

Using Data and Research to Address Missing and Unidentified Persons Cases in Indian Country and Alaska Native Villages

- Steven Hafner, Research Scientist, National Missing & Unidentified Persons Systems (NamUs)
- B.J. Spamer, Executive Director of Operations, NamUs
- Christine (Tina) Crossland, NIJ Senior Social Science Analyst, Office of Research, Evaluation & Technology, U.S. Department of Justice

14th Annual Tribal Leader-Scholar Forum, NCAI Mid Year Conference, June 26, 2019



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The Missing Person Problem

Every year, over **600,000** individuals are reported missing to law enforcement. Fortunately, many are quickly found, alive and well.

On any given day, there are between **80,000** and **90,000** active missing person cases in the National Crime Information Center also referred to as NCIC.

Missing and Murdered: No One Knows How Many Native Women Have Disappeared



DATA A CRISIS:
A NATIONWIDE MISSING AND MURDERED
INDIGENOUS WOMEN & GIRLS

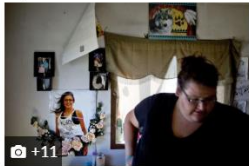
#NotInvisible: Missing and murdered Native American women

Sep 5, 2018



At the end of 2017, Native Americans and Alaska Natives made up 1.8 percent of ongoing missing cases in the FBI's National Crime Information Center database, even though they represent 0.8 percent of the U.S. population.

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Montana woman's disappearance 1 of many Native American women missing or dead

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Despite past reforms, Native women face high rates of crime

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — For generations, Native American women have been victimized at astonishing rates, with federal figures showing that more t...



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Lawmakers propose new ways to help Native women

Federal and state lawmakers have proposed or adopted a series of measures designed to address the problem of missing and murdered Native Ameri...



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The **National Missing and Unidentified Persons System** offers law enforcement agencies, medical examiners, coroners, family members and victim advocates powerful tools for resolving missing and unidentified persons cases.

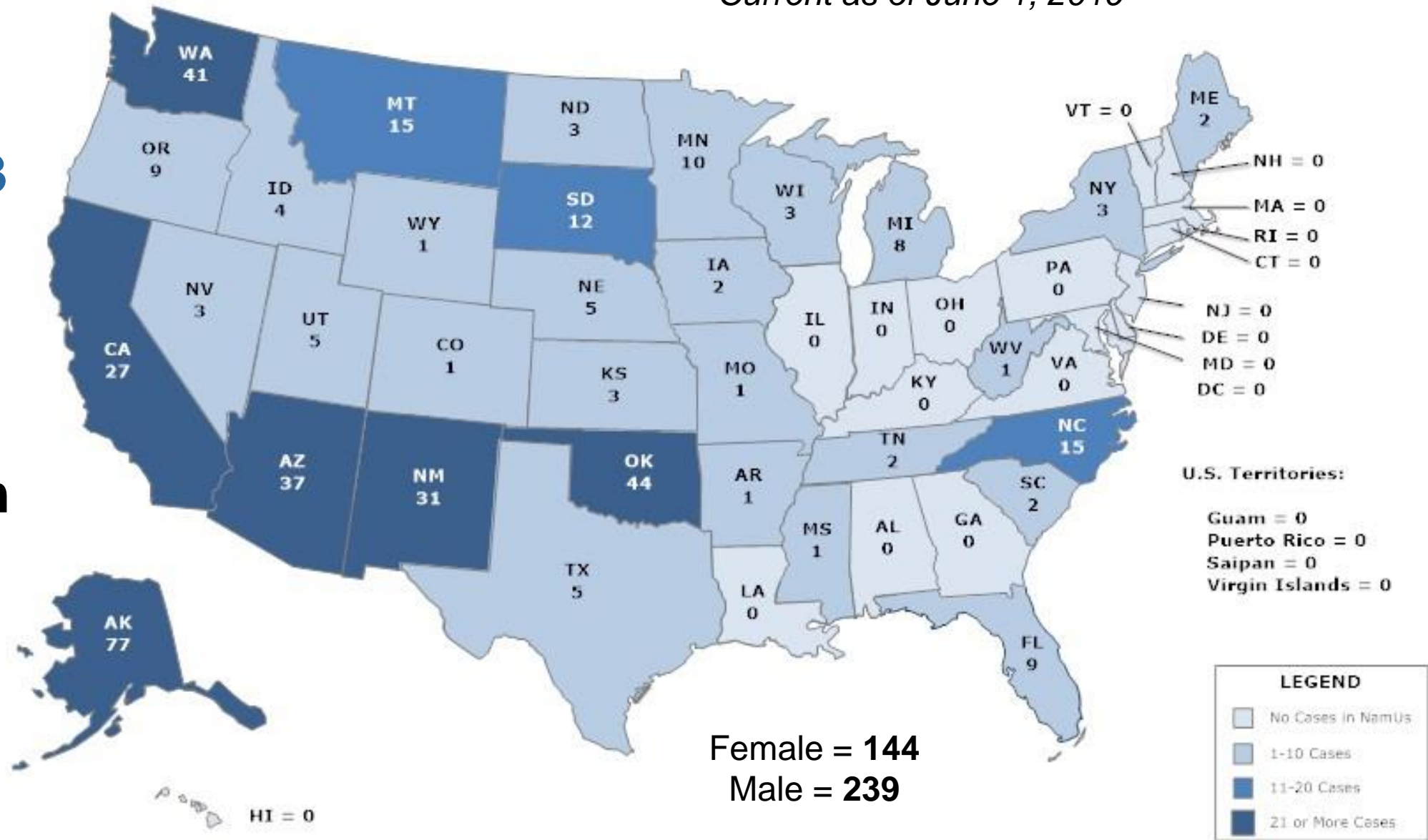
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NamUs American Indian/Alaska Native Missing Person Statistics

Current as of June 1, 2019

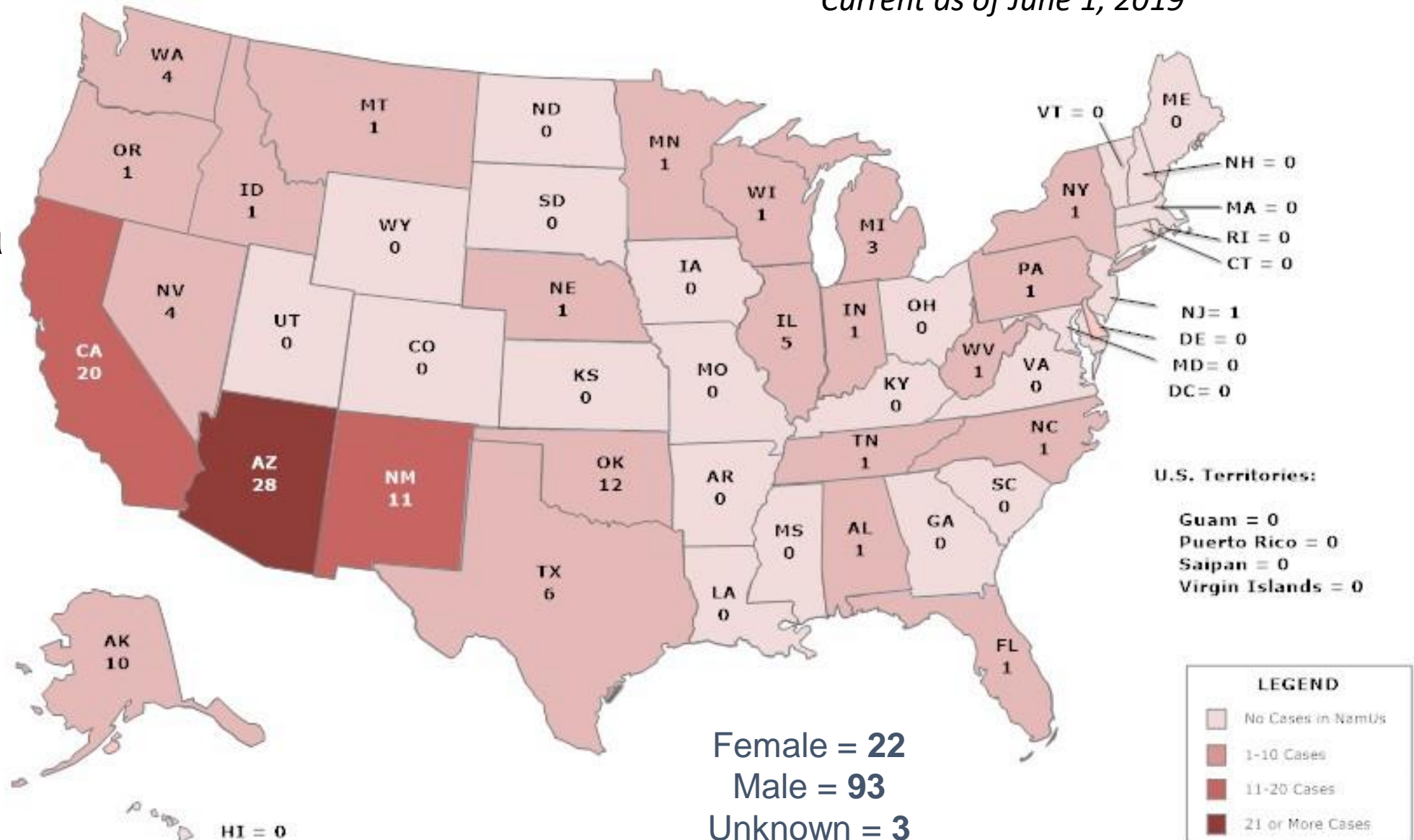
There are currently **383** American Indian/Alaska Natives missing from **32** states entered into NamUs



NamUs American Indian/Alaska Native Unidentified Person Statistics

Current as of June 1, 2019

There are currently **118** American Indian/Alaska Native persons found in **25** states entered into NamUs as unidentified decedents



New Tribal Data Fields

To improve data collection and system usefulness:

- Was a missing person last seen on tribal land?
- Was the missing person's primary residence on tribal land?
- Was the missing person enrolled in, or affiliated with, one or more tribes?
- Was an unidentified person found deceased on tribal land?
- Does the tribal law enforcement agency participate in TAP (Tribal Access Program)?

NamUs Data for Improved Understanding

- How can NamUs data be used to better understand missing, unidentified, unclaimed persons issues?
- NamUs as a data repository → data source
- Maintain awareness of:
 - Data strengths and limitations
 - Different sources of data

Violence Against Women (VAW) in NamUs

- Supported by Office on Violence Against Women
- Aims
 - To identify existing resources and resource needs
 - To examine patterns and trends in cases involving violence
 - To determine final disposition of such cases
 - To discern sex-specific characteristics and outcomes through comparison with cases involving males

VAW in NamUs - Methods

- Literature review
- Case analysis
 - Case classifications: violent, non-violent
 - Data analysis
 - Comparison of violent and non-violent cases
- Follow-up surveys / calls
 - final case outcomes

VAW in NamUs – AI/AN Special Section

- Public Law 280 states vs. Non-Public Law 280 states
- Type of investigating agency (tribal, local, state, federal)

Other Areas of Inquiry

- Health and wellness
 - Ex., victim services
- Investigative and forensic sciences
 - Ex., barriers to biometric data collection
- User experience
 - Ex., satisfaction with NamUs technology
- System evaluation
 - Ex., case completeness and quality
- Using existing NamUs data and new data collection efforts

Importance of Policy in Good Data Collection

Policies ensure that:

- Information collected on missing and unidentified persons is accurate and **robust** (not just complete) – remember that the more information collected and compared, the more likely a match will be made
- Accurate statistics can be obtained when all cases are accounted for in a national database
- Resources are pre-identified for ready availability, when needed

General Thoughts on Drafting a Policy

- There should never be a mandatory waiting period to file a missing person report with law enforcement
- Ensure any mandatory reporting periods to NamUs are appropriate and allow law enforcement agencies to use existing resources to locate the missing person prior to entry
- Include protocols for more timely entry of emergent cases into NamUs (child abductions and other endangerment issues)
- Account for collection and submission of biometric samples that will aide in the location or identification of the missing person
- Provide information to families, so they may assist with the acquisition and entry of data

States With Missing Person Legislation that Includes NamUs

- New York
- Tennessee
- Michigan
- Oklahoma
- Arkansas
- West Virginia
- New Mexico



Policy Example: Tennessee (Tenn. Code Ann. § 38-6-125)

- No law enforcement agency shall establish or maintain any policy which requires a waiting period to take a missing person report.
- Missing child cases shall be entered into NCIC within 2 hours of the report to law enforcement.
- Whenever law enforcement determines that a person is missing, such agency shall enter the missing person into any database of missing persons used by the agency, any database of missing persons used by the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation, and into NamUs.
- If a person has been missing 30 days, law enforcement shall make a request for dental records, including dental x-rays, for submission to NamUs within 10 days of receipt.

Policy Example: New York (Exec Law § § 837-e, f1 & f-2)

- The New York Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) shall transmit the report of a missing child to NamUs no later than 30 days after entry into the central register.
- The central register shall contain all available identifying data on any missing child, including fingerprints, dental information, and photographs.
- Missing adults will be reported to NamUs within 30 days after entry into the register whenever circumstances indicate the person may be in immediate risk of death or injury, or may be a match to an unidentified decedent in NamUs; all other missing adult cases will be reported to NamUs within 180 days.

Policy Example: Michigan (Mich. Comp. Laws § 28.258)

- Missing individuals will be reported to NamUs if the missing person:
 - a) Had a physical or mental disability
 - b) Disappeared under circumstances indicating their physical safety was in danger
 - c) Disappeared under circumstances indicating the disappearance was not voluntary
 - d) Was a child not otherwise covered in sections a-f
 - e) Was not described in a, b, c or f, which is believed to be incapable of returning to his or her residence without assistance
 - f) Disappeared as a result of a natural or intentionally caused catastrophe or accident
- Information collected will include: All vital statistics, including physical descriptors, and dental records after 30 days



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www.NamUs.gov