Initiative. And then we're going to have three other discussions throughout the year, and we'll send out invitations to all those as they get near. They're kind of spread out over the course of the year.

Matt Lysakowski:

And right now what our idea for topics for those sessions and these, these could be in flux. We may adjust these as we go along and see kind of what's coming up in the near term. But for the next session, we're hoping to focus on training opportunities, alerting authorities and the Tribal Access Program. And then our third session, we're thinking of focusing on volunteer engagement. There's a new training curriculum that the COPS Office is sponsoring through our collaborative reform initiative. And we want to talk about that volunteer engagement program and other technical assistance opportunities. And then our fourth and final session will be on funding and resources to address missing and murder issues. And also a wrap-up on the Tribal Community Response Plans. After the pilot sites are over, we'll have those out in the field and I think can share the final version of those and talk about how you all might be able to use those in your agencies.

Matt Lysakowski:

So again today, we're going to go over Operation Lady Justice and the MMIP Initiatives, and Marcia is going to be first up to talk about Operation Lady Justice.

Marcia Good:

Thank you, Matt. Can everybody hear me okay?

Matt Lysakowski:

Yes.

Marcia Good:

Okay. We'll go ahead and talk a little bit about Operation Lady Justice's first year. It's hard to believe that that has gone by so fast because there's a significant amount to do. So the first year of Operation Lady Justice ended on November 26th of 2020, so we are several months into our second year. The Task Force was required to do a number of different things under the Executive Order 13898 that set forth the exact work requirements for us to accomplish. The first one centered around listening and meeting. Basically the requirements were to conduct appropriate consultations with Tribal governments, and we included not only consultations, but also listening sessions and various other kinds of meetings with folks in the field. We had planned, of course, to do them out in the field, including several, about 10, that were in Tribal communities. But unfortunately with COVID, we ended up having to do the majority of them virtually. Next slide.

Marcia Good:

So we did listening sessions, some in-person ones, five different ones, before COVID hit and we were not able to be out in the field. We met with some different groups that came to Washington, D.C., but could meet with them in person, including the three agencies involved in the Operation Lady Justice Task Force's advisory groups. HHS, Department of Justice and Department of Interior all have their own advisory committees that are made up of Tribal

leaders, and so we were able to meet with each of them when we were starting our consultations and our listening sessions.

Marcia Good:

Once COVID shut things down and they had it be virtual, we had four large-scale listening sessions at the end of May, beginning of June. We had about a thousand registrations for those sessions and heard comments from a number of different folks, Tribal leaders, but mostly Tribal citizens, people who work in the field. Transcripts of those sessions are up on our website and that link is here. So if you want to see kind of what was said to the Task Force members and kind of question and answers, they're available for you to look at. Next slide.

Marcia Good:

We also did a set of 12 virtual Tribal consultations, which were specifically with Tribal leaders. And then if time permitted, if people had registered with others between August 17th and September 17th, again, we had almost a thousand Tribal leaders, designated citizens and others that were registered across those sessions, and we have transcripts of those as well. We received a number of really good comments, concerns, things that folks in the field had seen or ideas that they had to come up with solutions for some of the issues that they had identified within their own communities. Next slide.

Marcia Good:

We also took the time to meet with some real specific other engagements, the Center for Native American Youth and ANA's Native Youth Initiative participants, which was fascinating. It was really interesting to see kind of the perspective from the youth, they were ages 16 to 25, what they thought the issues were and what they were for the most part already doing in their communities to be able to combat some of these issues. We met with NCAI's VAWA task force. We met with the Navajo Nation because they have a very active Tribal task force. Obviously, many of you on this session today were part of COPS' Tribal law enforcement leaders sessions that we did last year, and they were very helpful in kind of pinning down within communities what the issues were you were seeing and thoughts and needs that you had expressed.

Marcia Good:

We also met with Tribal and state task forces and study groups. There are a number of different areas that are already working in these areas and making recommendations to their individual states. And so, we wanted to work with them and coordinate with them to make sure we were not duplicating their efforts, but also to see what they had found already, what they thought that the feds could do to help with this situation. We also met with the FBI and BIA victim services programs, because of course they're the folks who are working directly with victims and families in the field, and then with all of the Tribal domestic violence and sexual assault coalitions, so we could see what their thoughts were from actually being boots on the ground. Next slide.

Marcia Good:

So that was what we accomplished in the last year. In the kind of the next year, going forward in our listening and meet section, we can switch to the next slide, our action items include, we're going to do some additional consultations and listening sessions. We're hoping for being able to be out in the communities. If not, we could go back just to one slide, then we're going to do these virtually. We're going to work on putting together a series of kind of facilitated round tables with families of missing or murdered American Indians and Alaska Natives, utilizing our victim and family service folks. Those have been a little bit slow to kind of get underway just because we want to be sure we're doing these very correctly, that we're not causing any additional grief, any additional stress on families during the time that we're doing these. But we think it's important to hear directly from those who've been affected by these issues to find out what they thought went well in the process, when they had a case or a loved one who went missing, and what they thought could be improved.

Marcia Good:

We're also going to do some listening sessions with Tribal grassroots organizations. There are a number of tribes who actually have their own, they're not necessarily task forces, but there are grassroots organizations that are helping victims and helping with searches, working in these specific areas. And so, we're going to be meeting with them to get their thoughts. And then we're going to, again, try hosting virtual sessions with tribes. There were some tribes like Yakama and Navajo and other different tribes who are really working very actively and have been for several years in this area. And then again, continue to meet with other various stakeholders, including all you. Next slide.

Marcia Good:

Our next item that we were tasked with doing was basically working on a model protocols and procedures. This was an overlapping requirement that kind of went together and then hand in glove with what the Attorney General's MMIP Initiative required, which was putting together some sort of model protocols that could be adopted by Tribal communities, to be able to work cases in the way that works best for their communities. And Ernie will talk more about how that ended up working. The thought, I think in the executive order, and then also in the MMIP Initiative, as well as some new legislation, Savanna's Act, was that if we had some kind of models that tribes could utilize and then customize, it would help improve the way in which law enforcement would respond to these cases. And not only law enforcement, but communities, that when a case happened, that community could immediately roll into what their protocol was because they'd thought about what they needed, what their strengths were and what resources they needed.

Marcia Good:

We also have a section in the protocols about handling families, dealing with families and handling the media. And we also need to work on issues in those protocols about better use of the databases that we currently have, making sure that everybody in the systems understand

what the databases do and don't, how they can access the information and what benefit it is for the work that we're all doing. Next slide.

Marcia Good:

So this was a big project this first year. A big chunk of the work was around these model protocols. We basically put together what are called guidelines for the Tribal Community Response Plans that allow tribes to take these guidelines in the areas of law enforcement, victim services, community engagement, and media outreach, to be able to figure out what works within their communities. We received a lot of input on these from Tribal leadership, law enforcement folks, other folks that work in the field. And so, now we just kind of have a guide so that it's not a one-size-fits-all that are currently being piloted. Next slide.

Marcia Good:

So the draft format that we have right now, we're hoping to be able to release fairly soon. As I mentioned, we've got basically the-

Lisa Mantel:

Marcia, your audio is cut out.

Matt Lysakowski:

Hopefully Marcia will be able to rejoin us with audio. No?

Marcia Good:

Well, I hope my audio is back again.

Matt Lysakowski:

Yeah.

Marcia Good:

For some reason, my phone just completely disconnected. So the different guides that we are working on and that are in draft format are listed here, or we will talk more about those pilots that are currently going on, and then we'll release those nationwide for tribes to be able to utilize. Next slide.

Marcia Good:

The work projects that we have going forward in 2021, of course, then is to be able to finalize those guides, develop a dissemination and outreach strategy to ensure that they get to where they need to be. We're going to continue to work on the COPS Office Volunteer Engagement Program, which is going to be a discussion that we have in another one of these webinars. Basically the Volunteer Engagement Program is a program that COPS is assisting tribes with and in connection with Operation Lady Justice, that teaches tribes how to utilize volunteers in missing persons cases: the searches for folks, how you can utilize volunteers in an effective

and efficient manner and what works again for within the community. Those are being piloted in a couple of locations in hopes to be kind of broadly released from there.

Marcia Good:

One of the things we heard from many Tribal commenters was that they felt like they were unprepared in terms of lots of volunteers would show up at a search site or when there was a missing person recorded, and nobody really had any idea of what to do or how to utilize those volunteers to be able to engage in the search efforts. And so, COPS has, with the assistance of a couple of expert trainers, put together this program specifically for tribes that we're hoping is going to be very useful to be able to see what tribes are needing within those search parameters, and then getting volunteers to assist in that.

Marcia Good:

We're also working on convening federal agencies outside of the three that are involved in this Task Force to develop a guide for resources that are across all federal agencies. We found out fairly quickly when other federal agencies would contact us and say, "Hey, if you have an air search, we have resources," or, "Hey, if you need a water search, we have resources." And so, we make sure that tribes can utilize all of those resources, know that they're available and put them in their Tribal Community Response Plan.

Marcia Good:

We are also, as part of this section, undertaking some significant research and review of data reviewing commonly cited statistics. There's a number of statistics that are out there that we want to kind of take a real close look at and see about their accuracy, see if we're making sure that we're solving the problem that's actually there and not the problem that has kind of been reported. It doesn't help us to spend a significant amount of time and effort towards an underlying problem that turns out not to be the underlying problem for why it is that people go missing in American Indian and Alaska Native communities.

Marcia Good:

And we're also working with the education and outreach campaign working group in this Task Force to make sure that those resources were available to the field. And then we're also talking about developing a pilot location for establishment of an Ashanti Alert System, which is an alert system that can be done for tribe if you wish to basically do your own system for people who are not children and subject to an AMBER Alert or not of an age where a Silver Alert would be appropriate. There's also another system that we become aware of called the IPAWS system that may very well be the way in which tribes can do alerts and notifications to all of their Tribal citizens when someone goes missing in a very kind of simple way. So we're working with those folks right now to see what we can put together for Operation Lady Justice Tribal folks. Next slide.

Marcia Good:

One of the other big things that the Task Force was tasked with was putting together a Cold Case Team, and kind of a multi-disciplinary multi-jurisdictional team to look at cold cases. And these would be cold cases involving both missing persons and murder cases from across the United States. Next slide.

Marcia Good:

This part of the Task Force work has really been centered around the Bureau of Indian Affairs Office of Justice Services. They received additional funding in their budget that is separate and apart from their usual law enforcement funding, to be able to put together the first seventeen that are going to be reviewing these cold cases. The locations are set forth here below. They're kind of scattered across the country. I think BIA's office decided they were going to look at where cases were most prevalent, where the numbers are most prevalent, or where they had an office that they could easily conduct business from. That's why there's an office Nashville that kind of covers the eastern part of the United States. And they're going to be able to partner with Tribal law enforcement and other Department of Justice entities to look at cold cases. Next slide.

Marcia Good:

There were some significant accomplishments in that area for a working group that dealt with the Cold Case Team. Mainly the first part of the year, when folks were just hired, it was working on putting together training for those new investigators, especially on forensic disciplines, for them to look at cases and see what may be new and forensics that could help solve the case that they were looking at, made sure that we kind of marshaled all available forensic resources that we're aware of to be able to help the Cold Case Team. And then, also, talk to them about victim services. These Cold Case Teams are going to need to be able to develop victim services. It's just an incredibly important part of the process of reopening and re-looking at cold cases, is to make sure that you're working with families in a victim-centered, trauma-informed, culturally appropriate way.

Marcia Good:

And then, finally, we drafted standard operating protocols and procedures that the teams can rely on in order to look at cases and decide kind of which ones they thought potentially had vulnerability and could be worked on. Next slide.

Marcia Good:

Going forward for the Cold Case Team Initiative, obviously they wish to recruit additional members for each team, including several law enforcement. The idea is to work with tribes in the areas in which each of the teams is located. Basically, we're going to continue to provide training for those team members and forensic briefing. And then look at the metrics of how many cases they've reviewed, how many cases they've taken on. And if they've had any successes. Cold case work is not an easy victory kind of work. Cold cases are generally cold



for a reason. But it also depends on the age of a cold case and doing any kind of necessary new work that might be out there to assist, especially in terms of forensic evidence. Next slide.

Marcia Good:

We were also tasked with working on best practices requirements for clarity about roles within these cases. One of the things we heard regularly from Tribal leaders and Tribal citizens was that people did not seem to know with whom they should be working or who had responsibility for the cases. If we could switch to the next slide...

Marcia Good:

And it was also a significant topic of concern from people, was that it appeared that people who were reviewing cold cases are working, especially missing persons cases, did not really have a sense with families—how to communicate well with them from the beginning of a report, in terms of taking a report and not making there be a waiting period and all of those kinds of things.

Marcia Good:

One of the other things that we're going to be working on this year, that Matt and the COPS Office has already done some work on in this area, is facilitating formal agreements between federal, state, local and Tribal law enforcement. Probably one of the biggest complaints we heard from families who had had cases was the issue about who's got jurisdiction and who's supposed to be doing what. If you have a Tribal citizen who usually lives on a reservation...

PART 1 OF 4 ENDS [00:25:04]

Marcia Good:

...that goes missing off the reservation on county land, but is last known to have been seen in a city, some distance away, who's supposed to be working that case? And how are those cases going to be worked cooperatively? So that's one of the big things we're going to work on this year. Accomplishments for this year, from the slide, established a Justice Connect site on our FBI CJIS LEEP portal. Most of you have access to the FBI CJIS LEEP account. And so we have a Justice Connect site where we can put all of our law enforcement sensitive training and the Cold Case Team can communicate with each other and answer questions, concerns that they have.

Marcia Good:

Leslie Hagen, who I believe is on this webinar, has been the driving force behind our training working group. She is the head of DOJ's National Indian Country Training Initiative. And she has stepped up to be the head of the training working group to gather law enforcement and non-law enforcement training that can assist with either of these kinds of cases. Keeping in mind that working missing persons cases is very different than working murder cases, as you all know. And so she has put together a number of resources that are going to be put on the OLJ website and marketed through a number of other outreach opportunities. Leslie has been

sending out regular notices of trainings that are upcoming, and I'm hoping that she can put, maybe in the chat box, the upcoming training that she just provided notice of today about working these cases that she is putting on with assistance from a number of us that are working in this area.

Marcia Good:

And so she is in charge of putting together the training for that. So we also worked... Next slide. With COPS Office to talk about the Volunteer Engagement Program. This is the one I mentioned before that we're going to continue to work on. It's not a huge time commitment. It's a four-hour training that's geared towards Tribal leadership. And then to basically explain what the program is, to have them be thinking about what it is that they need within their communities. And then an eight-hour training for Tribal law enforcement and other staff who developed the program and manage the volunteers. Because the management of the volunteers and making sure that you know who's helping you and that they've been vetted and what it is that they're doing—so they're not doing law enforcement work, but they're doing work that can assist law enforcement officers—whether it's answering the phone, helping with grid searches, whatever it is that the community believes is best for them to do. And it's basically harnessing that energy of Tribal communities who want to help. Next slide.

Marcia Good:

So, for this next year, another one of the things that we're going to be able to do under this best practices rubric is to put together training for law enforcement to really work around the area of maximally cooperative trauma-informed responses to cases. That goes along with the concern that we have heard regularly from family members, that their feeling was that law enforcement maybe did not understand how traumatic these events were that were occurring. Or that their cases and their reports about a person being missing were not being taken seriously. In fairness to law enforcement, when you have competing priorities and everybody's very busy and understaffed, it's easy to see why there might be that concern about where the missing person's cases especially fit into the work that we're already doing. We also want to do some work with local and state law enforcement agencies who may have large American Indian and Alaskan Native populations to talk about the issues around missing and murdered American Indian and Alaskan Native persons in those locations.

Marcia Good:

We don't do as much work in the urban areas where there might be a large population, Seattle or Minneapolis or Albuquerque, but those areas need to have some discussion too, about working off reservation with state and local law enforcement, or in Public Law 280 states—like some of you on here are from California or from Alaska—what the issues are there that are very different than when the feds have jurisdiction in these cases. And then finally, we're going to work with Tribal law enforcement agencies. If there is a concern and they need to develop formal agreements or arrangements with their partners regarding who's going to do what in these cases. Ernie has done an excellent job up in Montana with the first tribe up there, who's doing work in this area and pulled together something like more than 10 or 11 separate law

enforcement agencies to figure out how they can work these cases together around this reservation. Next slide.

Marcia Good:

We also had a requirement to work on the education and outreach campaign. So we're in the executive order. That was basically to make sure that the public understood what these issues were and about how communities that were affected by crime could identify and reduce that crime and what the needs of affected families or resources that were needed and available. So the education and outreach piece, that will be on this next slide that comes up, is really focused around making sure the public understands the issues that are out there and what could be done through the federal government in partnership with tribes and states and locals to assist on those things. We can go two more slides. I think we're having a little trouble moving the slide. We can go to the next one. We started with putting together an Operation Lady Justice website, which just basically was meant to be, in the very beginning, a description of the Task Force. And then it talks about our accomplishments, the outreach events that we did, all of our listening sessions and consultations were up on there and the readouts from those sessions.

Marcia Good:

And then links to resources. Matt put together quite a campaign for the website that put together somewhere around 30 different fact sheets of resources that are out there. And did things like put together a fact sheet that talked about all the different kinds of alerts that are out there, or the different kinds of databases that are out there so that people could understand, get some of their questions answered. We also do a regular GovDelivery email out to a number of folks who've subscribed to our website and we'll have information at the end of this presentation if you wish to do that. As this slide that's up right now indicates, Leslie has been in charge of putting together what started out as one and turned into two issues of the DOJ Journal, which is a scholarly publication put out by the Department of Justice.

Marcia Good:

And Leslie is in charge of these two because these two issues are dedicated to missing or murdered American Indians and Alaskan Natives. There ended up being so many articles on such a wide variety of topics that it ended up being in two different journals. One is going to come out probably within the next day or two by the end of January and then one in March of 2021. And we'll have those up on our website. They're hopefully going to be a really great guide for the field on all sorts of issues, not just law enforcement, but victim services related, health and human services related. Looking at these issues as a whole, realizing that we're never going to law enforcement our way out of a missing person's problem or cases involving murder victims, that this has got to be a holistic way in which we look at things.

Marcia Good:

Why is it that people go missing? And what are we doing to help them when they return home? We know that the numbers indicate that about 95% of all American Indian and Alaskan Native

people, along with other races of people, will return home or be found. And so what are we doing in the meantime when those people return home to figure out why they went missing? Offer services, just to hopefully make it so that they don't feel like they need to leave again. And then also what about education within the community or the prevention? What can we do to prevent people from going missing, to solve issues before they come to that point where somebody feels like they need to leave. And then finally, we've done a lot of work between the Task Force members who were on during the first year and their support staff in education and outreach to the field, through op-eds, podcasts, news articles, and those kinds of things. Those will continue in this next year. Next slide.

Marcia Good:

So for 2021, we're going to be basically finalizing and publishing a frequently asked questions section on our website. We get a lot of the same questions over and over. That we want to be sure that people can have a quick resource, a good place to come to explain. It's like, "Why was an AMBER Alert not issued for my child when they went missing?" To show what the criteria are, or, "Why are there no Tribal leaders on Operation Lady Justice?" Because it's a federal only Task Force that is not a part of the Federal Advisory Committee. Just some of those things that we get asked pretty regularly. Obviously we're going to publish the issues in the DOJ Journal. One big project that we're working on is a guidebook for families when an adult goes missing.

Marcia Good:

We found that there are a lot of publications out there for when a child goes missing. But when it's your adult child, or when it's your mother or your grandmother who goes missing, there was not any good, clear guidance about the differences. Because the response when a child goes missing is much different under federal law and often under Tribal law than it is when an adult goes missing. We're working on a specific victim services page for the Operation Lady Justice website so we can make sure that family members or victim services providers in Tribal communities can look at the website to find out what different services, resources are available. Finally, we're also working on a searchable database of resources across Justice, Interior and HHS that will pull together all the different training, funding, technical assistance, and other resource opportunities that are out there. And there are a lot of them and we want to make sure that tribes and Tribal communities know what it is, that at least to these three agencies who were involved in Operation Lady Justice can do.

Marcia Good:

And then the education and outreach toolkit is going to be put together that highlights fact sheets and other different kinds of resources that will be available for communities who want to do some work in their own community to use social media, public service announcements. Again, towards that education campaign, towards that prevention piece. Next slide.

Marcia Good:

And finally, of course, the last thing that we were required to do is put together reports to let folks know what it was that we were doing. So, we had a report that was due at the end of our first year, and that was published in early December of 2020. That report is available on our website. And it basically has a lot of the information that you're hearing today. It just was required to set forth what were our activities and our accomplishments, the status of our projects and what recommendations we're making for future action. And then we have a final report that's due at the end of the Task Force, which is November 26th of 2021. Basically again, summarizing all the accomplishments and activities that we did in this second year. Next slide.

Marcia Good:

One of the other things that we'll be doing in this second year – since we now have new legislation that was not in place when the executive order was issued, we have Savanna's Act and the Not Invisible Act, which makes some additional significant requirements for both the Department of Justice and the Department of Interior to do work in this area – so we'll be doing coordination with those two pieces of legislation as well, so that we're all working together. If you're interested in looking at the website, here's our website address. And if you want our subscription updates, we send out – hopefully in this next year, it'll be every other week – email updates to let you know what's going on within Operation Lady Justice.

Marcia Good:

And then we have an email address, [operationladyjustice@usdoj.gov](mailto:operationladyjustice@usdoj.gov). If you have any questions, if you just want to comment, if you want to talk about what's going on within your community, or see about various resources, you can email and either Matt or I will take care of making sure that we get an answer back to you. So that's my quick update on Operation Lady Justice's first year and her plans for the second year. And then I'm going to turn it back over to Matt.

Matt Lysakowski:

Thanks Marcia. Wonderful update on Operation Lady Justice the first year and now year two, and where we're headed. Ernie, I think you're up next with the DOJ MMIP Initiative topic. So if you want to jump in, feel free.

Ernie Weyand:

Great. Thank you, Matt. And thank you for all who are participating today. I see a number of familiar names, familiar faces for those who were brave enough to turn their video on. I hope you'll see throughout the presentation, both with Marcia speaking about Operation Lady Justice and me talking about what has been happening with the Attorney General's Initiative, that your input was taken seriously and given much thought and incorporated into the work that we've done. So I'll start my presentation with thanking chiefs of police, community leaders, and others that are participating in this forum, for your input. Because it was extremely valuable over the last several months. So thank you very much. I should say good morning to our participants in Alaska and in the Pacific time zone and good afternoon to

others. I am going to talk about the Attorney General's MMIP Initiative, or the DOJ Murdered and Missing Indigenous Persons Initiative.

Ernie Weyand:

It was announced by Attorney General Barr on the Flathead Indian Reservation on the 22nd of November in 2019. I had a chance to be there. I was the sole MMIP coordinator at that time. And it was that time that Attorney General Barr announced the vision in where Department of Justice wanted to go, in order to address the issue relating and the many issues relating to and impacting murdered and missing indigenous persons problems in Tribal communities. So you know in terms of how close, a few days later, Operation Lady Justice was created by presidential executive order. So we're about the same age, the two initiatives and Marcia and I have been working very closely since the day that each program was created. So next slide please.

Ernie Weyand:

So the Attorney General's Initiative has three main parts. The first part was to establish MMIP coordinators in 11 states. I'll talk a little more in detail about where the coordinators are located and what our common duties are among us. Recognizing that each district is different, each state is different. Tribes and Tribal communities are different. The second part is to establish specialized FBI rapid deployment teams. And really what this is, looks like more is, how do we introduce at the appropriate time specialized resources from the FBI, from the state and from other entities, but specifically designated with Department of Justice from the FBI? So as we're out, as we're working in Tribal communities, working with Tribal community response plans, we're really trying to ensure the proper integration of these specialized resources. And that Tribal chiefs of police, Tribal police officers know how to access these resources, know their capabilities and know how they apply and how they can get them quickly and introduce them into kind of an emergent missing person case if that's happening.

Ernie Weyand:

And finally, the third part of the DOJ MMIP Initiative is performing comprehensive data analysis. That's something that we're working hard on now. And really it's more about looking at data sets that currently exist, identifying really a framework of how we really get an understanding of what the problem is of missing indigenous persons. Whether they're coming from Tribal communities on Tribal land in Indian Country, whether they're coming from urban areas or other areas that are non-Tribal in nature. So we are working on that. We're hoping that by the end of this next year, that we really have something in place that really starts to give us a strong handle on the numbers and the data in order to improve what we're doing in this area. Next slide please.

Ernie Weyand:

Okay. So I talked about the MMIP coordinators. Like I said, there's 11 of us, and I know there's a number of MMIP coordinators in this forum right now. I provided my contact information for those of you that maybe need to be connected to an MMIP coordinator, maybe have a

question that I can answer, or I can direct you to your MMIP coordinator. So please take a look in the chat to see my email. But our MMIP coordinators are all in place now. In Alaska, we have Ingrid Cumberlidge. In Arizona, we have Tony Garcia. In Michigan, Joel Postma. In Minnesota, Chris Beckers. I am in Montana. In New Mexico, Tom Ross. Oh, correction, Denise Billy. I'm sorry, Denise. In Nevada, Tom Ross. In Oklahoma, Patty Buhl. In Oregon, Cedar Wilkie Gillette. In Utah, Brian Speelman and in Washington, David Rogers. Hopefully you all, if you have an MMIP coordinator in your state, that you've had some contact with that coordinator and keep in mind we're resourced for you, Tribal chiefs of police, Tribal leaders. We work with the U.S. Attorney's Office to serve you.

Ernie Weyand:

There's a couple of other things you should know about our positions. One is, we're not investigators. And we serve a number of roles as it relates to the Cold Case Teams that Marcia talked with you about. But primarily with the Cold Case Teams — where we serve as a liaison to the U.S. Attorney's Office — our duties do differ, as I mentioned by state and district, depending on the U.S. Attorney, the needs of the district or the specific needs in the state. I know, I don't know if Patty Buhl from Oklahoma is here, but Patty has three different districts in her state that she's responsible for. I have one in Montana. I think Ingrid has one in Alaska, but there's some others. I know Dave has two in Washington. So obviously our roles differ. Next slide, please.

Ernie Weyand:

Some of the common duties that we have. Now again, recognizing that districts are different and that U.S. Attorneys have different priorities. There was agreement made through the Native American Issues Subcommittee last year that there should be some common duties that exist in all the 11 districts. And these are those common duties that were identified by members of the Native American Issues Subcommittee last year. The first is assisting with the development of guidelines to improve the response in cases of missing American Indians and Alaskan Natives. Again, as Marcia mentioned, we've been working very closely with Operation Lady Justice in order to advance work in this area and to develop guidelines that ultimately will lead to guidelines or protocols or policies in Tribal communities that choose to use these guidelines.

Ernie Weyand:

The second part is ensuring lead law enforcement agencies are aware of the available federal resources. And what that looks like in Montana and other districts when somebody goes missing and we're aware of that, we reach out to the local jurisdiction and we ensure that they have an understanding of the resources that are available to them.

Ernie Weyand:

If they don't have an understanding in terms of what may be available, we'll explain to them. We'll give them details in terms of what FBI resources might be available or other resources that we're aware of. The next part is supporting MMIP efforts within the state. As many of you

know, some Tribal communities have missing and murdered indigenous person task forces, and some states do as well. In Montana, the state of Montana has a state MMIP task force. I work very closely with them in order to ensure that by combining the federal work that we're doing and what's happening in the state, that there's synergy that we've created through combining the local resources, the local work that's being done and the federal work that's being done in this area. Next we help with the... Okay, next slide, please.

Ernie Weyand:

Again, supporting efforts to improve MMIP data collection practices. States vary greatly in this area. And we're finding that more and more. So, like I said, we're really focused this year on advancing work in this area. In some cases like Montana, we've got... There's been a lot of work done in terms of really understanding the problem that's occurring with missing persons in general, and specifically with American Indians or Alaska Natives who go missing in Montana. But other states, because of maybe restrictions in terms of information sharing and other maybe hurdles that we're identifying, that maybe it's a little more of a challenge in terms of really getting down and getting the data that we're looking for. The next piece is identifying training to build capacity in the communities we're working with and putting them in a place where they can successfully implement the guidelines that is out there.

Ernie Weyand:

And as Marcia mentioned, we talk about law enforcement response in these cases, but understanding that really it takes a community effort in order to be truly effective in MMIP related issues of all kinds. And finally, we provide assistance to other U.S. Attorney's Offices to address MMIP issues. And what that looks like is, if your state does not have an assigned MMIP coordinator, there's work that we can do with your Tribal liaison, through your U.S. Attorney's Office, to assist them. To ensure that they have an understanding of the work that's being done. That we can consult and provide assistance to them as they work with your communities in order to either develop a Tribal Community Response Plan or to deal with other issues related to missing and murdered indigenous persons from your communities. Next slide please.

Ernie Weyand:

Okay. So what is the Tribal Community Response Plan? Marcia talked about it a little bit, but again this is a plan for how a community will respond when a person goes missing. And to be clear, the Tribal Community Response Plan is about emergent...

PART 2 OF 4 ENDS [00:50:04]

Ernie Weyand:

...missing persons cases. Many of your communities have gained an exceptional understanding of this problem and what it does to families and to members of your communities. It's hard earned. In Montana where I work, there's not a Tribal community that hasn't been really significantly affected by Tribal members going missing or Tribal members



being murdered. But again, understanding that the plan, in order to effectively address what's happening, it takes a community effort. The second part, it's developed by tribes in conjunction with the U.S. Attorney's Office. I want to be clear that this is the tribe's plan.

Ernie Weyand:

So we as MMIP coordinators, is we go out and work with tribes in developing Tribal Community Response Plans. Ultimately it's up to the tribe and the way they would like to shape their policy, what it looks like and ensuring that it contains the things that they want in terms of the involvement of community-based organizations and understanding of the resources and culture that's available in their communities and what they're drawing from in their communities. So next slide please.

Ernie Weyand:

So, here's some of the goals of the Tribal Community Response Plans. Again, it's establishing a plan for Tribal communities to use the resources, to use what's unique in their communities to effectively address emergent missing persons cases. These are multidisciplinary approaches, really again, understanding that law enforcement is one leg of a stool or of a chair, in terms of addressing this problem. In terms of law enforcement response and law enforcement action, it's really not in a position to address maybe some of the deeper issues that are causing people to go missing or causing juveniles to go missing multiple times.

Ernie Weyand:

And finally, another important goal of the Tribal Community Response Plan is really effectively integrating community-based organizations into the overall response. I was able, pre-COVID, to go out and meet with all the tribes in Montana, to talk with Tribal leaders, to talk with Tribal law enforcement, to talk with community members, to talk to families of victims of people who had been murdered or people who were missing, and talk to folks involved in community-based organizations. And it struck me and it struck the groups as we would gather, that normally as we look around the room, we understood that for the most part we had everything we needed in order to effectively address these types of cases sitting right at the table, with the exception of maybe some specialized law enforcement resources and some resources that we bring in from the outside.

Ernie Weyand:

But for the most part, the main components were right there. And as we had various consultations throughout the year, meeting with communities, meeting with law enforcement and others, and many of you, like we said, we've participated and provided important input into some of the previous sessions we've had. It really came down to the understanding that this was, in order to effectively address this problem, it needed multiple pieces to come together, be planned out, be properly integrated. So next slide please.

Ernie Weyand:

So the Tribal Community Response Plan, again, based on your input, based on additional input, ultimately is composed of four guidelines. Our feeling is, and again, when I say our feeling, I mean, collectively from the various groups that worked on this is that if we can create specific guidelines or policies in four different areas and effectively integrate these, that we can improve and advance the response of the community when a Tribal member goes missing. And again, these areas where we've developed guidelines are law enforcement, victim services, public and media communications and community outreach. Law enforcement obviously has to do with law enforcement agency response and having effective policies in place.

Ernie Weyand:

And with law enforcement response, really having an understanding of its capabilities and capacity to respond to all kinds of missing persons cases, whether it's a child who goes missing or a teen who is thought to have run away or teens who run away multiple times, or maybe a Tribal elder who has wandered off and is in danger and so on. But really with the law enforcement agency, really taking a look at, its capability to handle these things, how do they bring in specialized resources? What specialized resources are available to them? How can they quickly bring them in and incorporate them into their investigations? At what point does the Tribal law enforcement agency maybe seed the lead of investigation to an outside agency, whether it's a county or whether it's the FBI and so on? So these are all things being looked at as we're looking at the law enforcement agency response.

Ernie Weyand:

With the victim services response, it's obviously, we're looking at both systems and community-based victim service providers, and really integrating them at the appropriate time in a culturally appropriate manner and keeping them active throughout the investigation or throughout the incident being looked at involving a missing person. The guide that we have is kind of systems-based focused, although includes a lot of good information on community-based involvement, and is really well done in terms of step-by-step approach of how to introduce and integrate victim services into the investigation.

Ernie Weyand:

The next part we felt was very important was the public and media communications because Tribal communities are searching for information when a Tribal member goes missing. As you know, this topic is top of mind in Tribal communities all over the United States now. When we have incidents in Montana, we may have 100 or 200 Tribal members show up on scene and want to assist. People come from all over Montana, Native Americans and others show up. They want to do their thing. They want to help to locate the missing persons, and really having an effective messaging component in place that's planned and that it's properly integrated into the law enforcement piece, the victim services piece and so on.

Ernie Weyand:

And finally the community outreach is really having an understanding of what community-based organizations exist in your community, or are around your community and provide

assistance or support, and how they can effectively be integrated to really address gaps in the policy. I'll talk a little bit about that when I share with you some of my experience with the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribe. Next slide please.

Ernie Weyand:

So currently there's six pilot programs that are taking place. Again, I think maybe the MMIP coordinators involved in these pilot programs are all on this or most are, but again, Alaska, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Oklahoma, and Oregon, Ingrid will be angry with me with the way I pronounce where Tribal community plans are taking place or where these pilot programs are taking place in Alaska, but the Koyukuk Native Village or the Native Village of Unalakleet and the Aquarion Tribal council. In Michigan, Joel Postma is working with Bay Mills and Sault Ste. Marie. In Minnesota, Chris Beckers will be working with Bois Forte Band of Chippewa. In Montana, we're in the final stages with the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. In Oklahoma, Patty Buhl is working with both the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and the Cherokee Nation. And in Oregon, we have Cedar working with the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, or will very soon.

Ernie Weyand:

Currently in Michigan, Montana and Alaska, we have action that's been initiated, Oklahoma as well. Minnesota and Oregon are kind of moving into their pilot programs very soon. This was some of the selection criteria. So if you're wondering, hey, why not my tribe? We looked at places that had MMIP coordinators, obviously interested Tribal partners. And unfortunately the COVID has driven much of where we go in these particular trial pilot programs. So the Tribal government that we're working with really determine the scope and nature of the Tribal Community Response Plan. So we do a lot of pre-work, we're finding there's lots of work to be done before we actually get into our working groups and start working through guides and so on. But again, it's a tribe's plan and ultimately, we advise, we assist, but it's up to the tribe to determine the scope and the expanse of their Tribal Community Response Plan. Next slide please.

Ernie Weyand:

So here's some of the pilot program goals, obviously for those tribes that we're working with, we want to establish and create a tailored and effective plan to respond to missing persons cases — as we talked about — that it's tailored to the needs, to the resources and to the culture of that community. The next part is we're working through these pilot programs is using what we learn from each of these pilot projects to improve our guides before there's a larger nationwide release of the guides. And again, as I talked about before, we've got this bullet here about pilot projects proceeding at the pace of the tribe, but ultimately emphasizing again that this is a program, that is in a plan, that belongs to the tribe. Next slide please.

Ernie Weyand:

So some early feedback, and I'm going to talk just a little bit about the Tribal Community Response Plan with the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribe, and really what it looked like,

as I said there's a lot of pre-work that was done in terms of me working directly, me and Jared Cobell, the Tribal liaison from Montana, working directly with the members of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribe [CSKT], MMIP Task Force, Ellie Bundy and Jami Pluff, Chairwoman Shelly Fyant were very active and had been very focused on this problem over the last couple of years. And again, it's a community that's been hit very hard, has several cases of long-term missing Tribal members that have had a profound impact on the community and members of that community.

Ernie Weyand:

But as we've worked through these things, we created four different working groups. We had a law enforcement working group that obviously was focused on developing the law enforcement guide and guidelines. We had a victim services working group that brought together both community-based and systems-based victim service providers to work through the guides. We brought together the media components and ensuring that law enforcement is present and participating in each of these work groups. And finally, we brought together key folks and key stakeholders from community-based organizations to come together, to provide input. What we've learned from this first exercise, certainly what I've learned is the law enforcement guide, it is really the foundation of the Tribal Community Response Plan. We need to have that done in a way that it is thorough and complete and understands the importance of integrating fairly early on in the response in these matters of the other components that we've listed. The victim services guide is very good. As I've talked about, you can almost wholly incorporate that, if you don't have a victim services guide in place.

Ernie Weyand:

And the media guide is very similar. It gives them some very specific steps. It could be wholly incorporated if a tribe currently doesn't have a particular media policy. You see with this last bullet, I said, the integration is community-based organizations, is really the secret ingredient. I learned that and saw that more and more as we've worked through the Tribal Community Response Plan with CSKT. And I say this because this is what is going to address the problem, truly. The community-based organizations are filling needed gaps in addressing this problem. With CSKT, we developed, or we identified, a number of areas early on where we needed this support, one had to do with community-based organizations, taking vulnerable members of the community who go missing or likely to go missing and put together programs, and direct resources towards these folks so we can address that problem before it occurs.

Ernie Weyand:

Also, looking at the teen runaway problem with CSKT, where you have teens who run away multiple times, and really addressing that with some of the cultural community-based organizations with various programs. There was also talk of integrating community-based organizations into the search of folks, adults who go missing, well, there's really no kind of criminal component to it. It may be somebody who frequently maybe goes to an urban area. Maybe they go there because of maybe drug or alcohol addiction, maybe there's a mental health component or some other factor that drives them away from the community, but really

requires somebody to really look into this in order to work with the family and to work with NGOs or community or civil society organizations in different urban areas in order to find these folks and make sure they're okay.

Ernie Weyand:

So anyways, we found a number of things. What was fascinating is we worked through the law enforcement working groups. We had two different groups. We had one that was specifically focused on the CSKT's Tribal plan, but then the second working group brought in all the other jurisdictions that worked on the Flathead Indian Reservation. And as many of you know, that's where there was work in addressing the difficulties that lie when you have 10 different agencies working within the Flathead Indian Reservation, and that didn't include federal agencies. With CSKT we had four different separate county sheriff's offices. We had four separate non-Tribal police departments. We had Montana State Police working on the reservation, as well as the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribal police department. So that's where the work really became interesting, having everybody in a room, talking through some of the issues, some of the problems in terms of communication or response or understanding who's the lead agency. We were able to get a lot of work done right there.

Ernie Weyand:

One of the fascinating aspects and byproducts of the work that we've done is the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribe Tribal Police Department has decided, along with everyone else, there was a collective decision made that there would be one common missing persons response protocol for all law enforcement agencies operating on the Flathead Indian Reservation, which I think is a huge win. And right now they're working to put together that kind of singular response policy. So anyways, next slide please.

Ernie Weyand:

So in terms of the Tribal Community Response Plans, the next steps are once our pilot projects are complete, we're going to take the lessons learned, we're going to collect them, we're going to review them, we're going to get input from other entities. And ultimately these changes will be used to improve the guidelines as they're kind of released nationally to Tribal police departments, Tribal communities and so on. Next slide please. Okay, so that is it for me. I thank you for your time, thank you for your attention, and I'll turn it over to Matt. Thanks, Matt.

Matt Lysakowski:

Thanks, Ernie. A wonderful discussion there, and some nice firsthand experiences with your pilot project there in Montana. So I want to open it up here for an open period of discussion and questions and answers. So if you have a question, feel free to type it in the chat or unmute yourself and ask questions. Marcia, hopefully has worked through her computer challenges and is able to respond. But if she is not, I can respond on behalf of Operation Lady Justice, and Ernie of course, on the MMIP Initiative. So let's see if we have any questions from our participants. Today we have 77 of you on the line so I know there's some questions out there. And while folks are composing those and thinking about them, Ernie, I have one initial one for

you. If you can chime in with what the timeline might look like for completing the pilots and the potential rollout of the final community response plans nationwide.

Ernie Weyand:

Yeah. Thanks, Matt, for the question, I can tell you that after this meeting, this afternoon, we're having an implementation group meeting where we're going to talk exactly that. Initially we were looking at beginning the Tribal Community Response Plan pilots in October, having them done by the end of January, early February, and then going through the work in order to put the final touches on the guidelines for the Tribal Community Response Plan. What I can tell you is each state, each district has been impacted so heavily by COVID. That time has shifted to the right.

Ernie Weyand:

So right now we've got the Tribal Community Response Plan pilots in various stages. I think today we're going to really discuss and determine, I think realistically, it's probably going to be summertime, but again, that's a speculation on my part before we see those kinds of national guidelines rolling out with the changes incorporated in them. I can tell you in terms of my experience with the first pilot project, the guides are pretty good. They're pretty good. They provide a pretty good foundational piece for programs that are developing their response, whether it's law enforcement or victim services or media, they obviously can be improved, but they're pretty good. The feedback that we have is that they're pretty good. And again, they weren't developed in a bubble. They were developed with many of the participants that are here today, and many others. So thanks, Matt.

Matt Lysakowski:

Thanks, Ernie. It looks like we have a couple of questions that came in through the chat. So I'll throw these out to both you and Marcia as well. I think on this first one, asking about the Operation Lady Justice and MMIP program continuing under the new administration and what the sense might be about the projects continuing in the new administration.

Marcia Good:

Well, let's see if my volume works here and my computer works. I've been having some technical difficulties. So we've got no indication from anyone that we're to do anything other than heads down and keep working. That's what we've been doing. Some of our Task Force members, of course, were politicals and will be replaced by other Task Force members this year. But the working groups that we had started in the first year, we had about 160 people between the Department of the Interior, the Department of Justice and Health and Human Services working on the...

PART 3 OF 4 ENDS [01:15:04]

Marcia Good:

... Task Force and all those people are still working on the Task Force. And so we're continuing on with the plans that were set forth in our 2020 report because we had things we need to get done under the executive order. Quite frankly, the new administration has always been very supportive of Indian Country issues. The incoming Secretary of Interior, Deb Haaland, has been one of the leaders of MMIP issues across her time, both in the government sector and private sectors. So we have no indication that there's going to be anything different other than continue forward.

Marcia Good:

The other interesting piece, though, is that we don't just have the MMIP Initiative for the Attorney General and Operation Lady Justice under the executive order, we now have Savannah's Act, which is legislation and the Not Invisible Act, also legislation from Congress telling us to do specific things. A number of the things in Savannah's Act are already in progress with some of the work that Matt and Ernie and I, and a whole host of others have been doing across this administration already, across Operation Lady Justice. And so we'll just be continuing to work on those things and adding in the things that are contained in Savannah's Act.

Marcia Good:

I see that another question is, how will the Task Force under Operation Lady Justice work with the Not Invisible Task Force? So the Not Invisible Act is really directed towards the Department of Interior where Savannah's Act is really directed towards the Department of Justice.

Marcia Good:

In the Not Invisible Act there are two very large requirements. The first is that the Department of Interior puts together first an official, they designated an official within their agency to kind of help coordinate efforts in this area and work with those of us who are already doing this work. And that person is to report directly to the Secretary of Interior.

Marcia Good:

So they're in the process of kind of working on some of that process and deciding how that's going to work for first. But the biggest part of the Not Invisible Act is the establishment of a commission. So it's not a task force. It is not a working federal task force like what we're doing. It is a commission that is being put together to study things over the next year to 18 months. And so the commission is going to basically study violent crime on Indian lands and against Indian persons.

Marcia Good:

There are a number of required roles, folks who need to fill those roles within this commission, some feds and most, all sorts of other folks, Tribal law enforcement, BIA Office of Justice Services, the new head of BIA-OJS, Jason O'Neal, is actually on this call as well, if you have questions for him, I believe. State and local law enforcement, if there's proximity to Indian

lands, but there has to be a recommendation from the tribe that the land is close to. FBI Victim Services Division, OVW, OVC, U.S. Attorney's Offices who work in this area, people from the Administration for Native Americans, the Director of IHS.

Marcia Good:

And then another kind of large group of people, which would be like a Tribal judge who has experience in this area, family members of people who've been involved in murder cases, family members of people who have gone missing, representatives from three tribes in very geographically different areas. Folks who work in the area of Indian health care and counseling and mental health issues, urban Indian organizations. And there's just a wide variety of different spots that are going to be on this commission. And the Department of Interior is charged with putting that together, accepting applications and selecting folks.

Marcia Good:

And so I'm sure there'll be announcing fairly soon how they're going to go about doing that. And then members were appointed for the life of that commission. And then basically they're going to hold hearings. That's basically the way commissions are set up to hold hearings and meet, take testimony, get evidence to carry out the duties of the commission.

Marcia Good:

And the duties of the commission basically are to make recommendations to the Secretary of Interior and to the Attorney General about steps the federal government can take. A lot of what we're doing in these things that we're doing right now are already responsive to what tribes have told us and Tribal leaders have told us need to be done. But again, it'll be more information kind of in these same areas. And then once those recommendations are given to the AG and to the Secretary of Interior, the commission has to write a report within 18 months. So that will be into early 2023 or late 2022. And then the AG and the Secretary of Interior have to act on those recommendations.

Marcia Good:

So the commission is kind of a long-term study group. Certainly we will do whatever it is they need from us. We'll make all of our work available to them if they're interested in kind of what we've been doing and what we continue to do so that we make sure that we're all working together and that nobody is kind of separate or siloed in this. There is so much work to be done, and so many agencies that have a role and we absolutely have to work together to solve these issues.

Matt Lysakowski:

Those are great points, Marcia, and I know you and Ernie have worked so well together over the last year or so to braid these two existing efforts together. And I know that you will continue with the Not Invisible Act and the Savannah's Act initiatives as well. And what is now a sort of a two-braided rope will become a four-braided rope I think, with all the different related initiatives around the missing and murdered indigenous persons issues.



Matt Lysakowski:

Other questions from participants? I don't see any in the chat right now. We have a few minutes left to take a couple of more questions if anybody has them. Again, feel free to type them in the chat or unmute yourself and ask them.

Speaker 1:

[inaudible 01:21:06].

Ernie Weyand:

There's a knock.

Matt Lysakowski:

Lisa, do you want to go to the next slide? And I'll just talk a little bit for a minute or two about our next sessions. As I had mentioned at the beginning, we have three more sessions planned, one on our training opportunities and alerts, alerting authority on how to conduct those, and then the Tribal Access Program as well. And our third session is going to be around the volunteer engagement and technical assistance opportunities. And our fourth and final one will be on funding and resources and support of the Tribal Community Response Plans. Although it's our last discussion topic for our four sessions, the funding and resources, I do want to mention to folks who might be looking right now for funding and resources that the Coordinated Tribal Assistance Solicitation for the Department of Justice recently opened. I helped put that together with the COPS Office and our sister agencies in the Department.

Matt Lysakowski:

And just want to make, I assume many of you, the Tribal law enforcement leaders on the call are already aware that that's hit the street, but if you weren't, it came out last week and it closes March 30th. And it is an opportunity to look for resources to help your MMIP efforts in your tribes.

Matt Lysakowski:

If you're looking for an officer to join an existing Cold Case Team that BIA has, or if you're looking for an officer to assist in implementing a Tribal Community Response Plan in your area, or if you are looking for other equipment and training needs around MMIP issues, we are providing extra consideration for applicants who come in this year to address MMIP issue. So CTAS is a great opportunity for some potential funding and resources this year. I'll put the, the link to the website for CTAS this year in the chat in case anybody wants to pull it out of there. And again, we got a couple minutes left, so I want to see if there's other questions from our participants, give you an opportunity to chime in here.

Bill:

Bill Elliott from Warm Springs, Chief of Police from Warm Springs. One thing that we've been talking about with the U.S. Attorney's Office is the ability for tribes to get greater access to

both federal and state databases, to where we can start uploading people, like using, making available to us, better access to TAPs, on the Department of Interior side IMARS, so we can start at least bringing our information databases together, and so that we can work across a better platform. Is that going to be discussed at some point?

Matt Lysakowski:

Yeah.

Marcia Good:

Happy to-

Matt Lysakowski:

Go ahead.

Marcia Good:

Go ahead, and I'll, well, what I was going to say is, so the problem, of course, is the Tribal Access Program was designed by the Department of Justice to give access to tribes when they're not able to, or cannot, or don't wish to go through their state to get to the FBI CJIS databases. So TAP is absolutely available to tribes. We're in the process of seeing if we can do another time for it to be open for tribes to apply. We've got about a hundred tribes in right now, and it just depends on funding and resources and all of that.

Marcia Good:

However, the FBI CJIS databases do not, it doesn't work in the same way back to the states. So if you participate in TAP, like say, you're in California, when you participate in TAP, because tribes can't generally access CLETS in California with few exceptions, then you get access to NCIC and CJIS, but you still don't get access to CLETS unless California changes their law. So those are run by the states and it's an unfortunate issue and one that we continue to talk to states' CSAs about to see if there's some kind of middle ground.

Bill:

Okay. And I know that's an issue like with the western states to information network, and stuff like that with the tribes having to waive their, basically sovereignty in order to participate, but our workarounds again, will be TAPs. And the other thing that's not been talked about as IMARS, the availability of IMARS, which is the Department of Interior's database.

Marcia Good:

Right.

Bill:

It's supposed to be made available to tribes, which could be a powerful platform. So is somebody going to be coordinating with Department of Interior to see if we can have access to like IMARS for this type of a project?

Marcia Good:

Well, we definitely got some folks from BIA-OJS on here I know. I'm not sure if Jason O'Neal is still on here. If he's not, I will find out that issue. I know that there's again some requirements in terms of who could actually access that database. Jason, are you still on? Let's see.

Matt Lysakowski:

I didn't see him in the participant list. I think he may have had to jump off.

Marcia Good:

I think he may have had to jump off. So let me, let me find out what the situation is there, because you're right. That would be incredibly helpful. That's a system that has taken a while to get to where it needed to be, but kind of is up and going now, and see what we can find out for you. And then I can let this entire group know.

Bill:

Thank you.

Marcia Good:

You bet.

Matt Lysakowski:

I think we have time for maybe one more question or two, if there's any more out there.

Speaker 2:

I got a question.

Speaker 1:

Sure.

Speaker 2:

Carmen Smith from [inaudible 01:27:11] How hard was it to get all those outside agencies in to commit to this program?

Speaker 1:

Are you speaking about particular agencies you're thinking of in like your area or ... ?

Speaker 2:

No, the one that we talked about earlier, the tribe with the outside agencies.

Ernie Weyand:

Yeah. Carmen, I can tell you it was, it wasn't hard at all. You know, CSKT had strong kind of working relationships with the other agencies operating on the reservation. So it really wasn't hard to get them in the same room. And we actually, despite COVID, did all meet, socially distanced in a very large room. We had about 18 participants, chiefs of police or county sheriffs, usually with their undersheriff or the number two in their department. And it was not difficult at all.

Ernie Weyand:

Now I do understand, after working a couple of decades with law enforcement agencies in Tribal communities and around Tribal communities, that that's not going to be the case everywhere, that in some cases there's historical differences that we're going to have to work through in order to make this effective. But I can tell you in terms of the work that we're doing, there's an absolute focus on addressing those issues through our program or whatever we can do in order to ensure that we do bring in those reluctant outside groups if there's a problem because, again, one of the hurdles to be truly effective in these types of cases is working kind of seamlessly with those adjacent jurisdictions.

Ernie Weyand:

So again, I don't anticipate it and I know going forward in Montana, it's not going to be the same experience everywhere.

Speaker 2:

Okay. It seems like that's always the issue, the history part of it.

Ernie Weyand:

Right. Yep. Yeah. And as you know, I think you recognize in some cases we may be working through generations of problems. So it might be something that is extremely challenging. So again, we face the same in some of the communities with reporting when somebody goes missing. We've got some communities that I'm working with in Montana where there is a huge reluctance to reach out to law enforcement when a loved one goes missing.

Ernie Weyand:

So as a result, it's only reported when the situation becomes dire, that person's been missing a very long time or we're getting things through, you know, other channels. So, again, and I think I, again, that's why it's so important that each of these Tribal community response plans are just that, that they're customized, that they recognize the culture and resources of the tribes and their communities, but they also understand and address the issues with surrounding and adjacent jurisdictions because it's going to look different in all cases. So I hope that helps Carmen. Where are you located?

Speaker 2:

Warm Springs, Oregon.

Ernie Weyand:

Oh, you are? Okay. Well, you've got Cedar Wilkie Gillette. She's I think, well, I know Cedar has a law degree, so maybe her negotiation skills from attending law school will be of assistance to you.

Speaker 2:

Yeah, we've been working with her and Tim Simmons from the Springs office.

Ernie Weyand:

Yeah. Excellent. Well, I know you've got a couple of good folks there, so I'm sure they'll be able to negotiate through that for you.

Speaker 2:

I mean, we have some, we have pretty good relationships here, but it always goes back to that history way back sometime.

Ernie Weyand:

Yeah. Well, you know one of the things with CSKT quite frankly, is, I think, they want to be respected as a legitimate law enforcement agency with trained officers who are professional and are equal to their law enforcement counterparts on the reservation. And I think that's some things that certainly we have to work through, depending on the Tribal community, the reservation. There can be that kind of dynamic that exists, as you know, that there's biases among departments. Well, heck, between the FBI and the ATF and the DEA, we have the same problem.

Speaker 2:

Yeah. But that's good though, that they got all these people in.

Ernie Weyand:

Yeah, yeah.

Marcia Good:

If you're in a situation like that in your area, definitely reach out to us. You've got our contact information because that's part of what this is all about is trying to get everybody to the table and realize this is a problem that we are all going to have to work together to solve whether it's federal, state, local Tribal, whether it's law enforcement, victim services, other community resources. I mean, once you all work together on this and stop kind of that turf war that you see from some outside agencies towards tribes, then I think we can make a difference. So

facilitating those agreements is one of the things that OLJ and the MMIP coordinators are doing.

Speaker 2:

Yeah. I agree, and you'll be hearing from us.

Ernie Weyand:

Yeah. And I was just going to say one of the discussions we had with CSKT and again, understanding they had good relationships with the outside agencies, but the one thing that I've talked about from the very beginning with all the tribes in Montana is we're working from the common ground that we want to do our absolute best to address missing persons cases, to address homicides or unsolved homicides. And there's not a professional law enforcement agency out there, that'll say, well, I don't want to do that. I don't want to be really good at these. So I think that's certainly the common ground we work from and in order to do that, we have to all work very closely together. We have to be coordinated. We have to be professional. We have to ensure that those responding from all agencies have the right training. They know where to get the resources and all that stuff. So again, Carmen, thank you for your question, because I think it's really an important part of this whole kind of operation.

Speaker 2:

Welcome.

Matt Lysakowski:

All right. I see we're a few minutes over now. So I don't want to hold folks too much longer, but I do want to say thanks to everyone for participating today. Our next session is going to be coming up in March. You'll receive an invitation for that similar to this one. It's going to be March 25th from 2-3:30, but Lisa will send out an invitation to that next session. And if you have ideas for topics, like I said, we have these planned out, but we can be flexible. If there's something else you want to hear about during the sessions, just let us know and we can try and incorporate that where possible.

Matt Lysakowski:

So with that, I think we can wrap things up for today. Again, you've got our website for Operation Lady Justice in our email there on the slides. And thanks to all of you for your time. It's great to see such a wide participation across all the Tribal nations and our Tribal partners out there. So again, look forward to reaching out to you all and hearing from you in March.

Speaker 2:

All right. Sounds good.

Marcia Good:

Thanks everybody.

Speaker 1:  
Thank you.

PART 4 OF 4 ENDS [01:36:01]