

KB Tenacious Emergency Support Foundation

kbt-esf.org | support@kbt-esf.org | (360) 937-4921

Family Guide

Missing Persons Support Resources & Volunteer Investigator Directory

We know you are going through something no one should have to face.

This guide is here to help you take the right steps, connect with the right people, and understand what support is available. Please read it carefully. The information here could make a real difference.

Step 1 — Report to Law Enforcement Immediately

Do not wait. There is no mandatory waiting period to file a missing persons report in Washington or Oregon.

Contact your local law enforcement agency or call 911 right now if you have not already done so.

Reporting to law enforcement is the single most important step. Law enforcement has the authority to:

- Initiate an official investigation
- Issue AMBER Alerts, Silver Alerts, and other public notifications
- Access nationwide databases and resources unavailable to anyone else
- Coordinate with other agencies across state lines

When you call, provide as much information as possible, last known location, physical description, known contacts, recent behavior, and any vehicles involved. The officer will guide you through the rest.

Keep your case number. You will need it for everything that follows.

Step 2 — Document and Organize Information

Accurate, organized information speeds up every part of the process. Start gathering the following as soon as possible:

- Last known location, be as specific as possible
- A timeline of the days leading up to the disappearance
- Physical description including height, weight, hair, eyes, distinguishing marks, and last clothing seen
- Known social media accounts and dating apps, and whether you can access them
- Known friends, hangouts, and group affiliations
- Significant other's name, contact information, and description
- Any tips or information you have already received
- Photos - recent, clear, and multiple if possible
- Any medical needs (medications, devices), relevant if the person is found
- Attorney or legal representative information if applicable
- Whether a protection order is in place

Tip:

Write everything down even if it seems minor. Details that feel unimportant now may become critical later. Keep a dedicated notebook or document and update it as new information comes in.

Step 3 — Create Awareness

The more people looking, the better. Use every channel available to you:

- Share on social media - Facebook, X, Instagram, Nextdoor, and community groups
- Post flyers in the last known location and surrounding areas
- Contact local media, TV stations, newspapers, and radio
- Reach out to community organizations, churches, and schools
- Consider a GoFundMe for search expenses, flyer printing, and travel costs

Be thoughtful about what you share publicly. Avoid sharing sensitive details that could compromise the investigation. When in doubt, check with law enforcement first.

Step 4 — Consider a Volunteer Investigator

This resource is available only to families with an active law enforcement report and case number.

You will need your case number when you first contact a volunteer investigator.

KBT-ESF maintains a directory of licensed private investigators who have volunteered to provide initial guidance and support to families at no cost. These are independent licensed professionals, they are not employees or agents of KBT-ESF.

What every listed investigator has agreed to provide at no charge:

- An initial consultation of at least 30 minutes
- Review of your organized case materials - timelines, tip logs, and documentation - up to 2 hours
- Honest guidance on investigative next steps
- Up to three follow-up contacts to answer questions and help you navigate the process
- A referral if the case falls outside their expertise

Why work with an investigator:

- Conduct independent interviews, sometimes people are more willing to talk to a PI than to law enforcement or family members
- Follow leads and utilize techniques not always available to law enforcement
- Provide personalized, dedicated attention to your case
- Review your organized case materials and give you honest guidance on next steps
- Help you understand what information agencies need and how to present it

Important:

A private investigator does not have the authority to make arrests. Their work is supplementary to law enforcement. Always keep law enforcement as your primary point of contact.

Any investigative work beyond the scope above is a private arrangement between you and the investigator. KBT-ESF is not a party to any such arrangement and bears no responsibility for services rendered independently.

You are never obligated to accept additional services and should never feel pressured to do so.

Step 5 — Take Care of Yourself and Your Family

Searching for a missing loved one is one of the most emotionally exhausting experiences a family can go through. Please do not neglect your own wellbeing in the process.

- Seek counseling - individual or family therapy can provide essential support and coping strategies
- Lean on your support network - friends, family, community, and faith communities
- Connect with support groups for families of missing persons
- Use the Crisis Text Line - text HOME to 741741 for free 24/7 support
- Call or text 988 for the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline if you or anyone in your family is struggling

Staying mentally and emotionally supported is not a luxury. It helps you stay sharp, stay present, and stay effective for your loved one.

Step 6 — Stay Connected and Coordinated

Keep open communication with law enforcement, any investigators involved, and KBT-ESF. Regular updates ensure that all efforts are coordinated and no information falls through the cracks.

- Check in with the assigned detective regularly and ask for updates
- Share any new tips or information with law enforcement immediately
- Keep a log of every contact, call, and tip you receive
- Stay active on social media posts and respond to comments that may contain leads

If you are in immediate danger or believe a crime is actively in progress, call 911.

KBT-ESF is a nonprofit support organization. We are not law enforcement and we cannot respond to emergencies. Always contact law enforcement first in any active emergency situation.

KBT-ESF does not guarantee outcomes. Every case is different and some factors are beyond anyone's control. We are committed to supporting you with transparency, compassion, and respect throughout the process.