
HAF+WRCF united with Native American Leaders to end humanitarian crisis

May 4, 2022



Humboldt Area Foundation and Wild Rivers Community Foundation are standing with Tribal communities in the Pacific Redwoods region to mark Missing and Murdered Indigenous People's (MMIP) Awareness Day.

Homicide is the third leading cause of death for Indigenous women and girls. In some Tribal communities, Indigenous women face murder rates that are more than 10 times the national average.

These rates are disproportionately high in the Pacific Redwoods region, which accounts for two-thirds of California's MMIP cases. California is home to the nation's fifth-highest number of MMIP incidents.

MMIP Awareness Day, which takes place on May 5, is a national effort to draw attention and resources to address this devastating pattern of violence and injustice.

The Foundations, which are supporting Native leaders' efforts to end this tragedy, today announced that they are launching The Pacific Redwoods Missing & Murdered Indigenous People (MMIP) Crisis Action Fund

with seed funding from individual donors and the Foundations' discretionary fund.

The fund will support regional research, policy advocacy, crisis response and recovery, and will aim to close technical assistance gaps. It will also allow for the Foundations' continued partnership with Tribal leaders and Indigenous experts to facilitate community support and address the root causes of this public safety threat.

"The national tragedy of MMIP has been all but ignored by philanthropy," said Bryna Lipper, CEO of the Humboldt Area and Wild Rivers Community Foundation. "These are our girls, our friends, our community. Their absence is devastating to us all. Today, and every day until it is no more, we are called to face the crisis that is Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons. We can do something to end this now."

California's most populous Tribe, the Yurok Nation, has developed internationally recognized MMIP justice efforts, working with the region's Inter-Tribal Court to advocate for public and philanthropic resources, elevate research, and help bridge barriers to services. Some of those barriers are a result of legal and jurisdictional issues arising from a 1950's era Congressional Act known as Public Law 280 (or PL 280), which applies to California and five other states. Tribes were neither consulted nor consented to the sweeping change.

This law has been used as justification to deny law enforcement funding to Tribes and has "dramatically altered criminal justice in Indian Country," according to the Department of Justice's Institute for Justice.

"We, all of those who are left behind, are failing. Our people are going missing. They are being trafficked and murdered," said Judge Abby Abinanti, Yurok Tribal Court Chief Justice. "We will not stop fighting for a fair and reasonable share of resources for our region, for our people, and our justice partners. Failures are mounting and we must unite and ensure justice as the right of all."

You can help by getting involved in Missing and Murdered Indigenous People's Awareness Day on Thursday, May 5. Community members are invited to:

- Contact your state and federal legislative representatives, requesting significant expansion in judicial, social, and health resources.
- Follow activities in the California State Capitol, including CA Native American Legislative Caucus and CA Legislative Women's Caucus, and contact Governor Newsom's office to call for budgetary and coordination support.
- Wear red in honor of those individuals who are and have been affected by MMIP and learn their names and stories.
- In the Redwoods Region, show solidarity by joining in the Yurok MMIW Program's Community Walk on May 5. The event starts at the Yurok Tribal Office in Klamath, with a ceremony to lay red flowers over the Klamath River.

- Make a charitable donation to support the work of the Yurok Tribal Court and the families they assist through its nonprofit Kee Cha E Nar.
- Contribute to the Pacific Redwoods Missing & Murdered Indigenous People (MMIP) Crisis Action Fund.
- Learn more about the Karuk coming-of-age ceremony and how it fosters community safety and wellness by watching the award-winning documentary “A Long Line of Ladies.” You can also support cultural revitalization and arts in Native communities.

“The Foundations will continue to support and partner with Tribal and community leaders to advocate for awareness and healing. We will also champion efforts to advocate with our elected leaders and educate the public about the crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous victims,” said Paula (Pimm) Tripp-Allen, Senior Advisor to the Humboldt Area Foundation. “With sustained efforts of philanthropic support and public action, we can begin to work together to forge a path of healing and prevention of this national and local crisis.”

For more information on how to support Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons (MMIP) Awareness Day and the Pacific Redwoods Missing & Murdered Indigenous People (MMIP) Crisis Action Fund, please **visit the Foundations’ website.**

About Pacific Redwoods Missing & Murdered Indigenous People (MMIP) Crisis Action Fund

The epidemic of missing and murdered Indigenous people (MMIP) is a national humanitarian crisis, with California ranking fifth in the nation for incidents of MMIP, and the far north of the state accounting for most cases. The Pacific Redwoods Missing & Murdered Indigenous People’s Crisis Action Fund supports prevention and response to violence against Indigenous people in our region. Your investment in the Pacific Redwoods Missing & Murdered Indigenous People’s Crisis Action Fund supports regional research, policy advocacy, crisis response, recovery, and more. Funds allow for our continued partnership with Tribal leaders and Indigenous experts to facilitate community support and address the root cause of this public safety threat.

About Humboldt Area Foundation and Wild Rivers Community Foundation

The Foundations serve the residents of Humboldt, Trinity, Del Norte Counties in California and Curry County in Oregon, along with 26 Tribal Nations and Indigenous territories by promoting and encouraging generosity, leadership and inclusion to strengthen our communities. We envision a thriving, equitable, healthy, and just region for the generations ahead.