



U.S. Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General

REPORT FRAUD, WASTE & ABUSE

Audit of the United States Attorneys' Offices' Compliance with Savanna's Act of 2020 and Their Efforts in Response to Missing or Murdered Indigenous Persons

Report Number: 26-076 | **Date Posted:** July 29, 2026 | **Division:** Audit

Introduction and Background

As of December 2025, there were 574 federally recognized tribes in the United States as shown in Map 1 below. The National Institute of Justice stated that, within these communities, 83 percent of American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) adults have experienced some form of violence in their lifetime. According to 2023 statistics evaluated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, homicide is the fourth leading cause of death among AI/AN males under the age of 44 and the sixth leading cause of death among AI/AN females under the age of 44. Further, as of June 2023, AI/AN individuals accounted for over 3.5 percent of reported missing persons cases in the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs) despite making up only 1.1 percent of the U.S. population according to 2020 census data. The terminology used to encompass these issues is missing or murdered Indigenous persons (MMIP).¹ The MMIP issue intersects with many other forms of violence such as child abuse and neglect, sexual violence, domestic abuse, and human trafficking, which can lead individuals to leave home or be identified as missing. These concerns related to missing or murdered Indigenous persons prompted government action, as outlined in the timeline below, including legislation such as Savanna's Act and various executive orders, emphasizing the need for a coordinated government response.

Legislation and Department Action Related to the MMIP Initiative

In recent years, the Federal Government and the Department of Justice have issued various legislation, guidance, and reporting related to the Missing or Murdered Indigenous Persons Initiative.

July 2010

Tribal Law and Order Act

Aimed to reduce crime in tribal communities, particularly violence against American Indian and Alaska Native women, by enhancing Tribes' authority to prosecute criminals, increasing law enforcement personnel, and improving access to criminal information sharing databases. It also introduced new guidelines for handling sexual assault and domestic violence crimes, improved evidence collection, supported comprehensive victim services, and promoted prevention programs for at-risk youth. [Read the Act.](#)

November 2019

Executive Order 13898

Established the Task Force on Missing and Murdered American Indians and Alaska Natives. Operation Lady Justice was created to conduct tribal consultations, develop best practices and resources for Tribal communities and law enforcement, form multi-disciplinary teams to review cold cases, and create best practice guidance. [Read the Executive Order.](#)

October 2020

Not Invisible Act

Established the Not Invisible Act Commission, an advisory committee of law enforcement, Tribal leaders, federal partners, service providers, family members of missing or murdered individuals, and survivors. The Commission will recommend actions to the DOJ and DOI to combat violent crimes against American Indians and Alaska Natives. [Read the Act.](#)

Savanna's Act

Enacted to clarify law enforcement responsibilities, enhance coordination and communication among law enforcement agencies, empower Tribal government with resources and information to respond to MMIP cases, and to improve data collection and sharing for MMIP cases. [Read the Act.](#) We reviewed EOUSA's compliance with Section 5 of Savanna's Act which required USAOs to develop regionally appropriate guidelines and [discuss our findings in this audit.](#)

November 2020

Activities and Accomplishments of the First Year of Operation Lady Justice

The Task Force held listening sessions with Tribal leaders, public safety officials, community advocates, and citizens to address public safety challenges, especially the disappearance and fatal violence against Native people. It convened 10 working groups to develop protocols, solve cold cases, expand outreach, and opened six offices nationwide to address cold cases involving missing or murdered American Indians and Alaska Natives. [Read the report.](#)

November 2021

Executive Order 14053

Aimed to improve public safety and criminal justice for Native Americans and address the MMIP crisis by developing a comprehensive federal law enforcement strategy, supporting Tribal law enforcement, improving data collection and sharing, and strengthening victim services. This Executive Order led to the creation of the MMIP Regional Outreach Program which we [discuss in this audit.](#) [Read the Executive Order.](#)

Memorandum from the Deputy Attorney General to Establish a Steering Committee to Address MMIP

To be consistent with EO 14053, DOJ launched a Steering Committee to coordinate the Department's efforts on MMIP. The Committee aimed to review existing guidance, policies, and practices and recommend changes to better facilitate this work. This memo led to the establishment of the MMIP Regional Outreach Program which we [discuss in this audit.](#) [Read the memorandum.](#)

April 2022

Final Report to the President: Activities and Accomplishments of Operation Lady Justice

The task force conducted consultations with Tribal governments, developed model protocols for new and unsolved missing or murdered persons cases, established multi-disciplinary teams to review cold cases, and developed best practices to provide clarity of roles, authorities, and jurisdiction. [Read the report.](#)

July 2022

DOJ and DOI Federal Law Enforcement Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Violence Against AI/AN

The strategy aimed to enhance coordination among Federal law enforcement agencies in Indian country, support for Tribal, State, and local law enforcement and victims, and improve data collection and analysis to understand causes of MMIP issues. [See the strategy.](#)

Memorandum from the Deputy Attorney General to Promote Public Safety in Indian Country

Prioritized addressing the high rates of violence against AI/AN and high number of missing Indigenous persons reported. The memo directs each U.S. Attorney with Indian country jurisdiction and law enforcement partners to update or develop new public safety plans in Indian country. [Read the memorandum.](#)

September 2023

FBI Operation Not Forgotten

The first iteration of FBI's Operation Not Forgotten deployed 40 special agents, intelligence analysts, staff operations specialists, and victim specialists to 10 FBI field offices to examine and solve cases and focus resources on seeking justice for women and children who have been victims of crime in Indian country.

November 2023

Not One More Report: Findings and Recommendations of the Not Invisible Act Commission

The report included recommendations for legislative and administrative changes, tracking and reporting MMIP and human trafficking cases, addressing law enforcement hiring and retention, coordinating resources to combat MMIP and human trafficking, and increasing information sharing on violent crimes in Indian country. [Read the report.](#)

March 2024

DOJ and DOI Response to the Not One More Report

Addressed the Commission's concerns about law enforcement resources, recruitment and retention of law enforcement, data collection and reporting, cross-jurisdictional coordination, family and survivor resources, and improvements in public safety. [See the response.](#)

October 2024

FBI Operation Not Forgotten

The second iteration of FBI Operation Not Forgotten surged more than 50 personnel to assist with unresolved investigations in Indian country. More than 300 cases received increased investigative, intelligence, and victim assistance.

November 2025

FBI Operation Not Forgotten

The third deployment of FBI Operation Not Forgotten surged FBI assets across the country to address unresolved violent crimes in Indian country, including MMIP cases. Over 3 years, the operation has provided investigative support to over 760 cases, and resulted in 249 arrests, 235 subjects charged, 109 subjects convicted, and services provided to nearly 2,000 victims and their family members. The operation was supported by the MMIP Regional Outreach Program which, we evaluated and [discuss in this audit.](#)

Savanna's Act is a bipartisan law signed in October 2020 to improve the federal response to missing or murdered Indigenous persons by increasing coordination among federal, state, Tribal, and local law enforcement agencies. The purposes of the Act are:

To clarify the responsibilities of law enforcement agencies responding to MMIP cases.

To increase coordination and communication among law enforcement agencies.

To empower Tribal governments with the resources and information necessary to respond to MMIP cases.

To increase the collection of data related to MMIP and the sharing of information among officials responding to MMIP cases.

DOJ plays a central role in the federal response to MMIP cases and, through its components, has articulated its continuing commitment to addressing MMIP issues. For example, in a November 2025 press release, FBI stated that Operation Not Forgotten—an FBI-led initiative active from 2023 to 2026 that deploys resources to resolve violent crimes, including MMIP cases—was supported by the Department’s MMIP Regional Outreach Program (ROP). Established in 2023, the MMIP ROP is a key initiative designed to help prevent and respond to cases of missing or murdered Indigenous persons by placing attorneys and coordinators in U.S. Attorney’s Offices across the U.S. This audit also assessed the effectiveness of the MMIP ROP.

Map 1: Federally Recognized Tribes

Legend

American Indian Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian Areas

Map showing the distribution of American Indian Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian populations across the United States and surrounding regions. The map includes labels for the United States, Canada, Mexico, and the North Pacific Ocean. A legend in the top left corner indicates the distribution of these populations.

Finding 1: EOUSA Should Ensure Savanna's Act Guideline Compliance

Finding 2: EOUSA Should Work to Address Staffing Vacancies to Improve Program Continuity of the MMIP Regional Outreach Program

Finding 3: EOUSA Should Develop an MMIP Definition and Performance Metrics to Demonstrate Program Effectiveness

Conclusion and Recommendations

OIG Audit Approach

Our objective was to evaluate USAO efforts to address missing or murdered Indigenous persons, including USAO compliance with certain requirements in Savanna's Act. Specifically, we assessed:

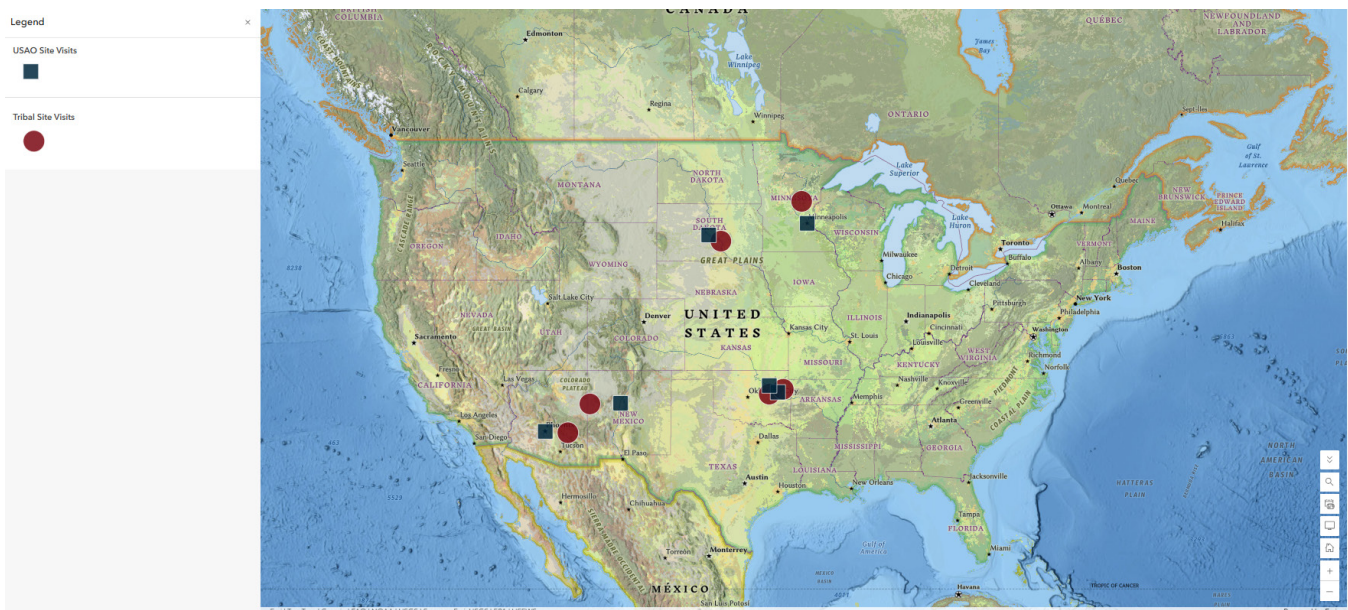
1. USAO compliance with Section 5 of Savanna's Act, which mandates the development of regionally appropriate guidelines for responding to MMIP cases; and
2. the effectiveness of EOUSA's MMIP ROP, which aims to aid in the prevention and response to missing or murdered Indigenous persons through the resolution of cases and communication, coordination, and collaboration with relevant partners.

As shown in Map 2, we visited six U.S. Attorneys' Offices and interviewed personnel, including Tribal liaisons, U.S. Attorneys, Assistant U.S. Attorneys (AUSA), Tribal Special Assistant U.S. Attorneys (Tribal SAUSA), Victim Witness Specialists, and MMIP ROP personnel. We also visited six tribes to engage with Tribal leadership, prosecutors, law enforcement, and victim advocates to gain insights into their experiences and challenges. Additionally, we interviewed EOUSA staff to discuss the MMIP ROP and broader Native American issues. Our review included documentation related to Section 5 of Savanna's Act, regionally appropriate guidelines, and MMIP ROP activities. Appendix 1 contains further details on our audit objectives, scope, and methodology.

Site Visits

Map 2: USAO & Tribal Site Visits

This map is current as of January 2026.



Finding 1: EOUSA Should Ensure Savanna's Act Guideline Compliance

Section 5(a) of Savanna's Act directed U.S. Attorneys to develop "regionally appropriate guidelines" for responding to cases of missing or murdered Indigenous persons, including six specific subsections:

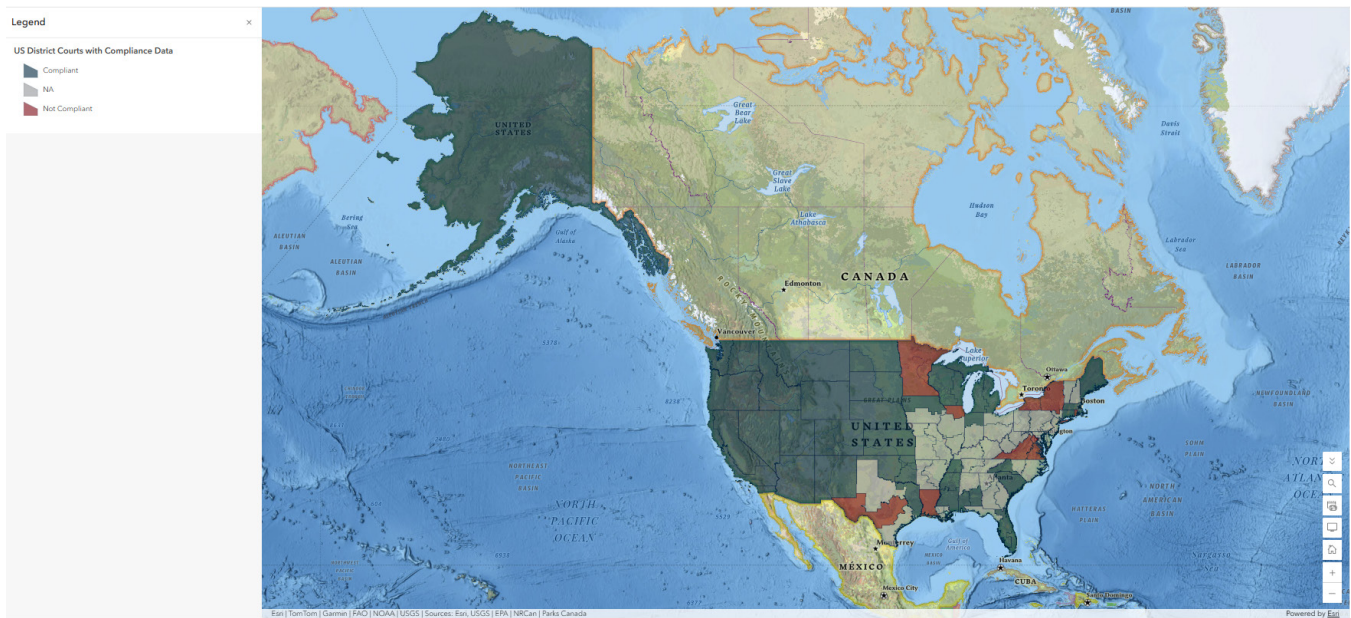
Savanna's Act Subsection	Requirement
Section 5(a)(1)	Guidelines on inter-jurisdictional cooperation among law enforcement agencies at the Tribal, federal, state, and local levels, including inter-jurisdictional enforcement of protection orders and detailing specific responsibilities of each law enforcement agency.
Section 5(a)(2)	Best practices in conducting searches for missing persons on and off Indian land.
Section 5(a)(3)	Standards on the collection, reporting, and analysis of data and information of missing persons and unidentified human remains, and information on culturally appropriate identification and handling of human remains identified as Indian, including guidance stating that all appropriate information related to missing or murdered Indians be entered in a timely manner into applicable databases.
Section 5(a)(4)	Guidance on which law enforcement agency is responsible for inputting information into appropriate databases under paragraph (3) if the Tribal law enforcement agency does not have access to those appropriate databases.
Section 5(a)(5)	Guidelines on improving law enforcement agency response rates and follow-up responses to cases of missing or murdered Indians.
Section 5(a)(6)	Guidelines on ensuring access to culturally appropriate victim services for victims and their families.

Source: Savanna's Act (Public Law 116-165)

In January 2022, EOUSA issued a memorandum to USAOs with guidance and a template to assist USAOs in fulfilling these requirements. The guidance emphasized that USAOs in districts with Indian country must tailor their guidelines to reflect specific circumstances of their district, and in response to input from tribes and other partners. EOUSA's guidance required USAOs in districts with Indian country to address the unique circumstances of a state or district which, based on our analysis of the guidelines, includes examples such as describing state-specific alert systems and identifying key Tribal agencies involved in certain aspects of MMIP investigations.

Map 3: Savanna's Act Compliance

This map is current as of January 2026.



EOUSA reviewed guidelines submitted by 49 USAOs from districts with Indian country and worked with them to improve compliance with Savanna's Act.² However, as described by an EOUSA staff member, EOUSA's authority over USAOs is not absolute. Therefore, EOUSA provided USAO guidance and support for the development and improvement of the guidelines. As shown in Map 3 above, we reviewed the 49 submitted guidelines to determine whether they included the six elements required by Savanna's Act sections 5(a)(1) through 5(a)(6) and were tailored to the specific circumstances of the district as required by EOUSA guidance. Our review of the 49 guidelines found that 39 complied with Savanna's Act Section 5.³ Table 1 below reflects the guidelines from the districts that did not fully comply with the requirements of the Savanna's Act. As shown in Table 1, we found that 7 of the 10 districts' guidelines complied with fewer than all 6 required subsections of Savanna's Act Section 5, and 8 of the 10 districts' guidelines were not tailored to the specific circumstances of the district.

Table 1: District Guidelines Compliance with Savanna's Act

District	5(a)1 Inter-Jurisdictional Cooperation	5(a)2 Missing Persons Searches	5(a)3 Data Collection	5(a)4 Data Input Responsibility	5(a)5 Response Rates	5(a)6 Culturally Appropriate Victim Services	Met all Six Parts of 5(a)	Tailored
Northern Illinois	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
Minnesota	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓
Western Louisiana	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Eastern New York	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
Northern New York	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Western New York	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
Rhode Island	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓
Western Texas	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
Eastern Virginia	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Western Virginia	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗

Source: OIG Analysis

In addition to reviewing the regionally appropriate guidelines to assess whether they were tailored to the region's circumstances, we gathered feedback from Tribal and USAO stakeholders to assess the effectiveness of the guidelines in improving communication and collaboration among agencies. Feedback from tribes was mixed. Some were unaware of the guidelines or did not find them effective, while others stated that the guidelines provided a foundation for improving communication and collaboration, which was beginning to take shape. Similarly, USAO personnel expressed differing views. Many believed the guidelines merely formalized existing practices, while others noted that they had enhanced communication and cooperation among agencies.

These mixed perspectives highlight gaps in the implementation and effectiveness of the guidelines required under Section 5 of Savanna's Act. However, during our discussions with USAOs and tribes, we identified some additional practices that resulted in improved coordination and communication between USAOs and tribes: (1) regular status updates on pending cases from the USAO; and (2) AUSA and victim witness specialist assigned to each tribe in the district to serve as a primary point of contact.

To address the implementation and effectiveness gaps, we recommend EOUSA coordinate with the 10 districts whose guidelines we determined were not compliant with the requirements of Savanna's Act Section 5 to ensure they include the 6 required subsections in accordance with Savanna's Act Section 5(a) and are tailored to the specific circumstances of the district.

Additionally, we evaluated EOUSA's compliance with certain aspects of Savanna's Act sections 5(b) through 5(f) and determined EOUSA met those requirements or they are not applicable at this time.

- Section 5(e) required EOUSA to provide training and technical assistance to tribes and law enforcement related to: (1) implementing the regionally appropriate guidelines; and (2) using the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System. EOUSA's National Indian Country Training Initiative (NICTI) fulfilled this requirement by offering residential training, webinars, and written materials. NICTI disseminated information through USAOs, FBI, the U.S. Marshals Service (USMS), and the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), requesting these agencies share announcements with their constituents.
- Sections 5(c)(3) and 5(d) required EOUSA to review and publicly disclose any Tribal, state, or local law enforcement agencies seeking recognition for incorporating regionally appropriate guidelines into their policies. According to EOUSA, as of August 2025, no Tribal, state, or local law enforcement agency sought such recognition. Accordingly, this requirement is not applicable.
- Section 5(f) required the Department to publish guidelines developed by tribes for responding to missing or murder cases as a resource to any federal agency, state, or Tribal governments. According to EOUSA, as of August 2025, no tribes have submitted their own guidelines. Accordingly, this requirement is not applicable.

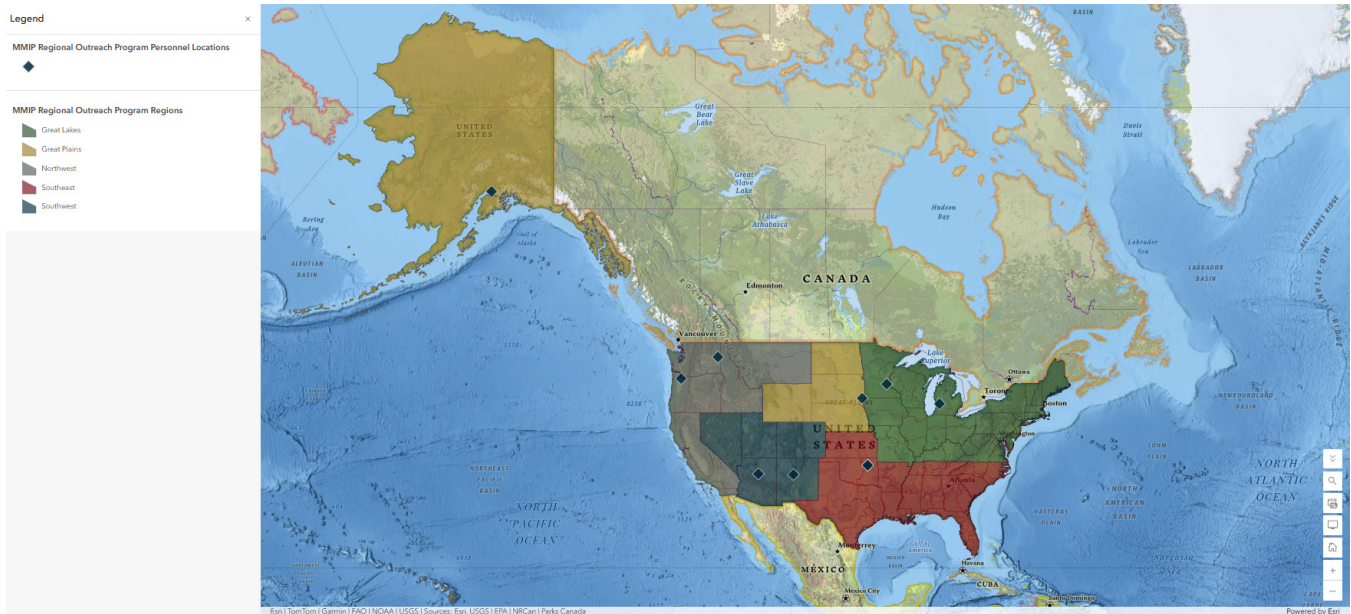
MMIP Regional Outreach Program

As a key initiative used by the USAOs to address missing or murdered Indigenous persons, the MMIP ROP's mission is to aid in the prevention of and response to missing or murdered Indigenous persons through the resolution of MMIP cases where federal jurisdiction exists and through communication, coordination, and collaboration with Tribal, federal, state governmental and non-governmental partners. To achieve this, the program aims to provide experienced and specialized support to USAOs to address and combat the issues of MMIP, including unresolved cases and MMIP-related crimes such as domestic violence, sexual violence, child physical and sexual abuse, drug trafficking, and human trafficking, that can lead to MMIP cases.

After receiving its funding in the FY 2023 Consolidated Appropriations Act, EOUSA solicited applications for AUSA and Coordinator positions in February 2023. In May 2023, EOUSA allocated 10 MMIP ROP positions—five AUSAs and five Coordinators—across five regions based on federal jurisdiction, victimization data, and unresolved MMIP cases. These positions were allocated to nine USAO host districts, which supervise MMIP ROP personnel while the program is programmatically managed by a Program Coordinator at EOUSA's Legal Programs Office. MMIP ROP AUSAs prosecute MMIP-related federal violations in Indian country within their home district and region. Additionally, the MMIP ROP AUSAs and Coordinators promote communication, coordination, and collaboration among federal, Tribal, local, and state partners on MMIP issues in their regions. The designated regions and locations of the 10 positions can be seen on Map 4 below.

Map 4: MMIP Regional Outreach Program

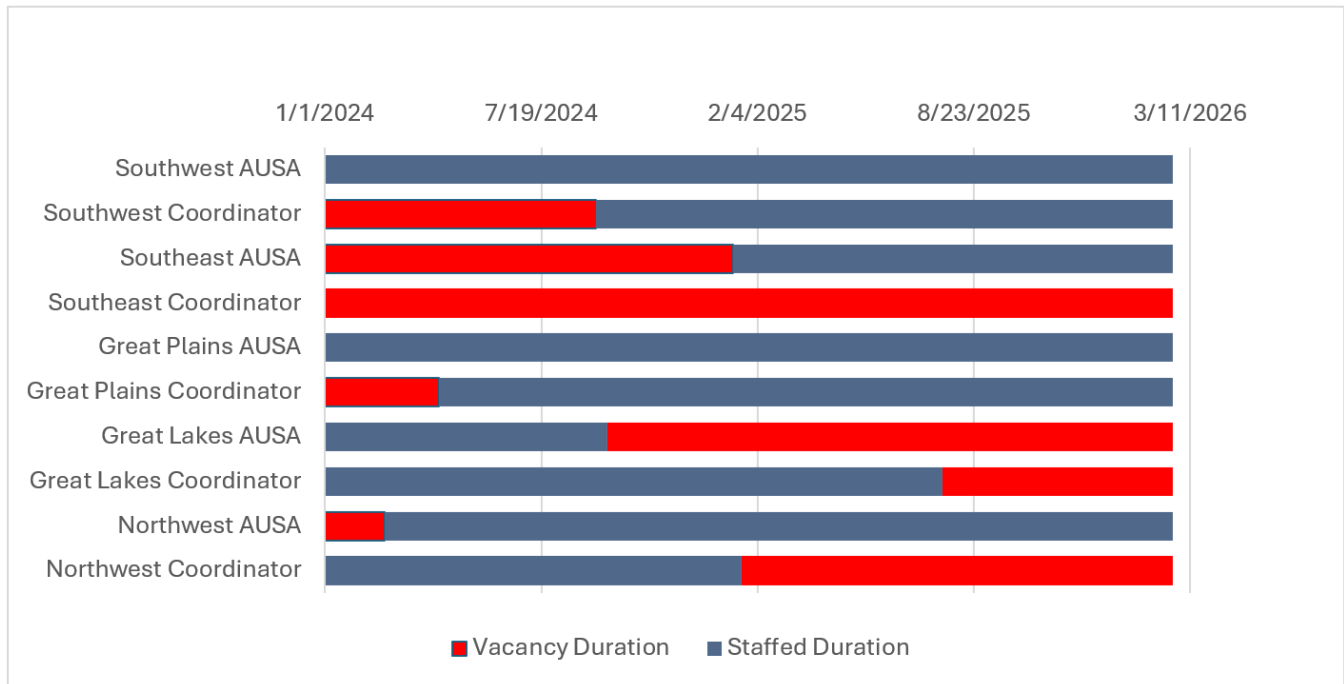
This map is current as of January 2026.



Finding 2: EOUSA Should Work to Address Staffing Vacancies to Improve Program Continuity of the MMIP Regional Outreach Program

EOUSA has the administrative oversight authority for the MMIP ROP. It is responsible for monitoring performance to ensure effective use of resources in regional MMIP work and can reallocate or eliminate positions based on inadequate productivity or shifting Department needs. However, EOUSA had not exercised the authority to relocate or eliminate positions, including in one district in which a position has been vacant for over a year with no plans to fill it. According to EOUSA, the MMIP ROP had never been fully staffed, with recruitment and onboarding occurring inconsistently since its creation. Program personnel noted that the persistent vacancies and high turnover have hindered the program's growth and momentum. For example, one host district had left an allocated MMIP ROP AUSA position vacant for over a year. The then Acting U.S. Attorney stated that their predecessor chose not to fill the vacant position, and the decision had not been reconsidered. An EOUSA program oversight official further stated that despite discussions, the district has no plans to fill the vacancy, leaving the region without a dedicated MMIP ROP AUSA. In another host district, an MMIP ROP AUSA had to fulfill both the AUSA and Coordinator responsibilities due to an ongoing vacancy for the Coordinator position in the region. As shown in Figure 1, from January 2024 to February 2026, the MMIP ROP had an average vacancy rate of about 33 percent.

Figure 1: Vacancy of MMIP ROP Positions



Source: EOUSA

Note: The MMIP ROP positions were allocated on May 9, 2023. For this figure, vacancy tracking begins in January 2024 to account for reasonable program ramp-up and onboarding.

While resource allocation to USAOs is at the discretion of EOUSA and the Department, leaving MMIP ROP positions unfilled is inconsistent with the Department's commitment to the program, as indicated in the FBI's previously referenced November 2025 public statement about the MMIP ROP in support of Operation Not Forgotten and its efforts to prevent and respond to cases of missing or murdered Indigenous people. Additionally, in February 2026, the MMIP ROP Program Coordinator left the Department, and those responsibilities were assumed by other EOUSA personnel who expressed a continued commitment to the program. In particular, in response to the 2023 Not Invisible Act Commission's Recommendations, the Department committed to the "permanent placement" of five MMIP AUSAs and five Coordinator positions in five designated regions across the United States. Moreover, the MMIP ROP's then-Program Coordinator said in the *DOJ Journal of Federal Law and Practice* (August 2025) that the MMIP ROP fulfills promises made in the Department's response to the Not Invisible Act commission report.

As of February 2026, the MMIP ROP had four vacancies—one AUSA and three Coordinators—across three regions representing a 40 percent vacancy rate, with no current plan to address these gaps.

These staffing deficiencies, together with other issues cited by EOUSA such as budgetary constraints, the 2025 federal hiring freeze, and USAO leadership turnover, present serious challenges to the MMIP ROP's ability to achieve its goals and threaten its continuity. Addressing staffing challenges is critical to the success of the MMIP ROP and its long-term sustainability. We recommend that EOUSA work to address staffing vacancies within the MMIP ROP to improve program continuity and fulfillment of the MMIP ROP's intended goals.

Finding 3: EOUSA Should Develop an MMIP Definition and Performance Metrics to Demonstrate Program Effectiveness

EOUSA currently lacks a process to measure, monitor, or demonstrate the effectiveness of the MMIP ROP, which limits its ability to determine whether the program achieves its intended outcomes and whether allocation of resources to it is productive. While some program personnel independently created quarterly accomplishment narratives and documents to showcase their work, we could not identify an organizational requirement or standardized format for doing so. Without performance metrics, evidence of the program's success remains anecdotal and inconsistent. EOUSA and the Department have previously recognized the value of monitoring the performance of allocated resources and periodically assessing the program to determine whether it was meeting its goals.⁴ Without clear performance metrics, EOUSA is limited in accounting for and demonstrating the program's achievements and whether it is meeting its intended outcomes. Additionally, the absence of standardized metrics limits EOUSA's ability to identify areas for improvement, allocate resources efficiently, and align program activities with the Department's intent.

A critical barrier to developing meaningful performance metrics for the MMIP ROP is the absence of a clear, standardized definition of MMIP. The solicitation for the MMIP ROP stated that the program would assist in addressing unresolved cases and crimes that are precursors to MMIP issues. However, our discussions with USAO staff revealed discrepancies in how MMIP cases are identified. Some staff believed the MMIP ROP should focus exclusively on missing and unresolved homicide cases, while others believed it should encompass MMIP-related crimes such as domestic violence, sexual abuse, and human trafficking that could lead to MMIP cases. These differing interpretations create inconsistencies in how the program is implemented across regions, undermining its coherence and ability to develop and track meaningful performance metrics.

In an August 2025 Department of Justice *Journal of Federal Law and Practice* article, the then-MMIP ROP Program Coordinator wrote that the MMIP ROP exists to address unresolved missing or murdered cases across regions while individual USAOs continue to actively pursue reactive violent crime cases. The then-Program Coordinator also acknowledged to us the value of allowing flexibility to address differing regional needs. However, they acknowledged this flexibility, in the absence of a standardized definition, has resulted in EOUSA's inability to clearly identify a universe of MMIP cases. Currently, the MMIP ROP lacks a mechanism to capture, quantify, or analyze these distinctions in work performed across the regions. This limits EOUSA's ability to allocate resources effectively and ensure program activities align with program intent. The lack of a standardized definition also hinders EOUSA's ability to establish consistent performance metrics, which are critical for monitoring program effectiveness, demonstrating measurable outcomes, and ensuring accountability. Additional consequences are weakened administrative oversight and risk of misalignment of resource allocation with the program's intended objectives.

EOUSA acknowledged there were no formalized expectations between EOUSA and the MMIP ROP host districts, leading to inconsistencies and accountability challenges across regions. While the original solicitation for MMIP ROP personnel outlined initial expectations, there isn't a formal agreement capturing the unique circumstances of each host district and overall program expectations. This makes it challenging for EOUSA to ensure a consistent national approach,

to hold personnel accountable to program expectations, and ensure program activities align with program intent. A formalized statement of expectations could provide clarity on the work to be done by the MMIP ROP personnel and provide EOUSA with a mechanism to promote proper program execution to the host districts and the MMIP ROP personnel accountable to the program's goals. Therefore, we recommend EOUSA develop a statement of expectations for host district USAOs that outlines a clear, standardized definition of MMIP-related work and establishes performance metrics to better assess the program's value and effectiveness.

Other USAO MMIP Work

USAOs aim to address missing or murdered Indigenous persons by prosecuting violent crime in Indian country. While our audit focused on the regionally appropriate guidelines required in Savanna's Act Section 5 and EOUSA's MMIP ROP, USAOs use the following tools to address MMIP:

Tribal Liasons

The Tribal Law and Order Act, passed in 2010, requires every USAO with Indian country jurisdiction to assign at least one Assistant U.S. Attorney (AUSA) as a Tribal liaison. Their responsibilities include coordinating prosecutions in Indian country, forming multi-disciplinary teams to combat child abuse, consulting and maintaining relationships with victims' advocates, Tribal leaders, Tribal prosecutors, Tribal law enforcement, and providing training to Tribal law enforcement. Assessing compliance with this statutory requirement and these responsibilities was beyond the scope of our audit.

Tribal Special Assistant U.S. Attorneys

Tribal SAUSAs are dedicated Tribal prosecutors cross designated as Special Assistant U.S. Attorneys to work directly with their USAO partners. The goals of the initiative include addressing gaps in jurisdictional coverage; enhancing communication and coordination among Tribal, federal, and state law enforcement agencies, fostering consistent relationships between federal prosecutors and Tribal communities; and improving the quality of investigations and prosecutions. Some funding for Tribal SAUSAs requires work on specific concerns such as domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, sex trafficking, and stalking.

Victim Assistance

The U.S. Attorneys' Office Victim/Witness Assistance Program ensures federal crime victims are treated with fairness and respect throughout the federal criminal justice process. Examples of services provided to victims include crisis intervention, referrals to other service agencies, court accompaniment, information about court proceedings and case status, language interpretation, crime victims compensation claims assistance, assistance with victim impact statements, and assistance with travel, lodging, and reimbursement for witnesses. Victim Witness Specialists also collaborate with Tribal agencies through multi-disciplinary teams.

Outreach and Training

USAOs provide outreach and training with Tribal communities in their districts. Trainings for Tribal law enforcement include crime scene response, successful federal prosecution, and case specific topics like gun violence or domestic violence. USAOs have also provided outreach to Tribal communities related to creating Tribal Community Response Plans.

Conclusion and Recommendations

While USAOs are utilizing various tools to address missing or murdered Indigenous persons cases, we identified areas for improvement in Savanna's Act compliance and the MMIP ROP. We found that guidelines adopted by 10 of 49 USAOs in districts with Indian country did not include all 6 required subsections required by Savanna's Act Section 5(a) or were not tailored to the specific circumstances of their district, in accordance with EOUSA guidance, hindering the implementation and effectiveness of the guidelines. While resource allocation to USAOs is at the discretion of EOUSA and the Department, it has stated its continued commitment to the MMIP ROP. Therefore, EOUSA should address staffing vacancies to ensure program continuity. The MMIP ROP should develop clear expectations for personnel and establish performance metrics for the program.

We recommend EOUSA:

1. Coordinate with the 10 districts whose guidelines we determined were not compliant with the requirements of Savanna's Act Section 5 to ensure they include the 6 required subsections in accordance with Savanna's Act Section 5(a) and are tailored to the specific circumstances of the district.
2. Work to address staffing vacancies within the MMIP ROP to improve program continuity and fulfillment of the MMIP ROP's intended goals.
3. Develop a statement of expectations for host district USAOs that outlines a clear, standardized definition of MMIP-related work and establishes performance metrics to better assess the program's value and effectiveness.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Objective, Scope, and Methodology

Objective

Our objective was to evaluate USAO efforts to address missing or murdered Indigenous persons, including USAO compliance with certain requirements in Savanna's Act.

Scope and Methodology

The scope of our audit generally was from October 2020, when Savanna's Act was passed, to February 2026. We visited six U.S. Attorneys' Offices and interviewed personnel, including Tribal liaisons, U.S. Attorneys, Assistant U.S. Attorneys (AUSA), Tribal Special Assistant U.S. Attorneys (SAUSA), Victim Witness Specialists, and MMIP ROP personnel. We also visited six tribes to engage with Tribal leadership, prosecutors, law enforcement, and victim advocates to gain insights into their experiences and challenges. Additionally, we interviewed EOUSA staff to discuss the MMIP ROP and broader Native American issues. Our review included documentation related to Section 5 of Savanna's Act, regionally appropriate guidelines, and MMIP ROP activities.

Statement on Compliance with Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objective. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Internal Controls

In this audit, we performed testing of internal controls significant within the context of our audit objective. We did not evaluate the internal controls of EOUSA to provide assurance on its internal control structure as a whole. EOUSA management is responsible for the establishment and maintenance of internal controls in accordance with Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-123. Because we do not express an opinion on EOUSA's internal control structure as a whole, we offer this statement solely for the information and use of the EOUSA.⁵

In planning and performing our audit, we identified internal control components and underlying internal control principles as significant to the audit objective, including management should use quality information and communicate the necessary quality information to achieve the entity's objectives. Specifically, we assessed the design, implementation, and operating effectiveness of internal controls to the extent necessary to address the audit objective.

The internal control deficiencies related to EOUSA's inability to ensure continuity of the MMIP ROP and measure its effectiveness are discussed in the MMIP Regional Outreach Program section of this report. However, because our review was limited to those internal control components and underlying principles that we found significant to the objectives of this audit, it may not have disclosed all internal control deficiencies that may have existed at the time of this audit.

Compliance with Laws and Regulations

In this audit we tested, as appropriate given our audit objectives and scope, selected

transactions, records, procedures, and practices, to obtain reasonable assurance that EOUSA's management complied with federal laws and regulations for which non-compliance, in our judgment, could have a material effect on the results of our audit. Our audit included examining, on a test basis, EOUSA's compliance with the following laws and regulations that could have a material effect on EOUSA's operations:

- Savanna's Act of 2020 (Public Law 116-165)

This testing included reviewing the regionally appropriate guidelines submitted by each USAO with Indian country to determine if it included all six sections in accordance with Savanna's Act Section 5(a). As noted in the Savanna's Act section of this report, we found that 7 of the 49 guidelines we reviewed did not include all required sections.

Appendix 2: The EOUSA's Response to the Draft Report



U.S. Department of Justice

Executive Office for United States Attorneys

Office of the Director

Room 2261, RFK Main Justice Building (202) 252-1000
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530

MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 15, 2026

TO: Jason R. Malmstrom
Assistant Inspector General for Audit
Office of the Inspector General

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Francey Hakes", is positioned above the "FROM:" field.

FROM: Francey Hakes
Director

SUBJECT: Response to the Inspector General's Draft Audit Report, *The United States Attorneys' Offices Compliance with Savanna's Act of 2020 and its Efforts in Response to Missing or Murdered Indigenous Persons*

The Executive Office for United States Attorneys (EOUSA) appreciates the opportunity to review the Office of the Inspector General's (OIG's) draft audit report titled, *The United States Attorneys' Offices Compliance with Savanna's Act of 2020 and its Efforts in Response to Missing or Murdered Indigenous Persons*. EOUSA recognizes the importance of addressing the issues identified by OIG and is committed to working with the U.S. Attorneys' offices (USAOs) to enhance efforts in support of Missing or Murdered Indigenous Persons (MMIP). To that end, EOUSA provides the below responses to the recommendations directed to EOUSA.

Recommendation No. 1: Coordinate with the 10 districts whose guidelines we determined were not compliant with the requirements of Savanna's Act Section 5 to ensure they include the 6 required subsections in accordance with Savanna's Act Section 5(a) and are tailored to the specific circumstances of the district.

EOUSA's Response: EOUSA concurs with this recommendation. EOUSA will coordinate with the ten identified districts individually to facilitate the necessary revisions to their guidelines. This coordination will include consultation with each district on Savanna's Act requirements, drafting assistance if required, and a final review of the updated guidelines to ensure they fully comply with Section 5(a) of Savanna's Act, by including all six mandated subsections and ensuring each guideline is tailored to the specific circumstances of that district. EOUSA will also provide assistance in coordinating with tribal partners where necessary. While the exact timeline for individual district revisions may vary, EOUSA anticipates guidelines for the 10 districts will be updated on or before January 15, 2027.

Recommendation No. 2: Work to address staffing vacancies within the MMIP ROP to improve program continuity and fulfillment of the MMIP ROP's intended goals.

EOUSA's Response: EOUSA concurs with this recommendation. EOUSA will work with each of the host districts to prioritize the filling of vacant MMIP ROP positions. By August 17, 2026, EOUSA will issue a memorandum to the host districts emphasizing the critical nature of these roles, their regional scope, and the need to prioritize hiring for these positions when there are MMIP ROP vacancies. The memorandum will also direct host districts to designate a qualified individual to coordinate essential MMIP ROP duties with EOUSA and other MMIP ROP personnel on an interim basis when there is a vacancy, and until it is filled. Additionally, this memorandum will offer EOUSA consultation with district stakeholders (e.g., senior leadership, Human Resources Officer), as needed, to help with recruitment strategies and vacancy coverage needs. EOUSA believes these efforts will directly improve program continuity and promote fulfillment of the MMIP ROP's intended goals.

Recommendation No. 3: Develop a statement of expectations for host district USAOs that outlines a clear, standardized definition of MMIP-related work and establishes performance metrics to better assess the program's value and effectiveness.

EOUSA's Response: EOUSA concurs with this recommendation. Working with relevant stakeholders, EOUSA will develop formal program expectations for the MMIP ROP, which will include a standardized definition of MMIP-related work and performance metrics to accurately assess the program's value and effectiveness. EOUSA anticipates the metrics will include prosecution, training, and law enforcement coordination data. EOUSA will issue a memorandum to host districts (leadership and MMIP personnel) setting forth these expectations, definitions, and metrics. EOUSA anticipates that this memorandum will be issued on or before January 15, 2027.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this response, please contact Michael Magruder, Audit Liaison at USAEO.EOUSA.Audit.Liaison@usdoj.gov.

Appendix 3: Office of the Inspector General Analysis and Summary of Actions Necessary to Close the Audit Report

The OIG provided a draft of this audit report to EOUSA. EOUSA's response is incorporated in Appendix 2 of this final report. In response to our audit report, EOUSA concurred with our recommendations and discussed the actions it will implement in response to our findings. As a result, the status of the audit report is resolved. The following provides the OIG analysis of the response and summary of actions necessary to close the report.

Recommendations for EOUSA:

- 1. Coordinate with the 10 districts whose guidelines we determined were not compliant with the requirements of Savanna's Act Section 5 to ensure they include the 6 required subsections in accordance with Savanna's Act Section 5(a) and are tailored to the specific circumstances of the district.**

Resolved. EOUSA concurred with our recommendation. EOUSA stated in its response that it will coordinate with each of the 10 identified districts to facilitate the necessary revisions to their guidelines including consultation with each district, drafting assistance if required, coordinating with Tribal partners as necessary, and a final review of the updated guidelines. As a result, this recommendation is resolved.

This recommendation can be closed when we receive evidence that each of the 10 district guidelines are updated to include the 6 required subsections in accordance with Savanna's Act Section 5(a) and are tailored to the specific circumstances of the district.

- 2. Work to address staffing vacancies within the MMIP ROP to improve program continuity and fulfillment of the MMIP ROP's intended goals.**

Resolved. EOUSA concurred with our recommendation. EOUSA stated in its response it will work with each of the host districts to prioritize the filling of vacant MMIP ROP positions. EOUSA said it will issue a memorandum emphasizing the critical nature of the roles, their regional scope, and the need to prioritize hiring these positions, and will direct host districts to designate a qualified individual to coordinate essential MMIP ROP duties on an interim basis until the vacancy is filled. The memorandum will also offer EOUSA consultation with host districts, as needed, to help with recruitment strategies and vacancy coverage needs. As a result, this recommendation is resolved.

This recommendation can be closed when we receive evidence that EOUSA has worked to address staffing vacancies within the MMIP ROP to improve program continuity and fulfillment of the MMIP ROP's intended goals.

- 3. Develop a statement of expectations for host district USAOs that outlines a clear, standardized definition of MMIP-related work and establishes performance metrics to better assess the program's value and effectiveness.**

Resolved. EOUSA concurred with our recommendation. EOUSA stated in its response it will develop formal program expectations for the MMIP ROP including a standardized

definition of MMIP-related work and performance metrics to accurately assess the program's value and effectiveness. EOUSA stated it anticipates the metrics will include prosecution, training, and law enforcement coordination data. EOUSA plans to issue a memorandum to host districts setting forth these expectations, definitions, and metrics. As a result, this recommendation is resolved.

This recommendation can be closed when we receive evidence that EOUSA has developed a statement of expectations including a standardized definition of MMIP-related work and performance metrics to better assess the program's value and effectiveness.

Appendix 4: Footnotes

¹ May 5th is designated Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons Awareness Day. Terms similar to MMIP include: (1) Missing or Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW) (2) Missing or Murdered Indigenous Relatives (MMIR) and (3) Missing or Murdered Native Americans (MMNA).

² According to DOJ's 2023 Indian Country Investigations and Prosecutions Report, dated December 2024, there were 52 districts with Indian country. Three districts in Oklahoma and two districts in Mississippi created combined state guidelines. Therefore, a total of 49 guidelines were developed.

³ Compliant districts include: Middle Alabama, Southern Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Central California, Eastern California, Northern California, Southern California, Colorado, Connecticut, Middle Florida, Southern Florida, Idaho, Northern Indiana, Northern Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Massachusetts, Eastern Michigan, Western Michigan, Northern and Southern Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, Western North Carolina, North Dakota, Eastern, Northern and Western Oklahoma, Oregon, South Carolina, South Dakota, Eastern Texas, Utah, Eastern Washington, Western Washington, Eastern Wisconsin, Western Wisconsin, Wyoming, and Western Tennessee.

⁴ Based on the February 2023 solicitation for MMIP ROP personnel and the Department's response to the 2023 Not Invisible Act Commission Recommendations.

⁵ This restriction is not intended to limit the distribution of this report, which is a matter of public record.

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Department of Justice



950 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20530-0001

(202) 514-3435

In memory of OIG Special Agent William "Buddy" Sentner

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