

## NCJTC- Fox Valley | Victim Centeredness And Community Notification And Education

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Welcome, everyone, to the National Criminal Justice Training Center Webinar. Our topic today is how to use victim centeredness and offender accountability to enhance community and victim safety. Presenters for today's session include Christopher Lobanov-Rostovsky, Theresa Faris, Jesus Garay, and Lea Geurts. My name is Joann Joy, and I will serve as your moderator.

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Let's practice a poll question with a simple poll. This will also give us a snapshot of who is joining us today. We have launched poll question number 1. How long have you been working in SORNA? Your choices, as they appear, are 0 to 3 years, 3 to 5, 5 to 8, 8 or more years, or I currently do not work in SORNA. Please make your selection from the options provided.

All right. It looks like we did have some answers come through, or responses. And it appears that the majority of our folks have zero to three years, and a good portion do not currently work in SORNA.

I'm pleased to introduce to you our presenters for today. Christopher Lobanov-Rostovsky is a licensed clinical social worker with over 30 years of experience working in the area of sex offender management and treatment. He currently works for the Colorado Department of Public Safety as the program director for the Colorado Sex Offender Management Board and as an associate for NCJTC.

Theresa Faris has worked for the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes' SORNA program since 2012. She has been an associate with the National Criminal Justice Training Center since 2019. She is a Cheyenne and Arapaho tribal member, and the liaison between law enforcement, the prosecutor's office, and the tribal court.

Jesus Garay is a lieutenant with the Pueblo Isleta Police Department, overseeing patrol services and providing support to community relations in the area of community policing and support of the SORNA program.

Lea Geurts is a project coordinator with the National Criminal Justice Training Center of Fox Valley Technical College. Providing training and technical assistance for tribal grantees, Lea has over 15

years of experience working in tribal justice programs in probation, court administration, SORNA, and tribal justice system planning. We are so pleased to have all of you with us today.

Before we begin the presentation, we want to begin by opening in a good way. Let us take a moment of silence to clear our thoughts and center our focus on the important work in front of us today. I will now turn the time over to our presenters. Theresa, the time is now yours.

Thank you, Joann, for that nice moment of silence, and hello, everyone. Let's take a moment just to review our agenda for this webinar. We will begin with community notification methods, move on to sex offender management with a victim-centered perspective, and then close out with resources available.

What is community notification and how do we, or how do you, inform your people about the registry and resources available made to the public? I know for the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes, we have always tried to take a layered approach with different media to try to capture all different ages. From social media posts to classic bulletin postings building to building to traditional newspaper announcements, our goal is to make it available to everyone coming into our jurisdiction and walking in our doors.

So it's important to think about, what are the best methods to reach out to your own community? Nobody knows our community best than ourselves. Also, now that we're faced with new challenges due to this pandemic, we are going to have to get creative in the future on how we adapt. The comfort in that is that we are all faced with this in our own community and we can team up together on ideas moving forward. So at this time, I think we're going to break for a poll.

We have our next poll question. Besides your SORNA website, what strategies do you use to notify the community of registered sex offenders? Please choose all that apply to your particular situation. Your choices, as presented, are community meetings, attend community events, media such as newspaper or radio, social media such as Facebook, we do not have additional notification, or I am not involved with notification of sex offenders.

As you can see from the results, it appears that the majority of our folks are not involved with notification of sex offenders. The next largest segment uses community notification meetings as the best way to notify their communities of registered sex offenders. And a good portion also use the media-- newspapers, radios, and Facebook. I'll turn it back over to you, Theresa.

Thank you, Joann. So with the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act, jurisdictions were then

responsible to make the sex offender information public to the community through the internet, and also, that immediately after offenders register, the SORNA official provides that information to appropriate agencies when needed. The more you keep your community partners engaged, the more you keep law enforcement engaged and inform them of resources and your offenders, the more support you will see overall, is what I've found.

For the Cheyenne Arapaho tribes, we've created forms for both HR at the tribal government level and at the casino for new employees to disclose whether or not they're sex offenders. We also elect to provide training in-house and to open community to provide for HR for the tribal government, the casino HR employees, the gaming commission, the legislative branch, and the department of business, as well. We find that key to gaining our partners moving forward.

So the National Sex Offender registry Public Website are great tools that you can use to share with your community on checking the current status and getting information on offenders. NSOPW is the only website that links the public state, territorial, and tribes' offender registries in one search. I find I use that probably the most often.

We like to send out global reminders and share the site, and also, we've created a How to Check the Public Registries. We list the tribal, the state, and the national website links included. This is helpful for quick share across the board and often triggers questions on who must register. This is also good to do frequently at your agencies due to administrative changes and also employee turnover.

This is a quick snapshot of the National Sex Offender Public Registry. I like to steer my public to this website anytime we have community meetings. I particularly like to steer them to the Safety and Education link. So I would encourage you to have your members and to check out, as well. If you have not gone through that Safety and Education portion, there's a lot of good resources there.

Like I said, we just encourage all our members quite frequently to go onto this website also so that they can receive email updates, as well. Once they do that, they will be notified of changes when an offender comes to register or makes an update. But we find that that's engaging for your public. When you do these community members, like I said, it's just it's really helpful to try to pull them in to engage.

That ties back into-- sorry-- just signing up for the email notifications. Like I said, I get a lot of pull on usually the community meetings. Also, when I do my education in-house to different partners in the tribe, we like to sometimes separate those community notifications and education on an in-house basis versus the open community.

I find that helpful for sometimes, I guess, hearing the people who are working with the tribe able to know who to talk to you if they know of a registered sex offender or who to report to, versus when you have an open community notification meeting that's open to everyone, you might not know who your crowd is. So sometimes, you can tailor those communications.

So this ties back into what is required when they notify the officials and the subscriber email. Now I can go ahead and break for the poll.

So we have reached our third poll question. To which tribal agencies do you provide SORNA information? Choose all that apply to your current situation. Your options, as presented, are courts; human services; education, housing, and/or employment services; victim services; or other agency not listed.

As you can see by our results, it appears that the majority of our attendees provide SORNA information to the courts. The next largest segments are equally split between education, housing, and/or employment services, and victim services. I'll turn it back over to you, Theresa.

Thank you, Joann. So who else can benefit from public information on registered sex offenders? I think often, we always think about law enforcement. We think about the courts. We think about social services. But really, maybe open your perspective to different agencies that may not necessarily have anything to do directly with compliance, but they are really helpful when it comes to education and supporting or getting that public community notification support, even.

Sometimes we know when we hold these community notification meetings, you don't have a lot of people come and attend always. So there's other ways you can try to, I guess, gain a crowd. We find it's really helpful for us here at the Cheyenne Arapaho tribes to get all of our child care agencies and directors on board.

You can provide them with the NSOPW.gov info, and they're always really receptive towards that. Especially, like I said, hitting on that safety and education tab. So those are tools and resources that are already built in that you can utilize and just show your community that there are things that they can do and share at each space, at each different department, to help towards the overall goal of community safety.

So now I'll take a break to see if any of my fellow panelists may have anything to offer.

Thank you, Theresa. This is Lea. I think that you did a great job of covering some of those notification

requirements. I think the only comments that I would have regarding that interaction with community notification and option to receive this notifications is to be sure that we're meeting the community where they're at.

If we know within our communities-- maybe we're a really rural community and maybe internet isn't available in all of our households or computers aren't in all of our households, we want to be sure that we're making that information available in a forum in a format that's accessible to all. So that's really your opportunity to evaluate your individual communities' needs and say, how are we going to get this information out there and what method is going to serve us best?

We know that the minimum requirement is that people are allowed to receive electronic notification, but I think when we think additionally where might people go to get information, that may be an option for us for being able to share that information in a meaningful way.

Thanks, Lea.

Theresa, if there's nothing else, I can just pick it up from here and keep moving forward.

Thank you, Chris.

Thank you, Theresa. We appreciate very much you sharing your expertise and your work with SORNA with us. This is Chris. And first of all, I wanted to say welcome to everybody. This is the first chance I've had to speak, and so I just wanted to say hello to all of my friends out there in tribal communities. I miss you all terribly, and I hope that we'll see each other face-to-face very soon.

And I also want to acknowledge the SMART Office staff members, who I'm assuming are out there, as well. I miss you, as well, and thank you for all that you're doing. And thank you for all the work that everyone on this call is doing. I know these are difficult times, and we appreciate very much what you're doing.

We are going to transition now into talking into community notification meetings. So what Theresa has been talking about up until now are the requirements of SORNA, the mandatory public notification requirements of SORNA that all SORNA jurisdictions must implement within their website and through some email notification processes.

And so all of the tribes that are SORNA-eligible have done that and implemented that as part of their program. I know that there are some folks on this call who are not SORNA districts and SORNA-eligible, but this part of the training, when we're talking about community notification, are really

things that all tribal community members and all tribal agency professionals can do.

And for those of you who have SORNA programs, this community notification process is a nice add-on. This is not a required component of SORNA, but I think for those of you who have implemented SORNA and really want to expand the reach and the impact of your SORNA program, I think adding in a community notification component, above and beyond the public website and the email process, can be very, very helpful.

So I want to make sure to be very clear about what's SORNA and what's not because I know that we all, as jurisdictions who are eligible for SORNA and have responsibilities for SORNA, want to make sure that we're implementing it correctly. But these things are things that the SMART Office has said, we feel like these are important for tribal communities to know about, as well, and so that's why this is one of these core pieces that we do through this SORNA webinar process.

So in terms of community notification, why do that? Why is it important? Why have community meetings to talk about sexual abuse? It sounds really kind of scary in some ways to open this conversation up. I think that sexual abuse, and sexuality in general, are very much of a taboo in terms of our societies and our communities, whether that's a tribal community or a state community, wherever we're talking about.

And so to open this up and talk about it is very hard and it can be very anxiety-provoking for citizens and for tribal agency professionals to have these conversations. But I really do think that this is an important conversation to have. Sexual abuse is a problem that affects all of us. It affects our communities. And if we can have dialogue with our community members about this and help them to know how to deal with this, I think we're better off.

I think too often, we just see this as a criminal justice matter or a law enforcement matter, but it really is a community area of interest. And so we want the community to be a partner and a collaborator. And so to have these discussions and to open this information up I think can be part of an overall really good offender accountability strategy. How do we hold offenders accountable better in our communities?

It can support victims, in terms of ensuring that victims feel heard, empowered, and that we're doing everything we can to protect victims. And it can be really an important part of a good prevention strategy, as well. How do we get information to the members of the community so that they can take protective steps for themselves, their family members, their children?

These are things that are of great import to all of our community members. And so in my experience in doing community meetings, I think they are very valuable. We'll also talk later about the value to law enforcement of this. But I think certainly from a community policing perspective, having a good dialogue between law enforcement, and the SORNA program, and the community, and having information going both ways in that can be really, really valuable.

So I think that there is definitely a purpose related to this. But again, this is something you can choose to do or not to do.

What are the benefits of this? I think that certainly having this dialogue, having this forum educates our community. I think many community members-- shoot, many of us-- are very ignorant when it comes to a lot of information about sexual offenders and offending. And so to educate community members, I truly believe that knowledge is power and it is empowering to communities to have correct information.

And so having that kind of a forum, I think there's great benefit. I never see a downside for people to have good, and accurate, and correct information. It also gives us a chance to provide resources to the community. There are really good resources out there. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children has a terrific website. NSOPW, as Theresa was mentioning.

There is great information out there that we can provide to our community members so that they can take steps to provide for the safety of themselves and their family members-- what to watch out for, what to do if, what are the dangers, et cetera. Those things are really great resources. And through a community meeting, you can set out flyers and brochures.

Some people might be shy to talk about it, but guaranteed, some people will walk by kind of quickly and pick up a brochure or something like that. So having that information can be great.

It also provides the ability to have these collaborations that Theresa was talking about within the other tribal agencies that are working, either in business or in child-serving organizations. And so I think there's real advantages for these meetings, and it also shows how all of the agencies are working together to manage offenders.

And so that for the community to learn how the agencies are working on their behalf, and what is available, and how offenders are being supervised and monitored in the community, helping them to learn more about probation, parole, the courts, law enforcement. I think that that's really critical information for the community to know because a lot of times, they feel like, well, there's nothing

really there to keep them safe from these offenders as they come back to the community.

And I think actually, it can help the offenders, too. That may seem counterintuitive, but the idea that an offender is going to come back to the community in a good way, to be accountable, to have that responsibility to the community to come back and to refrain from abusive and offending behavior, and for there to be support around the offender having access to those resources and how that benefits the offender in terms of not only them personally, but in preventing future offending.

And then finally, I think, as I was talking about related to knowledge, having these meetings can dispel that misinformation. And I think there's a slide that'll be coming up that'll talk about some of the misinformation that is out there. And so we want to make sure that those myths are dispelled. And there is a slide, so I didn't get ahead of myself, which is so unusual for me.

For those of you who've seen me speak, I'm always talking three slides down the road, so I'm proud of myself for showing restraint there. Congratulate me, everybody. I appreciate it. I'm saying this with a smile, for all of you, obviously.

So dispelling these myths in terms of that sex offenders come back. It's not that they're going away to prison forever. The vast majority of those who have committed sex offenses and have been prosecuted are in the community. They're not in our prisons.

That not all offenders are on the registry, that there are other people out there either who have been not detected, not identified, or for whatever reason are not on the registry. So we want to help the community understand the extent of the problem and that the registry is one component of that, but not the only component.

And that what we know about offenders, in terms of the threat, the risks that they present to the community, and that there will continue to be that risk. Some people think, well, once they've gone to prison, they've learned their lesson. They'll never do it again. Others think, well, once a sex offender, always a sex offender. And neither of those is necessarily true. So how can we dispel some of those types of myths? And I think through a good community notification meeting, we can do that.

So I'm going to turn it over to my friend, Lea, and Lea is going to now help frame this discussion related to these community notification meetings. Lea.

Great. Thank you, Chris. So as we dive into discussing the nuts and bolts of what community notification looks like, we wanted to start off by laying the foundation and emphasizing the importance, as you start evaluating whatever format works best for you in your community, that it's



consistent in the process and delivery, and that you're responding in a systematic way, rather than based on responding differently depending on who that person is, perhaps.

And so this will allow you to do a few things. It allows the community and those that you're sharing that information with to develop an expectation and to understand how to receive that information in the best way. We also feel that this will allow your team or your notification team to respond to the process that's in place, rather than to an individual circumstance.

Or as we find that we have a lot of impassioned people sometimes within our communities, and sometimes we have to respond back or report on particular meetings or information that we're sharing, it really allows us to respond to the process that we have in place versus to maybe that individual's concerns. And so we just wanted to preface that before Chris transitions us into really talking about the nuts and bolts of community notifications. Thank you, Chris.

Thank you, Lea I appreciate very much that frame, and I think this is just so crucial to think about if you're going to do something like this, why are you going to do it, what are your goals, et cetera. And so we're going to talk a little bit about how these meetings work. This is not a training specifically on delivering these types of community notification meetings.

We're going to give you just a little snippet here about this. There is additional technical assistance that could be available through the National Criminal Justice Training Center, if this is something you're interested in doing. I've worked with many of our tribal partners over the last number of years on this type of an approach, and we're happy to be available to you and to help you with this.

But we want to at least give you enough of an idea about this so that you can have some understanding. And if it's something that you're interested in doing, it's something then you could explore more.

In terms of thinking about these meetings and what type of a meeting you might want to do, there's a couple of models out there that I'd like to share. One is where you do a specific notification meeting on a specific registered offender as they're returning to the community. This is called an offender-specific type of a meeting.

Others have used more of an offender general type of a model, where you're talking about the registrants as a whole, not one specific registrant. And so when you have your meeting, you're talking about all of the registrants within the community, talking about them collectively, whereas the offender-specific one is you're trying to bring some attention specifically to one specific offender that

you may have specific concerns about to the community.

In my state, the state of Colorado, we have done offender-specific community notification meetings now for more than 10 years. This has part of our model for a long time. And the way in which we do this is we use a risk assessment tool to identify those as at the highest risk for repeating their sex crime. Now, risk assessment is not, again, part of the SORNA program, for those of you who do SORNA, so we in Colorado have the tiering system.

And there was a webinar a couple of weeks ago that talked about the SORNA 101 and the tiering requirements. So we have a SORNA tiering requirement based on the offensive conviction. But then we increase the tiering based on the risk assessment for certain offenders. So if they come in as high risk, they might move to a higher tier.

And so we call them our sexually violent predators, and that's some language from some old federal legislation, the Megan's law, which again, was discussed in a prior webinar. So go back and check that out if you want to learn more about that.

But we do the risk assessment, and then for those at highest risk, we do a community meeting where we invite the members of the community, in geographic radius to where the offender is moving, to come to a town hall-style meeting where we invite them in and we share information about that specific offender, along with educational information, which I'll show you in just a minute.

So that's the model that we have used as the offender-specific. But there are concerns about this, and so the originator of the community notification meeting is the state of Washington, and I'm to share a story from them. Not in any way to embarrass or shame them-- they tell this story and they share it as a cautionary tale-- I just want you to understand the risks and how you need to manage this very carefully.

Washington initially did flyers for their highest risk offenders, and there was going to be an offender who was going to be released from prison who had basically told his counselors that when he got out, he was going to do really horrendous and bad things again. And so in the flyer that they sent out to the community, they identified the offender, where he was going to live, and these horrendous things that he said he was going to do.

And so they sent it out and it arrived on a Friday afternoon. And so most people came home Friday evening, got their mail, and saw this flyer. And obviously, if you get a flier like that, there's a person coming into the neighborhood who wants to do horrendous things, you freak out. So all these people

called 911 like, what's going on here? What should we do?

And so because it was Friday after hours at that point, the detectives were already gone for the week. So they sent a patrol officer out. And the patrol officer went out, and being a good patrol officer, saw all these cars parked every which way and these people gathering in a group, proceeded to ticket all of the cars, rather than to try to deal with whatever was going on.

No intervention with the community. We were seeing a group of people coming together, sort of a mob mentality starting to form, and nobody de-escalated that. And so at the end of the day, what happened because there was not that intervention, that offender's home ended up getting burned to the ground.

And so I tell you this story not to scare you away from doing community meetings, but to know that this causes a great deal of upset for people. And as a result, Washington went to more of an offender general model, rather than talking about specific offenders. I, personally, still believe that the offender-specific model can work, but you need to keep very careful control on that in terms of what's going on and how you're managing the meeting.

And so we've not had any incidents in Colorado, to my knowledge, of vigilantism or anything like that because we're very careful in the meetings to tell the members of the public what's OK and what's not OK. And you would think it would be evident that you don't want people to take the law into their own hands, but that may not be an assumption that everybody has.

So it's something that we cover in our meetings, saying, if you have a concern, bring it to law enforcement. Don't take the law into your own hands.

So in terms of the meeting planning, here are some specific tips on things you can do. All of them have really solid reasons behind where you're going to do it, the time of day, which days are best, how you advertise the meeting. Again, there are best practices out there for all of this stuff. And we have guidance documents and things that we can provide you with if this is something you're going to do.

But I want you to know that doing these community notification meetings takes very careful planning. You need to be conscientious about how you do it, what you're doing, et cetera. And so that's all I'll say about that for right now, but just want you to think about those things.

So as we talk about implementing a meeting, one of the things that's really important is that if you're a SORNA person, say, within a tribal community, this isn't on you. It's not up to you to do this. It really

takes a partnership across a variety of different agencies and programs to be able to do it. So I'm going to invite my friend, Lea, back in. And I think Lea has a couple of thoughts related to partnerships and dividing responsibilities. Lea?

Great. Thank you, Chris. And I think we're on a really good conversation, and to just bring up a few points when we look at how are we sharing leadership? How are we sharing these responsibilities? As Chris just mentioned, this isn't on, necessarily, the SORNA officer's shoulders to say, I'm going to carry these meetings. This is what our community is asking for. And I'm going to get out in front of the public and it's all me.

And so it really is looking at those resources that we have, where we can connect people maybe to other departments or to other agencies, and really working collectively as a team. And when we're working collectively as a team, that shows that unified front. So people are getting consistent information.

Like Chris had mentioned, sometimes there's assumptions, or sometimes there's things that people might pick up. And if they're hearing different information from different people, that's what creates that level of confusion. And so we find that when you're bringing a team together, it really does create that unified front for people to receive information in the best way possible.

We also talk about sharing leadership. It allows us to utilize individuals that are working within our tribal departments, utilize their expertise to share that information in the most appropriate way within the community. I also think that by having a mixed team assist in your notification meeting, it brings those experts to the table.

So for example, if we're incorporating our victims' advocates or our social workers, we know that sometimes emotions can overwhelm folks at these particular meetings, that we have that resource available to respond to those individual needs as those arise. And so really, I think when we talk about bringing your team together, I think, how can we best support each other to share this information, that it's received in the best way? Thank you, Chris.

Thank you, Lea. So in terms of thinking about some of the to-do's-- again, planning this together, how you're going to handle it-- there's a whole series of meeting to-do. We have a meeting to-do list and things like that. In terms of things you want to think about, be prepared. You don't want to be setting up the meeting at the last minute as people are walking in. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

Make sure everything's working correctly. I've certainly had meetings-- shoot, I've done these webinars where these things haven't worked. So fortunately, we have some really great staff behind the scene who have helped us with this webinar and made this as seamless as it can. But as Joann said at the beginning, things happen. Things go wrong. And you have to be able to improvise or whatever.

One thing my good friend, Bob Schilling, who's up in Washington, always says is you want to start the meeting on time. People's anxiety increases by the moment the longer you wait. They wonder, why aren't you starting? Whatever. Start the meeting on time. Even if there's people in line, they know what time they were supposed to be there.

We have people signing in. If they're still signing in and you're getting started, at least we're managing anxiety and we're managing expectations for what's going on. So again, a whole bunch of meeting dos and don'ts and things, and we're happy to help provide some of this to you if this is something you're interested in.

Here's some of what typically is part of such a meeting. Educating about the laws, helping people to know about what the laws are related to registry. The fact that not all registrants are under supervision. A lot of people don't understand that. They think, oh, they're surely under probation or parole, as well. We educate about probation and parole, but they may or may not be under that.

Giving general information about sexual offenders and offending is really important, helping them to understand that. And again, dispelling some of the myths and helping them to understand that while we're giving them information about registrants, some of the facts that are really important, for example, are that 90% of victims know the offender prior to the offense.

So that while stranger danger is a thing, and it's important to tune into, we don't want them to become complacent in having their loved ones just avoid the offender who's registered who lives down the block. There is an equal or a greater risk, in some ways, from those within the social network of the family that potentially could place children, ourselves at risk. So giving that educational information, as well.

And then if you're going to do an offender-specific meeting, giving information about that offender, being very careful about not disclosing information about the victim during this process. That's a limitation, both in terms of what we put on the website about offenders, as well as in these meetings. And I know in small communities, tribal communities, everybody knows everybody and it may be a challenge in terms of that.

But we certainly want to respect, as much as we can, the confidentiality of the victim and not implicate them through the process. And so we will give general information about the offender, rather than specific offense information. And then finally, as I was saying earlier, giving them that specific information about what they can do to protect themselves, et cetera.

So those are the things that are typically a part of such a meeting. These meetings, usually from my experience, will last anywhere from 60 to 90 minutes once you do the Q&A at the end. And again, I think it's important that you don't just kind of stay there forever. I've had some folks who have been really magnanimous and said, well, we'll stay here until the last question's answered. And my feeling is that at some point, you're done, and the law of diminishing returns has set in.

But anyway, we can talk more about the specifics of these meetings with any of you who might be interested in that. So Joann, I'm going to give it back to you now for our next polling question.

Thank you, Chris. And yes, we do have another poll question. What is the community's general attitude towards registered sex offenders returning to the community? Your options are as follows. Generally supportive, mixed supportive and resistant, generally resistant, or unsure of the community attitude.

So taking a look at the results, 48%-- just under half-- selected mixed supportive and resistant, while 38% selected generally resistant. I'll turn it back over to you, Chris.

Thank you, Joann. And thank you all for answering that polling question. And I think that's fairly consistent with my experience, as well. I've done community meetings where the crowd is very unhappy about somebody coming back into the community. And I've done those in rural Colorado, and I think particularly if that person is not originally from there, then people are very reluctant to want to have them come back or to come there.

But if somebody's from there, maybe there's a little bit more mixed, and so some people might be supportive and some people may not. But I think doing this proactive community education can really benefit in terms of dispelling some of that negativity and helping the community to understand that by doing what we're doing and the steps that we're taking through SORNA, through our supervision, through our rehabilitative services that we're providing, that we're trying to keep the community safe.

That's why we're doing what we're doing, that we're there to protect them and to keep them safe to the extent that we can. But we also want them to be partners in that and to help with that. And so

again, I think even if the community is unhappy about the return of a registrant, I think that usually when they find out what it is that we do and we give them resources and things like that, I think generally, the meeting has ended fairly well.

There's still a few people that may come up afterwards and be angry about something. But generally speaking, I think we're able to minimize some of that resistance. And I know that I talked with a tribal partner before all of this COVID stuff started, and we were going to do something like this with her community because a registrant was due to come back and the community was very much up in arms about it.

And doing something like this hopefully can help not smooth it over, necessarily, but maybe help with that reentry as the offender's coming back. So I think there are some real benefits for everybody involved. Obviously, with what we do, we want to make sure that we're benefiting our community members. We want to certainly be protecting and keeping victims safe and trying to prevent victimization from occurring.

But I think through this process-- again, maybe it's counterintuitive-- but I think we can also benefit offenders to have a chance to come back to the community, hopefully in a good way, even using traditional tribal strategies in terms of restorative justice approaches and things like that.

The other piece that I think is real important in this process and where there's value in doing this community meeting process is the collaboration with law enforcement. I think I've alluded to this a couple of times already. But we have a law enforcement officer on the call with us, Jesus. And so I would certainly want, Jesus, to invite you into this conversation now and for you to let us know if you have any thoughts related to community notification, collaboration with the community from your perspective.

Thank you, Chris, and thank you all for being here today. I appreciate this time to be able to talk to you. Sad it's over the web, but maybe one of these days, it can be in person. But again, thank you. As far as law enforcement, the reason why it's so important to have us involved is for prosecution on violations. A lot of times, a lot of these sex offenders will probably violate again or commit another crime.

And we're always there to be able to handle a situation quickly and precisely so we can do the adequate charges. Also, we're able to keep in touch with other agencies. Again, we have to understand that a lot of our sex offenders, especially in small communities, will go into bigger cities. And it's really important for us to have communication with law enforcement within the surrounding

cities and we can make sure that we track these people when they're either at work or when they're going to school.

Here in my situation, sometimes we have some of our community members who are in SORNA that work, say, in the town of Albuquerque, and they probably go to school in Rio Rancho. So we usually have two or three departments that we have to deal with to communicate to make sure that our sex offender is not committing any other crimes outside our jurisdiction here in the Pueblo.

But let me tell you a story of why this is so important, and this is why it's so important to keep track of our sex offenders. In fact, as we try hard to keep track of our sex offenders, some can also slip through the cracks, and we sometimes don't even catch them. I'll tell you a little story where we had a sex offender who lived here in town, and he met all of his requirements. He was here when he was supposed to report on time. We never had an issue.

When we did house visits, mom always said, oh, yeah, yeah. He's not here. He's at work or he's at school, and we never got to see him there. What happened is one day, we get a call from the Tennessee Department of Public Safety asking us about our sex offender, saying, hey, do you have this guy who's a sex offender? And we said, yeah. He goes, why? He goes, well, did you know that he's living here in Tennessee?

And we're like, what? What do you mean? We've been checking on him. He comes every time he needs to check. He comes. He's always punctual. We never have an issue with him. And we find out he's got already an apartment. He's got some other resources. He had a job in Tennessee. Well, how did we come to find out? And this is real crazy.

So where he was working at, he had other fellow employees or workers who were jealous of him because he was doing such a great job working at the company where they were working. And they said, well, something has to be wrong. He's from New Mexico. He's living here. Something has to go wrong. Something has to be suspicious.

So I guess one of the employees started looking into the websites and came into the SORNA website where we do our reporting, and found out that he was a sex offender. So they went back and reported it to the law enforcement agency, and that's where we get the call from this agency that says, hey, what's up with this guy? We said, well, we didn't know.

So you see how important it is to be able to have law enforcement involved and for us to keep track of these sex offenders. Plus, the other thing that we have that's easier for us to do is it's easier for us



to, at any time, go out and check on our sex offenders because we don't need that assistance from law enforcement because we can do it ourselves and we can track these people easier than if we had somebody that's not a law enforcement officer that has to be checking on these people.

Sometimes, it can be complicated because you've got to remember one thing. Sex offenders are criminals. And sex offenders, like criminals, can be violent, and we need to be careful when we deal with them. And this is why law enforcement is a very important ingredient, I would say, of the SORNA program in your communities.

Thank you, Jesus. And as a non-sworn person, a social worker, I appreciate law enforcement very much. My law enforcement buddies-- we've been doing trainings for many, many years in this stuff. We always had a little thing going between law enforcement and non-law enforcement, but man, I appreciate law enforcement so much.

And in my experience, doing these community notification meetings, especially, having a law enforcement presence is so important. And we tell people, show up in uniform, too, because I think people certainly have that greater respect for the uniform and the role that the law enforcement folks play. So I think that can help keep order during these meetings a lot.

So I appreciate, Jesus, your work on the front lines as a law enforcement officer. And if you're not sworn, obviously then partnering with your law enforcement partners in terms of the registry functions can be really, really helpful, as well.

I now want to open it up to our panel and see-- Theresa, you've been sitting and listening a little bit. Theresa, do you have anything you'd like to add related to the relationship-building process here, related to committee notification, or anything else you want to jump in on?

I guess maybe going off the law enforcement, those of you who are civilians, like myself-- our SORNA program is built under the tribal courts here-- so when you're in that position, I would just stress it's even more important to have those collaborations across the board, whether it's law enforcement. And for us in checkerboard areas, you're talking your tribal law enforcement or your BIA, your cities, your counties.

And depending on how big your coverage is-- for us, it's nine counties-- it's a lot of work with making sure those law enforcement agencies know that your program exists. So that does tag into that community notification outside of your tribal area. For us, that's a lot of different small rural towns, that it's important for them to know that you're there. And that's all I have. Thank you.

Thank you, Theresa. Appreciate it. Lea, anything else you want to jump in on here before we transition out of this community meeting into the next phase of what we're going to talk about?

Emphasizing just really that collaboration and that team approach, and as we move forward, looking at how we're building those partnerships and those relationships is always going to be key to all of our program's success.

Thank you, Lea. Jesus, did you want to jump back in?

Yeah, Chris. I don't know how this pertains to this slide, but before we started the SORNA program here, we kind of were left out of the loop, especially when we had community members who were sex offenders. I know that when we joined the SORNA program, even the surrounding agencies were so happy and so glad that we were part of the SORNA program.

They were crazy. They're like, great. Now we can relate and give you that information that you guys should have. And this is why it's so important for us to be involved in the SORNA program so we can keep on top of our communities as far as any absconders and any sex offenders. I just wanted to share that with you.

Thank you, Jesus. And that just reminded me, our good friend, Jim Warren, who many, many of you know and who we still all look up to in terms of his work that he's done in SORNA over the years, but Jim always talked about the importance of SORNA for tribal agencies, to raise that visibility of tribal agencies to be an equal partner with state and local folks, and that tribes definitely benefited from that process.

And I know in my work here in Colorado and working with our two tribes, both of them felt like they didn't have that information and that their communities really wanted that information. And so I think there's been a lot of benefit through this collaboration. So thank you, Jesus, for sharing that. And Jim, if you're out there somewhere, we certainly wish you well.

So we're going to transition now into talking about monitoring, and supervising, managing offenders from a victim-centered perspective. And this is sort of the last piece of this training here today. But I think it fits in really nicely with the community meeting discussion that we just had because we want to talk about how, again, we're doing the things with the offender, but also to support victims in the process, as well, and to support the community.

And so in terms of sex offender management, for those who aren't as familiar with this term or aren't

working specifically in that area, here is a nice little definition from the Center for Sex Offender Management. And I would say that the Center for Sex Offender Management is a great resource. Some of their materials are a little dated at this point, but they do have training materials, and different kinds of documents, and things like that. So certainly would recommend their website as being a source of some information.

But they came up with this definition of sex offender management, that what we're trying to do here is to keep our communities safe and to prevent known offenders from committing future offenses, as well as to prevent people from committing offenses in the first place. That's a big challenge. Obviously, there's a lot of abuse and offending that goes on. But our goal is to try to take on our little piece of that in our world and to try to make a difference.

And I think any of us who do this work, if we can feel like we prevented something from happening-- and prevention is so hard to measure. But if we can feel like we did something to make a difference and we kept somebody safe as a result, I can't think of any greater reason to do what we do than that. And so I think for those of us who are managing the offenders, we need to keep in mind the victims and the potential victims at all time in what we do.

I think one of the themes we've talked about consistently through this webinar today is the importance of a multidisciplinary team approach, so that we all need to be working together. Treatment providers, supervision officers, SORNA folks, victim advocates, the courts, employment, housing, education-- all the groups need to be working together. I think really, this issue crosses so many different tribal agencies within the community.

And that we need to make sure that we know what we're doing and dealing with this population. Sex offenders present unique risks and are different from other types of people in our community. Their risks are great, and I don't think there's anything harder to deal with in a community than when an offender offends against particularly, say, a child, but against anybody, obviously, not to minimize anything. And so making sure that we have the right skill set and we have the expertise to be able to do it.

And so we're using best practices out there in what we do, making sure that we go where the data takes us. I think we've been all hearing a lot about that in terms of this whole COVID situation, but I think it applies in our field, as well, that we want to go where the data is and we want to go and do the things that work.

And so making sure that we're using strategies that are proven effective, and that we measure those

for ourselves, as well, in the things that we implement within our communities, and we do research, and we make modifications to our program based on that. So sex offender management is a very encompassing broad topic as we think about all of this kind of thing.

And so how does that fit in? How do I tie this all together? In terms of community education, what we're trying to tie together here is both what we're doing to prevent things from happening, for community members, for families, how we're keeping victims safe, and how we're managing offenders or monitoring and supervising offenders as they come back to the community so that they have resources at their disposal to be able to find housing, to find employment, to get education.

And many people may be opposed to that-- community members. Why should we help out the offenders? We don't even have those resources for ourselves. But I think we want people to understand that these things are all factors, called protective factors, that reduce the likelihood that an offender is going to commit another offense.

And so if we do things to help the offender to reintegrate in a good way back into the community, it keeps the community safe. And so we need that educational approach and helping for the community to see that these two what may be seen as competing interests, about safety of the community versus an offender reintegrating back in, that those can come together and that we can do both of those, to a degree, at the same time.

There's always risk when a registrant comes back to the community. And obviously, some communities may not want to take that risk. We've certainly heard about banishment and things like that, where offenders are not welcome back. But generally speaking, and with most of the tribal communities that I've worked with over the years, I think there is an interest in trying to figure out how to do this in as safe a way as possible.

And so we want to help the community to understand this. We want to educate around this. And our management approach has to take both of those things into consideration, both how we're dealing with the offender, as well as specifically how we are continuing to maintain for the safety of the victim, as well. So Lea, I'm going to turn it back to you now for this discussion about what is effective in terms of working with offenders from a management perspective.

Great. Thank you, Chris. And I just want to preface this next little bit of conversation, probably any conversation that we're having when we're talking about a victim-centered approach or we're talking about engaging victims or identifying victims' needs as part of that planning process, that when we're saying engaging the victim or identifying those victims' needs, that there's always that caveat

of saying, look at those relationships that you have, first and foremost.

So it may not be the most appropriate thing for corrections, probation, SORNA officer to go and engage a victim and say, we're developing a reentry plan, or so-and-so is coming back into the community. What type of safeguards do we need to put in place? It really is looking at those relationships. So for example, do we have a victims' services program?

And perhaps it's more appropriate for our office to communicate with that victims' service program who might have a connection to a victim if there's some type of interaction between our offices that need to take place, but that we're always putting that on the forefront. I think and also that we're not projecting or making assumptions about what a victim may want or what a victim may need, that anything that's incorporated into any type of planning process is something that that victim is requesting directly.

And so I just want to preface this conversation that sometimes we say, in general terms, I do want to identify victims needs or we're looking at a victim-centered approach. But really, all that information should be coming from the victim and we should also be looking at partnerships, first and foremost, to be sure that we're not creating any undue or additional harm for that particular individual within the community.

So with that being said, we know that part of that planning process-- are there things that we can put in place that are going to enhance that victim's needs or meet their needs in reducing the chance of them becoming over victimized? Are there safety procedures that we want to put into place? How are we educating and advocating within our community?

I know sometimes, again, in small communities, a lot of people know a particular incident. And so having education around sex offenders, around sex offenses is always a good way for the community to be informed.

And then really advocating for those support programs that can support victims in utilizing their voice or being the voice for those victims meeting those needs within the community are always something that I think we need to collaborate with and really promote within our offices, because again, there's some things that we may not be equipped to address, or to handle, or that might be outside of our scope in our particular position.

It also allows for safety planning. We know that we have offenders, if there's periods of incarceration and they're going to be re-entering into the community, we want to be sure that there's a plan that

the victim has if there's encounters. What happens if there's particular events that there may be people at the same event? How are we planning for those things? What types of safety checks are put in place?

What type of restrictions or authorities are we putting on our offenders in having free access to every event or every place within our community? Really, how are we engaging safety planning all around?

I think it's also important that we look at, how are we holding our offenders accountable? And so especially when they're coming into our offices or we're engaging with them out in the community, that's vital to victim safety. If an offender knows that they're being held accountable, and they're reporting when they need to report, or engaging them at their level-- we're seeing their engagement-- are they living where they say they're going to be living?

Are they having limited access to individuals that they should not have access to? Are they being honest and forthcoming? Those are all things that are going to assist us with holding that offender accountable.

Now, that doesn't reduce necessarily and say that they're never, ever going to re-offend, but it does put some safety guards into place to help us properly manage those offenders across the board. And again, this is where we look at those relationships. Are we incorporating our victims' advocates? Are we incorporating law enforcement that might have more of a presence if we're on a 8:00 to 4:30 job?

Where are they going out in the evenings? How are we able to track them and be aware of what's happening at the nighttime or in gatherings that are taking place maybe when we're not within our community? So there's all of these different relationships that we look at when we're looking at really creating that victim-centered approach, but also managing those sex offenders that are coming back into our community.

Chris, I know that you might have had a couple of examples that you wanted to share regarding sex offender management, so I'll go ahead and turn it back over to you.

Thank you, Lea. Yeah. A really basic example that I thought about was the fact that there was a tribal community where the SORNA program and law enforcement was in the same building as the victims' services program. And so what was happening was we were seeing victims and registrants crossing paths with each other. And so through a little coordination, able to come up with a problem-solving mechanism there.

And so what they did was that the SORNA program was actually in the downstairs part of the building, and there was a door in the back. And so they instructed all of the registrants to come around and drive around behind the building, park back there, and go in through that door, rather than going into the main entrance and going down the stairs.

And then that way, hopefully victims could feel more comfortable in seeking out victims' services in the upstairs section without being worried about crossing paths with the offender. And so I think thinking sort of strategically and logistically about some of those things.

I know that also tribal gatherings and tribal events, powwows, ceremonies, those things are huge things. How can you manage victim and registrant attendance in those at the same time, or perhaps in staggering attendance, things like that? So that's where I think SORNA programming, supervision, management of the offender can work very closely with victim representatives and victim advocates to be able to figure out how to manage some of those types of things.

So think about those things as you're working with the offenders, with the registrants in terms of, are you cutting off and creating barriers for victims to be able to seek out services or to participate in community events and things like that? So those are a couple of things that I've come across in the years that I've been doing this work that I would encourage you to think about. So thank you, Lea. So Joann, back to you. I think we have another poll here.

Thank you, Chris. Yes, we certainly do. Our next poll question is in front of you. Do you coordinate your SORNA program with any tribal victim services programs? Your options are yes, no, unsure, or I am not currently involved in the SORNA program. It looks like a little over 36% of our attendees answered yes, that they do coordinate their SORNA program with tribal victim services programs.

The next largest segment were unsure, and the third largest segment did not currently have any involvement with the SORNA program. Chris, I'm turning it back over to you.

Thank you, Joann, and thank you for again answering our polling question. And for those of you who are coordinating with victims' services, good for you. If you're not sure, I would encourage you to reach out to the victims' services programs or providers in your community. Meet with them. Find out what they do. Find out what their needs are. Explain to them what you're doing. Develop that collaborative spirit in terms of what's going on.

I think it's very important, for sure, to have this collaboration between our victims' services programs, and our SORNA program. I know that some tribal jurisdictions, unfortunately, don't have victim

service programs. So if you don't have something within your tribal community, maybe looking to some of those victims' service programs that exists within the local county nearby where those services exist because chances are, victims within your community are probably tapping into some of those resources.

Or is there ways that we can help develop some of these services? These services are so important. I think unfortunately, we spend a lot of our resources and time with offenders and much less resources on victims. And I really don't think that's OK. I think we have to be putting some of our resources into victims, as well.

The victim-centered approach I think is really important from a SORNA perspective, from a community education perspective, from an offender management perspective. All of those things, I think, are really important for us to keep this stuff in mind. Jesus, I want to invite you back in as a law enforcement officer in terms of victim-centered approach and your work with victims. Is there any thoughts that you have at this point in thinking about victim-centeredness?

Yes, Chris. Thank you, and I'll be real brief. Yes, we do have our victim advocate programs within the Pueblo Isleta. They're very, very involved in our community, and they really help a lot to deal with victims of crimes and really get them involved. One of the things that we have tried-- well, we have done-- is educate our victims as to how they can keep themselves informed, not only by depending on the police department or the victim advocate.

But we give them the resources and we tell them and teach them how to be able to access those resources, like the TSORS and other websites, which they can always get into it to see if there's any updates, not only on maybe that sex offender or that person that they're interested in, but anything surrounding their location where they live.

One of the things that we have found to be able to communicate with victims easier is, believe it or not, emails, because a lot of victims move. And sometimes, they don't keep up their locations or they don't notify us. And sometimes, the best way to notify them and keep them updated is by email or even by phone. But the best way we've found is emails.

Again, we did start a reentry program, and sometimes, it's really hard, with the resources, to be able to accommodate violators coming in. And again, it's really hard sometimes. But again, this works together with your administration and Pueblo that will allow these resources to help community members come back and come back safely into the community.



But sometimes, not everything is perfect, but we have been trying different things to be able to help the victim stay safe, but also the violator from re-offending, and hopefully making them an upstanding citizen, which sometimes, that can be also hard. Chris?

Thank you, Jesus, and thank you for mentioning about outreach directly to victims. I think that certainly, most tribal codes have specific victim notification requirements, but I think having that contact with the victim is so important, whether it's email or whatever way works best.

And I may have said it a little bit ago, but I want to say it again if I didn't, that certainly, if you're going to do any kind of community education meeting, particularly an offender-specific one, make sure that the victim is aware. We don't want the victim-- or the offender, for that matter-- at those meetings, but the victim needs to be aware that this is coming just so that they're prepared psychologically, emotionally, et cetera. So I think that networking and collaboration with victims is oh, so important. So thank you for representing that, Jesus.

Can I say one more word, Chris?

Please.

We talked about the religious gatherings and activities that we have within the Pueblo. And of course it's, such a small Pueblo that we will have that incident where both the victim and the offender could be at the same Pueblo. What we do is we take very aggressive action to separation and getting the offender out of the area to make sure that the victim does not feel concerned, or worried, or scared.

But if there's anything going on, well, we bring it up to the victim to let them know that this might happen so they're aware of it. But we also explain to them that they need to let us know, notify us, to make sure that we're on top of things. Again, we do try to really keep our victims notified and updates with any movement of the offenders so they will be aware of it, and hopefully, we can keep them safe from them.

Thank you, Jesus. Such important information, for sure. I want to go ahead and invite the panel back in again. Theresa, any additional thoughts as we're kind of wrapping down on this victim-centered piece? Is there anything that we haven't covered that you feel like it's important to get out there?

I guess just maybe acknowledging that all tribes are different, for sure, on how we limit our offenders to the community versus public events and things. But just to note for the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes, we do separate ourselves from ceremonies. So for us, we do not feel it's appropriate for the SORNA program or for the tribal government to be able to tell offenders that they can attend

ceremonies.

Now, I know there are other tribes that have different approaches. But for us, it is not for the SORNA program to decide, it would be for our chief's council to decide. So that's a group of chiefs and men that meet certain times of the year. So I would just like to acknowledge that, that everybody's a little bit different when it comes to ceremonies, and then that's OK, as well.

Thank you, Theresa. Lea, I'm going to go ahead and turn it over to you. You can do any kind of last thoughts you have related to victim centeredness, and then just go ahead and transition into resources when you're ready.

OK. Thank you, Chris. And I just want to acknowledge we had a question come in that I think it's probably directed towards Jesus, but I'll read it, and Theresa, if you have any insights to it, as well. And it's regarding multi-jurisdictional task forces, and if you have them, and how do you handle the organizational side of the task force?

As far as my knowledge, we do not have multi-jurisdictional task forces. It's just in general, we do work with other agencies and normally with the contacts that we have with the other agencies. But it's not, per se, a group of officers that we come together to address the issue. It's more of keeping ourselves communicated and informed so we can keep up with any movements of our SORNA or our sex offenders. I don't know about you, Chris, but here, we don't have any kind of task force.

Theresa, do you want to jump in on that?

Sure. At the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes, I guess we have what we call a multidisciplinary task force. So that really encompasses in-house, as far as the tribes, our victims' services, our law enforcement, our tribal security, department of justice, the tribal courts. So there's a lot of people that come together to make that happen.

I will say, when you have a lot of agencies, of course, in the tribe, it's hard to plan sometimes to get everybody on board, but just to keep trying to have those meetings. And whoever attends, you take that for what it is and you just keep going.

Also, sometimes the challenge is when administrations turnover or we had employee turnover, sometimes, those responsibility levels change. So at one time, our social services coordinator really, I guess, spearheaded that task force. Now, we're looking at transitioning that to another coordinator and then just getting her up to speed on everything that we've accomplished thus far. But other than

that, it's been really helpful for us.

Thanks, Theresa. And this is Chris. And our experience, part of our tribal-- or part of our state SORNA law, we have in our law the requirement to do what we call a community notification technical assistance team. So we have a team specified to do this kind of notification work. And the people who are responsible for initiating that tend to be the law enforcement folks in the jurisdiction where there's going to be some type of a Notification But we have a state-level team that provides them with technical assistance to be able to do it.

And so when I talk about collaboration, I think anybody can start the collaboration process. So if that's you asking that question, you sound like a great leader to me, and I would encourage you to reach out to other people and get some things going. So back to you, Lea.

Great. Thank you, everybody, for your feedback. And hopefully, that provided some additional insights. And keeping in mind that I think even in Theresa's example, there's a lot of checkerboard in Oklahoma, as well. And so I think everybody knows that difficulty in coordinating those multi-jurisdictional, multidisciplinary approaches. But definitely, good job in moving those things forward.

So as we're getting towards the end of our discussion today, we wanted to move a little bit into providing some resources and acknowledging that there is a ton of resources that are available for everyone if you're looking for that information. So I'm not going to read individually off this whole list, I just want to say that there's a lot of resources out there.

This particular page is available in the copy of the PowerPoint that you'll have access to that you can go back and look at any of these websites. I would also encourage that if anybody is faced with any challenges, they're looking at community notification meetings, or has any other SORNA or technical assistance needs or requests, please feel free to reach out to any of us here or go to [NCJTC.org](http://NCJTC.org) website, and you can get in touch with any of us to get training and technical assistance.

So there are resources that are available to further explore some of these topics or any of the topics that we've discussed over the last three weeks. So thank you for that time, Chris.

And if I could just add, also, this is through the SMART Office. The SMART Office has been a group that has funded a bunch of things that have been of benefit. They have provided the direct assistance to the tribal SORNA jurisdictions. And I know in my experience of working with tribal SORNA jurisdictions, they appreciate that funding greatly in terms of being able to get their SORNA programs going.

Those grants are for SORNA jurisdictions that are eligible to participate in SORNA. And they also

provide the funding necessary for the National Criminal Justice Training Center-- us-- to be able to do this training and technical assistance, and we're very grateful to them for that. And then I was also fortunate enough to participate in this project, as well, the Sex Offender Management Assessment and Planning Initiative, with the worst acronym of all time. I tease Scott Madsen about it. I'm not sure if you're out there, Scott, or not, but I'm teasing you, and SOMAPI.

But anyway, SOMAPI is a great project and it's on the SMART Office website, and it has great breakdowns on research, on information related to every topic that you might be interested related to sex offenders. So strongly encourage you all to go to the SMART Office website. That's a great resource, as well. And this SOMAPI research has some great information, including briefs and fact sheets that you could use with tribal partners, with tribal council, tribal governors, tribal leadership. I think providing good, research-based information can be very, very helpful.

So we want to just end this with talking about what some of those resources are, and I think Joann, it's now back to you for our final poll and then some questions and answers.

Thank you, Chris. We've launched our final poll question for today before we begin the question and answer portion of the webinar. And the question is, would you like to learn more about this topic? Yes or no. Thank you. We have a 97% response that yes, folks would like to learn more about this topic.

Thank you, Chris, Theresa, Jesus, and Lea for the excellent presentation today and sharing your insight and knowledge with us. We are now moving into the question and answer portion of our webinar. Let's also move to the next slide so that our presenters' contact information is displayed while we do the question and answer portion of the webinar.

So one of the questions that we have for our panel-- and there are a few coming in. One of the questions has to do with multiple jurisdictions. We have multiple jurisdictions over three counties, multiple towns, and three county sheriff's offices. It's hard to coordinate. While it is more of a statement, do any of our panel members have any guidance or experience they have had that could help our attendee navigate some of these difficulties associated with having to cover or having to communicate with multiple jurisdictions?

I can jump in that, Joann. The Pueblo Isleta Police Department-- we are cross-commissioned. We have two jurisdictions that come through our Pueblo. Half of our Pueblo is in one county and the other pueblo's in another county. What we have done is all our officers are not only FLETC or Federal Academy-certified, but we are also state-certified.

So what we do is every year with the new sheriff that comes in, we do get commission cards from the surrounding agencies to have the ability to enforce crimes not only with our native community, but also with non-natives that come to our community. And that gives us access to other agencies. And we also hold a New Mexico State Police commission, which also gave us the authority to enforce the laws of the state and also the community.

So it's a privilege to be able to have. I think our officers carry like five commission cards, which gives us the ability to be able to enforce, communicate, and also deal with crimes, not only within the Pueblo, but within the state. That helps.

Excellent. Thank you so much, Jesus. I appreciate it. So one of the questions that I would like to present to our panel is, what are the main interests of victims in participating in sex offender management?

This is Chris. I'm going to jump in, and then maybe other panelists can jump in, as well. In my experience of doing treatment-- so I did direct treatment for many, many years before I came over to the dark side of working for state government, and I'm saying that with my smile. You can see me smiling right now, for those of you who know me.

But anyway, in terms of my work directly in therapeutic services, I also had the opportunity and actually the privilege of interacting with victims, as well. I did basically restorative justice types of sessions, what we called clarification sessions, between offenders and victims. I also went and met with victims' groups a great deal to share with them what was going on in the offender's treatment and supervision.

And in my experience, what victims were very interested in knowing first and foremost was, was the offender going to get help, hopefully to prevent a future offense? I think victims are often very selfless and very concerned about future people being harmed. The other thing that I found that victims benefited from a great deal in these interactions was to learn more about what systems were in place and what was being done with the offender.

Sometimes, these were family members or people who were known to the victim, and so there was both a desire for accountability as well as some support for help. But I think that the more that we could educate victims about what it is that we were doing, in terms of managing the offender, it helped the victim, the survivor to feel safer, to feel like he or she understood what was going on.

And so I often felt, again, like that victim-survivors were very supportive of what we were doing, so

long as they had that understanding. So that was my experience. I don't know if anybody else has anything they want to add.

I think I might answer, if I might, Joann. Also, it's collaboration and communication with the surrounding agencies. What we do here, every quarter, we meet up with the surrounding agencies for coffee or for lunch, and just communicate what's going on in the Pueblo, what's going on in the surrounding communities. We create that relationship where it makes it easier for us to reach out to our surrounding agencies when we need any assistance or any kind of information. And that has really, really helped us a lot. That's a plus.

Perfect. Thank you to our panel. One of the questions that I would like to jump to because it is affecting so many-- really everyone, it seems-- has to do with our current situation with COVID-19. The question that we're proposing to the panel is this. Due to COVID-19 gathering restrictions, we aren't able to have our regular community notification-education meetings.

Do you have any suggestions on how we might have effective virtual notification meetings or alternative ways of sharing information regarding sex offenders in our community?

Here in Isleta, Joann, just to give you a brief, what we're doing with our sex offenders, for now, because of the epidemic, we are making house visits. Of course, using the necessary protection, we set up appointments to go meet up with our sex offenders and we meet them at their residence, and we do a process for now away from the office and in the open to make sure that we don't bring them into our stations and put anybody at risk.

And that's what we're doing for now. Until this is over, this is how we're handling our sex offenders within the community.

And Joann, this is Chris. I'll jump in, too, that I think Theresa was talking before about that there's a variety of ways of doing community education, and one of them that was mentioned was the media. And I've worked with different tribes where they've used different types of media mechanisms to do education and notification. Perhaps a local newspaper.

We had one tribe that actually has a weekly radio show where they share the information on the radio show. So I think there's other ways to access the community when you can't get together face to face. And I certainly understand that right now is probably not the time to hold a large-scale community meeting, but perhaps looking at some of those other types of mechanisms, like use of a different kind of media circumstances, might be a way to do it. So those are my thoughts.

Perfect. Thank you to our panel. The next question I'm going to propose to you I think is something that everyone on our panel, and I'm going to include our folks who are present on this webinar from the SMART Office, that we've all experienced or assisted with, so we're so happy that this has come to our attention.

The question that we're posing to our panel is this. We have an attendee who is building a SORNA program from the ground up. And he's asking, besides the SMART Office and Oklahoma DOC, are there any other good places for me to look at the beginning process? So this is clearly somebody who is trying to build this program from the ground up and perhaps needs some assistance. I'll turn it over to our panel.

My thing would be a TTA, allowing as soon as we can for one of us to go out and walk them through the process and teach them how to create that sustainable SORNA program so they don't get mixed directions or they do the proper things initially. And this is, I think, one of the best ways to do it as far as that I can think of right now. I don't know if anybody else has any other ideas.

This is Chris. I would encourage you to go back, hopefully, and review the first two of these that we did. I think particularly the first one, on the introduction to SORNA, could be very, very helpful. And yes, I think it's even possible to possibly plug into some kind of virtual technical assistance, as well, where maybe if we can't be on site, maybe we can get together with you by the phone or by some web-based medium to be able to help you.

So my understanding is that technical assistance is still available, and I would encourage you maybe to approach one of us or Joann, who is really our coordinator for all of this, offline and we'd be happy to help you.

Excellent. Thank you, Chris. And to our attendee that proposed that question, as you can see, we did send you a little note for following up with you outside of the webinar.

The next question that we're going to propose to our panel is this person is wondering if you have any suggestions for a tribal probation officer who supervises probationers who are registered sex offenders from another jurisdiction, but the offense here was not a sex offense. The example that is being given is that they had a possession of CDs in our jurisdiction, but are registered as an offender from a couple of counties away. I'll turn it over.

Theresa, do you want to take that one?

I would think of them more of like a law enforcement perspective, but even from a civilian perspective, you're just going to have to know who your probation officers in your surrounding counties, your surrounding tribal officers. It's going to be making those phone calls, reaching out to their emails. See who's in your courts. But like I said, just making sure your contact information is the most up to date.

We've had to reach out multiple times to see who's running the registry in different counties or cities at the time, because they have a lot of turnover, too. So it's just like I said, keeping that utmost information. And sometimes, it's as simple as maybe just reaching out to somebody that you don't know and offering to meet up for lunch that I found is an extremely effective tool. Thank you.

Thank you, Theresa, and I just want to clarify that our attendee did clarify that CD, for her, is controlled dangerous substance. I do want to note that we're really fortunate to have SMART Senior Policy Advisor Julianna Grant on this webinar. And if we can walk it back to the gentleman who was seeking a little bit more assistance in regard to getting the SORNA program off of the ground, Julianna gave some really great responses.

But one of the things that you can do is look on the SMART Office website and see what tribes in your area or close to your area have a program, and perhaps you can reach out to an implemented tribe that is nearby. But she definitely agrees that getting technical assistance by phone is still available. One of the things that we would want our attendees to note is that we do communicate very regularly with the SMART Office and enjoy the good relationship that we have with them and with our tribal partners. So it can really be a really positive approach, especially when we're in a situation when a tribe is trying to go from the ground up. You will get good support, but certainly looking at the SMART Office website is a wonderful place to start.

I think the last question today that I'm seeing is this. Do you have any suggestions on ways to encourage community members to opt into the automatic notification option? I'll turn it over to the panel.

This is Chris. I'll go ahead and start it off. And this is something I think we had in the slides, but didn't talk about much. One thing to do is for the SORNA program to get greater visibility and to perhaps attend different types of community events. So even if you don't do your own community meeting, if you attend different types of fairs, different types of things, have a table available and put some fliers and some brochures out and things like that.

That can let people know that the SORNA program exists. My experience has been oftentimes the



community are not as aware of the SORNA of program as we would have liked or we would hope. And so I think to attend some meetings, to do some kind of advertising, that may sound kind of crass, but the idea of educating your community that this information exists and then letting them know, maybe even having a sign-up sheet or figure out a way where they can sign in.

And again, this is going to be the non-COVID environment going forward. But and if you use the non-traditional community education ways through the media, perhaps advertising that there is this possibility and encouraging members to sign in so that they have this information. I think usually, when we make people aware of it, they're interested in it and they sign up for it.

Thank you, Chris. Are there any other panelists who would like to weigh in?

I like to use that tool, I guess, to engage. I find it a lot more helpful when I'm doing my in-house educationals. So when I'm going to my daycares, and my Head Starts, my directors, you get those mama bears on board and you got a lot of people involved there. So that's just another way to think about it.

Thank you, Theresa. Thank you again to our group of presenters. This concludes the question and answer portion of the webinar. Thank you for joining us today and have a great day.