



NATIONAL
INDIGENOUS
WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTER

A Step-By-Step Guide To

REQUESTING A **PROCLAMATION** IN YOUR STATE



MAY 5

National Day of Awareness for Missing and
Murdered Indigenous Women and Relatives



WHAT IS A PROCLAMATION?

A proclamation is a public announcement made by an elected official, such as a mayor or governor, that informs the public or raises awareness for a cause or event.



Why May 5th?

In 2017, the Montana Congressional Delegation worked to secure the passage of a Senate resolution declaring May 5 as the National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Relatives.

This resolution was a direct response to the demands for justice following the 2013 murder of Hanna Harris on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation. Due to an inadequate law enforcement response, Hanna's family and friends were forced to conduct their own search. Their relentless pursuit of justice sparked community-led marches and advocacy efforts, not only for Hanna but for the countless cases that remain unresolved.

Since 2017, the national movement to end violence against Indigenous women has continued to elevate Hanna's birthday, May 5, as a day of remembrance, action, and advocacy.



WHY THIS MATTERS

To raise awareness of the MMIWR crisis and honor the victims, survivors, families, and communities affected, you can request that your local, Tribal, or state government recognize May 5 as the National Day of Awareness for MMIWR by using this toolkit.

THE PROCESS



Requesting a proclamation takes coordination, but it can be broken into clear steps.

1

UNDERSTAND THE PURPOSE

A proclamation raises awareness for MMIWR in your community. It is designed to encourage elected officials to collaborate with Tribal communities and establish an annual National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Relatives on May 5.

2

RESEARCH THE PROCESS

Every government operates differently. Use our interactive map to find out if your state has issued an MMIWR proclamation and to find links to forms for submitting proclamations. Pay attention to deadlines (often 4-6 weeks), format requirements, who must sponsor the proclamation, and public comment procedures.

3

IDENTIFY KEY SUPPORTERS

Contact your lawmakers, as well as Tribal Nations, Native advocates, Native-led organizations, and survivors and family members of MMIWR in your state to gain support and collaborate on the document, ensuring it uses appropriate and respectful language, acknowledges Tribes and Native communities, and honors Tribal sovereignty.

4

GATHER INFORMATION

Gather local, state, and national MMIWR statistics and quotes or statements from Native community organizations and Tribal Nations, as well as background on the historical and contemporary context of violence against Native people and communities.

IMPORTANT! Include local cases only with the permission and guidance of families and survivors of MMIWR. While working with families and survivors, center their voices and clearly communicate timelines, expectations, and next steps.

THE PROCESS



5

DRAFT THE PROCLAMATION

Proclamation elements:

- Title (e.g., MMIWR Day of Awareness Proclamation)
- “Whereas” statements explaining the issue.
- Include local relevance.
- Include commitment to honoring victims and families.
- Declaration (e.g., “I, ____, proclaim May 5 as the National Day of Awareness for MMIWR”).

6

SUBMIT THE DRAFT

Provide the final draft in the requested format according to your city, state, or Tribal Nation. Follow all deadlines.

7

ATTEND RELEVANT MEETINGS

Organize speakers, including Tribal leaders, advocates, survivors, families, and community members, and attend relevant meetings or events in support of the proclamation. Wear red in honor of MMIWR and prepare signage and testimonies if permitted. If formally speaking at meetings, thank leadership, as well as supporters and collaborators.

8

CELEBRATE AND SHARE THE OUTCOME

After approval, take photos with lawmakers and community members and share on social media with permission. Provide copies of the proclamation to stakeholders. If it doesn’t pass, continue building relationships and organizing.

9

IMPLEMENT FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS

Request updates from government officials involved, hold annual community check-ins, collaborate on awareness events, and collaborate with your local, state, and Tribal governments to provide resources to survivors and families impacted by the MMIWR crisis.

SAMPLE PROCLAMATION



Proclamation of the (city/state/Tribal Nation) for the designation of May 5, 2026, as the National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Relatives.

Whereas, according to a 2016 study commissioned by the Department of Justice's National Institute of Justice, more than four in five (84.3 percent) of American Indian and Alaska Native women experienced violence in their lifetime, with 56.1 percent a result of sexual violence and 55 percent from intimate partner violence;

Whereas, according to 2017 data, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found homicide was the sixth-leading cause of death for American Indian and Alaska Native women and girls under 44 years old, with murder rates more than 10 times the national average;

Whereas, (insert local/state statistics);

Whereas, (address local case or how your community has been impacted by MMIWR or violence against Indigenous people);

Whereas, the current local, state, and Federal funding available in Indian country is inadequate to address the basic, emergency, and long-term service needs of victims and negatively impacts Tribal governments' ability to distribute life-saving resources;

Whereas, May 5, 2017, was designated the National Day of Awareness for Honoring Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, in honor of the birth date of Hanna Harris, a member of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe, who was murdered after being reported missing by her family in Lame Deer, Montana, and (insert if your state has acknowledged any MMIWR days, weeks, or months);

Whereas, the (insert city/state/Tribal Nation) affirms the inherent rights of American Indians and Alaska Natives and understands that addressing the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women and relatives is critically important when upholding human rights and ensuring justice for victims and their families;

Now, therefore, I, (name), (governor/mayor/chairman) of the (city/state/Tribal Nation), do hereby proclaim May 5, 2026, as a "National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Relatives" in (city/state/Tribal Nation), and commend its observance to all citizens.



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**2026 NATIONAL WEEK
OF ACTION FOR MMIWR**

May 4-8, 2026

