

[NCUIH Submits Comments on Executive Order 14053 About Missing and Murdered Indigenous People](#)

Category: Policy Blog

written by Moira Stuart | October 6, 2022

On September 8, the National Council of Urban Indian Health (NCUIH) submitted [comments](#) on Executive Order 14053 “[Improving Public Safety and Criminal Justice for Native Americans and Addressing the Crisis of Missing or Murdered Indigenous People](#).” This comment was in response to the Department of Homeland Security’s (DHS) [correspondence](#) dated May 25, 2022, seeking input and recommendations on the policy directives outlined.

NCUIH requested the following:

- NCUIH requested that DHS honor E.O. 14053 by including urban Indian organizations (UIOs) in policies, procedures, and projects to address Missing and Murdered Indigenous People (MMIP).
 - Working with UIOs is specifically required by E.O. 14053 itself
 - According to the [National Missing and Unidentified Persons System](#) (NamUs), as of August 1, 2021, most missing and unidentified cases involving American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) persons occurred off tribal land. AI/AN individuals living in urban areas face many, if not all, of the same violent crime and MMIP issues as AI/ANs living on reservations or tribal land.
 - In particular, UIOs can be critical partners in DHS’ efforts to address cross-border and jurisdiction issues.
 - We note that UIOs have already been working on addressing human trafficking through programs and services to victims and their families. For example, First Nations Community Healthsource in Albuquerque, New Mexico, has [an Education and Advocacy against Sex Trafficking \(EAST\) program](#) dedicated to supporting AI/AN victims of sex trafficking in the area and surrounding Tribal communities.
- NCUIH recommended that DHS hosts an Urban Confer Regarding DHS’ Plan to Address MMIP.
 - To assist DHS collaboration with UIOs in fulfillment of the goals and directives of E.O. 14053, NCUIH recommends that DHS host an Urban Confer with UIOs regarding E.O. 14053. Urban Confers are an established mechanism for dialogue between the federal government and UIOs that are a response to decades of deliberate federal efforts (i.e., forced assimilation, termination, relocation) that resulted in seventy percent (70%) of AI/AN people living outside of Tribal jurisdictions, thus making Urban Confer integral to address the care needs of most AI/AN persons.

Background

EO 14053

EO 14053 is a landmark [pledge](#) “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.” NCUIH is

particularly encouraged by DHS's efforts to communicate with Tribes as DHS continues to grow its efforts to support public safety in Tribal communities. NCUIH agrees with the Biden-Harris Administration that challenges faced by Tribes are best met by Tribally-driven solutions and appreciates that the DHS hosted several Tribal Consultation sessions from July to August 2022 seeking input and recommendations concerning DHS' efforts to address the unacceptably high rate of violent crime in AI/AN communities. These efforts advance [President Biden's directive in E.O. 14053](#), to engage in "[c]onsistent engagement, commitment, and collaboration," with AI/AN people and communities to "drive long-term improvement to public safety for all Native Americans" is essential to ensure AI/AN voices are included in issues that directly affect their communities at disproportionate rates.

E.O. 14053 specifically [directs 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." Furthermore, E.O. 14053 also [instructs](#) 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." Despite E.O. 14053 recognizing that the federal government must develop solutions for AI/ANs living in urban areas and that UIOs must be included in the development of these solutions to address the unacceptably high rate of violent crime and MMIP, **DHS has not made any efforts to work with UIOs to date.**

- **NCUIH Efforts on MMIP** On May 19, 2022, the National Council of Urban Indian Health (NCUIH) submitted [comments](#) on Executive Order (EO) 14053— [Improving Public Safety and Criminal Justice for Native Americans and Addressing the Crisis of Missing or Murdered Indigenous People](#). NCUIH outlined recommendations for HHS including communication and collaboration with UIOs, engagement with UIOs as critical stakeholders in HHS' comprehensive plan to address the MMIP Crisis and violent crime, and the establishment of an agency-wide Urban Confer policy.
- May 5, National MMIP Awareness Day, Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland and Deputy Attorney General Lisa Monaco hosted an event to announce the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI)'s Not Invisible Act Commission (Commission). The Commission is led by the Departments of the Interior and Justice and is aimed at reducing violent crime against American Indians and Alaska Natives. Members of the Commission include Sonya Tetnowski (Makah), the National Council of Urban Indian Health's President-Elect and the Chief Executive Officer of the Indian Health Center of Santa Clara Valley. NCUIH supported the nomination of Ms. Tetnowski who also serves on the [S. Department of Veterans Affairs \(VA\) Advisory Acommittee on Tribal and Indian Affairs](#) Commission Member Tetnowski said **"I am honored and proud to be appointed to the Not Invisible Act Commission. In this role, I will work hard to shed light on the devastating impact of violence against American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/ANs) living in urban areas.**
- On April 15, 2022, NCUIH submitted written [comments](#) and recommendations in response to the Department of Justice's (DOJ) Dear Tribal Leader [Letter](#) seeking stakeholder input on DOJ's efforts to address the unacceptably high rates of violent crime in American Indian and Alaska Native communities and the missing and murdered Indigenous persons (MMIP) crisis. In its comments, NCUIH noted the need for the federal government to also work with Urban Indian Organizations (UIOs) to address these issues. NCUIH further offered to assist DOJ in establishing strong working relationships with UIOs as it works to address these pressing public safety issues.

Next Steps

NCUIH will continue to advocate for and comment on UIO inclusion in addressing the MMIP crisis.