

Subject Office of Missing and Murdered Black Women and Girls

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Overview

In the 2021 session, the legislature established the Task Force on Missing and Murdered African American Women to examine the causes of violence against African American women and recommend policies to address those causes. This bill establishes an Office of Missing and Murdered Black Women and Girls in the Office of Justice Programs, modeled on the recently established Office of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives. This bill also requires the BCA to issue alerts when a person is reported as missing and endangered.

Summary

Section	Description
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1	Office for missing and murdered Black women and girls.
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Subd. 1. Establishment. Establishes an office dedicated to preventing and ending the targeting of violence against Black women and girls within the Office of Justice Programs in the Department of Public Safety.

Subd. 2. Director; staff. Directs the commissioner of public safety to appoint a director of the office. Establishes that the director must be closely connected to the Black community and have familiarity with criminal investigations. Encourages the commissioner to consider individuals recommended by members of the Black community. Permits the director to hire employees as necessary. Provides that the director and staff are members of the Minnesota State Retirement Association.

Subd. 3. Duties. Establishes the duties of the new office, including facilitating research, collecting data, advocating for action by the legislature and state agencies to address violence against Black women and girls, proposing legislation, and maintaining communication with other departments and offices regarding cases involving missing Black women and girls.

Section **Description**

Subd. 4. Coordination with other organizations. Directs the office to coordinate with stakeholders, community members, state agencies, local law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, and survivors to fulfill its duties.

Subd. 5. Reports. Directs the office to provide an annual report on its actions, data related to missing and murdered Black women and girls, and objectives for the coming year. Reports must be submitted by January 15 each year to the chair and ranking members of the legislative committees with jurisdiction over public safety.

Subd. 6. Acceptance of gifts and receipt of grants. Creates a special revenue fund account. Authorizes the office to accept gifts and apply for grants. Requires money received to be deposited in the special revenue account and appropriates that money to the office.

Subd. 7. Access to data. States that the office has access to confidential and private corrections, detention, and medical data maintained by an agency in order for the office to perform its duties.

Subd. 8. Grants to organizations. Establishes a grant program for the Office of Missing and Murdered Black Women and Girls to award grants to organizations providing services designed to prevent or end the targeting of Black women and girls. Requires reporting from grant recipients. Authorizes the office to coordinate with the Office of Justice Programs to administer the grants.

2 **Missing and endangered persons.**

Directs the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension to operate an alert program and requires issuance of an alert when a person is determined to be missing and endangered.

3 **Office of Missing and Murdered Black Women and Girls; appropriation.**

Appropriates \$1,248,000 in fiscal years 2024 and 2025. Of that amount, \$300,000 each year is for grants to community-based organizations, and \$948,000 each year is to establish and operate the Office of Missing and Murdered Black Women and Girls, of which \$50,000 each year must be used for a public awareness campaign to inform the public about the office and its responsibilities.



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