

KAYKWEY KII PAYHTAANAAN LII ZHAAN
michif

GAA-NOONDAMANG
anishinaabemowin

T'ANTU NUHEL HODI
dëne sų́líné

KA ISI PEHTAMAHK
nehiyawewin

TUSALAUQTAVUT
inuktitut



WHAT WE HEARD

Manitoba-Wide Red Dress Alert System Pilot Project

NOVEMBER 2025



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The name Giganawenimaanaanig means “We All Take Care of Them”. We are a Manitoba-wide network of First Nations, Red River Métis and Inuit families, Knowledge Keepers, urban and Indigenous-led organizations, Two Spirit-led, and First Nations, Métis and Inuit representative organizations and governments, the Province of Manitoba and the City of Winnipeg. We are committed to ensuring the 231 Calls for Justice from the “Reclaiming Power and Place – Final Report National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls” are fully implemented.

The work of Giganawenimaanaanig is grounded in Indigenous cultural ceremony and practice. The efforts of Giganawenimaanaanig are based on a matriarchal way of knowledge, cultural practice and lived experiences. Knowing, being and doing from an Indigenous gender-based lens.

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DEDICATION

GRANDFATHER, KNOWLEDGE KEEPER, ELDER OGIMAW GIIZHIK IBAN WALTER STANLEY (STAN) LAPIERRE

This report is dedicated to the loving memory of Stan iban LaPierre. His lifelong career and work supported Giganawenimaanaanig and the Red Dress Alert.

We acknowledge his work, dedication and immense spiritual, cultural and emotional support to the search crew and impacted families who searched for their loved ones at the Prairie Green Landfill. He was a strong advocate for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls (MMIWG) and Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, Intersex and Asexual people.

Stan iban, along with his life partner, Denima Morrisseau, significantly influenced many community members throughout the province. He was recognized as a trailblazer both within the community and in shaping the justice system. He supported affected MMIWG families through various court processes, including attending trials, and introduced Indigenous traditions and spiritual practices into these institutions. Stan iban consistently expressed pride in his work with the youth he engaged with at the Manitoba Youth Centre.

Stan iban will be greatly missed as a loving husband, father, grandfather, brother, uncle and friend who led with his heart, love, kindness, hope, compassion, strength and ceremony.



His care, wisdom, guidance and teachings will have a lasting impact on present and future generations.

Giganawenimaanaanig will continue to work with Denima to carry out the vision they brought forth - that every person enjoy safety and security and above all, unconditional love. We are forever grateful for Stan iban's strong spirit and guidance of the team and for his invaluable contributions of love, support, teachings, and comfort.

With love, honour, and gratitude, Giganawenimaanaanig, the Red Dress Alert Bundle Carriers and Team.



Lori Ann Mancheese

Brandy Wesaquate



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: FRAMING THE BUNDLE

The What We Heard Report summarizes Phase 1 of the Community Engagement for the Red Dress Alert Pilot Project, led by Giganawenimaanaanig (We All Take Care of Them). We thank the Bundle Carriers who played a vital role in guiding the project from the beginning. This forms part of a province-wide effort to develop a Red Dress Alert System in Manitoba. Using Indigenous methodologies, it was crucial to hear the voices, knowledge, lived experiences, innovative ideas, and solutions of the community to create a culturally safe and trauma-informed alert system.

The Red Dress Alert is envisioned as a life-saving mechanism that rapidly mobilizes and coordinates immediate responses from Manitobans and systems. This system will be initiated during the critical hours when an Indigenous woman, girl, or Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, Intersex and Asexual (2SLGBTQQIA+) person goes missing or disappears.

This valuable information was gathered through 43 in-person engagement sessions within Manitoba from January 2025 to August 2025. These sessions included impacted families of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ relatives and survivors of gender-based violence whose voices were at the heart of the work. Indigenous governments and organizations, public institutions, and the wider

community also attended and supported the engagements. In addition to the engagement sessions, a public survey with over 1,000 responses contributed to informing the development of the Red Dress Alert.

Participants shared deeply personal and often traumatic experiences of reporting to authorities, searching for a loved one, and navigating systems and resources. Many were told to wait 24 to 48 hours before filing a report. Additionally, communities often had to use their own limited resources to conduct searches, rely on grassroots networks, and volunteers in the absence of adequate institutional support.

Participants stated that the Red Dress Alert System must be an Indigenous-led, independent organization with sustainable funding and have a clear legislative mandate. We heard that a Red Dress Alert law is necessary to establish clear protocols and processes, ensure accountability at all levels, and facilitate cross-jurisdictional cooperation and coordination while maintaining autonomy. The law must also protect privacy while enabling effective information sharing and include mechanisms for public reporting, evaluation and oversight.

The Red Dress Alert System must be responsive to the community, flexible, and rooted in trust. Alerts should be issued without arbitrary delays and be

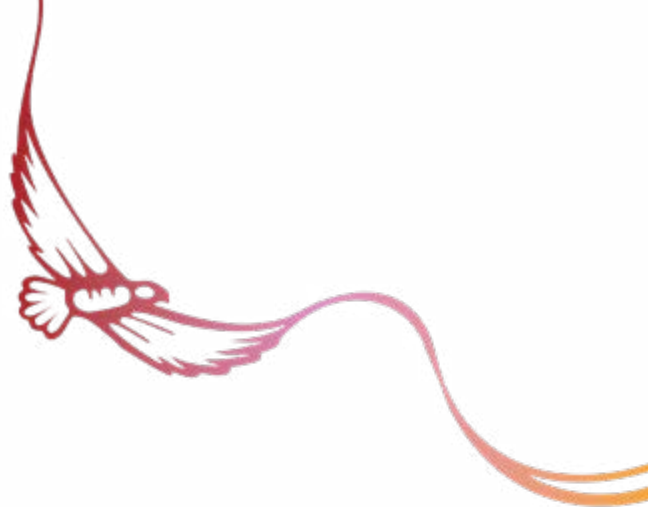
specific to each case. The system must use a variety of communication systems, including radio, social media, interactive website, posters, and mobile applications, to ensure timely, broad and effective dissemination. Wrap-around supports for families, survivors, and communities are essential, including a 24-hour, 7-day-a-week culturally safe liaison, emotional, crisis and mental health services, financial assistance, and long-term healing supports and resources. The Red Dress Alert System must also be inclusive of all genders and identities, recognizing the unique needs of the 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons.

Participants indicated that public awareness campaigns and training on the Red Dress Alert System are vital for the broader Manitoba community. These efforts will play a crucial role in protecting and ensuring the safety of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons.

The final report, to be released on November 25, 2025, will present a detailed framework and

timeline for development and implementation of the Red Dress Alert System - to be fully operational province-wide in 2026. The system will promote the security and safety of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons and provide impacted families and communities with the tools, support, and justice they deserve. Participants indicated that the system could be a national model for other jurisdictions to follow.

Giganawenimaanaanig and the Red Dress Alert Team are grateful and honoured to care for relatives in the best possible way, aiming to prevent further harm and take action on the incredible, heartfelt stories that were gathered. It is imperative that this process leads to a comprehensive Red Dress Alert System that advances the human rights of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons to live free from violence.

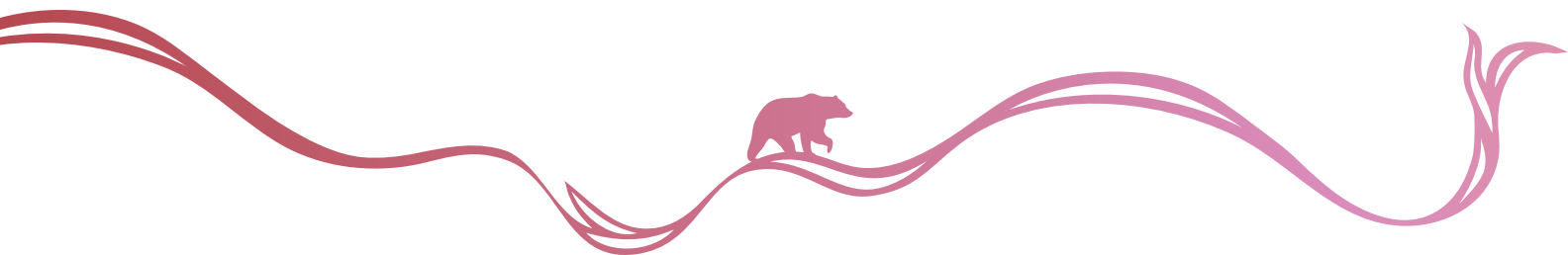


TAKING CARE OF YOUR HEART

The information contained in this report may be upsetting for some because its content relates to Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, Intersex and Asexual (2SLGBTQQIA+) relatives.

If you are affected by the issue of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ relatives and need immediate emotional assistance, call 1-844-413-6649, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Toll-Free Support phone line. This service is available 24 hours, 7 days a week in English, French, Cree, Ojibwe, and Inuktitut.

You may also access long-term [health support services](#) such as mental health counselling, community-based emotional support and cultural services and some travel costs to see Elders and traditional healers. Family members seeking information about their Missing or Murdered loved one can access a list of additional resources (See Appendix A).



INTRODUCTION

This project is guided by Bundle Carriers who have been given the sacred responsibility to bring spirit to all aspects of the work. Giganawenimaanaanig is guided by the Seven Sacred Teachings and the spirit world and began the project in ceremony. By decolonizing the work at every stage, through Indigenous methods and approaches, Giganawenimaanaanig seeks to inspire hope and create meaningful change for the lives of First Nations, Red River Métis and Inuit women, girls, 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons, their families, communities and Nations.

The federal and provincial governments have committed to creating a Red Dress Alert system for Manitoba. A Red Dress Alert is a new form of public alert intended to quickly mobilize police, government agencies, service organizations, and the public in the critical hours and days after an Indigenous woman, girl or 2SLGBTQQIA+ person is first reported missing. A Red Dress Alert is meant to save lives and help address the high levels of violence targeting Indigenous women, girls or 2SLGBTQQIA+ individuals.

Canada and Manitoba have entrusted Giganawenimaanaanig (We All Take Care of Them) to develop a pilot Indigenous-led Red Dress Alert System for the entire province. Giganawenimaanaanig is committed to ensuring that this system is rooted in cultural competency and safety, traditional knowledge, community empowerment,

and trauma-informed healing. We recognize that there are differing needs for First Nations, Red River Métis and Inuit, as well as for gender-diverse individuals, and that any system for justice, protection, and wellbeing must be adapted to lived realities in different regions and traditional territories throughout the province.

It has taken years of effort to convince government of the need for a Red Dress Alert system. Given the urgency of the need, it is now important to move as quickly as possible to put such a system in place. At the same time, it is crucial that any system will respect and be responsive to the distinct and diverse needs of all First Nations, Inuit and Red River Métis families, communities, and Nations.

Toward this goal, Giganawenimaanaanig has undertaken a multi-stage engagement process with impacted families of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ relatives, with Indigenous governments and organizations, with public institutions, and with the wider community. The engagement process was designed to examine in concrete detail what currently happens when a person is reported missing; the strengths and capacities that can be mobilized at the local level; and the changes that must be made to ensure an effective, rapid, and coordinated response and follow-up.

This report provides a summary of the feedback that was heard during the engagement sessions. The report is organized by the core themes of these conversations. A sample agenda is provided in Appendix C. The discussion questions are available in Appendix D. Finally, Appendix E sets out a brief history of this initiative to date.

Giganawenimaanaanig would like to thank all the families, friends and communities who have generously shared their knowledge and insights throughout this process. The conversations were much richer than can be fully reflected in this report. We heard with empathy many traumatic personal stories of surviving violence and harm throughout their lives. In all these stories, a common element was the need to be listened

to and heard. Most participants during their their truth-telling of their lived experience and realities, felt validated and that, **“We need to be believed.”**

Many of the engagement sessions raised important issues that go beyond the scope of the Red Dress Alert pilot, such as measures needed to build safer communities for Indigenous women, girls and gender-diverse individuals. These conversations are an important reminder that the Red Dress Alert must be part of a much larger, comprehensive, and ongoing effort to fully implement all the Calls for Justice of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

RED DRESS STORIES MB

Giganawenimaanaanig publicly launched the Manitoba digital Indigenous-led Red Dress Stories Map on October 4, 2025. This stories map serves as an evergreen and lasting memorial for families of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ relatives. It is also designed to be a teaching tool for educators, policy makers, and leadership organizations. Currently, 412 loved ones are profiled on the stories map and can be found at: Red Dress Stories MB (reddressstoriesmb.ca)

This project aims to:

- Honour the lives and memories of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ relatives.
- Support families and communities in sharing stories.
- Educate the public about the crisis and its root causes.



PART I: WHAT WE HEARD FROM THE COMMUNITY

METHODOLOGY

Giganawenimaanaanig has carried out 30 in-person engagement sessions throughout the province, beginning on January 23, 2025. These sessions were grounded in applying Indigenous research methodologies, allowing for flexibility in asking questions based on community feedback and fostering understanding.



Giganawenimaanaanig Red
Dress Alert Team, October 2025

It is important to note that due to the sensitivity of this topic – and the intense loss and suffering that has been experienced by families, friends, and communities – every effort was made to ensure engagement sessions were trauma-informed, inclusive, and culturally safe. The Manitoba Kee-

watinowi Okimakanak (MKO) MMIWG Liaison Unit provided participants with immediate access to mental health and emotional supports during and after the sessions.

Sagkeeng Anicinabe Nation hosted the first engagement session. It was important and symbolic to launch this process with Sagkeeng Anicinabe Nation because this Nation has experienced the highest proportion of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ relatives of any community in Canada. Sagkeeng Anicinabe Nation has also been a leader in advocating for action to end this violence. The engagement session at the Sagkeeng Anicinabe Nation was led with ceremony by the community at their Turtle Lodge Center of Excellence in Indigenous Education and Wellness to recognize and honour their loved ones.

We would like to acknowledge and thank the following participants. We are thankful that Elders and Knowledge Keepers guided each session. We are thankful for all impacted families and survivors, 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons, those with lived experience who attended, and youth. All engagements in First Nations communities had leadership in attendance (Chief or Councillors). The Spokesperson of the Infinity Women Secretariat and Ministers from the Manitoba Métis Federation – the National Government of the Red River Métis – were present for the specific Métis engagement sessions. Other participants included representatives from school divisions, teachers, staff, the superintendent of The Pas School Division, and the City of The Pas Council. We acknowledge the representation of many faith traditions at each engagement.

Understanding that we were guests in each community and in order to honour community-led principles, ways of doing things, and local protocols, the Red Dress Alert Team collaborated closely with each community who took the lead in planning and coordinating each session.

The sessions are listed in the order they occurred, from earliest to latest:

- Sagkeeng Anicinabe Nation
- Winnipeg (5 sessions)
- O-Pipon Na Piwin Cree Nation
- Thompson (2 sessions)
- Fisher River Cree Nation
- N'Dinawemak (2 sessions)
- Sandy Bay Ojibway First Nation
- God's Lake Narrows (Women's Gathering)
- Norway House Cree Nation (2 sessions)
- Sunshine House
- The Pas (2 sessions)
- Opaskwayak Cree Nation (2 sessions)
- Flin Flon (2 sessions)
- Hollow Water First Nation
- Infinity Women Secretariat, a proud affiliate of the Manitoba Métis Federation – the National Government of the Red River Métis (held in Dauphin with province-wide attendance by Red River Métis Nation Citizens) (2 sessions)
- Tunngasugit Inuit Resource Centre
- Sioux Valley Dakota Nation.

Recognizing that Two-Spirit persons and other members of the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community have distinct needs, and often face additional challenges in dealing with police and service agencies, two specific engagements were held in Winnipeg to focus on these themes. This discussion considered the distinct experiences of First Nations, Inuit and Métis women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons, as well as the different realities of northern compared to southern communities, and urban communities compared to First Nations and rural communities.

An additional engagement session was hosted by N'Dinawemak. This provided an opportunity to meet with experts with lived experience of gender-based violence (including intimate partner violence and sexualized violence) as well as housing insecurity, gang involvement, mental health, and addictions. Many women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ individuals face ongoing risks to their safety, security, and well-being. They expressed the hope that a Red Dress Alert will contribute to keeping them safe.

An additional engagement session was held to consider the experience of newcomers and the potential for collaboration between newcomer communities and Indigenous Peoples. It was an opportunity for participants to learn about the Red Dress Alert pilot project, dispel misconceptions, and understand the broader issues related to Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ relatives.

It should be noted that in addition to these in-person engagements, a public survey was conducted between April 4 and June 30, 2025 with over 1000 responses. The survey provided those who could not attend an engagement session the opportunity to share their knowledge and contribute to the Red Dress Alert development

process. The results of the survey will be summarized in a separate report.

On June 3, 2025, Giganawenimaanaanig released an Interim Summary of key themes discussed in the engagement sessions to date. That Interim Summary was intended to update families and communities and to advance our conversations

with the federal and provincial governments and other key partners in the creation of the Red Dress Alert system.

The Final Report will be issued on November 25, 2025. Our goal is to have a fully operational and effective Red Dress Alert System in place province-wide as soon as possible in 2026.

MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN, GIRLS AND 2SLGBTQQIA+ RELATIVES SACRED MEMORIAL OF OUR RELATIVES

At the beginning of each engagement session, Giganawenimaanaanig acknowledged and honoured the lives of all the loved ones and relatives who have been taken from us. At our second session, a Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ Relatives Sacred Memorial was organized. The photos and mementos lovingly provided by families and

friends then travelled with the team as a reminder that the spirit of our loved ones are with us, guiding our path forward. Throughout the journey, the photos and mementos grew from one table to four tables, reflecting the disproportionately high numbers of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ relatives that have been murdered or have gone missing in Manitoba.



Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, 2-Spirit (Two-Spirit), lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual (MMIWG2SLGBTQQIA+) Sacred Memorial Table, October 2025



1. LIVED EXPERIENCES OF MAKING A MISSING PERSONS REPORT

People go missing under a wide range of circumstances. In every instance, Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals are at greatly heightened risk of harm when they are out of contact with family, friends, and their community.

To address these risks, it is essential that the missing person be located as quickly as possible, so that they can be protected from harm, their needs can be met, and their loved ones can be reassured that they are safe. Throughout the engagement process, however, family members, members of the community, and representatives from service organizations described a wide range of barriers and concerns that can significantly delay or prevent a missing persons report being filed.

Some participants shared examples of lack of resources available to them and reported not receiving the same response from the police, even though this is an essential service. Participants told us that they felt that because they are Indigenous, they did not get the same response from the police or RCMP. Communities are forced to adapt and manage on their own due these challenges and barriers.

Some participants said that in First Nations communities, when someone wants to report a missing person, in some cases, they go to the Chief and Council first and, only after that, to the RCMP. Some participants went directly to resources out-

side of First Nations. At the engagement hosted by the Manitoba Métis Federation affiliate, Infinity Women Secretariat, some participants said they always contact the Bear Clan Patrol because they are more responsive and act faster than the police. Other points of first contact named in the engagement sessions included First Nation Safety Officers, the Fire Chief or Fire Commissioner, and Morgan's Warriors. In many of these instances, mistrust of police and prior negative experiences lead people to seek help from other sources before going to the police.

A parallel example was shared that the domestic violence provincial crisis line is available to victims of intimate partner violence, however, there are times when they will send the call directly to First Nations shelters. Participants discussed their experience that **"Police don't care"** or feel that police are unhelpful, dismissive, or racist. A critical issue for many is that police are slower to respond or may simply refuse to file a missing persons report if any individual is known to police, because of past involvement, because of mental health or addiction, or that they are living unhoused. One participant shared that **"Police are telling us [to wait] to make a report after 24-48 hours. They won't take us seriously"**.

Others talked about how they feel that police are less responsive to lower-income or primarily Indigenous neighbourhoods in large cities. One

said “If I wasn’t in the North End, the police would respond immediately. If I was in Charleswood or Tuxedo, the police would care and come right away”.

In every engagement session, we heard deeply concerning reports of negative experiences and

We heard deeply concerning reports of negative experiences and interactions with police when reporting a missing loved one. Many participants said police need to be more culturally sensitive and have a better understanding of the risks facing First Nations, Métis, and Inuit women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.

interactions with police when reporting a missing loved one. These negative interactions included being placed on hold for a long time; rude, ignorant or racist remarks; and lack of empathy. Many participants said police need to be more culturally sensitive and have a better understanding of the risks facing First Nations, Métis, and Inuit women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.

One person described the experience of trying to report a missing person outside of daytime hours and getting an answering machine rather than an actual person. Another said that the officer who took the details of their missing person report never gave their name and that, without a contact point, they had trouble following up with police.

We also heard concerns about that the way that the 911 service is set up can cause delays, con-

fusion, and frustration for people making reports from northern or remote communities. The 911 dispatcher answering the call often doesn’t recognize the community where the call originates. This can cause confusion and delay. The call may be redirected to the First Nations Police Service or the First Nations Safety Officer in the community. Then, if the case is outside their jurisdiction – for example, if the person went missing in another community – the case is redirected back to the RCMP to take the report.

Some participants recommended that a central emergency number be established specific to missing persons reports. This number should be well-publicized and prominently displayed in public spaces. The

call number should be adequately staffed and accessible 24/7.

Participants expressed concerns over delayed response times (sometimes by several days) and poor communication with police. They said officers need to be more involved with the community so that they will understand it better and can build trust.

Some participants also described slow response times from understaffed First Nations police services. One participant said it can be too difficult to reach an officer and that they are very slow to reply when they are left a message. An example was shared of one community where only a single officer is responsible for responding to every call in the community and other communities throughout a large geographic area.



Roselyn

Maria

Belinda Vivian McKay

be good die young
we are young
gone but never forgotten
you will always be in our hearts

Participants said that police responses vary based on the available information. Police look for indications that the person is “genuinely” missing. There are many reasons that a person can fall out of contact or be difficult to find or unable to find, such as having left the community for emergency care or living without a permanent home. Participants said that police often dismiss the concerns of family and friends and instead rely on their own assumptions to determine whether the individual is actually at risk and the priority that should be given to the search. In one engagement session, a family member said that police waited two weeks before acting on a missing persons report because their sister was known by police, and was experiencing homelessness, and police assumed she wasn’t really disappeared.

Missing persons cases are not treated as criminal investigations unless there is evidence that the individual has been the victim of violence. Participants said that the way that police may categorize reports can become a barrier to using investigative tools like tracing ATM and cell phone use or accessing security cameras.

A number of concerns were expressed about who the police are most likely to listen to and trust when gathering information about a missing person. Participants said that a different definition of family is needed to reflect kinship systems of an Indigenous Nation, rather than basing it on Western concepts of the “nuclear family”. The same concepts of kinship should be applied to how family members are to be kept informed about the search process. Some participants expressed concern that same sex partners are not treated with the same respect as heterosexual partners.

In some contexts, a missing individual’s closest relationships may not be with their own families. In discussions about youth in care and in engagement sessions with the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community, participants pointed out that a person’s social circle, or service organizations that they use, are sometimes the best and most trustworthy source of information.

Concerns were also raised about what information police gather and share when someone goes missing. Police are not consistent on whether they distinguish between First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people or if they are able to do so accurately.

It was said that police still often record Métis persons as non-Indigenous. Police often fail to ask if the missing person is 2SLGBTQQIA+. Police methods of recording gender identity – with the



Hollow Water Engagement
Session, May 2025

limited categories of male, female or “other” – can lead to confusion.

As a result of these failings, police may be missing important information that would help assess the risk to the missing person and the steps needed to help find them. Over time, failure to accurately identify missing persons as First Nations, Métis, or Inuit, or as 2SLGBTQIA+, also leads to distorted statistics, reinforcing misunderstanding and misinformation about community needs.

Participants noted that there are a lot of information-gathering steps that take place largely behind the scenes before a search is seen to be getting underway. For example, if the missing person is a youth in care, group homes will be contacted, and a list will be created of the youth’s likely hang-out spots. Any disruption or change in their regular activities could be seen as concerning.

Participants also talked about the wide range of circumstances in which someone might be reported missing. In some cases, the individual has chosen to break off contact with family and friends. In other cases, they may be hiding from an abusive partner, a stalker, or gangs. If an alert results in a call from someone claiming to be the missing person, but saying that they don’t want to be found, there need to be ways to verify their identity and that they are not being coerced to make the call.

It was noted that efforts to verify reported information can significantly delay a search being initiated. Participants said that a better balance

needs to be struck. One way to do so is to involve organizations that know their communities and know the individuals who are at greatest risk. This is a better alternative than relying exclusively on the judgement of authorities who may not understand the community or may be influenced by their biases and assumptions.

Police can – and should – act on missing persons reports as soon as possible. Failure to do so undermines the effectiveness of the response and increases risks to the missing person. Participants said that as more time passes, the individual is at greater risk of being harmed.

In every engagement, participants shared examples of police telling them that they needed to wait at least 24 hours – or as many as three days – before a missing person report could be filed. The frequency of first point of contact and front-line police officers telling family and friends they must wait before filing a report raises significant concern about police procedures, training, and accountability. We also heard that there is a widespread belief at the community level that it is necessary to wait 24 hours or longer before making a report.

Police can – and should – act on missing persons reports as soon as possible. Failure to do so undermines the effectiveness of the response and increases risks to the missing person. Participants said that as more time passes, the individual is at greater risk of being harmed. In 24 hours, a kidnapped person could be moved to

another province or out of the country. A quicker response time from all police authorities involved was identified as critical in finding a missing loved one.

Participants also noted the need for better public education on the steps that should be taken when a person goes missing, so that families and friends can be better advocates for their rights and hold police accountable for following proper procedures.

Many participants said attitudes toward missing Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQIAA+ per-

sons continue to be shaped by racism and the history of colonialism. One said, **"I think inter-generational trauma and colonization play a role in declaring someone is 'important' enough to be declared missing."** Others talked about the mindset "that us Indigenous women are not of value or not missed"; "normalized violence," and "ingrained victim blaming". One person said, **"We are in 'protective mode' constantly, scared to voice our needs or help."** Others talked about feeling "isolated within and by your own community."

1.1 REASONS WHY A MISSING LOVED ONE MAY GO UNREPORTED

Participants in the engagement process noted that there were a number of factors that could discourage families and communities seeking help from police or going public with a missing persons report. Some of the key issues are discussed below.

Reporting may lead to a loved one being prosecuted

Families and communities need assurance that the information they share for the purpose of finding their loved one will not be used in a criminal prosecution of the missing person. An example that was shared was the reluctance of families to go to the police if the missing person has an outstanding arrest warrant.

"Racism is a barrier or obstacle. They blame the victim. There is no empathy, people are desensitized, not educated, ignorant, and quick to judge which caused community division."

Thompson Service Provider Engagement
February 2025

Information shared for the purpose of locating a missing person shouldn't be used for any unrelated purpose, including criminal investigation or prosecution of the missing person. Otherwise, there is a strong barrier to contacting police or engaging with the search process that puts lives at risk.

Fear of child apprehension

Evidence shows that Child and Family Services (CFS) removes greatly disproportionate numbers of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit children from their homes. As a result, families may delay reporting a child missing for fear of possible repercussions if the CFS system becomes involved.

It was also noted that sometimes, children running away from a foster home will be taken in and hidden by a family who does not trust CFS to do what's right for the child.

Escaping from trafficking, gangs, and gender-based or intimate partner violence

Individuals who are experiencing violence, or who are being threatened with violence – for example, if they have been trafficked or if they are experiencing intimate partner violence – may break off all contact with friends or family while trying to escape violence. It was noted that when there are no shelters in the immediate area, people may need to travel very far away to escape violence which makes it more likely that they will lose contact.

Similarly, people who are experiencing such violence may be unable to go to police to report a missing friend or family member or share information about that person because doing so could lead to retaliation.

Shelters cannot disclose the identity of the people using their services without consent or even

with their consent, if the particular shelter policy doesn't allow it.

Participants in the engagement process emphasized the need for crisis lines and safe houses that provide a trusted environment where people can make contact with friends and family without fear of repercussions.

Intergenerational Responses of Trauma

Some participants noted that the individuals or families of individuals who have gone missing multiple times may feel complex emotions or have had bad experiences with reporting. This is linked to the intergenerational responses they have experienced within systems such as child family services or policing. Due to these historical negative experiences with reporting a loved one who has gone missing, participants expressed a fear of being judged, which prevents them from making a missing persons report.

Potential targeting and abuse of families that report a missing loved one

Concerns were also raised about patterns of individuals taking advantage of missing persons alerts to extort money from concerned family members. There needs to be careful screening to ensure missing persons are legitimate, to produce alerts in a way that community members will know that they are authentic, and to ensure that responses to any tip line are handled by a reliable third party, so that family and friends are shielded from potential harassment and abuse.



2. LIVED EXPERIENCES OF THE SEARCH PROCESS

First Nations, Red River Métis, and Inuit communities have limited and underfunded resources and inequitable access to essential policing and emergency management services that other Manitobans have. Despite this, they mobilize to help search for a missing person. Throughout the engagement process, countless examples were shared of families, friends, community leaders, and service organizations working together to get the word out, conduct ground searches, and provide comfort and support for the missing person's family and friends.

Participants from Thompson expressed concern over the inadequacy of formal supports, search systems and accessibility of related services in that city. However, they said that there is an informal network that will lend support when an Amber Alert is issued. This includes helping with street canvassing or ground searches or giving support to the family.

In some smaller communities, when word goes out that someone is missing, people know to gather at a particular hub that has been used before, such as the fire hall or the medical clinic. A northern community shared that it begins any search for a missing person by getting community members together, going door to door, and assigning people to drive up and down the local roads. The Emergency Measures Organization coordinates. Another community shared that an

auntie or grandma is approached to ensure the family is well taken care of, including arranging food or childcare. In other communities, churches may play an active role in sharing information and providing support to the families.

Another important theme was the strong sense of community among people with common experiences such as living unhoused. Many said that these circles of friendship and support are a vital and untapped resource in searching for missing persons. They said that friends and peers often know more about the missing person than their families and should be involved in the search process. One participant said that community members can find someone on their own faster than the police can.

Participants in the 2SLGBTQQIA+ engagement session described how their community acts quickly when someone goes missing. Words travel fast through social media and by word of mouth. Members of the community tend to know each other and where a missing person is most likely to be found. People get together to check the usual locations where the missing person hangs out. They will ask people in the area if they have seen the missing person. Calls are made to shelters, hospitals, and jails.

Depending on location, ground searches might cover an extensive area. In some northern com-

munities, Peace Keepers have used drones to help with the search. In one community it was noted that the Fishers and Trappers Association have been asked to lead searches because of their knowledge of the land and lakes. In urban centres, volunteer organizations like Bear Clan Patrol play an important role in going door to door, or visiting homeless encampments, to ask if the missing person has been seen. Examples were shared of Manitoba Hydro and the army providing personnel and equipment to assist a search. In other examples, neighbouring Indigenous communities have provided help.

Participants said searches need to be thorough and based on an understanding of the wide range of institutions and locations where the missing person might be found or where important information could be gathered. Examples that were shared included friendship centres, medical transport, ferries or airports leaving remote communities, and hotels where victims of trafficking might be held.

While many positive examples were shared, participants also felt that too much burden is being placed on family members and friends. Families should not have to take on critical search activities like creating and putting up posters and fundraising. All the critical tasks should be covered by a designated organization, whether that is police, service agencies or other government bodies. In all cases, families should be provided clear information on who is doing what, and when they are doing it.

Many participants said that funds need to be made available to cover the kinds of costs that are often incurred by families. This includes the costs of creating posters, travelling to search locations away from their home community, or taking time away from work.



Opaskwayak Cree Nation
Engagement Session, April 2025

Families in northern and isolated communities highlighted significant challenges, dangers, and barriers they face in carrying out searches due to rough terrain, heavy bush and large areas of water.

It was noted that not all communities have comprehensive or up-to-date emergency operation plans and protocols in place for when someone goes missing, or adequate funding to implement these plans and protocols. The existing capacity within Indigenous communities could be strengthened through programs to provide training on different aspects of the search process, systematizing local procedures, gathering maps of the area, accessing technology (e.g., drones and apps), and establishing contact lists and communications systems to involve all the relevant local organizations. One community said they wished they had funding to train respond-

ers and to have their own search dogs instead of relying on outside resources.

One community described how the Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc. crisis response team had trained a designated group of community members to coordinate and serve as trusted

healing process and highlight important lessons to be learned for the future.

The point was made that the search process should also use means to integrate spirituality, ceremony, and tradition, not only in the support provided to the family, but also in ensuring that

the search activities are conducted in a way that respects the Indigenous cultures and values of that community. A participant mentioned to “look at the book by Louis Prince that talks about using spirit to help find missing persons for police and families. Use our senses to help with searches.”

Facing or experiencing racism in how searches are conducted or supported by the general public

was raised, in that there was a lack of public response in helping with searches, and the lag in law enforcement responses. Many participants noticed the unequal and different responses to help search by the general public when a non-Indigenous person goes missing versus when an Indigenous person goes missing. They also highlighted the unequal resources and support given to Indigenous families to support searches for a loved one.

Facing or experiencing racism in how searches are conducted or supported by the general public was raised, in that there was a lack of public response in helping with searches, and the lag in law enforcement responses.

intermediaries in the event of a missing person or other emergency. They recommended this approach to other communities.

Participants also noted the need for trauma-informed, wrap-around care for family members and friends going through this difficult process. In addition, many participants noted the importance of a sensitive debriefing process after a search is concluded. Debriefing can contribute to the

CURRENT METHODS OF INFORMING THE PUBLIC

Typically, when a missing persons alert is issued, the information is shared in various formal and informal ways, such as with news media, posted on social media, and distributed in the community as posters in public places. Radio was frequently

identified as the most effective media in communities with limited internet and cell phone connectivity. First Nations Band Councils will often use community radio to amplify missing persons alerts.

Missing persons announcements typically include the age of the person, a physical description, what they were wearing, and where they were last seen. In some cases, the alert will be translated into Indigenous languages. One participant noted that they have never seen or heard an alert with information about supports available for people affected by the disappearance.

Noting the important role of the news media in drawing attention to missing persons alerts, some participants said that journalists and news outlets need better training in how to “represent missing persons with dignity.” Specific concerns were expressed over terms like “high risk lifestyle” that “makes it seem as though they are giving an excuse not to care or to look.” Concerns were also raised with using photos from police or correctional identification.

Depending on the community, some additional ways to get the word out include:

- Phone calls to key community organizations
- Going door to door when cell or phone lines are down
- Advertising in high traffic places like Facebook Marketplace
- Word of mouth to friends and relatives
- Community billboards
- Community websites.

Participants noted that getting the word out quickly and effectively requires having up to

date emails and phone numbers for key contacts in the community. This can’t be set up quickly but instead needs to be set up in advance and regularly maintained. Some participants recommended having an organized telephone tree set up to alert key organizations (or even the whole community if the community is small).

Where connectivity is good, social media is the fastest and easiest way to get the word out. Participants noted that different demographics prefer different social media platforms. As a result, Facebook, X or Twitter, Instagram, SnapChat, TikTok, and even Facebook Marketplace should be used.

Some participants shared caution about over reliance on social media, stating that “**not everyone uses social media.**” There were also concerns that once information is posted to social media, there is no control over how it is used or for how long it might circulate. For these reasons, family and friends may have greater concerns about sharing information on social media than they would about using some of the other available tools. Some participants said that if information is posted on social media, the forum must be strictly moderated to ensure lateral violence and unhelpful comments are filtered out.

More generally, participants identified concerns that once an alert is issued, malicious gossip and other misinformation about a missing loved one often circulates in the community, whether by social media or word of mouth. This can undermine search efforts and add to the trauma experienced by family and friends.

WHEN A PERSON GOES MISSING IN ANOTHER COMMUNITY

Many challenges and barriers were identified when a loved one goes missing far from home. For example:

- Families find it harder to stay informed or who to contact or where to search.
- Families don't have a point of contact and are left to navigate unfamiliar systems on their own.
- When family members travel to another community to carry out a search, they may incur a heavy financial burden or face discrimination when they travel.
- They often experience culture shock – a lack of community connection and displacement.
- There is often no access to a place to stay that is culturally safe.
- Families experience racism or discrimination.

We heard from participants from northern communities that when a loved one goes missing in an urban centre, they have no one to reach out to. Many felt that officials in those cities are unhelpful and uncaring. Many felt that they were unsafe in a new city or place away from home and were afraid they may not return home.

At some engagements, it was noted that it is important to enlist the help of off-reserve band members living in these communities where someone has gone missing.

The situation is further complicated for communities on or near provincial and national borders. For example, we heard in Flin Flon, that it was not unusual for people to live at an address with a Manitoba postal code but have a Saskatchewan health card.



Dauphin Engagement Session in partnership with Infinity Women Secretariat, May 2025

EXISTING SUPPORTS FOR FAMILIES AND SURVIVORS

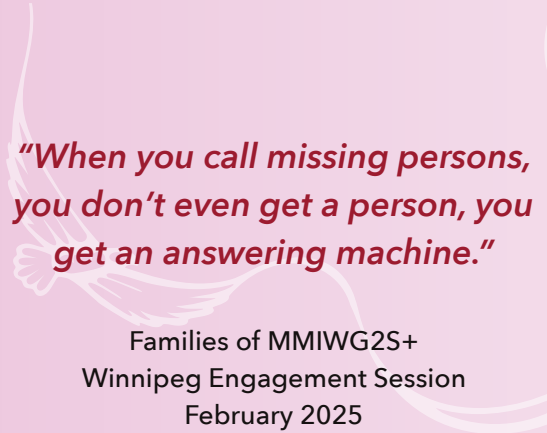
Participants highlighted a range of existing supports that assist families and friends when a loved one goes missing (age-appropriate, location etc). These examples provide important foundations on which to build. However, many participants also expressed unfamiliarity with existing supports or called for better communication about assistance that may be available.

A number of participants talked about the welcome support provided by the Bear Clan Patrol in Winnipeg, which helps in disseminating a missing person's information, but also helps throughout the various stages of the search. We heard from participants that the Bear Clan helps as a point of contact, so that friends and family aren't put into a position of dealing with the large numbers of calls, many of them false or harassing, that an alert, a poster or a post about a person who has disappeared can generate. The Bear Clan Patrol also works with a national non-governmental organization, the Indigenous Awareness Network, that helps promote these cases and helped create a manual on how to carry out searches. It is important to note that the Bear Clan is not operating in all communities and has working hours and resources.

Another helpful support is the Canadian Centre for Child Protection (formerly Child Find) who will reach out to the Winnipeg Police Services for updates on the investigation of a loved relative on behalf of the family.

The MKO MMIWG Liaison Unit provides a range of support to First Nations families and communities, such as:

- Operating an Intake Line to provide supports to the families.



"When you call missing persons, you don't even get a person, you get an answering machine."

Families of MMIWG2S+
Winnipeg Engagement Session
February 2025

- Assistance engaging with police to help ensure that their concerns are heard and that police take these investigations seriously.
- Making posters, search banners and other materials to help get the word out when someone goes missing.
- Mobile crisis training can assist communities in creating crisis response plans.

Many participants said that they were unfamiliar with existing supports and resources such as the MKO MMIWG Liaison Unit. Some said they want better communication about existing supports and that there should be more effort to get information out during related gathering and events.

[illegible]



3. CREATING A RED DRESS ALERT SYSTEM

Throughout the engagement sessions, participants emphasized the importance of a Red Dress Alert being put in place as soon as possible to address the significant gaps and failings in the current system. The urgency of a Red Dress Alert was highlighted by one participant as **“I don’t want to be in the (MMIWG2S+ Memorial) book.”**

Participants also spoke about the need to get the system right, so that it would meet the unique and distinct needs of First Nations, Red River Métis, and Inuit families and communities from all regions and territories and ensure that they are treated with respect. Some suggested that there would need to be ongoing learning and suggested that engagements should continue with Indigenous, rural and urban communities so

that the system can be evaluated and continually improved.

While this engagement process focused on creating a province-wide Red Dress Alert system for Manitoba, participants said that the system will only be fully effective when it is integrated with a nation-wide alert system. Participants noted that people who go missing may cross provincial boundaries or be trafficked to other provinces.

Based on community engagement, various components were suggested, including a comprehensive system that outlines supports; training and education; resources; accessibility (sign language, languages and interpretation); phone, radio, website and applications; proactive strategies and safety measures.

3.1 WHEN AND HOW SHOULD A RED DRESS ALERT BE ISSUED?

There was widespread support for the idea that a Red Dress Alert be issued as quickly as possible whenever someone is at risk. Many specifically said that there not be an arbitrary waiting period – that as soon as the information can be verified, it be released.

As noted above, there is widespread concern about reliance on police as the first and primary

point of contact for making a missing persons report. Family, friends and community members need access to someone they trust and who will treat them in a culturally safe and trauma-informed way. It is also important that the person or system receiving missing persons reports have sufficient knowledge of the community to be able to record the information accurately and respectfully.

A number of participants emphasized the importance of the system receiving and acting on reports that are brought forward by people other than immediate family such as extended family members and kin or by friends and peers. Many vulnerable persons are estranged from their families – including among the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community – with the result that a friend is more likely to know if they are missing.

Overall, it was said that a family or friend’s intuition should be listened to. Some recommended that while the first step should be to make sure police have the missing person report, the police

some participants said that they were aware of situations where an abusive partner had made a missing persons report in an attempt to locate a spouse who had gone into hiding for their own safety.

There is also the danger of spreading misinformation. Some participants proposed that there needs to be processes in place to determine if the missing persons report is genuine and whether the details are accurate.

While some participants said that an Alert should be issued any time a woman, girl or 2SLGBTQQIA+ person is reported missing – regardless of the circumstances – some raised concern that receiving frequent Red Dress Alerts could lead to desensitization of the public and undermine the effectiveness of the tool.

Overall, there seemed to be general agreement that an Alert should be issued if there is any reason to believe the individual is at risk. For

example, many said that an Alert should always be issued if the missing person is a youth or a child. In some engagement sessions, participants discussed specific criteria to determine whether a missing person may be at risk:

- How unusual it is for them to break off contact, not respond to texts or telephone calls, or tell someone where they can be found.
- After a wellness check has been requested but the person was not located.

“We want to decrease, and prevent violence against Indigenous women, girls, 2SLGBTQQIA+”

Families of MMIWG2S+ Winnipeg Engagement Session
February 2025

should not have the last word on whether or not an Alert is issued.

There was also discussion of potential risks associated with issuing an Alert based on incomplete information or without sufficient understanding of the circumstances of the missing person. For example, an Alert might draw unwanted or dangerous attention to an individual who has chosen to go into hiding. Personal information revealed in an Alert could have unintended consequences such as making it easier for them to be found by the person or persons threatening them. In fact,

- If a parent does not return home to a child in the care of a family member or babysitter.
- When someone is known to have gotten into an uber or taxi, or accepted a ride, and they don't arrive at their destination.
- When a person was last heard expressing fear or distress.
- The age, mental capacity, and maturity of the missing person.

It was noted that there are potentially many different components to an Alert:

- Contacting shelters, hospitals and clinics, jails and remand centres and other places where a missing person might be staying or being held.
- Getting information out to frontline organizations and service providers.
- Engaging Indigenous governments and representative organizations.
- Activating police responses.
- Coordinating specific activities like a ground search or a door-to-door canvas.
- Targeting messages to specific communities and neighbourhoods most likely to have information about the missing person.
- Trying to reach the individual and provide a safe way for them to make contact.
- Mobilizing specific resources and supports for affected families and friends.
- Getting the word out to the public as a whole.

Some participants said that the goal should be to alert as many people as possible so that “all eyes” are looking for the missing person. Others expressed concern that if every alert is treated the same way, and always go out through all possible channels without any targeting, the public may become jaded and disengaged. There are already many other forms of missing persons notifications competing for attention. More broadly, many people are overwhelmed with information, particularly if they are active social media users. Concerns were raised that frequent use of a general alert could become less and less effective over time.

Some participants suggested that depending on the circumstances, some Alerts might go “full blast” and engage every channel of communication, while others might be more effective if they used only some. Some participants suggested that the communication of Alerts should always target the people and communities best able to act on the information of a missing person. If a person is known to have gone missing in Winnipeg, for example, the Alert should prioritize reaching key community organizations and the public in Winnipeg, rather than going out to everyone province wide. In a number of sessions, the suggestion was made that there be different levels of Alert, or different Alert colours or codes, to indicate, for example, whether there was need for immediate community mobilization for a ground search or door-to-door canvassing.

There was widespread agreement that there must be clear criteria on when and how an Alert is issued. There also must be clear criteria for when an Alert is cancelled.

Many participants underlined the need for such decisions to be made by people who know and understand the individual's context and community. Some participants suggested that deci-

sion-making should follow protocols specific to First Nations, Métis and Inuit individuals and communities and to different regions of the province. A number of participants specifically said that the decision about when and how to issue an Alert should not be made by police. At some engagement sessions, recommendations were made about establishing community-based advisory bodies that could make these decisions.

Participants also made specific, concrete suggestions about the kind of information that should be gathered to help determine whether and how an Alert is issued. As much as possible, this information should be gathered from the person filing the initial report, although some of the information might need to be obtained through follow-up with police and service providers. It is important to note, however, that only some of the information gathered to inform the report would be released as part of the Alert: some of the information may be confidential or potentially harmful to the individual if widely shared and therefore must be used only internally within the search process:

- Age, height, weight.
- The First Nation, Inuit, or Métis community or communities they come from.
- Different names they may be known by.
- Gender pronoun.
- Whether they identify as part of the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community, and if this something they have made public or would be comfortable having made public.
- Identifying marks such as tattoos, birth marks, piercing, and what they were last wearing.
- Their last known location and who they were with at the time.

- Their typical routine, and places they visit frequently.
- Their plans on the day they went missing.
- Their social media habits.
- The missing person's history of medical care, police involvement, prior wellness checks, or time spent in a crisis centre.
- The language or languages that they use.
- Recent photos and videos of the missing person – these photos and videos should be respectful and dignified, not photos that look like mug shots or that use filters.
- Known intimate or close relationships.
- Housing situation.
- Known medical conditions and, particularly, if they require regular medication or medical treatment of any kind.
- Whether or not the missing person is known to self-isolate.
- If the individual works in the sex trade that should not be a highlight of their Red Dress Alert notice.
- Any substantive evidence of the missing person's location and state of being.

As noted earlier in the discussion of current practices for publicizing a missing persons report, participants said that a diversity of media and techniques should be used. In particular, caution was expressed over relying too heavily on social media and apps. These tools do not reach everyone. For people who can't afford smart phones or internet access, and in many northern and remote communities where connectivity is limited,

other means of communication are essential, including radio and television; flyers and posters; and direct calls to key organizations. Some participants suggested that dedicated digital and or electronic billboards be put in place in key locations to be used when needed. Databases and communications systems used by key professionals, such as Qdoc Virtual Healthcare, could display Alerts as part of their notifications. It was also suggested that larger employers could be enlisted to agree to send out Alerts to their employees.

Whatever communications methods are used, they should be reviewed regularly to assess their effectiveness and learn from any problems that may have been encountered.

Depending on the person who has gone missing, and the circumstances of their disappearance, different organizations may need to be contacted at the outset of the search. Participants pointed to a variety of factors that would need to be considered. Youth will have distinct points of contact that need to be alerted like schools and youth centres. Organizations and businesses within the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community may have an important role to play when someone goes missing from that community. Other possible points of contact named in the engagement session included medical clinics, medical transport, boarding homes, recreational facilities, public transport, and libraries.

This, again, is an area where difficult decisions must be made. Determining what organizations or services need to be contacted requires deep understanding of the community, trust and effective two-way communication.

The importance of family involvement was emphasized throughout the engagement process. Particularly if the missing individual has close



"We want more empathy and understanding, sensitivity and quicker response and action."

Sandy Bay First Nation Engagement
March 2025

ties to their family, the family's judgement should take priority and they should be consulted at each step of the process. Critically, if there are any new developments, family members must be notified first: they should not find out on social media or the news. A recent example related to the Prairie Green landfill search is Mashkode Bizhiki'ikwe, when a non-family member let the public know about her identity before the family was notified.

A common theme throughout the engagements was the need to ensure that any criteria for issuing an Alert is widely known and understood. The people recording the initial reports and those making the decision whether or how an Alert is distributed, need specific training to ensure that these criteria are followed consistently. In addition, it will be important that the public is also aware of the criteria so that people know what to expect, how to help, and can help hold the system accountable.

Criteria also must be developed about what kind of information is shared in the Alert. The more information that is shared, the stricter the criteria must be in order to safeguard the privacy of

the individual and protect them against possible unforeseen consequences.

Rather than just saying the individual is Indigenous, it would be more helpful to say if they are First Nations, Red River Métis or Inuit and to name their specific community – provided the information is accurate. It would also be helpful to the search process to include if the individual publicly identifies as 2SLGBTQQIA+ – provided there is reasonable confidence that they wouldn't have concerns about this information being widely shared. It was noted that special care needs to be taken regarding youth who may be "out" with select friends but not with their parents or caregivers.

In addition to informing the public that a person is missing, a Red Dress Alert system should also

include a way to provide updates, including about the resolution of a missing person report. At a number of sessions, participants noted that it was important to learn when a person first goes missing, but also whether they have been found or if they remain missing. The point was also made that Alerts should include information on how family, friends and others affected by the disappearance can access supports.

Some participants noted the existence of long-standing, unresolved missing persons cases. Many of the functions that have been identified for a Red Dress Alert would also benefit family and friends of women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons who went missing years ago and remain missing. The question was asked whether the Red Dress Alert system could include such long-term cases.

3.2 WRAP-AROUND SUPPORT TO FAMILIES, SURVIVORS, FRIENDS, AND COMMUNITIES

A recurring theme throughout the engagement process was the heavy burden carried by the families, friends, and communities of missing persons. Participants repeatedly emphasized that a Red Dress Alert system needs to be more than a one-way system of communication, sending out information about missing persons. A majority of participants said they wanted a system that will serve as first point of contact and the ongoing liaison for families, friends and communities. The Red Dress Alert system could play a leading role in coordinating search activities and helping families, friends, and community members access culturally safe and trauma-informed wrap-around supports.

Families and community organizations emphasized the importance of having someone available 24/7 to help triage and navigate the process of filing a missing persons report, and advocate for the family or community. They want someone who is prepared to listen and who has the power to act when a loved one goes missing.

Families and friends are in crisis or shock when a loved one goes missing. Some participants explained that **“while they search or wait to find out more, it is an emotional time for families and they can’t think straight.”** One participant described creating and sharing a description of all the steps in the search process presented in clear, plain language. There may be a need for a team to liaise with police and other officials on

their behalf. The team would also provide regular updates to families about the search process.

It was suggested that this liaison team should be in a position to actively reach out to families, including going to their homes, walking them through the search process, and answering any questions. It was suggested that the liaison or point of contact be someone who understands the technical aspects of the search process, be trauma-informed and culturally proficient, have knowledge of the communities they are serving, and is likely to be considered trustworthy by family and friends. There may be a need for several liaison persons to carry out the work, and they will need to receive extensive training to do so in a culturally competent, trauma-informed way.

The importance of family involvement was emphasized throughout the engagement process. Particularly if the missing individual has close ties to their family, the family’s judgement should take priority and they should be consulted at each step of the process.

Participants specifically said that the point of contact with the Red Dress Alert system should not be a police officer. One said **“We need (designated) Aunties and Kookums”** including 2SLGBTQQA+ Kookums. The point was also made that families and friends should be provided the option to talk

to a male or female or 2SLGBTQQIA+ support person.

Recognizing that the Red Dress Alert system will need to coordinate closely with police, participants recommended that there should be designated liaisons within all police services to work with and facilitate accurate and regular flow of communications. While most family members are likely to prefer to work directly with the Red Dress Alert system, they should always have the option to speak directly with the police liaison.

Participants at one engagement suggested that a Red Dress Alert Team or Liaison should establish a contact point among the family or friends of the missing person. That contact person would always be their first point of connection and keep them informed on a regular basis.

supports need to be broader and more inclusive to support families and friends.

Examples of the kind of immediate, comprehensive and culturally safe care required include:

- Access to traditional medicines, Elders, Knowledge Holders, and ceremony
- Child care
- Meals
- Counselling (crisis and mental health), including the option to talk to someone outside the community and who speaks the language
- Connection to other resources and supports and help to navigate the process of accessing these supports.

The Red Dress Alert system could play a leading role in coordinating search activities and helping families, friends, and community members access culturally safe and trauma-informed wrap-around supports.

Although there are many challenges and delays, Victim Services is intended to help people access their rights and understand their responsibilities. Access to Victim Services is only available when it has been determined that the case involves a criminal matter. Even then, there are long delays because of lack of resources. The Circle of Courage and the Families First approach were suggested as good models.

Many participants said that family and friends need access to a wide range of wrap-around care that is age-appropriate and trauma-informed. Participants also said that support needs to be distinction-based, specific to First Nations, Inuit, and Métis families. First Nations participants noted that they have access to federal programs, but the

It was also suggested that wrap-around supports are needed for children who frequently go missing.

Participants noted that due to their isolation, and challenges finding staff, northern and remote communities have much less access to culturally

safe and trauma-informed supports than urban centres, including lack of safe physical spaces.

A number of participants highlighted the fact that families, friends and volunteers often have to incur financial costs related to the search process, including taking time off work or travelling to help in search activities. It was recommended that a specific, province-wide fund be established for this purpose and that the Red Dress Alert system would coordinate and facilitate access to this fund.

Participants also noted family and friends continue to experience trauma “long after the search is over.” However, existing support systems often fall away over time. Furthermore, communities are often unsure how to reach out to and support family and friends experiencing long-term grief. It was recommended that this be considered in supports and training provided by the Red Dress Alert system. One suggestion was to include recommendations for commemoration activities and ways other members of the community can show solidarity.

An ongoing public awareness and education campaign will be needed to ensure that any system is well-known and that friends and family members know who to contact. Some participants suggested that a Red Dress Alert system include periodic orientation sessions for all communities.



Engagement with Winnipeg
Service Providers, May 2025

Some participants expressed the need to include wrap-around supports and inclusive victim services for survivors of gender-based violence after they are found when reported missing. It was suggested that there should be more enhanced care for survivors so they can heal with a circle of support and stay physically, emotionally, spiritually, and mentally safe to achieve a good life, one that offers hope and compassion.

3.3 TRAINING FOR FAMILIES, FRIENDS AND COMMUNITIES AND ACCESS TO RESOURCES

Some participants expressed the need to access more supports and resources such as toolkits and training to help families and communities engage with the search process. Examples of the kind of information include:

- what happens in a search
- who should be involved
- what are the possible outcomes.

Many participants and communities were not aware of existing tools such as the Ka Ni Kan-ichihk Missing Persons & Persons at Risk Toolkit that could help and guide them during the crisis when a loved one goes missing. It was suggested that the Red Dress Alert system could:

a) assess existing resources and produce new resources where there are gaps and needs; and

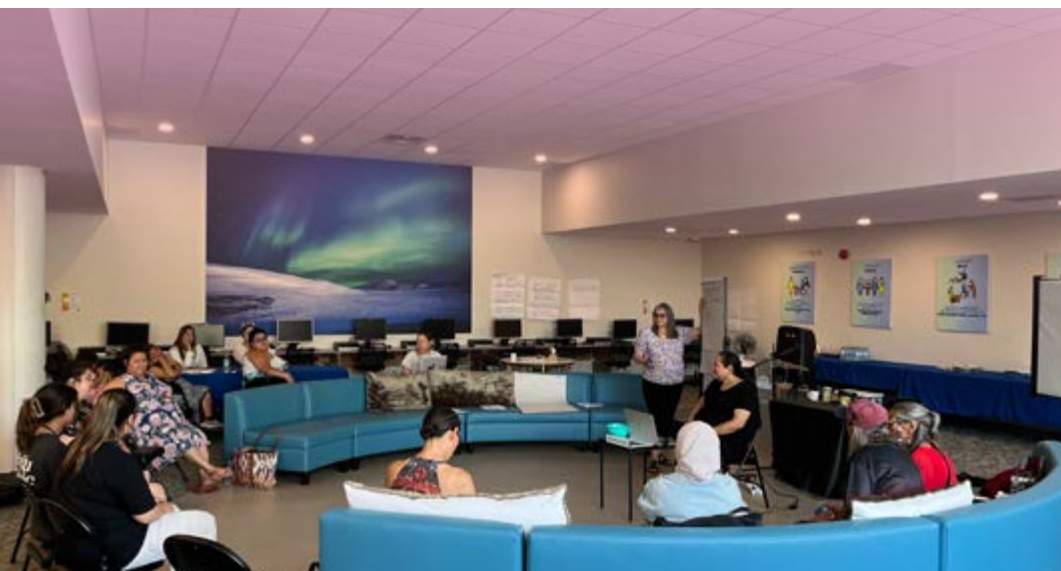
b) help make these resources more accessible to families,

friends, and communities.

Some Indigenous leaders and participants identified the need for locally-based support teams specific for their community that could work with the Red Dress Alert liaison. One community shared an idea for every Chief and Council, Métis local, or urban community centre to create a designated liaison to work with the Red Dress Alert system and support families and the community when a loved one is missing. Inuit organizations could also be a designated point of contact.

Some participants recommended that the Red Dress Alert system include a train-the-trainers component that would help spread understanding of effective and trauma-informed responses when a person goes missing.

As noted earlier in this report, many participants described positive impacts of the training that is already provided at the community level by the MKO MMIWG Liaison Unit. This was suggested as a model for strengthening local response capacity.



It was suggested that when the Red Dress Alert system is implemented, there should be a comprehensive public information campaign that

Tunngasugit Inuit Resource
Centre Engagement, May 2025

reaches all age groups so that the public understands the alert and how to use it. For example, create pamphlets and posters for children, youth, and adults to be displayed in libraries, hospitals,

stores, and grocery stores. Another suggestion was to distribute pamphlets by mail to all Manitoba households.

3.4 A RED DRESS ALERT DEDICATED PHONE LINE

Some participants highlighted the need for an easy and quick way to contact the Red Dress Alert systems. A well-promoted Red Dress Alert 1-800 or 733 (RED) hotline could be used to make reports and access resources. It could also be used proactively by people who feel they are at risk and need help getting into a safer, more secure situation.

The 1-800 line should be staffed 24/7. The hotline should have the capacity to immediately initiate the missing persons process by taking down all the relevant information that the caller can supply. The line should also include access to all Indigenous languages spoken in Manitoba – Anishinaabe (Ojibwe), Ininew (Cree), Dakota,

Denesuline, Inuktitut, Michif, and Anisininew – to accommodate family and friends whose first language is not English.

A number of participants also emphasized the importance of a Tips Program functioning as an anonymous tip line for people to share information. For this to work, they said the tip line has to be well publicized and there has to be trust that the information will remain anonymous.

Some recommended using an easy-to-remember number such as 1-800-733-3737 (RED-DRES). Others suggested a three digit number which could be 733 (RED).

3.5 WEBSITE AND APPLICATION

In addition to a 24/7 phone line, participants suggested that families, friends, and communities should be able to easily access information, is interactive and centralized – and be able to initiate missing persons reports – through what was described as a “One-Stop Red Dress Alert Website.”

The system must be well-organized, visual, and presented in plain language. Ideally, there would be content in Indigenous languages, particularly where there are significant numbers of speakers

who might have difficulty accessing information that was only in English. Key information should be presented in video form as well. Some of the suggested content included:

- Live, 24/7 connection with the Red Dress Alert hotline.
- Ability to post questions and receive quick response times.
- Include current, accurate and respectful information on persons who are currently missing.

- Include links to resources for families and survivors such as how to apply to the MMIWG2S+ Healing and Empowerment Fund, ideas on how to hold vigils, and templates for missing persons posters.

It was suggested that this system should include options to access the most up-to-date Red Dress Alert information such as a private link, email, or log-in capacity. It would allow for designated

family members of a missing loved one to access the same information.

Some also recommended a mobile app, that would work in conjunction with the website to provide access to alerts. An app could also be used as an information gathering tool. For example, linked to a map, an app could allow users to report the location where they last saw the missing person.

3.6 PROACTIVE MEASURES FOR PEOPLE AT RISK

Some community organizations shared they already engage in proactive measures so that they are better prepared in case someone goes missing. For example, if individuals they work with are understood to be at risk in any way, some organizations institute regular check ins. Some also arrange in advance to have the individual's consent, or the consent of next of kin, to go to the police if they are missing. The Tunngasugit Inuit Resource Centre in Winnipeg makes it a practice to ask clients for consent to take their photos so that good pictures are available if needed. We heard that youth in care in Flin Flon are encouraged to make safety plans that include letting the youth centre know where they will be and who they will be with. Others described having an individualized emergency response plan in place in case of need. These measures allow faster and effective response when needed.

At a number of sessions, participants recommended providing "panic buttons" to people at risk, which, if set off, would trigger assistance. Such panic buttons could be provided through a phone app. One possibility might be for the app to be tied to certain identifying information that would allow the response to be tailored to

the needs and circumstances of each individual. It was also recommended that panic buttons be placed in accessible public places so that an individual with a single touch of the button could be placed in contact with the hotline.

There was also mention of providing panic buttons in locations such as rest stops along northern highways as a protection for people who have been kidnapped or who are being trafficked.

Internet Safety

Another resource suggested, especially by the 2SLGBTQQIA+ and some impacted families, was the need for people to be safe on dating apps, as some shared that they or their loved ones were preyed upon.

Suggestions included increasing public education and awareness about how to be safe when using dating apps, social media forums and the internet in general. This could include advocating for stricter safety precautions within social media and dating apps. It was also identified to educate youth about anti-grooming, safe dating app use, and how to report exploitation.

3.7 ACCESS TO INTERPRETATION AND TRANSLATION

Families and communities recommended that the Red Dress Alert System include access to Indigenous language interpretation and translation support for families who need it, whether to communicate with the point of contact or to read any written materials being produced. It was particularly noted that many Inuit in Manitoba require English to Inuktitut translation and interpretation.

Participants also pointed out the importance of access to sign language interpretation and for materials that would be accessible to people who are blind or who have limited vision.

3.8 PEOPLE WHO DO NOT WANT TO BE FOUND

Participants said that there are many reasons why an individual may not want to be found. This includes individuals escaping gender-based violence, intimate partner violence, sexualized violence, or gangs. Service providers also said that sometimes when people enter into treatment, they often need to break off contact with family and friends who have been a negative influence on them, or don't want anyone to know that they are in treatment. It is important that the Red Dress Alert system be accessible and responsive to the needs of people who are in hiding or have chosen to break off contact with family and friends.

Family members said the safety of the missing person was their main concern. They want to know that their loved one is safe, if possible, even if the missing person doesn't want to resume contact with them.

The point was made that if someone who has been reported missing does make contact, there has to be a way to validate and confirm that they are who they claim to be and that they are not being coerced into saying they are safe. For example, it was suggested that there could be a

follow-up contact at a safe space or code words offered for the individual to indicate if they need help. Concerns were expressed that a contact person for the person who does not want to be found needs to be safe and trusted, and that police are not always best suited to provide this.

A number of participants recommended creating a well-publicized check-in line where people who do not want to be found can let family and friends know that they are okay. The check-in line could also help connect them with any assistance they might want, including setting up ways to reach the individual for follow-up. When hiding from perpetrators, those escaping an unsafe situation must be able to access these supports without revealing their location.

Participants said that there must be safe spaces for individuals to return to. People who have chosen to break off contact may feel shame or fear about reconnecting with their families and friends. Participants said there is a need for more safe, accessible drop-in spaces, including spaces specifically dedicated to the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community.



4. THE STRUCTURE FOR OPERATING A RED DRESS ALERT SYSTEM

There was wide agreement throughout the engagement process that the proposed Red Dress Alert system should be run by a stand-alone organization that supports Indigenous self-determination and nationhood.

This organization should have its own governance structure, funding, and mandate specific to this purpose. Participants said that the organization should be Indigenous-led, distinctions-based, and committed to the principles of culturally safe, trauma-informed care. Participants said the roles and responsibilities of the organization should be clearly set out in provincial legislation.

While recognizing the need for close collaboration with police, there was widespread agreement that the Red Dress Alert system must be run by a civilian organization that has the trust of Indigenous communities, “will meet relatives where they are at”, and will listen to families’ and communities’ voices. Similarly, while there were calls for cooperation with First Nations, Red River Métis, Inuit, federal, provincial and municipal governments, participants said it was important that the organization be seen to be independent of any government or political agenda.

Some participants suggested that Giganaweni-maanaanig was a natural fit for running the Red Dress Alert system, particularly given its experience in this engagement process and its exist-

ing work on Missing and Murdered Indigenous, Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ relatives. Some suggested that the Indigenous health agencies might be a potential alternative to be considered. Others recommended that the service be managed through Indigenous governments and representative organizations such as the Manitoba Métis Federation or the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs First Nations Advocacy Office.

Participants said that it is important that the system be staffed by a team of Indigenous people who understand and are experienced. It was highlighted that the team staff should consist of impacted family members of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ relatives and survivors from many diverse backgrounds and fields of expertise as a priority, promoting and benefiting community ownership of the Red Dress Alert system. It was noted that staff require holistic and trauma-informed support, as well as workplace wellness and safety initiatives due to the sensitive nature of the work.

This team should work in close collaboration with Indigenous Peoples’ organizations, police, and other frontline organizations, such as the Manitoba Association of Women’s Shelters. Other roles would include providing advocacy and wrap-around support and services for families.

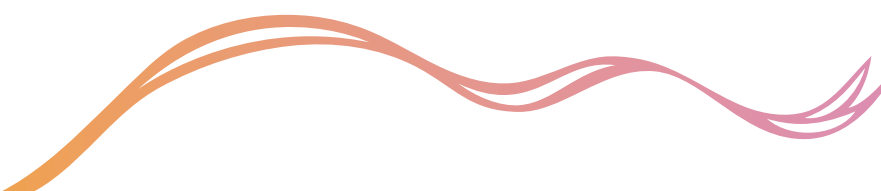
A number of participants talked about the importance of a Red Dress Alert governing and oversight committee to provide direction and guidance reflecting the organizations and the communities that it serves. Many said that such a committee should include Elders and Knowledge Keepers, impacted family and survivor representatives, gender diverse relatives, youth, and other people with lived experiences. A suggestion was also made that where they exist, Indigenous police services could contribute to this oversight body.

Some participants said any organization should have a presence in each community to be as accessible as possible, to build relationships, and to help support local search efforts. It was also recommended that the organization have staff

and resources dedicated to coordination with police and other government agencies.

A note of caution was sounded by those who said that it will be important that the organization not duplicate work that is already being done by others or add an extra level of bureaucracy to the delivery of services and supports. It should also be noted that whether or not a family member or survivor participates in the governing and oversight committee, they should always have the right and the option to raise concerns directly with police or other organizations.

Finally, participants said that it is vital that the organization responsible for the Red Dress Alert have secure and sustainable multi-year funding so that it can make and implement long-term plans.



5. COORDINATING ACROSS JURISDICTIONS

Loved ones often go missing far from family, friends, and community. Participants talked about the vulnerability of individuals who travel from small, isolated, and remote communities to urban centres in the south for medical treatment or for other reasons. Examples shared in the engagement sessions included individuals who flee their community to escape sexualized or physical violence and harassment, dangerous situations, and those who have been trafficked.

We heard that family members, friends, and community organizations often don't know how to file a report if the person has gone missing in a different community. For example, should they

contact police in their own community or police where they think the individual may have gone missing?

The example of Jordan's Principle was raised. Families and friends shouldn't have the responsibility or onus to understand what police services or agencies would have jurisdiction. They should be able to make the report to any appropriate authority and trust that those authorities will be able to determine who has jurisdiction and share information accordingly.

However, many participants expressed concern and uncertainty about how well the different

police departments, government agencies, and service organizations communicate across jurisdictions. The concern is compounded by the fact that coordination may also be needed across provinces or even international borders.

It was noted that service providers and agencies may each have part of the picture of a missing person's life but on their own they rarely have the full picture. A concrete example is access to databases like the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) and Women in Safe Housing (WISH), the client management software used by some women's shelters. Some agencies have access while others do not as they may not be part of those systems. A Red Dress Alert could be a catalyst for much needed coordination, collaboration, and information sharing among service providers and agencies in locating a missing person. Some participants suggested that there should be provincial legislation requiring all agencies to use certain integrated databases like HIFIS.

An additional issue relates to privacy and consent. Agencies and service providers may need the express consent of the individual before they are able to share information from their databases, particularly if that information is being used for a different purpose than originally intended. A process may be required for individuals to grant consent for information to be shared if they go missing.

In Dauphin, we heard that there is a weekly meeting of service providers to foster better communication and collaboration. It was suggested that any Red Dress Alert for someone from the region, or has gone missing there, could be part of the



"Women NEED to be leading roles from within safe spaces."

Fisher River Cree Nation Engagement
March 2025

agenda for that meeting so that information could be pooled. The Red Dress Alert could be added to the service providers' intranet.

Despite positive examples such as this, the point was also made that in many communities, service providers may be very siloed. Competition among service providers is sometimes an obstacle to maintaining open lines of communications. First Nations, Métis and Inuit organizations don't routinely work with each other. High turnover rates, particularly at frontline organizations, is also a barrier to maintaining open lines of communication.

One thought was to create a map of the supports and resources available in each urban centre. This would be of great benefit, especially for rural families looking for relatives in the city.

A suggestion was made that a Red Dress Alert website could be modeled after a current overdose awareness site.



6. SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS FOR MISSING 2SLGBTQQIA+ PERSONS

Participants said that 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons often have much closer ties with other members of this community than they do with their immediate families. Other members of the community will be the first to know if they go missing and will often have the best idea of where to look

for them. However, as discussed earlier in this report, members of the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community often face barriers when trying to report a missing friend or are excluded when a search is initiated.

6.1 REVEALING AND RECORDING GENDER IDENTITY WHEN REPORTING

Participants discussed the importance of honouring the gender identity of the missing individual and the care that must be taken in recording and sharing this information. Identifying a missing individual as 2SLGBTQQIA+ provides important information that can help guide search efforts. At the same time, it is crucial that their gender identity only be shared publicly if there is certainty that the individual is public about their identity. Outing someone as a gender diverse individual can have significant repercussion for work, family life, and access to services. It was noted that special care needs to be taken regarding youth who

may be “out” with select friends but not with their parents or caregivers.

Participants emphasized the importance of knowing what organizations are well connected to the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community and are able to get the word out about a missing person. Participants said they utilize Morgan’s Warriors, Bear Clan, or other grassroots street patrols to help with searches. In some circumstances, these organizations are their first point of contact rather than the police.

6.2 SUPPORTS THAT REFLECT THE DIVERSITY OF THE 2SLGBTQQIA+ COMMUNITY

Participants talked about the diversity – and what are sometimes competing interests – within the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community. The lack of 2SLGBTQQIA+ specific or supportive shelters and safe spaces was identified as a critical issue. This means that existing shelters and safe spaces may be of limited help in finding or spreading the news about a missing 2SLGBTQQIA+ person. Participants also commented on the lack of specific supports available for gender diverse family members and friends of missing persons.

Participants said organizations and agencies engaged in any aspect of the search process need to be better educated about the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community. They suggested organizations and agencies must have more training about respect-

ful engagement with Transgender, Two-Spirit and other gender diverse individuals along with trauma-informed education and cultural sensitivity training.

It was stated that the Red Dress Alert system should include an option for 2SLGBTQQIA+ individuals to be able to contact a designated 2SLGBTQQIA+ contact point, so that they know the conversation will be culturally safe.

Participants also emphasized the need for greater inclusion of gender diverse people in decision-making processes related to government policies, programs, and services, including the development and operation of a Red Dress Alert.

7. MISSING INDIGENOUS MEN AND BOYS

We heard from a number of participants that a Red Dress Alert should include all genders. Some communities shared heart wrenching examples of men and boys going missing in or from their communities. Some participants shared personal stories of violence impacting people of all genders in their families and social circles. In the 2SLGBTQQIA+ session, participants expressed concern that the Red Dress Alert system not play into a false gender binary that leads to the exclu-

sion of Transgender, Two-Spirit and other gender diverse individuals.

MKO shared that a Missing and Murdered Men and Boys group is being created but currently only has limited resources to help families. MKO and other communities shared that men are part of the solution to the issue of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ relatives. They are also impacted family members when a loved one goes missing.



8. NEWCOMERS

We heard from participants that newcomer communities are often close-knit. When someone goes missing, the first step isn't to contact the police. Word goes out through group chats and WhatsApp. The institutions and meeting places specific to that community get involved in trying to find the missing person.

Newcomer communities often don't understand the system of police and social services in Canada and don't know where to turn for help. Some participants noted that it is mostly the women and girls of their community that get involved when a woman or girl goes missing; they said more men from all communities need to stand up for women and girls.

Language barriers and mistrust of police are key obstacles for many newcomers who might need to access the missing persons system. However, it was noted that in some cases, newcomer communities in Winnipeg may reach out to the Bear Clan because they have a good reputation.

The challenges facing newcomers are compounded when the family of the missing person doesn't live in the city. In some cases, family members come from other countries to search for their loved one. For them, the city is often experienced as very confusing and frightening.

Some participants noted the common ground between newcomers and Indigenous Peoples' experiences of racism and exclusion and suggested that there could be potential for relationship building and collaboration.

A number of newcomer participants asked if a Red Dress Alert system could include women and girls from their communities. There was also a strong desire expressed to help address violence against Indigenous women and girls and all who were present agreed that they would like to attend and promote any training related to the history of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ relatives.



9. ACCESSING AND MANAGING INFORMATION

To be effective, a Red Dress Alert system must be able to receive, record, store, and share highly sensitive information about the missing individuals and their friends, families, and communities. Throughout the engagement process, significant concerns were raised about the potential misuse of such information. At the same time, participants also said that current practices designed to protect privacy and confidentiality are too slow and undermine the search process by hindering information-sharing among organizations with the knowledge of the missing person.

Questions were asked about whether the Personal Health and Information Act (PHIA) and other laws could be changed so that confidential information could be shared in emergencies, such as when a person goes missing. Participants also asked whether a miss-

ing persons database could be integrated with other tracking systems, such as HIFIS, and confidential access provided to key organizations that might be involved in the search.

It was noted that youth are already tracked through a variety of systems that are not linked or coordinated, including school attendance records and Child and Family Services. Many community organizations do not use databases, but instead track clients on a variety of more ad hoc paper and digital filing systems. Greater consistency and integration of all these systems are required to assist the search process, communication between systems, and the timeliness of finding someone.

“Red Dress Alert and program must be funded by provincial and federal governments. Equal funding. No jurisdictional gaps.”

Sagkeeng First Nation Engagement
January 2025



10. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE FOR A RED DRESS ALERT SYSTEM

An effective Red Dress Alert system depends on certain key infrastructure at the community level that is standard across the province. The most frequent example raised during the engagement process was cell phone service, and reliable internet connectivity to make reports and get the word out. Participants also talked about the importance of accessible safe spaces.

The importance of communications infrastructure cannot be understated. Free landlines, access to internet, and cell phone connectivity are critical to enable timely reporting of missing persons, to help families stay informed, to help the missing person reconnect, and to mobilize and coordinate

searches in the community. Some organizations provide free cell phones to at-risk individuals. Of course, this only works where there is reliable cell coverage.

There were a number of suggestions to establish safe spaces within each community to support the search process from start to finish. A designated building that is well-known and easily accessible, could:

- provide assistance filing a report
- enable families and friends to access wrap-around supports during times of crisis and in the longer-term
- serve as a meeting point and coordination hub for search activities
- host workshops and other training
- provide access to technology such as computers and panic buttons.



N'Dinawemak - Our Relatives'
Place Engagement June 2025



11. ELEMENTS OF A RED DRESS ALERT LAW

Participants agreed on the importance of establishing a legislative framework for the Red Dress Alert. A Red Dress Alert law was seen as an essential legal tool to set clear expectations of how police and other public institutions should act, ensure accountability for meeting these expectations, and address barriers to cross-organizational and cross-jurisdictional cooperation, including barriers created by other laws.

Participants said that a Red Dress Alert law must designate a lead agency or organization to operate the Red Dress Alert system and mandate the full cooperation of police and other relevant public agencies and institutions. The operation of the system must be subject to regular review and public reporting. It was critical that legislation also include a commitment to ongoing sustainable and multi-year funding.

Participants said the legislation must send a “strong message” that the lives of Indigenous women, girls and gender diverse persons are valued and are a priority, no matter where they live or under what circumstances. The law must set clear expectations that responses to missing persons reports will be grounded in respect for human rights, be trauma-informed and culturally safe; that individuals at risk deserve a fast and effective response; and that families need to be treated with dignity and kindness. Participants

also said that the law must include accessible and effective mechanisms so that families, friends and community members can file complaints if mistreated or rights are infringed. The law must provide specific, concrete measures for police and other agencies to be held accountable if established protocols, procedures, and performance standards are not met or followed.

The law must clearly set out what information can be legally disclosed and shared among organizations for the purpose of conducting a missing persons search. If necessary, this should include an amendment to the Manitoba Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. This could also include clarifying how the duty to report applies to information that could be helpful to locating a missing youth who is at risk.

The Act must also establish a legal process to obtain privately held records that can be essential to a search, such as access to security camera footage and records of cell phone and ATM use, even in cases where no crime is suspected.

A recommendation was made that any law should include reference to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Calls to Action and the Calls for Justice of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

12. NEXT STEPS

Giganawenimaanaanig will release the Final Report in November 2025. That report will include a province-wide Red Dress Alert System Framework, outlining specific proposals for federal and provincial implementation legislation and, other critical steps for a timely and effective implementation of a Red Dress Alert in 2026.



Part II:

What We Heard from the Online Survey



Pilot Project to Develop a Manitoba-wide Red Dress Alert System
Online Survey

INTRODUCTION

The following report summarizes feedback received from an online survey conducted by Giganawenimaanaanig (We All Take Care of Them) as part of the development of a Red Dress Alert system for Manitoba.

A Red Dress Alert is a new form of public alert intended to quickly mobilize police, government agencies, service organizations, and the public in the critical hours and days after an Indigenous woman, girl or 2SLGBTQQIA+ (Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, Intersex and Asexual) relative is first reported missing. A Red Dress Alert is meant to save lives and help address the high levels of violence targeting Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons.

The federal and provincial governments have entrusted Giganawenimaanaanig to develop a pilot Indigenous-led Red Dress Alert System for all of Manitoba. Giganawenimaanaanig is committed to ensuring that any new system is rooted in cultural competency and safety, traditional knowledge, community empowerment, and trauma-informed healing.

We recognize that there are differing needs for First Nations, Red River Métis, and Inuit, as well as for gender-diverse individuals. Any system

for justice, protection, and well-being must be adapted to lived realities in different regions and traditional territories throughout the province.

Toward this goal, Giganawenimaanaanig has undertaken a multi-stage engagement process with impacted families of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ relatives, with Indigenous governments and organizations, with public institutions and with the wider community. The engagement process was designed to examine in concrete detail what currently happens when a person is reported missing; the strengths and capacities that can be mobilized at the local level; and the changes that must be made to ensure an effective, rapid, and coordinated response and follow-up.

Giganawenimaanaanig has carried out 30 in-person engagement sessions throughout the province, beginning in January 23, 2025. Participants in these engagements were given postcards with a QR link to the survey as an opportunity to share additional comments. In addition, the survey was promoted through the social media channels of Giganawenimaanaanig, Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre and their partners. The postcards with the QR code link were posted in public spaces at several communities visited during the engagement sessions and at community events.

1. SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

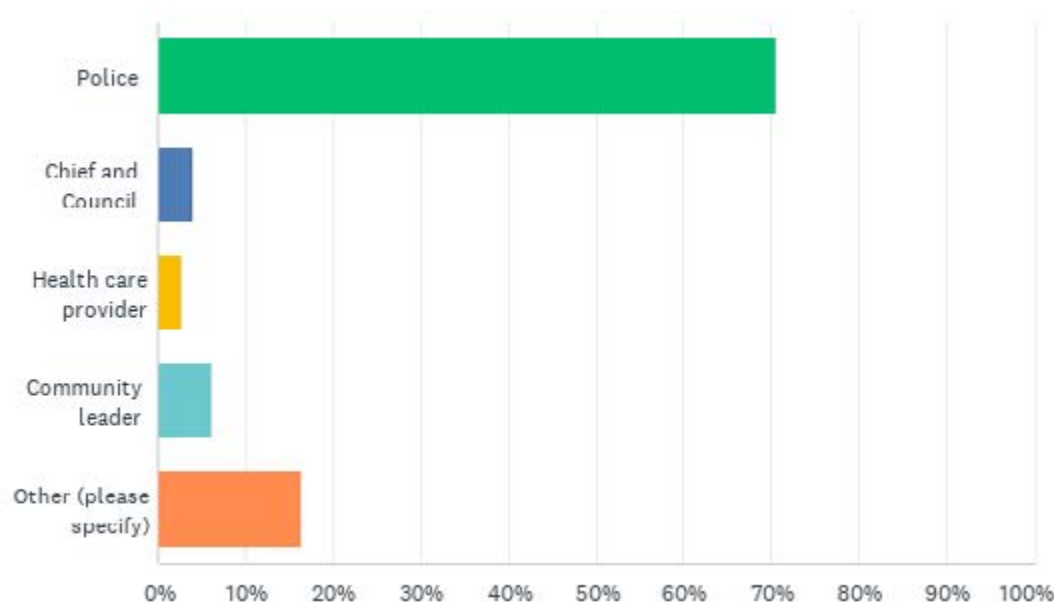
More than 1000 people completed all or part of the online survey.

- Seventy percent of participants identified as First Nations, Red River Métis, or Inuit.
 - ◊ More than 36 percent of participants identified as being First Nations from Manitoba and roughly 6 percent identified as First Nations from outside Manitoba.
 - ◊ Just over 25 percent identified as Red River Métis.
 - ◊ Less than one percent identified as Inuit.

- ◊ Just over 5 percent said they live on a First Nations reserve and just under 10 percent said they live in a Métis community.
- Almost 28 percent said that they are a survivor of gender-based violence or a family member of a Missing or Murdered Indigenous Woman, Girl or 2SLGBTQQIA+ relative.
- Just over 37 percent said that they work for a service provider.
- The great majority of people who completed the survey (almost 72 percent) identified as female.
- Sixteen percent identified as 2SLGBTQQIA+.

2. WHEN SOMEONE GOES MISSING

2.1 WHO DO YOU CONTACT FIRST?



Seventy percent of survey participants said that if they were concerned about a family member, friend or community who may be missing or in danger, they would contact police.

The survey provided three other choices – Chief and Council, community leader and health care provider – as well as the option to write in additional responses. Just over six percent chose community and another four percent selected Chief

and Council. Just under three percent selected health care providers.

Approximately 16 percent of participants wrote in alternative answers. The most common written in response – accounting for 5 percent of all survey responses – named the Bear Clan Patrol.

Six people named specific Red River Métis and First Nations governments and representative bodies.

A significant number of respondents used the comment field to express concerns about police or to explain why they would go to other organizations before going to police.

One person wrote that they would first talk to an Indigenous organization to get guidance before involving police. Other comments about the role of police included:

- Would contact police only after first contacting the Bear Clan and other community organizations to ensure a “legal paper trail.”

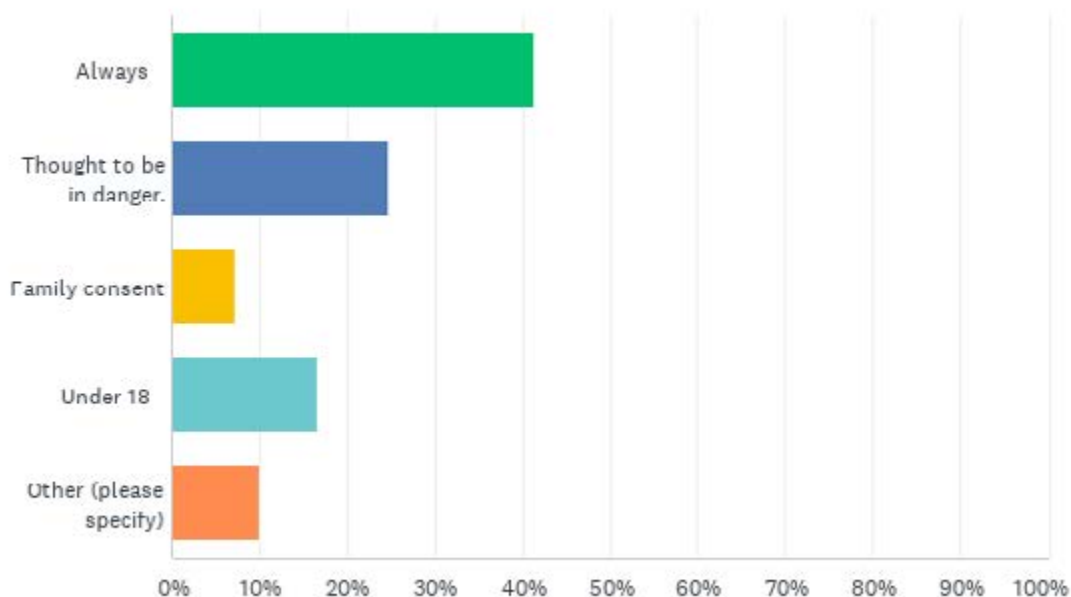
- Would contact police “officially” but rely on others to get the word out.
- “I don’t trust the police to do anything.”
- Police “work from a colonial presence and often dismiss or treat us/our sister like disposable trash. My family and I do not trust the Winnipeg Police Service. They are colonizers who don’t want to search for our loved ones.”
- Would only contact police if organizations like Bear Clan have been unsuccessful in finding the missing person.
- “Police as a very last resort.”

2.2 GETTING THE WORD OUT

The survey asked participants to rank the effectiveness of different ways to get the word out about a missing person. Social media was ranked highest, with more than 42 percent of participants naming social media as the most effective tool. More than 30 percent named making calls to family members as the most effective tool. Word of mouth was also highly ranked.

Most participants felt that door to door canvassing, posters and flyers, television, or local radio were at least somewhat effective. However, very few named any of these tools as the most effective option. Most, but not all, participants gave phone calls a low ranking. More than 60 percent said that newspapers were the least effective of these options.

2.3 WHEN SHOULD AN ALERT BE ISSUED?



There was a wide range of views about when a Red Dress Alert should be issued. The first question on this topic asked participants to choose if an alert should always be issued whenever an Indigenous woman, girl or 2SLGBTQQIA+ relative goes missing, or if specific criteria should be met.

Forty percent said that an Alert should be issued any time that a person goes missing. The remainder felt that some criteria should apply. A total of almost 50 percent selected one of the three criteria provided: if the person is thought to be in danger (25%) if the person is under the age of 18 (17%), and only if the family consents (7%). The remaining 10 percent of participants wrote out responses, mostly to suggest that multiple criteria should apply.

For example, one person wrote, "Generally any-time a person goes missing, with the families consent. If the person is under 18, it should be automatic." The majority of the written responses agreed an alert should be issued either if the

person is thought to be in danger or if they are under the age of 18.

Some participants said additional factors may need to be considered. One said: "depends on person and lifestyle – every situation is different."

Another wrote:

"Some people have legitimate reasons for not having their family locate them. Lots of work needs to go into the answer. The wishes of the missing matter most but are unavailable. Your policy needs to accommodate multiple complex factors without become a hindrance to a quick response when warranted."

Some stated that the key thing is to trust the judgement of family and loved ones. One person said that the decision must always be made "in consultation with family, community connections/ supports."

Another person wrote:

"If the family or supports in the person's life who are most familiar with them believe an alert is warranted, it should be issued."

Another said:

"Anytime a person goes missing and the family believes something isn't right. We shouldn't be waiting 48 hours and assuming kids ran away. Maybe they did but we can't waste valuable time. Run away or not, this world is scary and our indigenous woman and girls need protection now more than ever."

Some suggested that in addition to these criteria, alerts should only be issued if the person is considered vulnerable or in danger. One said that the options provided in the survey question were "...too broad. It would make it so that the Alert would be called so many times as to make it useless."

The next question asked participants to write in examples of circumstances in which they would like to see a Red Dress Alert issued. Consistent with responses to the previous question, a significant number of participants said that alert should be issued anytime an Indigenous woman, girl or 2SLGBTQQIA+ relative goes missing. Others suggested a range of factors that might be considered in decisions about when an alert is issued, or about when a search is carried out. Examples included:

- Environmental factors such as extreme cold/extreme heat that could threaten a missing person's survival if they are not quickly located.
- When it is known or very highly probable that the missing person has been kidnapped.

- If the missing person has been threatened or harassed or has experienced a history of violence.
- Changes in usual patterns of behaviour, including breaking off contact with family or friends they speak with regularly.
- After initial call-outs to close contacts, hospitals, treatment centers, police fail to locate them.
- If the individual is vulnerable in any way due to mental health or physical or mental challenges.
- Suspicious events in the individual's life or in the community.
- Reports that the person was feeling anxious or fearful.
- If the missing person is involved in any way with dangerous and violent people such as gangs.
- Indications of plans that were interrupted or activities left unfinished.

Some participants said that if any alert system is used too frequently it will become less effective. One person wrote, "You won't get buy in from police, government or the public if you don't have an objective screening process; more people are reported missing than most people of privilege realize, and the alerts would be so frequent that they would start to be completely ignored."

A number suggested that screening criteria be adopted that parallel those used for Amber Alerts.

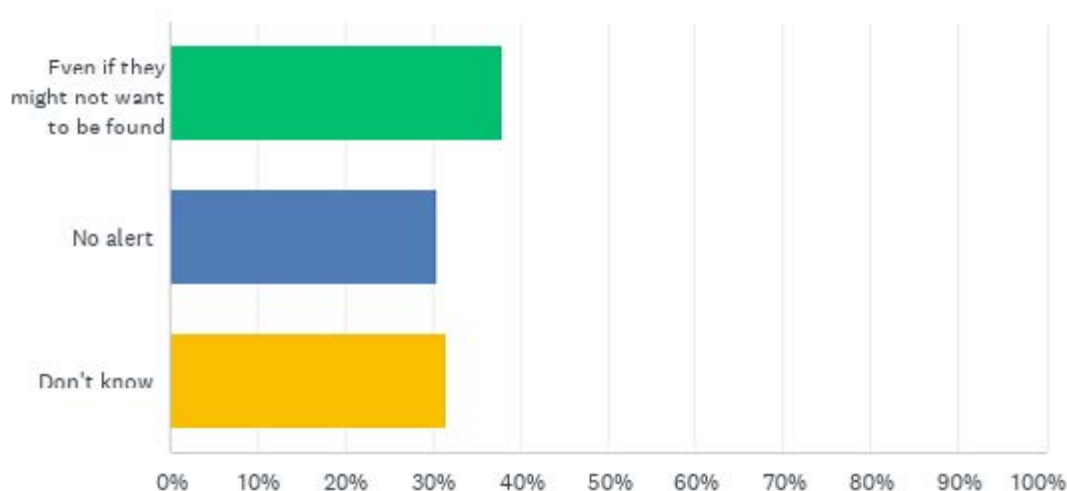
One person noted that not everyone who breaks off contact with friends and family is necessarily in danger: "A lot of times, we just need a break, but our communities are so unsupportive of each

other that we can't even tell each other we need a break. We just take off without telling anybody."

Some participants questioned whether the alert should be specific to Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ relatives or whether it

should include non-Indigenous people. While it is important to have a system in place that Indigenous persons feel comfortable with using, if an alert system is only for Indigenous persons, that may feed into continued racism and the general public not taking the alerts seriously.

2.4 PEOPLE WHO DON'T WANT TO BE FOUND



When specifically asked about situations where there are reasons to believe the individual might not want to be found, views were divided. Just under 40 percent said that the Alert should be

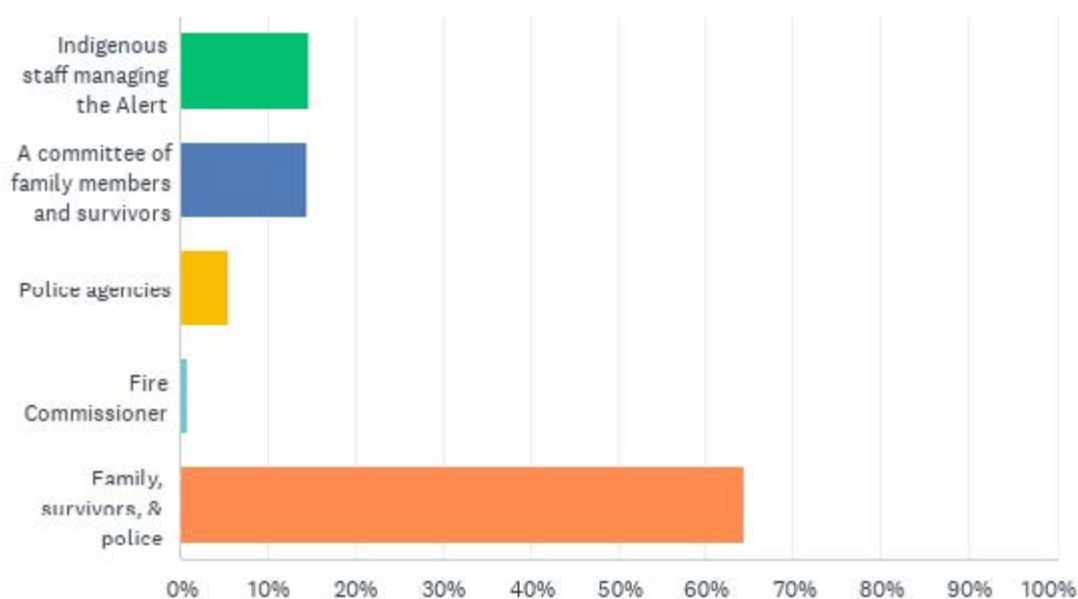
issued anyway. Thirty percent said the Alert should not be issued. And just over 30 percent said that they were unsure.

2.5 RESOURCES NEEDED TO SUPPORT FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES DURING THE SEARCH PROCESS

The survey provided a list of possible resources that families and communities may need when someone goes missing: compensation for volunteers who take part in the search, search costs, awards for information, training for volunteers, access to recordings of surveillance cameras,

crisis supports, travel costs and accommodation. Almost seventy percent said all of these resources were needed. For those who selected only one answer from the list, compensation for volunteers, search costs, and crisis supports were the resources most frequently chosen.

3. WHO SHOULD DECIDE WHEN AN ALERT GOES OUT?



Participants were provided five options about who should make the decision about when an Alert is issued. Almost two-thirds said the decision should be made by a committee that includes family members, survivors, and police. Thirty percent of the responses were equally divided between two other options:

1) a committee that includes family members and survivors, but not police and

2) an Indigenous person entrusted to manage the system. Just under six percent said the decision should be made by a police agency and less than one percent said the decision should be made by the Fire Commissioner.

4. ADVICE FOR A RED DRESS ALERT SYSTEM

The survey provided an opportunity for participants to share advice on any aspect of a Red Dress Alert system. A wide range of recommen-

dations were provided. Key themes include the following:

INDIGENOUS-LED

One of the most frequent comments was the advice that decisions about how the system will operate, and when alerts should be issued, must be made by a trusted Indigenous organization

rather than by police. One person wrote that the Red Dress Alert must “work along with” but be “independent from these institutions that has a history of systemic racism.”

PROVIDE A CULTURALLY SAFE POINT OF CONTACT FOR MAKING MISSING PERSONS REPORTS ANYWHERE IN THE PROVINCE

A new Red Dress Alert system should include capacity to receive missing persons reports and gather necessary information. This would provide

a culturally safe and trauma-informed point of contact for family, friends and community members.

INDIVIDUALIZED APPROACHES

Participants emphasized that any system must be responsive to the unique circumstances of each person who is reported missing. For example, one survey response stated, “It is important to have family members involved, but also worth acknowledging that not everyone feels safe with their family either. An individual approach may be more advantageous.”

Part of this individualized approach includes recognizing that some information gathered about the missing person may be useful to the search process but could be harmful if shared publicly. One person wrote, “Always think of the missing person first.”

ALERTS SHOULD BE CLEAR, PRACTICAL, AND RESPECTFUL

Responses said alerts should be in plain language and include essential details necessary to identify or locate the individual. Many said that the alert needs to make sure the missing person is presented in a sympathetic or respectful light, including selecting the best available photo. Specific concerns were expressed over identifying the missing person with terms like “sex worker” that lead to victim blaming and public apathy. Others

raised concern about “alert fatigue”, particularly if it’s hard to distinguish a new alert from a previous alert or they don’t convey enough sense of urgency. There were also some suggestions for alerts and updates to target specific neighbourhoods, communities or regions where the person went missing or is most likely to be found, rather than always making every alert province wide.

PROVIDE REGULAR UPDATES, ESPECIALLY TO FAMILIES, FRIENDS, AND COMMUNITIES

Once a report has been received, there has to be clear, respectful ongoing communication with

affected families and communities, including immediate updates on any new developments.

USE A WIDE RANGE OF TOOLS TO GET INFORMATION OUT

Many suggestions were shared, including using all available social media, having dedicated public spaces for announcements and posters, and creating a dedicated app. Some partici-

pants emphasized that there need to be regular updates to the general public so people know if the person has been found or whether the search needs to continue.

ALLOW INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE AT RISK TO REGISTER WITH THE SYSTEM

Several participants’ recommendations said that a Red Dress Alert system should include a “just in case” registry, promoted through frontline service providers and other community partners, where individual who are at high risk would be

provided the opportunity to voluntarily share key information that might be helpful if a search is ever needed, as well as necessary consents to access private information.

GOOD RELATIONS WITH COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

Some noted that many community organizations are already playing a critical role in supporting searches. These organizations have extensive experience, have contacts at the grassroots, and

have built up relations of trust. These organizations should continue to be involved. Any new structure should work with and learn from them.

ENSURING EFFECTIVE POLICE ACTION

Some noted that police cooperation and accountable are essential, particularly given the range of inquiries and searches that may be necessary,

including monitoring airports and airlines serving northern communities.

BUILD COMMUNITY CAPACITY

Foster development of local infrastructure, protocols, and individual capacity to carry out searches. This includes equipment for ground searches, updated maps and lists of key places to contact or search under different circumstances, communi-

cation systems like phone trees where there is limited cell service, and training in search methods, including how to ensure searches are culturally safe and trauma-informed.

CULTURAL SAFETY TRAINING FOR EVERYONE INVOLVED

Survey responses called for cultural safety training for everyone involved in the search process, particularly those who may be in contact with family and friends of the missing person. Some partic-

ipants specifically emphasized that it is critical to have an understanding of the importance of gender pronouns.

WRAP-AROUND SUPPORTS TO FAMILIES, FRIENDS, AND COMMUNITIES

Participants said that the same organization or structure responsible for receiving missing persons reports and issuing alerts should also play a role in ensuring family and friends have access to the supports they need. Examples that were shared included access to trained professional

counsellors and emergency respite for family members. Some also said that when a missing person is located, the Red Dress Alert system needs to be responsive to their needs, including identifying and helping access preventative measures to reduce future risks.

INTEGRATE SUPPORT FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO MAY NOT WANT TO BE FOUND

Alerts should publicize safe and culturally safe, low- and no-barrier ways for missing individuals to check in and access supports without necessarily

revealing their location or resuming contact with family and friends.

ESTABLISH AN EASILY ACCESSIBLE TIP LINE

Some responses recommended that a Red Dress Alert system including a way to receive anonymous

tips. This could include a 1-800 phone line as well as online and app-based ways to connect.

EFFECTIVE PROTOCOLS AND PROTECTIONS ABOUT HOW INFORMATION CAN AND CAN'T BE USED

Some participants said that it important to ensure that information gathered for the purpose of finding a missing person not be used against them or their family. One example would be records being accessed by Child and Family Services and

used to apprehend a child. Others talked about the long-term value of this database to evaluate search responses and better understand needs of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ relatives.

PROMOTING THE SYSTEM

Implementation must include means to promote the Red Dress Alert system so that families, friends and communities know what to expect and how

and when they can make a missing persons report.

COLLABORATE WITH SYSTEMS IN OTHER JURISDICTIONS

Many responses emphasized the need for a Manitoba-based system to be integrated with

databases and alerts in other provinces and territories.

IMPLEMENT CONTINUED ASSESSMENT OF ANY SYSTEM, INCLUDING ONGOING ENGAGEMENT WITH FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

Responses emphasized the need to learn from experience and to remain transparent and

accountable to families and others with lived experience.

5. CULTURALLY SAFE AND TRAUMA INFORMED APPROACHES

Participants were asked what steps must be taken to ensure that a Red Dress Alert system is culturally safe, trauma informed and helps counter the systemic discrimination experienced by Indigenous Peoples. Some of the responses repeated or echoed advice summarized above, including:

- Being Indigenous-led
- Ensuring all staff receive appropriate training on culturally safe, trauma informed approaches.

Additional recommendations included:

- The Alert system should operate under the guidance of Elders and Knowledge Keepers.
- Alerts should include information on how to access supports.

- The Red Dress Alert system should act as an intermediary, liaising with police and journalists on behalf of families and fielding inquiries.
- The system should help families navigate other systems they made need to access or become involved with, including justice, health care and child and family services.
- The Red Dress Alert system could play a leadership role in promoting knowledge sharing among people with lived experience and frontline organizations about what cultural safety and trauma informed processes look like in practice.

Participants overwhelmingly agreed with the statement that a Red Dress Alert system “would be helpful in countering the challenges of systemic racism that families and community members experience in dealing with police, governments, and other institutions when an Indigenous person goes missing.”

6. PRIORITIES FOR A RED DRESS ALERT LAW

Survey participants were asked to choose between three options set out for possible priorities for the purpose of a Red Dress Alert law. The overwhelming majority (more than 72 percent) chose the first option: Setting out agreed requirements for how police and government should handle a Red Dress Alert. Just over 20 percent

chose the third option: Requiring regular public reporting on how often the Red Dress Alert is being used and in what circumstances. Finally, just over seven percent selected the second option of preventing arbitrary changes to the agreed procedure.

Part III:

What We Heard from Essential Partners



SUMMARY OF INSIGHTS

“We have to always fight for equality and safety. Enough is enough”.

This Report is a summary of what we heard from the Essential Partners engagements. All Essential Partners brought forward the urgent need for a Red Dress Alert System, with the goal of saving the lives of First Nations, Métis and Inuit (Indigenous) women, girls, and Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, Intersex and Asexual (2SLGBTQQA+) people. Its promise depends on the leadership and engagement of Indigenous communities, who are the experts in their own lives. All Essential Partners expressed their commitment to support a Red Dress Alert System.

The feedback from Essential Partners resulted in eight themes, which are summarized below.

First, a provincial-wide Red Dress Alert System must be grounded in Indigenous expertise. It is critical to recognize the strengths and knowledge held by Indigenous Peoples. The perspectives of Indigenous women, gender diverse individuals, survivors and families must inform the design and implementation of every stage of the Red Dress Alert System. An independent system is envisioned to ensure that it is not limited by jurisdictional boundaries.

Sustainable and equitable funding is required to effectively support the Red Dress Alert System

for success. This includes investments into Indigenous-led organizations to lead this work alongside measures to promote safety and healing everywhere that First Nations, Red River Métis and Inuit persons live in Manitoba.

Second, legislation is required for the Red Dress Alert system. The Red Dress Alert System must be prescribed by legislation that is Indigenous co-designed and co-led. Legislation must capture the following criteria:

- the scope of who is captured by the alert;
- defined criteria and timelines for issuing an alert (such as any person who goes missing in Manitoba, inclusion of neighbouring communities outside of Manitoba);
- the content of the alert, including (i) the missing person’s name, their home community, where they live, what they were last wearing, where and when they were last seen, and (ii) clear instructions to the public on what they can do to help;
- criteria for media releases;
- timelines for investigations;

- defining any sub-category of the alert such as specific additional criteria for minors, persons with disabilities, persons with health concerns, and other vulnerable persons;
- the thresholds and processes under different circumstances (e.g., intimate partner violence, targeted violence, sexual exploitation, abductions, missing persons who may not want to be found, persons with prior disappearances, etc.) while remaining flexible to the varying conditions and locations under which people go missing;
- requirements for recording and sharing data;
- the provision of support services;
- address issues with privacy and confidentiality laws (including under the *Freedom of Information and Privacy Act* and *Personal Health Information Act*) to allow the appropriate disclosure of information across health, education, public and private institutions and sectors to advance location efforts and support families informed by Indigenous data sovereignty principles;
- consider the use of location services attached to cell phones to allow for the targeted dissemination of alerts based on where the missing person is believed to be;
- address jurisdictional issues to ensure that no one is left behind based on their age or where they live, including allowing the Red Dress Alert System to work with others outside of Manitoba to find missing persons;
- verification measures to ensure that someone reporting being safe is in fact safe and not coerced;
- roles and responsibilities of all partners must be expressly defined, including additional regulations on essential partners in the hospitality, transportation, and resource extraction industries; and
- accountability measures including (i) a statutorily-mandated Red Dress Alert Advocate to ensure that there is a partnership focused on continual improvements and accountability, and (ii) monitoring consequences for those perpetrating violence, including timelines for investigations.

“We are representing and portraying our relatives in a good way, so there is care and respect for the people who are going missing”.

Third, the Red Dress Alert must be issued alongside a public communications strategy.

The defined criteria of the alert are important to managing expectations of a family about when an alert can be triggered. The timely dissemination of an alert is also critical to its effectiveness.

The Red Dress Alert must be kept simple and standardized, and clearly identify who to call,

the steps of the process, public notice, dissemination, and the criteria or timelines for updates to the person who made the report, their family, and their community. The alert can be sent out through the following forums:

- text messages to the public;

- notice through existing information distribution mechanisms and communication infrastructures of essential partners, such as emails to public employees; notices to hotel and hospitality franchises; notice to professional associations, and other public and private institutions; and faxes to the offices of service providers;
- a dedicated Red Dress Alert System website and public database that is Indigenous-designed and led to ensure cultural safety and trauma-informed practices to allow alerts to be quickly uploaded and disseminated;
- social media (including Facebook);
- mail by Canada Post and community flyers to reach those who do not have access to television, the internet, or a cell phone;
- other public posters at frequently visited places like coffee shops;
- other means to appropriately reach youth such as through TikTok, YouTube, and SnapChat;
- digital public billboards in high traffic areas or highways that lead out of Indigenous communities and/or the province to continually update the public about current missing persons; and
- the use of Manitoba's emergency alert system to achieve widespread reach on an urgent basis, including through television warnings (akin to extreme weather alerts) and to provide photos when appropriate based on Indigenous-designed standards.

The public communications strategy must also address (i) the standards for culturally safe and trauma-informed messaging that does not normalize violence and is action-oriented, (ii) how to best alert the public and media to promote engagement and minimize alert fatigue; (iii) the branding of the alert to allow for quick public recognition; and (iv) the translation of materials into Indigenous languages.

Indigenous community liaisons can support the public dissemination of missing person notices and lead searches, though these persons should receive adequate resources to do this work to ensure that additional work is not offloaded to already overburdened frontline workers.

A Red Dress Alert System App (with free subscriptions and notifications) can be created to facilitate reporting, access to resources, information about current missing persons, and report community risks.

Other safety measures can be adopted such as installing cameras and safe infrastructure measures at major intersections and roads throughout the province to help locate the missing person, especially if they are abducted or human trafficked.

Fourth, families, survivors, and victims must all be supported. This includes through the following direct services:

- Readily available contact information for the Red Dress Alert and a single Indigenous-led communication point that is 24/7, 365 days per year to access wrap-around supports, programs and services to reach appropriate and timely supports that are holistic (and include reporting supports), culturally safe, trauma-informed, and accessible to persons with various forms of disability;

- This single communication point can:
 - ◊ exist in collaboration with police efforts to investigate missing persons, and provide families with services immediately after reporting a missing loved one, regardless of their location in the province;
 - ◊ be equipped with a network of support services including transportation, accommodation, search, and cultural services that are barrier free and accessible to everyone including the most vulnerable;
 - ◊ ensure that staff are not over-exposed to vicarious trauma;
- This network of frontline service providers should receive long-term investments to conduct their work to ensure that they do not become overburdened, and must receive competitive salaries, counselling, and access to culture, ceremony, and land-based healing to promote their retention and allow them to continue to do their life-saving work; and
- Assigning a Red Dress Alert lead staff to each family to ensure that they have a single, consistent point of contact and receive real-time updates.

Additional services that promote safety also require investments that reflect the scale of targeted violence in Manitoba. This includes through the following indirect services:

- mandatory training for frontline service providers (including law enforcement, taxi services, train operators, hotel workers, educators, and wrap-around service providers) on how to identify risks and address them, where training should be available in multiple languages;
- building relationships with sexually exploited or experiential individuals such as those who are involved in gangs or human trafficking as they have the lived experience and expertise in new and unfolding risks and dangerous persons;
- advancing safety measures and safety plans for vulnerable persons including through more outreach workers and alert buttons in public places and cabs;
- investing in Indigenous-led services including for transportation, accommodations, health, and other essential services while ensuring no-barrier access to these services;
- supporting Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons who experience homelessness and/or mental health and substance use to promote their healing; and
- informative warnings about local risks and dangers as they are identified.

Fifth, the role of media must be defined. An Indigenous-led organization could be designated to issue all alerts, disseminating these alerts to media partners like Native Communications Inc. (NCI) to ensure communications and messaging are consistent across forums. This is important to ensuring that content about missing persons reflects Indigenous-designed content that honours respect and dignity, with warning messages as required.

It was suggested that multimedia messages sharing a Red Dress Alert be done from a woman's voice and delivered in the same format to allow listeners to easily recognize that it is a report about a missing Indigenous woman, girl or 2SLGBTQQIA+ person. This message would also

need to be translated into Indigenous languages. When a person is located, a further media segment should be issued providing this update. These messages can be recorded like an advertisement, and shared with radio stations so that all listeners hear the same voice.

"We need to prevent systemic harms because of our race".

Sixth, public education is needed. This includes public education on (i) the distinctive purpose of the Red Dress Alert compared to other alerts and the importance of a timely response and action; (ii) the value of Indigenous lives and the root causes of the crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons in Manitoba; and (iii) how to report missing persons, including dispelling misconceptions such as the need to wait 24 hours before reporting.

This should occur alongside a comprehensive education strategy through Indigenous epistemology. This strategy would promote safety through safety tips, identify how to report violent experiences (including through industry reporting mechanisms), and combat discrimination, racism and sexism towards Indigenous Peoples.

Essential Partners must receive universal mandatory education and be equipped to recognize and address (i) the Red Dress Alert System and how to respond to it, (ii) the history of Indigenous Peoples in Canada and Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ individuals, (iii) confront unconscious bias, racism, sexism, transphobia, and homophobia, and to do their work in a manner that demonstrates Indigenous cultural safety including by recognizing

the importance of listening to concerns shared by Indigenous Peoples.

Seventh, coordination and collaboration across governments, sectors, and non-governmental organizations are needed. The Red Dress Alert System requires sustained political will, long-term government funding, and public support. An Essential Partners' Network Hub can be created to bring all partners together to collaborate, and eliminate any siloed or duplicative work relating to promoting the safety of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons. This hub can also include all levels of government and all service providers, to support the streamlining of processes for responding to missing persons reports and to promote community safety. Single contacts for each partner can be identified to ensure that any issues related to the Red Dress Alert System can be quickly raised and addressed. Other entities who may be able to support collaboration should also be invited as appropriate, such as educational institutions who have large networks of relationships.

Funding for the Red Dress Alert System should be directed by an Indigenous-led organization.

"People's stories belong to them".

Eight, data collection must be improved. The Red Dress Alert System and all collected data under it must promote Indigenous data sovereignty and ownership. The creation of a Red Dress Alert Information Management System will honour Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons, not misuse sensitive information, and allow for the accurate recording of critical data points (including on gender-diverse people, demographics, locations, experiences, safety risks, and vulnerability factors) and the true scale of the issue.

This information management system should be properly sorted by category (including name, home community, place of disappearance, and date of disappearance) and contain photos (as available) and searchable records. The proper storage and sorting of this data will promote analysis and policy development that supports a safer future. This system must be stored and operated by Indigenous Peoples with consideration to pri-

vacancy laws and to Indigenous data sovereignty principles, such as the First Nations Principles of Ownership, Control, Access and Possession (OCAP).

Existing limitations in the data must be addressed, including incomplete reporting (cases remain unreported or misclassified), data fragmentation (multiple databases exist without standardized protocols), limited data on 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons (hindering the understanding of their specific vulnerabilities), and privacy and cultural sensitivity (for victims, survivors, and families). External partners should be approached to support the identification and collection of existing data related to Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons. Confidentiality and privacy restrictions must be addressed to facilitate access to data for Indigenous partners whose work includes the search of missing persons.

INTRODUCTION

This report shares what we heard from Essential Partners to the Red Dress Alert project. It provides a summary of the current issues, procedures, and practices in each of the fields of Essential Partners, along with their perspectives on designing and implementing the Red Dress Alert System for success.

Essential Partners were engaged over the course of 14 engagement sessions. A list of participants can be found in Appendix B.

It was difficult to reach everyone, as these engagement sessions occurred in Summer 2025, when there was a state of emergency for forest fire evacuations covering a large portion of Manitoba. Many service providers who would otherwise participate in these engagements were providing essential frontline services to evacuees.

The perspectives and recommendations of Essential Partners may not necessarily reflect those shared by survivors and families of Miss-

ing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons. This may be attributable to the distinct lived experiences of Indigenous survivors and families, who disproportionately experience targeted violence, racism, and sexism based on Indigenous identity and gender. Discrimination against Indigenous persons with disabilities also needs to be addressed.

Holding follow-up sessions as part of the development of the Red Dress Alert System with Essential Partners would provide an opportunity to further engage those who were unable to participate in initial engagements. This would meaningfully advance the design and implementation of the Red Dress Alert System. Additional efforts will be made to reach these stakeholders in subsequent phases of this work.

SUMMARY OF ENGAGEMENTS BY SECTOR

SECTION 1: POLICE

(a) Current Issues, Procedures, and Practices

i. Current Processes for Response and Investigation into Missing Persons

Currently, family members may phone the local police to report a missing person. On making that call or attending a police station in person, their report will be directed to the relevant jurisdiction. Call centre operators are trained on taking these calls, creating a file, and sending it to a dispatcher and asking that a community “Be on the Lookout” (BOLO) alert be disseminated. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) are able to send out Canada-wide notifications.

Sometimes, call centre operators may wait until curfews or more time has passed. There is no process map that is followed. Instead, it was said that staff are experienced and know how to assess risk, including through the use of a computer system.

There have been changes in receiving reports for missing persons, such that no police service in Manitoba is supposed to have a wait-

ing period for accepting these reports. It was reported that generally, police services allow family members to have support liaisons from Indigenous-led groups to assist with reporting. The procedure is to generally allow call takers to provide information and advice to families. Police use a Children in Care Response guide to assist their investigations as applicable.

Standard questions are used to facilitate information sharing with media. Additionally, missing person reports can be shared with media. Where youth go missing, only their first name is disclosed to the public. The reason for this concern is because once information appears on the internet, it cannot be removed.

Brandon Police Services consults with families on what photo can be shared with media. The RCMP do not want to use police or corrections identification photos when providing information to the public.

Victim Services may be available, if the justice system determines it to be a criminal case and other conditions are met. Following an initial

investigation, there may be a lack of updates to families due to sensitive case information.

Shelters are not supposed to confirm or deny whether a specific person is present, though police may be able to assist where they have a relationship.

Participants said that missing persons who do not want to be found do not have to disclose their location to police, but can simply confirm that they are safe.

When a person is found, the system takes down their photo, and this process has been informed by the Canadian Centre for Child Protection.

The RCMP are responsible for determining when an Amber Alert is issued. Amber Alerts are used sparingly and selectively based on very strict criteria defined by national standards. When Amber Alerts are issued in Manitoba, it takes approximately 15 to 30 minutes to reach the public.

There are currently partnerships with law enforcement underway. This includes the Manitoba Integrated Missing Persons Coordination Centre, which is a partnership between the Winnipeg Police Service and the RCMP, funded by the Province of Manitoba, which provides a 24-hour intake process. It operates three tiers: (i) a social media release, (ii) an opt-in alert system for subscribers (particularly youth), and (iii) forced broadcast alerts for geographic areas (like Amber Alerts). This team collects information and completes missing person reports from the general public and nine law enforcement agencies across the province. These reports are each assessed by the Missing Persons Coordinator for risk, assignment of investigative responsibilities (including jurisdiction and

police agency) and the primary investigator responsible.

It was shared that the team includes Crime and Intelligence Analysts who collect data and develop tools to streamline reporting and evidence-based decision making. This includes the use of a dashboard that provides the most up to date information on missing persons incidents and a Predator Threat Assessment tool that alerts if a known violent offender is observed interacting with youth or at a location frequented by youth. These analysts create maps and timelines, and perform analysis to support investigations.

It was further shared that the team also includes Manitoba's Child and Family Services Missing Persons Liaisons within the unit, who provide direct support and information access to law enforcement partners as a point of contact with expertise in child protection. They also assist with identifying patterns of behaviour, gaps in services, and identifying resources to support youth. They provide a triaged approach to reporting missing children in care, and individualized safety plans for youth connected to the child welfare system. The team further includes a Family Support and Resource Advocate as the primary point of contact for families.

ii. Current Training on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ Persons

The RCMP have non-mandatory Indigenous Perception Training, which captures the history of Indigenous Peoples in Canada, cultural considerations, unconscious bias, and Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons. Similarly, the Winnipeg Police Services has non-mandatory Diversity

Training. In both cases, they reporting having limited capacity to carry out this training.

(b) Designing and Implementing the Red Dress Alert System for Success

i. Designing the Red Dress Alert System

Alerts should be criteria-based to preserve credibility and impact. Timely communications and dissemination of the Red Dress Alert is critical. Consideration should be given as to whether different levels of alerts should be developed. Defined criteria is important to manage expectations with family, including why an alert may or may not be triggered. Additional consideration must also be given as to whether the issuance of an alert may be a further threat to the missing person. Ultimately, specific information must be captured in order for the alert to be effective for the public to engage.

It was said by participants that public dissemination of a Red Dress Alert will be effectively done by Indigenous community organizations and liaisons, including BOLO's to community partners.

Law enforcement partners reported that they rely on community-led searches when a person goes missing, particularly because of Indigenous expertise about the landscape, community risks and issues.

Consideration needs to be given to the best way to engage the public on these alerts, as the number of alerts and repeated alerts may halt engagement.

Improving education among law enforcement officers and intake workers at call centres and local police stations is needed to ensure they appropriately respond to, accept and escalate reports of missing persons without delay. Mandatory Indigenous education for all officers of police services in Manitoba would assist, including on history, unconscious bias, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons, and cultural safety. Wellness teams are also needed to provide support, promote health, and combat fatigue.

ii. Supporting Families

Relationship building with Indigenous communities is essential. Additionally, communications with families can be improved, including through the creation of a process map to allow families to understand the internal policing investigation process.

iii. Public Communications for a Red Dress Alert

Alerts can be shared by text messages. Social media, including Facebook, should also be utilized for alerting the public. The public need to be provided with clear instructions on how they can help. The content of the alert can be personal with the consent of the family.

iv. Prevention

Participants suggested that safety planning for Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ individuals is needed to reduce the number of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons.

SECTION 2: EDUCATION

(a) Current Issues, Procedures, and Practices

Often, there is a lack of policy and process when a student goes missing and a school is concerned. While there are policies for students with poor attendance records, there are not policies for missing students. This can mean that there is a gap in process where a student abruptly goes missing.

Educational institutions do not track data on missing persons, but rather only enrolment and graduation rates.

There is no mandatory universal education on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons across educational institutions, including because of collective agreements for faculty. For example, at the University of Manitoba, this has meant that only 500 of 3,000 staff have voluntarily taken an Indigenous cultural competency course over the past five years.

Educational institutions and sectors have a reach beyond staff and students, which extends to a larger community, which can be helpful in the development and implementation of the Red Dress Alert.

(b) Designing and Implementing the Red Dress Alert for Success

i. Designing the Red Dress Alert

The Red Dress Alert must be Indigenous-led, and provided proper resources, testing and contingency plans. Funding must be made available to support its operation and success. The alert should be kept simple with a step-

by-step process set out and publicly available about what is needed to trigger an alert and what happens after a report is made. A Red Dress Alert template can clearly set out the defined criteria for an alert and allow educational institutions to provide assistance and share their relevant knowledge.

A centralized system is needed to ensure timely response and dissemination, and avoid duplication. The public should be instructed about what to do to respond to a Red Dress Alert in very clear and simple terms.

There is an opportunity for collaboration between educational institutions, provincial and federal governments, and an Indigenous-led organization(s) to work together to create processes for identifying risks, early intervention, and responding to missing persons reports.

Schools have detailed information about a student, and the ability to use and share this information under defined parameters can provide critical assistance.

Universities have an extensive network of relationships and partners who carry a wide-range of expertise. Post-secondary institutions can be approached to discuss how they and their networks can support the design, operation, and implementation of a Red Dress Alert System.

ii Supporting Families

Contact information for alerting services must be kept up to date.

Staff and employees need clearly defined roles and responsibilities to ensure that they

are accountable to supporting safety issues in a timely and appropriate manner.

Family and community members must receive public education on their rights and avenues for reporting missing persons (including that 24 hours does not have to pass before a report is issued).

iii. Public Communications for a Red Dress Alert

The public needs to be educated about the different types of alerts that exist (for example, an Amber Alert, a Silver Alert or a Weather Alert) and any sub-categories of the Red Dress Alert for minors or other vulnerable groups. The participants shared deeply emotional experiences with the issue of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ persons

and the compelling impacts these experiences had on their lives.

A participant noted that by the time a family member calls to report a loved one missing, they have already taken the immediate steps to try to find them, so the call taker, service provider or police “must trust the person who calls and is worried” and respond immediately, taking the call very seriously.

iv. Prevention

Some post-secondary institutions have cameras throughout campuses, but there are locations without cameras. Improving monitoring mechanisms and using this available information as needed can assist with investigations and locating.

SECTION 3: HEALTH

(a) Current Issues, Procedures, and Practices

i. Current Processes

If someone goes missing in the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority (WRHA) or Shared Health area or its other public service delivery organizations (including hospitals, health centres, and some community-based programs such as home care or ACCESS Centres), there is a written policy that is to be followed. This process is not triggered where the person was initially missing in the community.

Under the process, a “missing person code yellow” is used for persons whose location is not known, but they are not yet identified

as a missing person. This occurs once an initial search is undertaken without locating the person, along with a completed Code Yellow checklist for hospital review. Once approved, a Code Yellow is issued at the health institution, which is broadcast throughout the facility that may include their name, description, and last known location. It is used to alert staff to search their area and report any updates to security.

Under the process, where the person has a mental illness, other steps are required. This includes health care providers making a report to law enforcement officers.

Generally, hospitals and other health facilities under the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority do not have partnerships with community

organizations, often owing to restrictions in the sharing of personal health information.

If someone is fleeing a dangerous situation, the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority has protective processes to keep that person safe. This includes the front desk not having a record of the person, so that their identity cannot be disclosed or confirmed in the hospital. The leadership may be alerted for dangerous situations.

ii. Training

There is minimal specific training on the issue of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons. Training on related topics does exist including the Take Good Care of the People training. However, the training is 50 hours long with limited seats, making it have limited reach and challenging for health care providers to complete.

The Winnipeg Regional Health Authority has two educators on staff who are developing self-paced learning modules to help address capacity issues, including content on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons.

Racial information is subject to voluntary disclosure, making the available data less complete and thus potentially more limited. This is informed by poor experiences with the health-care system including racial profiling.

(b) Designing and Implementing the Red Dress Alert for Success

i. Designing the Red Dress Alert

The Winnipeg Regional Health Authority requires specified criteria on the Red Dress Alert and its obligations to disclose and report when certain criteria are fulfilled. This must be defined by legislation, which will allow the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority and other stakeholders to fulfill their role in reporting missing persons once specified criteria are satisfied. Ultimately, critical criteria must be specified and defined in order for the public to take these alerts seriously.

Any Red Dress Alert must be able to have widespread reach on an urgent basis, such as using Manitoba's emergency alert system.

All efforts must be supported by government investments, and long-term core funding.

ii. Supporting Families

Twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days per year supports must be put in place to make Red Dress Alerts available year-round, along with culturally relevant services (including Elders, grief counsellors and support staff) for survivors and family members. These services must be barrier-free, including to persons with all forms of disability.

Case workers should be assigned to each family to ensure that they have a clear line of communication and receive timely updates. Care teams should be available to provide support at every stage of the Red Dress Alert process, where staff are also supported to recover from exposure to vicarious trauma through ceremony and land-based healing.

It was said that full services across jurisdictions must be available when a person goes missing

iii. Public Communications for a Red Dress Alert System

All efforts must be made to reach every demographic through the manner that they receive information: this includes the general public through television news and text messages; youth through other measures like TikTok; and community members without access to television or phones through flyers.

Participants suggested that a Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ Persons Red Dress App can be developed to facilitate a network of reporting, access information and resources, share information about missing persons, and report community risks.

iv. Prevention

Consistent services are required to ensure that the immediate needs of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons are met. This includes transportation, accommodation, and cultural support services. These services must be barrier free and accessible, including to the most vulnerable, such as those who are experiencing targeted violence on the streets or visiting the city from their home community.

Counselling and mental wellness support services should also be available, including online, to reach persons in northern and remote locations with less access to physical services.

Special attention should be paid to youth to educate them on the risks, and provide them with life promotion services to address the youth suicide epidemic and engagement in high-risk activities.

SECTION 4: MEDIA

(a) Current Issues, Procedures, and Practices

The media plays an important role in the dissemination of information, and how missing person are portrayed, which sets the tone on how the public engages, including whether they feel compelled to act. Radio is one of the most common ways for communities to receive information today, particularly since many do not have reliable access to internet.

People have called Native Communications Inc. (NCI), an Indigenous-led radio station, to report missing loved ones where police will not accept

missing person reports until several days have passed.

Generally, Indigenous communities have shared that they do not like how the media portrays or describes their loved ones, as negative stereotypes are often conveyed.

Care and consideration need to be taken on the information that is shared on the radio. For example, police have advised NCI not to share messages left that use colours, as these can be gang related.

There is a real need for a Red Dress Alert given the growing population of Indigenous Peoples

in Manitoba and their disproportionate experiences with disappearances and deaths.

(b) Building the Future: Designing and Implementing the Red Dress Alert System for Success

i. Designing the Red Dress Alert System

Red Dress Alerts must be designed with thoughtfulness and care to ensure that the messaging does not cause further harm to affected persons and Indigenous communities.

The Red Dress Alert should include basic information about the person: their name, where they live, what they were last wearing, and when they were last seen. The scope of the Red Dress Alert must be defined by legislation to ensure that it is uniform across Manitoba and provides accountability measures.

The Red Dress Alert system should maintain control of the information contained in the alerts.

ii. Supporting Families

The inclusion of families should be clear and consistent, providing support and information about whether their approval is required for media releases.

It is recommended that a physical space be set up for a Red Dress Alert system that welcomes missing persons and family members, with significant safety measures in place as it may be prone to targeting.

Providing ongoing support to staff including regular check-ins, counselling, and capacity management is needed to avoid burn out.

Additionally, staff should be properly compensated for this extremely sensitive work.

iii. Public Communications for a Red Dress Alert

It must be extremely clear to the public who to call when they have information related to a Red Dress Alert. Radio can also play a role in directing listeners to websites for more details and information. A communications strategy is required to promote awareness of Red Dress Alerts and compassion for the crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons and mitigate the risk of fatigue.

The Red Dress Alert needs to be designed to engage every person in Manitoba. A designated organization is needed to receive all Red Dress Alerts and disseminate these alerts to essential partners like NCI. This will ensure that communications and messaging is consistent across forums. This will also formalize the process and build trust in it across the public.

Multimedia messages sharing a Red Dress Alert should be from a woman's voice and delivered in the same format to allow listeners to easily recognize that it is a report about a missing person. If this message is delivered in an Indigenous language, listeners will pay additional attention to it. Where a person is located, a further radio segment should be shared updating the public that the case was resolved, which assists with showing the impact of public assistance. These messages can be recorded like an advertisement, and disseminated to multimedia outlets so that listeners are hearing the same voice.

The messaging of Red Dress Alerts must not normalize violence against Indigenous women,

girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons but be delivered from a standpoint of care.

NCI expressed a desire to play a bigger role in the public communications surrounding Red Dress Alerts – it has 57 transmitters from Winnipeg to Churchill throughout Manitoba and a sister station in Saskatchewan. It also has a large reach through Facebook.

Other media stations should be engaged and encouraged to support Red Dress Alerts, with new partnerships developed. This includes, but

is not limited to, Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN).

Further education is required for families, including that there is no 24-hour rule before waiting to report someone, safety tips including for children and youth, and messaging that combats discrimination, racism, sexism, homophobia, and transphobia. This can also include Grandmother Teachings to support public education of Indigenous ways of living and doing.

SECTION 5: FRONTLINE COMMUNITY RESPONSES

(a) Current Issues, Procedures, and Practices

Across Manitoba, Indigenous communities are expressing that the current system is failing them. Often, community members discover that an Indigenous woman, girl or 2SLGBTQQIA+ person is missing through Indigenous-led social media pages rather than public alerts or announcements.

Indigenous individuals have had tremendous difficulty with reporting missing persons to police and may not receive call backs or follow up. Other times, searches are not conducted, and families are left without support.

By the time a family member calls to report a loved one missing, they have already taken the immediate steps to try to find them, so the call taker, service provider or police “must trust the person who calls and is worried” and respond immediately, taking the call very seriously.”

Instead, families are often given incorrect information, including that they must wait for a person to be missing for 24 hours before reporting to the police, which is incorrect.

Confidentiality issues can create red tape for Indigenous organizations and inhibit their ability to support finding a missing person.

The federal government plays an important role in approving travel requests and has a highly administrative process with many levels of approval that can be difficult to navigate. There are challenges with data collection, which can be improved, including incomplete reporting (cases remain unreported or misclassified), data fragmentation (multiple databases exist without standardized protocols), limited data on 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons (hindering the understanding of their specific vulnerabilities), and privacy and cultural safety (for victims, survivors, and families).

Ultimately, Indigenous communities have been failed by the current system. This has resulted in

Indigenous communities developing their own grassroots efforts and solutions to address the system failures. Indigenous people do this work out of love for present and future generations. Often, there is no choice but to do the work of addressing the crisis of MMIWG2S+ persons alone and in isolation.

There are Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ Units housed within Infinity Women Secretariat – a proud affiliate of the Manitoba Métis Federation, the National Government of the Red River Métis; the Southern Chiefs' Organization; Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak; Island Lake Tribal Council; Southeast Resource Development Council and the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs. These units support families who are searching for missing loved ones, including by asking questions and creating narratives for police.

The RCMP also has a National Missing Persons Program, but its ability to share this information is more constrained.

The Bear Clan Patrol provides outreach services with a view of reclaiming traditional responsibilities to provide security to Indigenous people in Winnipeg through maintaining a physical presence on the streets, promoting safety, and providing early response.

Participants said that Amber Alerts have more narrow criteria, and their expansion could be considered (e.g., an Amber Alert be triggered when any child goes missing).

(b) Designing and Implementing the Red Dress Alert System for Success

i. Designing the Red Dress Alert System

The Red Dress Alert System must be Indigenous-led in the way it is designed, implemented, and refined.

A Red Dress Alert requires a single database that is publicly accessible, allows for easily searchable records (by category, including name, home community, place of disappearance, and date of disappearance), photos, a robust alert system, and media coverage. Additionally, it can be a scaled process, such as a single initial alert while the initial investigation is completed. Those experiencing intimate partner violence should be prioritized.

Legislation is required to formalize the Red Dress Alert and the standards for its implementation. A system must be developed for the issuance of a Red Dress Alert, which includes defined criteria, timelines, and special considerations when the missing person is a youth or there are intimate partner violence concerns. Still, some flexibility is required as the circumstances under which persons go missing can widely vary. Ultimately, these alerts must be issued where there are material safety concerns about a person. It must also be designed in a manner that facilitates and encourages the missing person to reach out for support, with required culturally safe and trauma-informed support readily available to meet them where they are at and allow them to leave an unsafe situation as required. Culturally safe and trauma-informed support for family members is also required.

Legislation that is developed must be Indigenous-led. This legislation must include measures to reduce barriers, record data and information through Indigenous operators, instructions to service providers, and accountability measures. The Red Dress Alert requires clearly defined criteria, including for different circumstances, such as intimate partner violence. It also must set out when the alert is triggered.

The Red Dress Alert must also have sub-categories, such as for missing minors.

Special consideration must also be given to missing Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons – including that they may not want to be found. Diligence is required, and thresholds must be set for assessing risk.

Coordination across governments, Indigenous organizations, and service providers are needed to ensure that there is a process for responding to reports of missing Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons and safety issues, including through dedicated liaisons to promote collaboration.

There is a tremendous opportunity to thoughtfully collaborate, including through the creation of a centralized Red Dress Alert hub to promote efficiencies and avoid duplication.

ii. Supporting Families

Often, when families report missing Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons, they are left without support. Indigenous partners routinely step in to support them, but clear and accessible services are required.

The dignified portrayal of missing Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons as human beings who are valued is important to

supporting their return home, along with the journey of their families and communities.

It was shared that the experiences of families and communities can be improved through streamlining a single intake point, single communication point with authorities, liaisons for each community, instant alerts to nearby locations, and ongoing communication and support to families. It was mentioned that families are required to be contacted within 12 hours (or sooner) of a report of a missing person, to provide resources, support, and guidance. Families must be made aware of their rights under existing and new legislation, and be supported to strategically defend their rights.

iii. Public Communications for a Red Dress Alert System

The Red Dress Alert needs to facilitate the participation of all members of the public, and give everyone the opportunity to engage. Sending out the alert through various avenues will facilitate ensuring that it is readily accessible to all demographics (text, email or fax to offices of service providers, online). There must be prescribed timelines for the issuance of a Red Dress Alert after a person is reported missing.

Creating a dedicated website, public database, and social media pages will also assist, so that missing person alerts can be quickly uploaded and disseminated, and past alerts can be readily accessed and updated with additional information as available. These forums need to be Indigenous-designed to ensure that the content is culturally safe.

It was shared that media are required to report on new missing persons in a manner that reflects the Indigenous-designed content and framing of the circumstances.

Social media is also effective for distributing messages and alerts quickly. Alerts must be sent to have a maximum reach, while giving consideration to avoiding over-alerting people such that they stop paying attention. A public relations team is required to promote and educate the public about the Red Dress Alert.

Location services must also be used to target communities or neighbourhoods as needed for Red Dress Alerts.

iv. Training

Indigenous-designed and led training is needed, supported by resources and investments. This training must include education and support for staff and frontline workers on managing exposure to vicarious trauma and self-care.

Additional training is also required on privacy law limitations and Indigenous data sovereignty and ownership, including, for example, the First Nations Principles of OCAP.

v. Partners

Some ideas shared by participants about existing partners that could be included in collaboration related to a Red Dress Alert System are: The Child and Family All Nations Coordinated Response Network, Missing People Canada, Bear Clan Patrol Inc., Canadian Centre for Child Protection, Safe Passage - Native Women's Association of Canada, and Drag The Red.

vi. Data

A database must be created that honours the work related to Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons, and does not misuse sensitive information. As

much information as possible should be shared with others, and collaboration is needed. This database must be stored and operated by Indigenous Peoples.

vii. Prevention

Proactive action is needed to address Indigenous persons from going missing in the first place, with attention to the different circumstances on reserve compared to off reserve, in the north compared to in the south, and in rural compared to urban communities.

Structural and systemic factors exacerbate the vulnerability of Indigenous Peoples. This includes historical and systemic trauma through racism, displacement, and government inaction; socio-economic marginalization through racialized poverty, unemployment, housing insecurity and homelessness, limited access to culturally safe services (including healthcare, education, and social supports); Child and Family Services institutional failures including abuse within the system and the over-representation of Indigenous children; and other forces including substance misuse, targeted violence, histories of abuse, stigma from involvement in the criminal legal system, a loss of hope and lack of supportive programming.

If there are no supports for a missing person once they are found, then they will continue to go missing or be murdered. Special attention is needed for unhoused persons.

Promoting safety requires universal collaboration that is not inhibited by jurisdictional divisions. We all need to be working together. This includes cross-sector work, such as a dedicated Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons liaison who

also works to address the high number of missing Indigenous children in care.

Others are needed to address other pressing issues against Indigenous peoples, including intergenerational trauma, homelessness, and substance misuse issues. Wrap-around services need to be universally accessible. Further resources and investments into detoxification and treatment programs are urgently required, as long waitlists are the norm. Additionally, these programs are often extremely expensive, which pose as a further barrier to access as people are priced out of supports that can be integral to their survival. The connection between trauma and substance misuse cannot be understated, and the lack of attention and resources into this issue is causing people to have a lowered life expectancy. Ultimately, Indigenous Peoples have the answers, and know how to deliver programming and services in a way that best serves our community.

Supporting an Indigenous-led organization to do this work is an act of reconciliation.

Indigenous organizations need resources and investments to do their work more efficiently, as staff are over-burdened with caseloads. In turn, staff repeatedly go above and beyond their responsibilities, and thus, there are high turnover rates.

Changes are needed within the federal government to improve their processes and service delivery to Indigenous Peoples. There should also be additional supports available to Indigenous nations on the ways to best use prevention funding.

Additionally, allies need to be empowered to learn and engage.

The existence of the Red Dress Alert may deter perpetrators if it has broad reach.

SECTION 6: CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

The child welfare system must do more to promote the health, wellness, and prosperity of Indigenous children, including requiring them to enroll in extra-curricular activities like sports or music to promote their skill development and confidence.

School and educational institutions must be re-configured to promote the health and wellness of Indigenous children in care, and do their role

in fostering pride in Indigenous identity (such as through Indigenous-specific days like Ribbon Skirt Days) and life promotion. Schools also must accurately teach the history of Indigenous Peoples in Canada.

Targeted work is required to address the number of Indigenous children in care.

SECTION 7: HOTELS AND HOSPITALITY

(a) Current Issues, Procedures, and Practices

Families and community of missing persons do not trust police to effectively do their work when a missing person is reported. There is also a widespread misconception in the community about the need to wait 24 hours to report a missing person.

The Manitoba Hotel Association is a voluntary, membership-based organization. It has numerous hotels across the province, and no regulations with its partners. It can consider what processes work based on what other stakeholders have done. Ultimately, staff are supposed to make guests feel safe.

Manitoba Tourism provides training to its staff and hotels. It has also promoted Tracia's Trust to Manitoba hotels to help address human trafficking. However, it does not know the process by which Manitoba hotels train their staff.

Generally, the collection of data about incidents of violence and Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons does not occur.

The Manitoba Hotel Association is not a legislated or regulated body, potentially limiting what they are required to do. This means that there are generally not consequences or penalties for misconduct. However, participants expressed an openness to work on addressing the issue of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons in order to increase safety.

(b) Designing and Implementing the Red Dress Alert System for Success

i. Designing the Red Dress Alert System

Geographical scope, timelines, and criteria are important components of the Red Dress Alert. It should include an alert and communication with as far of a reach as possible. Still, alerts should be tailored so that they are relevant to those who receive them, and do not get missed from less relevant communications being shared.

Every community has different strengths, even when there is no support to do the searches. Collaboration and cooperation are required to set up a Red Dress Alert.

This can include a comprehensive approach, such as training for hotel staff on human trafficking and how to intervene.

ii. Supporting Families

Confidentiality, and consideration around minors, must also be considered.

iii. Public Communications for a Red Dress Alert

Education can be part of the communications strategy, including to owners and managers in the hospitality industry.

v. Prevention

There are many lessons to be learned from recent summer fire evacuations in Manitoba. One of those lessons is that the Red Cross is not adequately equipped to support Indigenous

communities. However limited, the Red Cross would have information about who housed evacuees. Additional lessons can be learned from the use of hotels for isolation during the Covid-19 Pandemic.

There are specific Calls for Justice from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered

Indigenous Women and Girls for the hospitality industry, which must be implemented.

Additional education can be shared on human trafficking and the role of the hospitality industry to educate and address it.

SECTION 8: TRANSPORTATION

(a) Current Issues, Procedures, and Practices

Transportation plays a role in the crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons. Greater training, availability of passenger rights, and investigations are now being conducted more frequently. In Winnipeg, passengers can report their experiences to 311 for investigation, where dispatch will gather information about the driver and vehicle. Other educational measures, such as Know Your Taxi pamphlets have also been developed and are available in public spaces.

People have distrust of services and police. Ultimately, existing programs are constrained by city bylaws.

Data recorded is largely disconnected from the realities known to Indigenous Peoples.

The magnitude of the crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons is also influenced by bordering communities, like in Saskatchewan, and evacuated communities.

Currently, there is nothing comparable to a Red Dress Alert that would allow everyone to be alerted about a missing person.

There is an urgency to establishing a Red Dress Alert, which will require cooperation and coordination across jurisdictions and agencies.

(b) Building the Future: Designing and Implementing the Red Dress Alert System for Success

i. Designing the Red Dress Alert System

Clear criteria must be set out and designed for when a Red Dress Alert should be issued, and the steps that must be taken as a result. Community support is required to make these alerts a success. Practical measures like Vehicles For Hire can be used to get the message out quickly.

Indigenous communities have important strengths, and must be part of the process in developing and implementing a Red Dress Alert System that will effectively address the needs of their community.

ii. Supporting Families

A rideshare service called Ikwe Safe Rides was piloted as a safe service for transportation.

iii. Public Communications for a Red Dress Alert

Social media plays an important role in information sharing.

iv. Training

Drivers applying for licenses require Vehicles for Hire training for 2025. Those who already have licenses will need to go through training when their license expires.

Often, drivers are missing the messaging and need further education.

The list of drivers' rights and passengers' rights have been translated into 15 languages.

v. Prevention

Proactive measures, such as safety buttons in car services, must be available for passengers to obtain quick assistance from police.

Where incidents occur in a cab, an investigation may occur, and police may need to be involved depending on the situation.

SECTION 9: HUMAN TRAFFICKING

(a) Current Issues, Procedures, and Practices

There are known risks to Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons, but limited resources often constrain the work of Indigenous governments and Indigenous-led organizations. These known risks including avenues for targeted violence, human trafficking, and migration of Indigenous relatives to urban areas in southern Manitoba, including due to evacuations from forest fires and flooding. Evacuations have resulted in additional risks to women and children.

All too often, those who contact police services when a loved one has gone missing are not left with the trust and confidence that their report will be seriously considered, actioned, and investigated. When missing person reports

are made, family members are advised that they must wait 24 hours before making a report, despite the first 48-hour period being critical to the locating and safe return of a missing person home. Other times, families are advised to call after the person is missing for 7 days if they have disappeared multiple times in a short time period.

Taxi transportation services remain a problem. There are processes for reporting, which are often unknown to the public and have short timelines (including 15 days before a video is overridden and no longer accessible).

Vehicles For Hire are being used as targets for training and improved safety measures, but low reporting rates remain. When persons do report, they can sometimes go to the wrong channel and get discouraged.

Indigenous individuals are sought for targeted violence and drugs, in which the drug supply is becoming increasingly toxic. Those who exploit are good at what they do and often operate in plain sight.

The crisis of violence is causing triggers of self-harm and suicide for Indigenous individuals.

(b) Designing and Implementing the Red Dress Alert System for Success

i. Designing the Red Dress Alert System

A dedicated Red Dress Alert Advocate is required to serve as a monitoring body to ensure that there is accountability, co-management, and continual improvements to the Red Dress Alert.

Defined criteria are needed so that reports are not overlooked, including for those who have repeated disappearances in a short timeframe.

A tiered process can be set out including what happens after the passage of 24 hours and 7 days, for example. Short timelines for response must be prescribed.

There must be access to Indigenous languages when needed.

ii. Supporting Families

Greater public information and access is required to ensure people know available resources, supports, and avenues for recourse. This includes public posters and flyers that share information about safe spaces, and specific Indigenous-led services for evacuees and transportation.

Families who report missing loved ones should receive a meaningful response on reporting.

It is important that community organizations have procedures in place to support them.

iii. Public Communications for a Red Dress Alert

Phone and text alerts are helpful to disseminate information.

Indigenous leaders must also be engaged to share information with their members as applicable.

Participants suggested digital billboards, highway signs, and posters at public locations like Tim Hortons can be helpful in spreading the news quickly.

iv. Prevention

Law reform is required for prevention and safety. People need to be accountable for violent crimes against Indigenous people, including for sex trafficking and exploitation. The existing process lacks accountability and causes harm to Indigenous individuals, families and communities.

Victims, survivors, and families require education on their rights, when to report, and who to report to. Education for targeted groups is also needed, including on reporting (such as keeping a condom or condom box that was used during an assault, which has a serial number on it to potentially trace the perpetrator).

More trained Missing Persons detectives are also needed. Barriers to reporting must be addressed. Liaisons should be assigned to support families and advocate for the issuance

of a missing person report. Services must be available at all times.

Targeted work is needed to combat human trafficking, including on trains and semi-trucks. Malls remain another location for targeting for sexual exploitation. Street-based outreach workers are also needed.

The sex work network has a lot of information about people, escalating safety risks, and what is going on in the streets – they should be utilized as a powerful resource. These women often provide help to Indigenous women and children, and have information about bad date lists, men who buy sex, and risky vehicles.

Shelters and accommodations need to be expanded, safe, and accessible. The shelter system can also be an avenue to procure victims which needs to be addressed including through social services and supports for safety and security.

Youth must be educated on the tactics of grooming, and adults need to know how to identify it. Additionally, youth need to be educated on safety measures for using social media.

Sustainable and long-term funding is required to do prevention work.

SECTION 10: DATA

(a) Current Issues, Procedures, Practices, and Developments

i. Data Practices at the City of Winnipeg

The City of Winnipeg has an Open Data Portal, which stores department-owned data that is governed by a records management bylaw. Every department manages their own data. At the municipal level, the Office of Equity and Diversity collects self-declaration data on First Nations, Inuit, and Métis individuals, and persons with disabilities.

The Indigenous Relations Division produces numerous reports, including the *Journey of Reconciliation* (an annual internal report that tracks the five Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that the City of Winnipeg was directed to implement by the Federated Council of Municipalities in 2017); annual Indigenous Relations Division reports (an

internal report that highlights the division's work for the year and includes data from the Office of Equity); the Indigenous Accord (a framework for implementing the Calls to Action and the Calls for Justice from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, which invites both internal and external partners to identify goals for implementing these calls with a view of accountability in reporting. It is important to note that the public reporting will be discontinued effective 2025 due to administrative burdens.

The centralization, standardization, and use of an open portal, which the City of Winnipeg say are best practices for data collection. Data collection is also done by some Indigenous Accord partners report on statistics and incident data related to Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons, and Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Services records inci-

dent reports. However, access to this data can be limited due to confidentiality.

The City of Winnipeg uses additional data to evaluate funded programs for Indigenous peoples and policy decisions, including mandated anti-racism and gender diversity training for taxi drivers.

To improve compliance and accountability, Indigenous Accord partners need to develop training and resource materials, which will also support data collection and reporting across municipal departments.

The Indigenous Relations Division of the City connects with other departments for collaboration, including Transportation and Community Services. Other city committees include the Human Rights Committee, Safe Cities Committee, and the Mayor's Indigenous Advisory Circle.

The Indigenous Relations Division of the City also has 262 Indigenous Accord Partners, most of whom have committed to Call to Action #57. This includes the Vehicle for Hire Department which carries a mandate of training 4,000 taxi drivers in cultural competency.

57. We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to provide education to public servants on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal-Crown relations. This will require skills based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism

ii. Manitoba Association of Women's Shelters

Demographic information related to Indigenous identity and gender is collected during intake, although data collection from shelter-to-shelter is inconsistent. Data is shared externally in aggregate form, with a focus on ensuring protection against perpetrators.

Data is stored on services through a system called Women in Safe Housing, where intake collection is anonymized. Every shelter is a separate entity with its own governance process, with access to the system. However, shelters cannot see the data of others due to privacy laws. In the future, WISH data will inform service advocacy.

The Manitoba Association of Women's Shelters has long been working on a shared database to allow shelters to merge their data into a single system. Currently, shelters are being onboarded to this system, and data will be merged once possible. This is being done with a view of identifying patterns for promoting safety.

The Manitoba Association of Women's Shelters is overseen by an advisory group of survivors of family violence, although their identities remain private. The advisory group informs WISH practices and indicators for success.

The Manitoba Association of Women's Shelters contributes to data under Clare's Law which supports the expansion of electronic monitoring tools.

There are no consistent statistics on how many survivors successfully obtain protection orders. There are several reasons for this, such as the complexity and sensitivity of the process, as

well as the burden of proof placed on the victim seeking an order.

iii. End Homelessness Winnipeg

End Homelessness Winnipeg is the custodian of the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System ("HIFIS"). HIFIS data collection includes case management software. Currently, there are 31 organizations and 90 programs using HIFIS but they do not have access to each other's data. Federal funders have access to HIFIS reports.

Each shelter has a single environment for HIFIS, and HIFIS is where every homeless serving center shares information about individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness. When a person consents to sharing their information, a HIFIS bulletin is disseminated across shared groups and other shelters. There is no current data on the frequency in which this is done.

Organizations can opt out so their information is not in a shared environment. Additionally, organizations can request express consent. If a client declines to share their information, then it is only stored within a single organization.

Individual shelters are responsible for collection, which can be used for reports to funders. Additionally, data collection is governed by a national HIFIS committee which includes persons who have experienced homelessness. The database includes limited information on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons as it was not originally built into the database, though the need for this information is now recognized.

End Homelessness Winnipeg is required to collaborate with Indigenous partners, although

these partners are not required to share data (though most do share their data). It has service level agreements with each sharing organization, which outline the roles and responsibilities of each member of the partnership. Only non-identifying data can be shared.

Data reports are used to promote advocacy, policy changes, and securing greater resources. End Homelessness Winnipeg serves as both a funder and a recipient of funding, such that data is used in various forms. Their Prevention Manager receives requests for information, including the number of claimants accessing services from different demographics so that patterns and trends of uptakes or declines in use of services can be observed.

iv. Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre

Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre collects data, although it is not consistent and not shared between sites. Program specific data is collected, and individual sites collect data in the format that they see fit.

Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre is planning a shared database in the future, which will be live, cross-programmed, and with controlled access rights. The goal is to track the full journey of participants through the organization (from initial support to volunteer positions or employment) and reduce fragmentation. The goal is to track long-term participant outcomes.

Statistics and data on program-specific information about vulnerable youth, particularly those in care, can be tracked, along with Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons who were previously involved in the child welfare system. When data is collected, Registry of Indian Status and Personal Health Insurance Numbers (PHIN) can be

connected to the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy.

Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre plans to use the First Nations Information Governance Centre's OCAP Principles, including comprehensive training for collectors, obtaining prior consent, and trauma-informed and confidential data collection. It is also planning a legal review of data sharing agreements to uphold Indigenous data sovereignty and community ownership.

First Nations Health and Social Secretariat of Manitoba is also developing nation-based wellness indicators in collaboration with women leaders and Cree communities to measure success from an Indigenous worldview.

A shared database would assist with data insight, including staff turn-over (such as a new caseworker being more informed about their service delivery). A shared database can also demonstrate the vulnerability of a community

member (including their history with CFS, for example).

To date, there are no existing reports on data.

(b) Designing and Implementing the Red Dress Alert System for Success

Existing partners through the Indigenous Relations Division of the City of Winnipeg and HIFIS could collaborate in sharing data.

Consistent data collection is required, including on vulnerability factors that lead to targeted violence or influences over likelihood to disappear or be murdered, along with specific data on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons.

Confidentiality concerns must be addressed to promote access to data for safety and quickly locating missing Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons.

SECTION 11: LIST OF ESSENTIAL PARTNERS

Name Organization

Emory Ahmo..... Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs

Allison BalmerManitoba First Nation
Police Service

Oyepero Banjo.... End Homelessness Winnipeg

Alex Bear..... Royal Canadian Mounted Police

Glen Binda Royal Canadian Mounted Police
D Division

Jessica Bloomfield..... Red River College
Polytechnic

Samantha Brown... Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre

Amy CarriereManitoba Keewatinowi
Okimakanak

Tammy ChristensonMa Mawi Wi Chi Itata
Centre

Tara Clelland.... Royal Canadian Mounted Police

Carla Cochrane . First Nations Health and Social
Secretariat of Manitoba

Jackie Connell Manitoba Education
- Indigenous Excellence

Rob Cyrenne.... Royal Canadian Mounted Police

Dan Defer.....Altona Police

Kelly Dehn..... Winnipeg Police Service

Tiffany Desmarais Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs

Cassandra Dokken.....Manitoba Justice

Todd Duhamel University of Manitoba

Bonnie Emerson..... Winnipeg Police Service

Kendra FlettMount Carmel Clinic

Andrea GallagherManitoba Justice

Stevie GollerMount Carmel Clinic

Daymon Guillas.....Potash Agri Development
Corporation of Manitoba

Brock Happychuk.....Manitoba
Emergency Management

Ashley Hartle Winnipeg Police Service

Lori Hawkins Winnipeg Police Service

Tasha Hodgson Manitoba Indigenous
Reconciliation Secretariat

Chris Katansky Winkler Police Service

Tyler Lamy Royal Canadian Mounted Police

Dana McCallum.....Brandon Police Service

Marion McKenzie .. Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre

David McLeodNative Communications Inc.

Trevor McNeelyManitoba Justice

Camille K Munro Assembly of
Manitoba Chiefs

Jessica Paley City of Winnipeg
- Indigenous Relations Division

Darryl Ramkisson Winnipeg Police Service

Richelle Ready Klinik Community Health

Kevin Riel..... Winnipeg Police Service

Sebastian Sanchez Assembly of
Manitoba Chiefs

Mike Scharikow Winnipeg Parking Authority

Andrea Scott..... Winnipeg Police Service

Christine Stevens Manitoba
Emergency Management

Margaret SwanSouthern Chiefs'
Organization

Kristen Tompson Manitoba First Nation
Police Service

Tracy VanstoneManitoba Teachers Society

Jerry Wier.....Manitoba Hotels Association

Candace Wood Manitoba Institute of
Trades and Technology

Jenn Manitoba Indigenous
Reconciliation Secretariat

Jeremy.....Winnipeg Regional Health Authority

Yvonne.....Winnipeg Regional Health Authority

APPENDIX A: LIST OF RESOURCES RELATED TO MMIWG AND 2SLGBTQIA+ SUPPORT

1. Ka Ni Kanichihk

- a. Missing Persons & Persons at Risk Toolkit - Ka Ni Kanichihk (<https://kanikanichihk.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/MBC-Missing-Persons-Toolkit-Combined-Package.pdf>)
 - This includes documents and information that can assist family members with information regarding missing persons or persons at risk.
- b. Medicine Bear Counselling, Support, and Elder Services - Ka Ni Kanichihk

Services provided include:

 - Individual, family, and crisis-counselling sessions
 - Developing support with weekly circle check-ins
 - Referrals and advocacy
 - Support within the Justice System, Child and Family Services, Winnipeg Regional Health Authority and other Agencies

- Elder Support Services (when requested)
- Traditional Ceremonies and Teachings
- Training and workshops
- Mediation services for families, police and justice officials

- c. Heart Medicine Lodge
 - Ka Ni Kanichihk

2. Southern Chiefs' Organization

- a. MMIWG2S+ Outreach and Awareness

The primary function of this program is to support MMIWG2S+ impacted family members through advocacy and system navigation. Additionally, another significant aspect of the program is to provide educational tools to prevent instances of gender-based violence. Our liaisons will share presentations, host workshops, and show support during gatherings.

b. SCO Mobile Crisis
Response Team (MCRT)

"The MCRT's is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Its primary focus is crisis response and intervention, and the Team also provides navigator and aftercare services. The MCRT delivers culturally responsive, trauma-informed, and appropriate southern mental health and wellness care and includes an Anishinaabemowin speaker."

- Toll free: 1-877-SCO-2880 (1-877-726-2880)
- Email: CrisisResponse@scoinc.mb.ca

3. Crisis Phone Lines

For confidential help and information on domestic violence please contact the Toll-Free Province-Wide Domestic Abuse Crisis Line (24 hours): 1-877-977-0007 (or text 204-792-5302 or 204-805-6682).

- Victim Services: 1-866-484-2846
- Klinik Crisis Line: 1-888-322-3019
- Klinik Sexual Assault Crisis Line: 1-888-292-7565
- Sexual Assault Crisis Line: 1-888-292-7565
- Mobile Crisis Services: 1-204-940-1781
- Manitoba Suicide Prevention and Support Line: 1-877-435-7170

4. Shelters

Winnipeg, MB - Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin Shelter Inc

Crisis Line: 1-800-362-3344

Winnipeg, MB - Willow Place

Family violence-related inquiries (text):
1-204-813-8887
Phone: 1-877-977-0007
Emergency: 911

Dauphin, MB - Parkland Crisis Centre Inc

Phone: 204-638-9484
Emergency: 204-638-9484
or 1-877-977-0007

Koostatak / Fisher River, MB - First Nation Healing Centre

Phone: 204-645-2750

Portage la Prairie, MB - Prairie Harbour

Phone (local crisis line): 204-239-5233

Selkirk, MB - Nova House

Phone (local crisis line): 204-
482-7882, ext. 0
Email: info@novahouse.ca

Steinbach, MB - Agape House Women's Shelter; Eastman Crisis Centre Inc

Phone (local crisis line): 204-346-0028

Winkler, MB - Genesis House: South Central Committee on Family Violence Inc

Phone (local crisis line): 204-325-9800

5. Indigenous Services Canada (Federal)

Hope For Wellness

- Toll Free Prevention and Support Line: 1-877-435-7170
- Toll Free Hope for Wellness Help Line: 1-855-242-3310
- Online chat available at hopeforwellness.ca

Hope for Wellness Helpline

- ᐃᓄᓐᓴᓄᓐ nêhiyawêwin
- Nishnaabemwin

6. Manitoba Keewatinowi Omimakanak (MKO)

- a. Traditional Healer Program
 - * Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak
 - MKO provides access to services for people who are eligible for Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) for ceremonial healing needs.
- b. Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQI+ People | CMHR
 - Aftercare services | MMIWG
 - Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) covers counselling and cultural support services for survivors, family members and those affected by the issue of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

7. From the Province of Manitoba

Province of Manitoba | justice - Resources for Families of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) (The website)

Resources for Families of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG)

The Manitoba Family Information Liaison Unit (FILU) can gather information to help you learn more about your loved one(s) death or disappearance. We can also connect you with culturally appropriate and trauma informed counselling and other support services.

Winnipeg

Family Liaison Contact
Family Information Liaison Unit
Manitoba Justice Victim Services
Telephone: (204) 945-5456
Toll free: (866) 484-2846

Community Supports for Families of MMIWG

MMIWG & 2SLGBTQ* Program
Southeast Resource Development Council
Telephone: (204) 956-7500
Mobile: (204) 330-2421
Website: <https://www.serdc.mb.ca/>

Inuit Family Support Worker

Manitoba Inuit Association
Phone: (204) 774-6848 ext. 206
E-mail: info@manitobainuit.ca
Website: <https://www.manitobainuit.ca/>

Kids Help Phone

Professional counselling, information, referrals, and volunteer-led text-based support for children and youth are available at <https://kidshelpphone.ca/>.

Shelters in Manitoba

Brandon

YWCA Westman Woman's Shelter
Phone: 204-571-3680

Dauphin

Parkland Crisis Centre Inc
Phone: 204-622-4626
Emergency: 204-638-9484
Email: pkndcris@mymts.net

Flin Flon

Women's Safe Haven
Crisis Line: 204-681-3105 (9 am – 5 pm)
After House Crisis Line: 204-271-5375

Koostatak First Nation Healing Centre

Phone: 204-645-2750 (24 hours)
Toll-free: 1-800-692-6270

Nelson House

Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation
Women's Shelter
Office Line: 204-484-2634

Norway House

Jean Folster Place Women's Shelter
24/7 Crisis Line: 1-877-885-5889

Portage Family Abuse Prevention Centre Inc

Phone: 204-239-5234
Emergency: 204-239-5233
Email: director@abuseprevention.ca

Selkirk

Nova House
Phone: 204-482-7882
Emergency: 204-482-1200
Texting Crisis Line: 204-805-6682
Email: info@novahouse.ca

Shamattawa Wechihin Waskkahikan Women's Community Healing Centre

24/7 Crisis Line: 1-204-565-2548

Steinbach

Agape House Women's Shelter;
Eastman Crisis Centre Inc
Phone: 204-326-6062
Emergency: 204-346-0028
Email: admin@agapehouse.ca

Swan River Swan Valley Crisis Centre

Phone: 204-734-9369
Emergency: 204-734-9368
Email: svcc119@mts.net

The Pas Aurora House

Crisis Line: 204-623-5497
(accepts collect calls)
Texting Line: 204.623.0536

Pukatawagan Mamawehetowin Crisis Centre

Crisis Line: 1-866-432-1041

Thompson Crisis Centre

Provincial Crisis Line: 1-877-977-0007

Winkler Genesis House: South Central Committee on Family Violence Inc

Phone: 204-325-9957

Emergency: 204-325-9800

Email: sccfv@genesis-house.ca

Winnipeg Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin Shelter Inc

Crisis Line: 1-800-362-3344

Phone: 204-987-2780

Willow Place

Crisis Line (TEXT ONLY): 204-792-5302

Phone: 204-615-0313

Emergency: 204-615-0311

Email: reception@willowplace.ca

Winnipeg Outreach Network: WON-guide-high-res-print-version.pdf

Canadian Museum of Human Rights: Resource Guide for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQI+ People, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQI+ People | CMHR

8. Infinity Women Secretariat

<https://infinitywomen.org/about-us/>

PROGRAMS, SERVICES, SUPPORTS, AND RESOURCES

IWS connects and empowers Red River Métis women, girls, and 2SLGBTQ+ individuals by providing culturally specific programs, services, supports and resources. This includes social, and economic programs, community engagement, advocacy, and leadership. Having grown substantially since its incorporation, IWS now engages with over 2000+ members. We foster a sense of belonging and sisterhood for all Métis women and our communities.

Standing together as sisters, we advocate and inspire change on issues that impact all Métis women, and our communities. Our matriarchs lead with wisdom and share their experiences, impacting the lives of our members. Throughout history, the women of our Nation have long-held meaningful, strategic roles in inspiring positive change for our families and communities."

APPENDIX B: LIST OF ENGAGEMENT SESSION PARTICIPANTS

Abraham, Agnes	Beaune, Kris	Candaele, Nicholas	D., Teena
Abraham, Myrna	Bell, Dawson	Cann, Stacy	Daniels, Isabel
Adedoyin, Bola	Bell, Dustin	Canzol, Ivy	Day, Delores
Alexander, Cheryl	Bell, Roland	Cardinal, Chelsea	Defer, Dana
Amos, Maria	Bercier, Patsy	Caribou, Sue	Dehn, Kelly
Anderson Jr., Vaughn	Bighetty, Tia	Carter, Patricia	De Hoop, Teresa
Anderson, Delila	Bileski, Pamela	Catcheway, Bernice	Demare, Mary
Anderson, Marina	Binda, Glen	Catcheway, Caroline	Dennin Gamblin,
Anderson, Melissa	Binol, Katy-Dene	Chartrand, Caroline	Elaura
Antoine, Murphy	Bird, Cheryl	Chartrand, Jennifer	Desjarlais, Carrington
Apetagon, Nicole	Bird, Nathalia	Chatelain, Erica	Desmarais, Barney
Arnold, Tiffany	Bird, Shaneen	Cheekie, Charles	Desmarais, Toni
Azure-Cook, Melanie	Bird, Sheila	Chuy, Terri	Dewar, Allison
Baker, Rebecca	Bird-McDonald,	Clark, Bonnie	Dewar, Denise
Baker, Bruce	Cleveland	Clements, Cedar	Dokken, Cassandra
Baker, Rosalie	Bone, Carley	Cochrane, Carol	Doolittle, Jody
Ballantyne, Monica	Bone, R.	Cochrane, Katina	Dorreji, Leslie
Ballantyne, Scott	Boulette, Drake	Cochrane, Kayla	Dowan, Avin
Ballantyne-Lewis, Val	Boyd, Janine	Cochrane, Sarah	Ducharme, Chasity
Ballard, Margaret	Brightnose, Horizon	Cochrane, Vera	Ducharme, Myrna
Banman, Sandy	Bruneau, Carol	Constant, Tammy	Ducharme, Roxy
Baptiste, Nate	Budd, Francis	Contois, Joni	Dumas, Beverly
Berens, Chris	Buettner, Hanne	Cook, Angel	Dumas, Dawn
Bayer, Caroline	Bulmer, Allison	Cook, Christie	Dyck, Melissa
Bayer, Loretta	Burke, Wendy	Cook, Shelly	Dysart, Annette
Bear, Alex	Bushie, Elizabeth	Corins, Barbara	Dysart, Valerie
Beardy, Sadena	Bushie, Kelly	Cormier, Elaine	Easter, Chelsea
Beardy, Tamara	Bushie, Mason	Cormier, Elsie	Easter, Crystal
Beardy-Linklater,	Bushie, Michelle	Courchene, Beverley	Easter, Eileen
Brielle	Bushie, Shannon	Courchene, Debra	Easter, Liam
Beaulieu, Asia	Bushie, Tiffany	Courchene, Hayden	Eastman, Jillian
Beaulieu, Delina	C., Monica	Courchene, Heather	Eastman, Lavinia
Beaulieu, Delores	Calder, Jasmine	Courchene, Linda	Eastman, Melissa
Beaulieu, N. Laura	Cameron, Candace	Cua, Crystal	Elk, Mahy
Beaulieu, Susan	Campbell, Vanessa	Cyrenne, Rob	Elk, Glenys
Beaulieu, Tiffany	Campher, Dakota	D., Natalie	Emms, Shantelle

Everett, Lisa	Hart, Ernest	Kalluak, Liana	Ly, Vince
Favel, Geraldine	Hart, Trudy	Kaur, Gagandeep	MacPherson, Grey
Favel, Ranah	Hart, Wanda	Kayseas, Noah	Maillet, Nelson
Favel, Tanya	Hart/Murdock, Marilyn	Keeper, Carmelita	Majowski, Cathy
Fernandez, Leo	Hartle, Ashley	Kehler, Kate	Majowski, Kathy
Fiddler, Joann	Hathout, Linda	Kennedy, Amya	Mandamin, Dakota
Fidler, Jason	Hawkins, Lori	Kennedy, Natasha	Marsden, Pam
Flett, Denise	Head, Donna	King, Marla	Martel, Nicole
Fleury, Angie	Head-Nickel, April	Kingilik, Dimarice	Maruscak, Mary
Folster, Luke	Heather, Grant	Kirkness, Colleen	Massan, Leona
Fontaine, Teresa J.	Henadeerage Dona,	Kirkness, Kassi	Massan, Tiffany
Foster, Tim	Thamali	Klassen, Angela	Mayer, Marilyn
Fournier, Ally	Henderson, Nissa	Knott, Kiera	McCallum, Dana
Gallagher, Andrea	Hickes-Makayak, Carl	Koop, Kira	McDermott, Loretta
Gamblin, Leah	Hildebrand, Cecily	Kowel, Monike	McIntyre, Madison
Gamblin, Reannon	Hill, Lydia	L. J. Hart, Robert	McIvor, Crystal
Gamblin, Vanessa	Hotain, Dolly	LaJambe, Holly	McIvor, Eileen
Garson, Gloria	Houle, Janet	Lane, Trevor	McIvor, Mary K.
Garson, Crystal	Houle, Ricki	Laplante, Amber	McIvor, Sandra K.
Genaille, Chrissy	Houle, Sheila	Lathlin, Theresa	McIvor, Sheryl
Gibbs, Fran	Houle, Tricia	Lathlin, Victoria	McIvor-Richard,
Gilmour, Lisa	Houle-Desmarais,	Lawal, Effie	Cheryl
Goosehead, Selena	Louanne	Lay, Kerri	McKay, Andrea
Gray, Carmel	Houston, Bradley	Le, Longe	McKay, Ida
Green, Meghan	Huard, Anna	Leask, Tammy	McKay, Jodi
Greenwood, Jocelyn	Irwin, Tamara	Leclair, Duncan	McKay, Kelvin
Greyeyes, Aria	Issaluk, Anita	Ledoux, Ernestine	McKay, Marion
Guimond, Barb	Ivall-Besignano,	Ledoux, Lee	McNeely, Trevor
Guimond, Bonnie	Michaela	Lengyel, Jenilee	McLeod, Albert
Guimond, Candace	James, Priscilla	Lennon, Mike	McLeod, Jenelle
Guimond, Karen	Jebb, Edwin	Levasseur, Justina	McLeod, Roslyn
Hall, Colleen	Johnston, Judith	Link, Amanda	Meikle, Jonathan
Ham, James	Johnston, Robyn	Linklater, Bailey	Merasty, Connie
Hapa, Nancy	Johnstone, Hayden	Linklater, Mary	Merrick, Kailee
Hapa, Samuel	Jolly, Tobi	Lobster, Rita	Michelle, Darcy
Happychuk, Brock	Jones, Carla	Loewen, Paul	Michelle, Ivonne
Harper, Stephanie	Kalak, Mayran	Lowther, Janet	Mondaca, Victor
Hart, Andee	Kalansky, Chris	Lukeanchuk, Tricia	Monias, Pat

Monette, Cynthia	Pawlyk, Justine	Sanderson, Matthias	Stonesand, Caskey
Moneyas, Betty	Paypompee, Jaycee	Sanderson, Michelle	Stonesand, Rhonda
Moneyas, Jill	Peterkin, Corinne	Sanderson, Roman	Swampy, Bull
Monkman, L.	Peters, Everett	Sanderson, Shikana	Swampy, Dorothy
Monkman, Lindsay	Peters, John	Sawka, Mae	Swan, Caramello
Moose, Dave	Phillips, Kateri	Sayese, Stacey	Swanson, Diana
Moose, Freda	Pierre-Roscelli, Jewel	Schmidt, Christien	Tacan, Leah
Moose, Hubert	Pochinko, Hope	Scott, Haven	Tacan, Margaret
Moose, Janet	Presley, Cowley	Scott, Wanda	Taylor, Kamara
Moose, Marcia	Prim, Phyllis	Seguin, Jennifer	Taylor, Romyne
Moose, Martha	Pruden, Gayle	Seny, Julett	Thauberger, Troy
Moose, Susanna	R., Debra	Simard, Chastity	Thomas, Flora
Moose, Wanda	Ramkisson, Darryl	Sinclair, Teena	Thomas, Rita
Moquano, Ivory	Raven, Nichole	Skworchinski, Aron	Thomas, Susanna
Morrisseau, Lyle	Raven, Williamson	Smalter, Mark	Thompson, Billie-Jo
Mousse, Dona	Redhead, Denise	Smith, Amber	Tompsen, Kristen
Mousseau, Candace	Richard, Elizabeth	Smith, Melissa	Trudeau, Samantha
Mousseau, Joanne	Riel, Kevin	Smith, Sage	Tyo, Angel
Mousseau, Wendy	Roberts, Priscilla	Smoke, Gina	Ulrich, Carl
Muminawatun, Lillian	Robinson, Margaret	Smoke, Tia	Valgardson, Anj
Munro, Camille	Robinson, Melissa	Soulier, Annette	Wall, James
Murdock, Constance	Rocchio, Jennifer	Soulier, Daniel	Werstach, Nicole
Murdock, Cynthia	Roman, Doreen	Soulier, Sydney	Werstick, Peggy
Murdock, Fay	Romaniuk, Colette	Spence, Clara	West, Bradley
Murdock, Marie	Roulette, Eileen	Spence, Clayton	Whitford, Lorraine
Murdock, Wilma	Roulette, Leah	Spence, Fran	Whitford, Lorna
Muswagon, Lucy	Roulette, Melissa	Spence, Gloria	Wiggett, Jeff
Myers, Marylynn	Roulette, Neenerz	Spence, James	Williams, Tyler
Myran, C.	Roulette, Shirley	Spence, Juliet	Williamson, Nicole
Nabess, Marjorie	Roulette, Vanessa	Spence, Laura	Willman, Bella
Nenka, Tyler	Roulette-Starr, Jadlyn	Spence, Lena	Wood, Brodi
Neufeld, Camryn	Roussin, Irience	Spence, Matthew	Wood, Carol
Noonen, Joyce	Salversda, Candace	Spence, Melva	Wood, Cassandra
Osborne, Kimberly	Sammurtok, Jenelle	Spence, Rebecca	Young, Desiree-Renee
Packo, Lorraine	Sammurtok, Suzanne	Spence, Roland	
Paley, Jessica	Sammurtok, Tutaa	Spence, Tina	
Patricle, Tasha	Sanderson, Antonius	Starr, Sylvia	

APPENDIX C: SAMPLE ENGAGEMENT SESSION AGENDA

Red Dress Alert Pilot Project (Community Name) Engagement Session

(date) (time)

AGENDA

- Elder Prayer
- Introductions
- Red Dress Alert Presentation and Background
- Breakout Session and Discussion Questions
- Break - draws
- Breakout Session and Discussion Questions
- Report Back from Breakouts
- Checking-in
- Evaluation - draws
- Closing Remarks and Next Steps
- Elder Prayer

APPENDIX D: ENGAGEMENT SESSION QUESTIONS

For Family and Community:

1. What happens now when someone is missing? (For example, what help do family and community members receive making the report? How do police handle the report? What agencies or organizations get involved?)
2. What would you like to see happen when someone goes missing?
3. What is the best way to get the word out about a missing person? (This is about reaching people who may have useful information to aid in the search.)
4. Should a Red Dress Alert be issued any time a family member or friend has concerns? Or, should there be specific conditions before an alert is issued? (Are there circumstances where an Alert shouldn't be issued?)
5. What is the best way to keep families and community members informed? (For example, regular in-person meetings, having a designated contact person who is available to the family, etc.)
6. What supports do families and communities need? (This may include help navigating the missing persons system, mental health support, cultural supports, resources for travel, and more.)
7. Who should be in charge of the Red Dress Alert? (What organization or group should run the system and make decision when an Alert is issued?)
8. What are some challenges for families (and service providers) when a loved one goes missing in a different community? How can these challenges be overcome? (for example, a person goes missing in one community but the person making the report or their family members live somewhere else)
9. Part of a Red Dress Alert is passing a provincial law setting out requirements for when an Alert is issued and how police and government agencies must respond. What should be in the Red Dress Alert Law?

For Service Providers:

1. What role should your organization play when someone goes missing?
2. How could Red Dress Alert be helpful in engaging your organization?
3. What is the best way to get the word out about a missing person?
4. Should a Red Dress Alert be issued any time a family member or friend has concerns? Or, should there be specific conditions before an alert is issued? (Are there circumstances where an Alert shouldn't be issued?)
5. What kind of information should be recorded about a missing person that would be helpful? (In addition to the standard details like what they look like or where they were last seen.) Do you have any advice about such information should be handled? (For example, is there information that would be shared for specific purposes but not shared publicly? How is the information stored or protected?)
6. What protocols or requirements should be in place for keeping family members, friends and the community informed?
7. What other supports should be provided to families, friends and the community? Who should provide these supports?
8. How can communications be improved among families, government, police and other services across different communities and regions? (for example, if a person goes missing in one community but the person making the report or their family members live somewhere else)
9. How could a Red Dress Alert make use of other information and communication. Systems such as HIFIS?
10. What requirements should be written into a Red Dress Alert Law (including standards for police and government agencies already discussed in this session.)
11. Who should be in charge of the Red Dress Alert? (What organization or group should run the system and make decision when an Alert is issued?)

APPENDIX E: BACKGROUND

On 2 May 2023, the federal House of Commons unanimously consented to the motion proposed by Member of Parliament Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre) calling on the government to:

(a) declare the continued loss of Indigenous women, girls and two spirit people a Canada-wide emergency; and

(b) provide immediate and substantial investment, including in a red dress alert system, to help alert the public when an Indigenous woman, girl or two spirit person goes missing.

As a result of that motion, the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women (Committee) launched a study off the most effective and efficient manner to operate, administer, and control a Red Dress Alert system in Canada. The Committee met with expert witness, families and survivors of MMIWG and 2SLGBTQQIA+ peoples, organizations, police officers, various federal departments, and received written submissions. Giganawenimaanaanig submitted a written submission to the Committee.

In parallel with this study, Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC) organized sixteen pre-engagement sessions between December 2023 and January 2024 to gather preliminary feedback on the potential implementation of a Red Dress Alert. This was led by prominent advocates for the Indigenous women and girls including Hilda Anderson-Pyrz, Chair of the National Family and Survivor's Circle Inc.; Sandra DeLaronde, Chair of Giganawenimaanaanig (MMIWG Implementation Committee); and MPs Leah Gazan and Pam Damoff. The pre-engagement sessions were held across the Canada with

national Indigenous organizations, regional and urban organizations, technical experts, family members and survivors and grassroots service providers.

On May 3, 2024 the Government of Canada and the Province of Manitoba announced that they were partnering with and entrusting Giganawenimaanaanig to develop an Indigenous-led Red Dress Alert System Pilot in Manitoba to alert the public when an Indigenous woman, girl or 2SLGBTQQIA+ person goes missing so that action will be taken immediately and to call on the public to assist in locating them. It was agreed that the system must be rooted in cultural competency community empowerment and trauma-informed healing for justice. To support the project, the federal government invested \$1.3 million for the project.

In September 2024, the House of Commons Standing Committee presented its report - IMPLEMENTING A RED DRESS ALERT IN CANADA - with 17 recommendations. The report stated that these recommendations were intended to "ensure that the implementation of a Red Dress Alert is effective, Indigenous-led, and meets the needs of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, their families and their communities across Canada."

The Red Dress Alert Project Team was established in December 2024 to begin planning and identifying the methodology to conduct the project in a way that is Indigenous-led, respectful, rooted in cultural competency, community empowerment and trauma-informed healing for justice. The Red Dress Alert Project Team provided regular updates on the status of the project to both federal and provincial partners.

On December 13, Giganawenimaanaanig held the inaugural gathering of Red Dress Alert Bundle Carriers made up of First Nations and Métis families and survivors from various regions of Manitoba. This inaugural meeting began the work with a water and pipe ceremony conducted by Grandmother Denima Morrisseau. This was to ensure the ancestors would help provide spiritual guidance, wisdom and strength to the Bundle Carriers and the Red Dress Alert Bundle Carriers for the emotional and spiritual work ahead. The Bundle Carriers provided feedback into the engagement plan and questions that were to be asked that would inform the development of a Red Dress Alert System in Manitoba.

On January 29 and 30, 2025 the third National Indigenous-Federal-Provincial-Territorial Meeting on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQI+ people was held. Giganawenimaanaanig provided a status update of the Red Dress Alert Project being well received with delegates emphasizing the urgency and importance of supporting the implementation of a Red Dress Alerting System. Ministers and Indigenous delegates expressed support for this project and stated that they looked forward to the final outcome.

APPENDIX F: DEFINITIONS

Essential Partners: Governments, organizations, private and public industry and others who may collectively play an active role to partner, collaborate or support building the Red Dress Alert System in Manitoba.

Gender-Based Violence (GBV): The federal Women Gender Equality defines gender-based violence (GBV) as “violence committed against someone based on their gender, gender expression, gender identity, or perceived gender. GBV can take many forms, including physical, sexual, societal, psychological, emotional, economic and technology-facilitated violence.” (<https://www.canada.ca/en/women-gender-equality/gender-based-violence/facts-stats.html>)

Gender Diverse Individuals: Gender diversity (and equality) were embedded in the ways of life for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis cultures. This is largely because most communities understood gender identity as more complex than the “male” and “female” binary. Historically, Two-Spirit people were seen, loved, and respected as unique individuals in most Indigenous communities. They were gifted with keen insight and the ability to see things through both feminine and masculine eyes (double vision). Native Women’s Association of Canada, Restoring the Circle

(https://restoringthecirclenwac.ca/?fbclid=IwAR0x748u1Bpv1FDGXvRJMSNsKS-8EgilAT-b57qfJs2Wy_1PZqSxqXMJxzMg#/lessons/Fby-vDF7H6ZGP5cVeTosxYsuwHC1g80RR)

Indigenous Peoples: A term referring to First Nations, Inuit and the Métis Nation. It refers to the original inhabitants of a territory. It is most appropriate to refer to Indigenous Peoples by the proper names of their communities or Nations. (<https://www.canada.ca/en/library-archives/col-lection/research-help/indigenous-history/indigenous-terminology.html#indigenous>)

Newcomers: Newcomers include all people who have recently come to Canada from other countries - whether as refugees, immigrants or migrant workers, for example.

2SLGBTQIA+: Is an acronym that captures the term used by Indigenous Peoples, Two-Spirit, for a person whose gender identity, and/or sexual orientation includes both male and female spirits, along with other gender diverse individuals (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, Intersex and Asexual).



NOTES:



Lori Ann Mancheese



Brandy Wesauate



