

[NCUIH Submits Comments to DOI and DOJ on Executive Order on Improving the Public Safety and Criminal Justice for Native Americans and Addressing the Crisis of MMIP](#)

Category: Policy Blog

written by Alexandra Payan | March 23, 2022

On March 17, 2022, the National Council for Urban Indian Health (NCUIH) submitted comments to the Department of Interior (DOI) and Department of Justice (DOJ) in response to their joint Dear Tribal Leader [letter](#) dated February 7, 2022 seeking stakeholder input related to the policy directives outlined in [Executive Order \(E.O.\) 14053](#) - Improving Public Safety and Criminal Justice for Native Americans and Addressing the Crisis of Missing or Murdered Indigenous People (MMIP). NCUIH emphasized the importance of clear and consistent communication with urban Indian organizations (UIOs) regarding the Agencies' future plans to incorporate UIOs into the policies, procedures, and projects set forth in E.O. 14053 and also encouraged the Agencies to establish an Urban Confer policy.

E.O. 14053 Impact on Urban AI/AN Communities

E.O. 14053, signed by President Biden on November 15, 2021, directs the federal government to “to strengthen public safety and criminal justice in Indian Country and beyond, to reduce violence against Native American people, and to ensure swift and effective Federal action that responds to the problem of missing or murdered indigenous people.” E.O. 14053 committed the federal government’s to “[c]onsistent engagement, commitment, and collaboration,” with AI/AN people and communities to “drive long-term improvement to public safety for all Native Americans.” E.O. 14053 specifically directed the federal government to “build on existing strategies to identify solutions directed toward the particular needs of urban Native Americans,” because “approximately 70 percent of American Indian and Alaska Natives live in urban areas and part of this epidemic of violence is against Native American people in urban areas.” In addition, E.O. 14053 directed the federal government to “work closely with Tribal leaders and community members, Urban Indian Organizations, and other interested parties to support prevention and intervention efforts that will make a meaningful and lasting difference on the ground.” To that end, in a November 15, 2021 [memorandum](#), Deputy Attorney General Monaco directed DOJ’s Steering Committee to seek and consider the views of stakeholders including Urban Indian Organizations (UIOs).

The E.O. also included the following directions to various federal agencies to collaborate with urban AI/AN communities:

- Section 4
 - Directs DOJ, DOI, and HHS to “sustain efforts to improve data collection and information-sharing practices, conduct outreach and training, and promote accurate and timely access to information services regarding crimes or threats against Native Americans, including in urban areas.”
 - Directs DOJ, DOI, and HHS to “develop a strategy for ongoing analysis of data collected

on violent crime and missing persons involving Native Americans, including in urban Indian communities.”

- Directs HHS to “evaluate the adequacy of research and data collection efforts at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Institutes of Health in accurately measuring the prevalence and effects of violence against Native Americans, especially those living in urban areas.”
- Section 5
 - Instructs HHS, “in consultation with the Secretary of the Interior and Tribal Nations and after conferring with other agencies, researchers, and community-based organizations supporting indigenous wellbeing, including Urban Indian Organizations,” to “develop a comprehensive plan to support prevention efforts that reduce risk factors for victimization of Native Americans and increase protective factors, including by enhancing the delivery of services for Native American victims and survivors, as well as their families and advocates

NCUIH’s Role

NCUIH has consistently [advocated](#) for urban AI/AN communities to be included when addressing public safety and MMIP in an effort to strengthen critical services provided by UIOs for AI/ANs. In furtherance of that advocacy, NCUIH’s comments in response to the Dear Tribal Leader Letter highlighted the critical importance of UIOs in addressing and combating the epidemics of MMIP crisis and violent crime against AI/ANs. NCUIH made the following recommendations and requests to the DOI and DOJ:

- NCUIH requests that the Agencies honor E.O. 14053 through consistent and clear communication with UIOs
- NCUIH requests that the Agencies provide specific information regarding their future plans to incorporate UIOs into the policies, procedures, and projects set forth in E.O. 14053
- NCUIH requests that Urban Indian Organizations receive formal notice of future consultations on E.O. 14053
- NCUIH request that the Agencies establish an Urban Confer policy to set the necessary policies and procedures for direct and clear communication with UIOs

NCUIH also attended consultations on March 11, 2022, hosted by DOI, and March 17, 2022, hosted by DOJ, on behalf of the UIOs it represents. In these consultations Chandos Cullen, NCUIH’s Director of Federal Relations, provided additional oral comments stressing the need for the Agencies to work with UIOs to address the crises of MMIP and violent crime against AI/AN people. Mr. Cullen emphasized that these epidemics also affect urban AI/AN communities and that UIOs are already engaged in providing critical services to combat MMIP and violent crime. UIOs are critical service providers who can help bridge Tribal, State, local, and Federal efforts to ensure that all AI/ANs are accounted for when combatting MMIP and public safety issues. NCUIH will continue to closely monitor and advocate for urban AI/ANs on this topic.