

Webinar Transcript | An Introduction to Child Abduction Response Teams (CART) in Indian Country

Welcome to the National Criminal Justice Training webinar-- An Introduction to Child Abduction Response Teams in Indian Country, presented by Derek VanLuchene and Valerie Bribiescas. My name is Julian Garcia, and I'll be moderating for you today. This webinar was provided under an award provided by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs, US Department of Justice, and supported by the AMBER Alert and Indian Country programs. The opinions expressed by presenters in their oral or written material or theirs alone and do not necessarily represent those of the National Criminal Justice Training Center of Fox Valley Technical College or the OJJDP.

In conjunction with our mission, our webinar series works to bring together state, local, and tribal subject matter experts to present and discuss critical issues related to missing, abducted, and exploited children. I am pleased to introduce today's presenters-- Derek VanLuchene and Valerie Bribiescas. Derek VanLuchene is a project coordinator for the AMBER Alert Training and Technical Assistance Program, with a focus on CART in continuing to expand the number of us DOJ-certified CART programs, increase the number of trained CART programs in Indian Country, and assist previously trained teams in maintaining operational capacity and readiness.

Valerie Bribiescas is a project coordinator with the AMBER Alert in Indian Country program. She is a retired detective with the Maricopa County attorney's office in Arizona and has over 25 years experience, with the majority of her policing career with tribal law enforcement. Valerie is a nationally recognized expert on cultural complexities of law enforcement operations on tribal lands in advanced forensic interviewing. Derek and Valerie, thank you for being here with us today. The time is now yours.

Thank you, Julian, for the introduction. Good to hear you. And thank you all for being on the webinar today. Again, my name is Derek VanLuchene, and I'm a project coordinator with the National Criminal Justice Training Center. Joining me today is Valerie, and she is not only a good friend but an excellent instructor and brings a lot to the table when it comes to issues in Indian Country. So Val, welcome.

Thank you, Derek. Welcome, everybody. Glad to have you.

Yeah, so we'll get started today with our Child Abduction Response Team training in Indian Country. And hopefully, today, by the end of the webinar, we'll have covered these things in our learning objectives. We just want to go over the basic elements of CART-- what is the Child Abduction Response Team and identify considerations and challenges for implementing CART in a tribal community, when-- the overall concept can be a complex one. And hopefully, this webinar will talk about things that we can do to make that easier for you to implement a team within your community, within your tribal community.

And we'll explore different ways that you can engage the community-- how you can get your community involved in the overall concept of CART because it's very important. As we all know, when a child goes missing, it's going to be more than just a law enforcement event. It's going to be a community-wide event. And so it's important that there's many stakeholders that come to the table to make up a team, and we'll talk about those different stakeholders later on in the webinar today.

And then we're going to go over some techniques. How do you start? That's the question that I get asked. The concept is great, but how do you-- how do you do that big lift of starting a Child Abduction Response Team? So Val and I will go over some of those things that can help you get started, get the ball rolling when it comes to starting a CART. So hopefully, by the time that you get done with this webinar today, we will have explained to you, thoroughly, what a CART is and then answer any questions that you have. And I just want to remind folks to put any questions that you have in the chat for us, and we'll answer those questions as we go along.

So what is a Child Abduction Response Team? It's a multidisciplinary team that responds when a child goes missing. So one of the misconceptions sometimes with a Child Abduction Response Team-- that it has to be an abducted child. We have teams around the country that respond to children that wander off. For example, in Iowa just a couple of weeks ago, a five-year-old autistic girl who was with a foster family wandered away from the house.

This was in a rural area of Iowa. They called when she disappeared. And local responders got there, and they activated the Iowa State Child Abduction Response Team, which-- there's different regions in Iowa that make up the team. It was a rapid deployment of multi-agency response to that. And they found the little girl within a couple of hours, using a drone. But the thing is all those resources are frontloaded. So in other words, they already know the resources before they ever get that call. So it's easier to implement those types of resources.

My background-- personally, my little brother, Ryan, in 1987 was abducted by a repeat sex offender from our backyard in the community of Libby, Montana, which is in the Northwest part of our state. One of the things-- when my brother went missing-- he was missing for two days before he was found. One of the things that the first responding officer said to me years later is he said, I wish I would have known what my resources were. I wish I hadn't been looking for my resources and looking for your brother instead. So that is the essence of CART-- getting those resources frontloaded so we aren't looking for them when that child is missing.

Now, a CART can be set up in several different ways. It can be a single-agency CART. So I look at Columbus, Ohio, and they have a single-agency CART. So they respond to missing children as a team within their jurisdiction. A regional CART is-- we were just in Nebraska talking about reorganizing that whole state. So they already have, with their State Patrol, regions that are set up, so they have State Patrol regions throughout the state. And so that concept takes those regions and makes a team within each region of that state. So we see a lot of regional CARTs that are coming up.

Also, bigger counties-- agencies that are-- a larger county-- Allegheny County in Pennsylvania-- there are countywide CARTs. So that county is responsible for the cart, but they bring in all those agencies that are within that single county. So those are different examples of a regional-type cart. Statewide CART concept-- again, usually those involve the whole state. Arizona is a good example of that. They have a statewide cart program that involves multiple agencies that cover the entire state. So the whole state is covered by pods of child abduction response teams. It's very similar to a regional, concept but it does include the entire state. So that's an example of a statewide CART.

And a tribal agency CART-- and this is something that we're hoping to see an increase in-- tribal communities that want to implement a CART within their tribal agency. We all know that time is of the essence in these cases. And the quicker we can deploy on these cases, the better our outcome is going to be in terms of finding that child and returning that child home.

So today's focus will be on, how do we do that? What's the concept behind a tribal agency CART? And what have we seen in terms of training for them and the special needs that go along with creating a tribal CART? And as Val can attest to, tribal-- you've got to keep lots of things in mind when you're creating something for a tribal agency. And Val, you can jump in any time and talk about that. But it's something that we have to pay attention to.

So in my experience in working with tribes with AMBER Alert in Indian Country, we are going out, and we're talking to communities, and we're talking about their AMBER Alerts. Is there a gap between the state agencies and the tribes? It's very important that we cover all those gaps. And one of the things that we notice that would be helpful with this these CART teams is-- a lot of the tribes already have what they call a CERT team in place.

So the CERT team is pretty much a response team for the tribe-- a community response team where everybody works together. And they respond to disasters-- maybe a flood, maybe a fire, whatever the case may be. But you have an array of people, because in a tribal community, we all work together. Everybody knows everybody. Everybody knows who lives where. So it's easier for us to work as a group that way.

So when we have our training for AMBER Alert and we talk about our tabletop exercises, a lot of those people join so they can be a part of that. And it's an array of people. It can be social services, teachers, ADOT, casino staff. Anybody that is a part of that CERT team can definitely help with this CART, with providing a CART team for the community.

Right, absolutely. And Val, Desiree asked a question in the chat. Have you seen tribal response teams combined due to lack of resources? And I'm in Montana. I live in Montana. One of the tribes I work closely with is the Blackfeet Nation. And they formed a CART team three or four years ago. And within that team, they have partnered with the county, which is Glacier County. They've also partnered with the border patrol because they're right up on the border. They've partnered with Federal Fish and Game. So yeah, there's lots of different partners that a tribal community can choose to have join in their team and have those agreements with other agencies that can make up that team.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

I'm so sorry, Derek. Go ahead. I'm sorry.

No, I was just going to say that what's important, though, is the training that goes along with it so those tribal issues that are there-- everybody knows, going in-- for example, searching a cemetery for a child in a tribal community is something that needs to be talked about before people just go into that kind of thing. Go ahead, Val.

Most of the tribes that we work with-- Desiree, in speaking with you-- is-- tribes don't have the resources. So when we get together and we have training with AMBER Alert Indian Country or we bring together a training for a tabletop exercise, that's all about resources. And it's a test, basically, to find out what resources you have available for your tribe, and it fills the gaps. Like I said, it's all about filling the gaps.

It's coordination and communication with the outside entities-- Sheriff's office, city, whoever is your outside entity. That's all part of it because we all know that when that child is abducted in Indian country and taken somewhere-- they're going to be taken off the reservation. They're not going to be staying on the reservation with this perpetrator. This perpetrator will take that child off, in most cases. So that starts involving everybody. And it's just trying to get everybody to work together at one time.

Absolutely. Teams, usually-- CART teams train together in specialized areas. We'll talk about search and canvass, investigations, leads Management, command post coordination, volunteer coordination. What we've seen in a lot of tribal communities is the element of an emergency manager or tribal emergency manager or coordinator that really is instrumental in getting a CART started and maintaining that CART. They have their fingers on the pulse of a lot that goes on within the tribal community, so they're a very good resource.

Now, this-- these specialized positions in CART are instrumental in the CART team. However, it's not limited to that. And we'll talk, like Val said, about different partners that make up a Child Abduction Response Team. But keep in mind-- your emergency manager or tribal emergency response coordinator-- they can be very, very helpful in getting that because they know how to organize during a natural disaster or a community event that happens. They're very well organized, and they know how to do that sort of thing. So keep them in mind.

With working with tribes, we've also found that a lot of the tribes that do not have public safety in effect-- so they may be overseen by BIA or some other entity-- that those tribes will definitely have an emergency manager in place. So a lot of the times, we work with them when we're going to do training.

Yeah, for sure. Very important part of it. CART coordination-- each team should have a CART coordinator. Now, this doesn't mean that this CART coordinator is the boss and they take over every incident, but it could be. A CART coordinator-- that job is to oversee the operations of CART. So really-- and I always call it a champion for the cause. It's got to be somebody that's going to want to see, first of all, a CART develop in their community. And secondly, it's going to be somebody that oversees that, makes sure it's sustainable-- and we'll talk about sustainability a little bit, too, but making sure that cart stays operational in terms of manpower, in terms of training, all those things that are important to keep that ball rolling.

But what happens if that CART coordinator goes on vacation? Well, Val never gets a vacation because she's always working. But if Val's our coordinator and Val leaves for some reason, who's going to pick up that while she's gone? Who's going to manage that CART team while she's gone? And so we have to have a depth chart of people that know what CART is and that can oversee that coordination in the absence of that main coordinator.

So very important that we build the layers in all of this because when we do get that champion for the cause, we know that sometimes they do everything. They wear multiple hats. So it's something that-- we have to ensure that we build those layers out for each position, and we'll talk about those positions after a while. So make sure that you bring on several people that can help and assist in that.

Evidence-based standards of excellence-- we have 12 things that we look for in a CART team, and we'll go over those 12 things here in a little bit. But that's what we look for in making sure that a CART team has the sustenance in it to function as a team and we're not missing any crucial response mechanism within that Child Abduction Response Teams.

Now, these are fluid teams. I always call them, fluid teams, because I've seen teams around the country that have responded to a missing child. I'll go back to the Iowa example the other week, with the five-year-old autistic girl. When they deployed on that, they did a very good job. They got resources in there. But still, after the girl was recovered, returned to the family, I'd met with their CART coordinator, and he said, boy, we forgot this. We forgot this. We need this resource that we didn't think about.

So it's a fluid type of team, that you're always going to be looking and seeing where you can improve, and that's where the importance of training comes in because training allows you-- and Val had mentioned our tabletop exercises, too, that we do when we bring in a mock child abduction scenario and we sit in a classroom. We give you the case, and you do the investigation. You do the search. You come up with ideas of how you would handle that situation within your community.

And that's a good way of testing your Child Abduction Response Team-- whether you have the resources that you need. But it's a fluid process. But we're always building and improving those capacities, and we're always involving the community, enhancing that response from the community because, believe me, I was in Eastern Montana on a little girl-- four-year-old little girl that was taken out of a park by a stranger. And he was captured first, before we found her. But by all indications, this guy had thought that he killed the little girl. We recovered her alive after he told us an area where she was.

That was a huge community. And this was in a tribal community, and it was a huge response. But we not only need that response-- it's very important. But if we do get that response, it has to be organized. It has to be an organized response so we don't lose control of anything. We maintain the investigation but still involve community members where they can assist and they can be useful. So we'll talk about different areas that we can do that. Very important that we stay in touch with our community when it comes to these kinds of incidents.

So yeah, I was going to bring up the case study just real briefly. This did not involve a child abduction response team, but that Eastern Montana story that I talked about where this little girl is literally playing in the park with a bunch of other people-- a bunch of other kids-- actually, the oldest child there was a 12-year-old girl.

And they observed a guy outside of the park and-- just standing there watching this group of kids play. Well, this guy ended up walking into the park, picking up the victim, literally throwing her over his shoulder, and walking out of the park. And the other kids witnessed that. They went and got grandma, which-- our victim-- our four-year-old victim-- little girl-- was living with her grandmother. And they went and got grandma, and grandma responded over to the park and couldn't find the little girl, so she called law enforcement.

And it was a tribal response. Tribal police responded. Federal Fish and Game responded. And they started to look for the little girl, and she was not found. And of course, our oldest is-- our oldest witness is 12 years old. And they interviewed her, and she described the suspect. She described the suspect to them, and she was able to give such a good description that they were able to identify who the suspect probably was.

The reason I got involved-- I'm a Team Adam member with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. And what Team Adam does is it's a group of retired law enforcement that responds to your community or your command post when a child goes missing. So I was deployed out to Eastern Montana, to this community. And I got there, and they were-- everybody was searching for the little girl. Her name was Maci Lilley. Everybody was searching for Maci. And we had to get some organization to it.

And that's where the concept of the Child Abduction Response Team comes up, is the faster you can get organized, the better off your results are probably going to be. So the suspect in the case of Maci Lily was a guy by the name of John Lieba. Once his description went out, people started to say, hey, this sounds a lot like John Lieba. And he was kind of a transient guy within the community that everybody knew.

But the main goal in that was to find John Lieba, and John Lieba was found the morning after Maci's disappearance and abduction. He was by himself. He was picked up by somebody on the side of the road. A passerby, a motorist saw him in this van that he was riding in and called in 911. And they stopped the van, and they were able to put Lieba-- John Lieba in custody for questioning.

And what Lieba had told them is that Maci didn't deserve what she got, and I deserve the death penalty. Those were the two statements that he'd given the FBI agent that interviewed him. And so, at that point, you're thinking, well, we've got a different kind of case here. We've got a case that he's probably-- Maci's probably not alive. And I can tell you, as-- being there in that command post, just the look on people's faces-- but nobody gave up. Everybody continued to do what they were supposed to do. And so into the next day, we continued to look for Maci.

The second day, John Lieba, the suspect, contacted the jailer, and the jailer contacted the command post, and he wanted to talk again. And that's when he was able to say where he was, in a general location, to get to where he said he put Maci. So we ended up going there with a search team. He said, I put her in the front seat of a truck, and that's where you'll find her.

And so the team moved over there. We had dogs with us. The dogs-- scent dogs hit on that vehicle. And the deputy went up to the vehicle, and Maci popped up-- her face popped up right into his, and she was alive in that vehicle. She was alive in the front seat of that truck. And she was recovered. Obviously, medical attention was needed. John Lieba thought that he had killed her, but he didn't. She was alive.

So that's an example of how quickly one of these cases can develop. Obviously, we had a stranger abduction. We had a lot of different-- lack of resources. This was in Wolf Point, Montana, which is-- population-- maybe 2,000 people within the whole county there and within that tribal community. So there was definitely lack of resources, but everybody came together to find this little girl. Everybody did their job and did it well. And to have that organized response is something that's key.

And like I said, in Maci's case there was not a CART team. It wasn't a CART team's response. But the way they responded and how they responded was an organized fashion. And I can tell you that, in that case, the entire community was involved in that. The entire community came together to find that little girl. And it's just one it's an example of-- you've got to be organized. And secondly, it's a good example of not giving up-- not giving up and finding that child.

And we know those kinds of cases are rare cases. But any time we respond to one of these, we've got to have that in our mind, that it may be the worst-case scenario. I go back to my little brother going missing. Law enforcement assumed that he was an eight-year-old boy out playing, out on a big adventure somewhere like little boys do, and they didn't suspect that it would be the worst-case scenario. So we always have to respond with that, what if, in mind.

And that's what CART helps us do, is come together and get those resources rolling, even if we end up not needing them in the end and the child's found and we get all these resources there, and you go, oh, gosh, we deployed a lot of resources, but we ended up finding the child. And that's a good thing. I mean, that's what we want to do.

Let's check our chat here. Let's see. Desiree is asking, do you have a process to get searchers vetted? She's talking about vetting searchers, Val. And we know, with searchers, that it's very important that we vet them because we don't want certain people maybe involved in our search.

I think that, individually, as an [AUDIO OUT] somebody within the child abduction response team that is assigned to vet individuals-- assigned to vet searchers before you ever get that call. And what we encourage is-- find community organizations. Usually there's a search and rescue in communities. Also, civic organizations-- for example, the Exchange Club. I always use that as an example. They're already vetted. Those people are already vetted. They know criminal history, things like that. They make great searchers, as long as they're trained-- as long as they're trained on what to look for. Val, do you want to add to volunteers?

There's one area, as far as searchers in Indian Country, that-- or in tribal nations, that we utilize a lot. And most tribes will have-- they will have a bunch of officers that work the boundaries. And they-- a lot of tribes have these types of searchers or officers that just patrol the boundaries. They know the land, and those people are very instrumental in looking for individuals on reservations.

Some of the tribes call them the Rangers. You can definitely use those guys to vet other people or look for other people that they know because they're probably ones that would know who would be able to work in that community or have some idea of how that community works or how the land base is, how the geography is in that community because every community is different. So if there are Rangers available with your tribal police department, those are probably the ones that I would go to first.

Yeah, absolutely. Great resource, too. And they know the community. They know certain aspects of the community that maybe nobody else does, and that's so important. So yeah, to answer your question, Desiree, search and rescue is always the go-to-- the volunteer search and rescue, but also vetting your community members and taking them through a training on-- if they're going to help, this is how they need to do it because we need to be mindful of things like evidence, and we don't want to put our searchers in danger. Those kinds of things are very important to train up-- to train on the front end so we have people that are knowledgeable about what they can do with.

Let's see. How do we know if tribes have a CART? Well, that's a very good question. That comes from Denise Johnson. I know that we have CARTs that we had trained a long time ago that-- tribal carts that aren't operational. And one thing was sustainability of CART. Sometimes people get promoted or they move on or retire, and suddenly we see the cart go away. So what we're trying to do is re-energize tribal communities to get CART-- Child Abduction Response Teams.

I see you're in Wisconsin, Denise. And right now, Wisconsin doesn't have any operational tribal CART teams, but we're looking to change that. And that's what we're Val has been instrumental in outreach for us for-- with tribes, on starting these teams. So we're going to push that to get these started. I know that, in my state, the Blackfeet tribe has been very consistent with keeping their team going.

And I was actually able to respond-- I guess it's been two years ago, in the springtime, to a little girl that had wandered off. We never did find her, but they did a very good job in their response. She wandered away, and we think that she-- it was springtime, high water. They were right by the water. We think she might have drowned. So we're looking to create that model within tribal communities.

So let's look at the different components of the CART real quick. What does make up a CART? What are those 12 things that we're talking about when it comes to what it takes to bring together a CART? So those 12 basic things that we like to see each CART have. So response criteria-- this could include the area of service, like we talked about, or is it going to be a city-wide-- obviously, if we're talking tribal communities, it's going to be a tribal-wide CART to respond within that tribal community on any child that goes missing. What are you going to respond to?

One of the misconceptions that some people have of Child Abduction Response Teams is, oh, it's got to be an AMBER Alert to activate our Child Abduction Response Team, or it's got to be an abducted child in order to activate our team. Those two things aren't true. You can activate your Child Abduction Response Team without having an AMBER Alert that's out there. So maybe it's just a child that wandered off from grandma's house, playing in the front yard with the dog, and then the child disappears. That can be a CART call-out. I mean, that can bring those resources together it's with any missing child.

The other misconception is that there has to be an AMBER Alert in play, and that's not necessarily true, or it has to be an abducted child. So it can be for any missing child. So we've got to define that. How are we going to use our team? Some people say, OK, if it's a child of 17 or younger, we're going to deploy our team. We have some teams that say, if it's a missing person, we're going to deploy our team because, in any missing person case, you would probably activate those same types of resources that a Child Abduction Response Team brings. So if we do deploy our team, we need to make sure that we define that.

So team composition-- we talked a little bit about this. Who's going to make up that team? Who's going to be the people? And that's anybody that can bring a resource to the table. So Val had mentioned earlier-- teachers, social workers, child protection folks, of course, law enforcement, search and rescue-- corrections-- we have probation parole officers that are part of the CART team. But it's anybody that has a level of expertise that can respond when a child goes missing.

So be thinking in terms of a scenario. Think of that five-year-old girl in Iowa that-- she just wandered off, and how would you respond to that? And who would you want to have respond to that type of situation? So those are things that you can think about as far as making up your team. And we have examples of that on our AMBER Advocate website, where you can see examples of what teams have done with different members.

How is your team going to get notified? This is one thing that we've had some problems with, is you've got a child that's disappeared. You activate your team. And you've got three people that show up from your team. That's a problem. How do you not only get them to respond, but where are they going to respond? And what situation do you have?

We have a lot of teams that use an app-based notification system, where they notify people across the board, and you have to push 1-- yes, I'll be there, 2-- I can't go. But they know, based on that app, who's going to respond, and not only how they respond but also who's going to call them out. Who's got the authority to do that? Who's going to be the one that-- I guess that big red button from Staples or whatever that-- That Was Easy button? Who's got that red button that they're going to push to activate that?

So that's got to be figured out. Usually, it's the CART coordinator. It could be somebody else. Communication--

Derek, can I say something real quick?

Yes, go ahead.

Remember, in tribal communities, We're working out in our areas, there's Wi-Fi issues. Technology is not great in some areas. We have dead spots. So we have to make-- we have to understand those and consider all those technical issues that happen on tribal land. So be prepared to work on those when you're-- make sure that everybody is able to be notified at some point, somehow, whether it's ringing a bell in the community, whether-- it could be something as simple as that.

When we were in Yurok, we taught there. And in Yurok, it was a dead zone. There was no Wi-Fi where we were at on the Yurok tribe. And we stayed in the hotel there, and we said, our cell phones are not working here. And they said, well, yeah, the Wi-Fi is really bad, so you have to get on your rotary phone and call out. So if you want to call your husband, just dial 1, and then call. And we're like, oh, OK. You would think it was the first time we all used a rotary phone again, but some places like that do not have Wi-Fi. So that's a consideration in Indian Country that we have to understand and work on.

Yeah, absolutely, though, and that becomes very important in your planning and pre-planning, to take situations like that, with internet that's not good or phone service that's not good and make that part of your plan-- make that part of your planning for your team because that's going to be a situation that arises with any of this. But good communication-- not only between the agencies, but how are your leads going to come in? And I go back to the Maci Lilley case, with that situation. We had tons of leads coming in to the 911 dispatch. How are they going to be communicated? Who's going to manage those leads? So that's all about communication.

Let's see. Jesse says, in those areas with no Wi-Fi, do any of the team members have FirstNet? And Val, you've worked with FirstNet a little bit.

Sure. Basically, what we do with FirstNet-- and this is just-- I'm talking about AMBER Alert Indian Country-- we have, actually, AMBER Alert in Indian Country Technology toolkits that we are giving out to all the federally recognized tribes. And part of that toolkit is a six-month Wi-Fi connection, free, using FirstNet. So we're deploying all these to the tribes, and it's-- FirstNet is very, very well-versed. It's a good resource to use. And I think that the tribes would agree to use that once they saw the service and what was available through AT&T.

So our partners with FirstNet and AT&T-- we provide six months free internet services. And all we've got to do is make contact with your tribes, and we definitely can provide that service and provide the toolkit to you. So if your tribe has not received one, please put it in the chat, and we'll make contact with you Thank you.

Absolutely. Yeah, I know that's been a great resource for our tribal communities. Command and control-- when we build our team, that's something that-- we have to decide who's going to be in charge, first of all, but also our partners. We can't have people coming onto the tribe and saying, we're going to take over this case, unless it's the FBI, who has that jurisdiction. But we want to make sure that we have command and control and we know who's going to be in charge of the overall operation-- and not only who's going to be in charge, but are they capable of being in charge?

I've deployed a lot of these cases, where people are like, I want to be in charge. Well, then they realize what it involves, and they're like, well, maybe I don't want to be in charge. So you have to have somebody-- if they're going to be in charge-- that they're familiar, obviously, with CART and they've run a big incident before because it's something that-- these cases are fast-moving, and to oversee one of them takes a lot of different talents. You're going to be doing a lot of stuff at once.

Our stereotypical Child Abduction Response Teams involve multi-jurisdictional-type settings, so figuring out-- if we get a call, who's going to be in charge of that? Who's going to be in charge of managing that? And agree upon those roles before you ever have a call out because you don't want to be standing around figuring out who's going to take charge of the incident while you're looking for the child.

Search and canvass-- we looked at that-- an important component of that. Again, search and rescues are out there, volunteer community groups-- those are things that are important to have. One of the things that we do have-- and I don't think it's on our website yet, but it's going to be, is a presentation that you can download from our website to train volunteers. So it's what to do, what not to do in a search situation. And I'm finishing that PowerPoint up, that will go once it's gone through approval.

It'll be a template that you can grab and say, OK, I have a group of people that I want to train about searching when a child goes missing. What's important for them to know as volunteers? What's really important for them to know? So it's a basic PowerPoint that you can train folks with that want to be searchers, and you can vet them as well ahead of time.

And James brings up a really good point. ICS-- the Incident Command System-- is what we use for CART-- absolutely. It's a command structure that we use who's in charge? Who runs each little component of CART? We've got to have those people identified before we ever get a call out.

Blake asks, are there special considerations or different ways you would handle runaway juveniles? That's a really good question. I think a Child Abduction Response Team is a good approach to even a runaway child because a runaway child is an endangered child. A runaway child is a missing child. And we know, statistically, that those kids that run away-- chances of them being victimized is very high.

So we have the old approach, with law enforcement, that, oh, that kid's just a runaway. We don't put the resources into that. I'm telling you that we need to respond to these cases. We need to find out not only where the child is but why they're running away, the reason why they're running away. But I think that the biggest thing that we need to do-- our goal is to find that child and bring that child to safety. That may not be at home. It may be somewhere else, but bringing that child to safety.

So using the multidisciplinary approach to a runaway case, Blake, is perfect because you have lots of different resources that are there, working together for that common goal to bring that child home to safety, or to safety. So very good question, Blake. I like that. And we've had our teams used for that-- just for that resource.

Training-- we talked about that-- similar to what we're in. We've got a whole host of training. And I know Julian, at the beginning, had you scan that QR code thing, and that's where our training is. We bring to the table not only CART training but a lot of different trainings across the board on endangered missing children, child sex trafficking, missing children and Indian Country investigations. We have a lot of trainings that-- we bring experts from around the country-- subject matter experts-- to come in and give you that training. What does it cost? It's free. It's all free training. We come in for free. The training is free. We just need a place to do it. But training is a really important component to maintaining your Child Abduction Response Team, making sure that you have the latest, greatest training.

Legal-- this is something that is a very important component to CART-- having somebody a prosecutor on board from the very beginning, somebody that understands what a Child Abduction Response Team is. If you are to get into a situation where-- and usually it's with the Fourth Amendment search and seizure, you could get into an iffy situation with a search that you're doing for a child. It's nice to have that prosecutor on board to say, hey, yeah, go ahead and search it. Under the Emergency Aid Doctrine or the exception to the Fourth Amendment, you're covered. But it's really good to have that prosecutor on board from the get-go so they know what CART is and they can help you out when they're needed.

Inventory-- equipment is so important. And this is something that we do. We take a white board into a training, and we say, OK, you have a missing child. What equipment are you going to need? And we list all of the stuff that the agency has, stuff that they don't have, and then we create a wish list of stuff that they wish they had.

And what we do with that is explore that and say, OK, take this list that-- of stuff you don't have, and we've got to find it. We've got to figure out where to get it who, can bring it to the table, how available is it. So having equipment-- those physical assets and resources are very, very important to determine before you ever get that call. Again, we're being proactive when we're setting up our team in terms of resources, so that proactive approach and getting it set up beforehand before we ever get that call.

CART protocols-- that's what we're talking about now. These 12 components of CART-- we like to see those put on paper. And we have examples of card protocols from around the country that other CART teams have done. And that's the beauty of this, is that-- I was just in Nebraska yesterday and talking to them about their statewide Child Abduction Response Team plan. And all the protocols are already written by other people. And that's the beauty of it, is you can steal that, plagiarize it, whatever. But we've got those things on our AMBER Advocate website.

Reunification-- such an important thing. I'll go back to the Maci Lilley case. When Maci was recovered, grandma wanted to bring Maci home and forget anything that ever happened. And we can't do that. We've got to make sure that we give not only the victim services, but we've got to have somebody there for that family-- those victim advocates, especially when it comes to tribal communities, where we have a lot of the things that we need to consider-- traditions, things like that we need to consider when it comes to that reunification and when it comes to how that family is treated. So Val, I know you have something on that. Go ahead.

And I think that when we're working in tribal communities, it needs to be somebody that's from the community, first off. If that's available for you, that's the way I would go, is have somebody from the community work with the family because, like I said, in tribal communities, everybody knows everybody. And a lot of times, we're comfortable with our tribal community members being there and present with the family.

Very good. Yeah, absolutely important. And then community-- we talked about that-- bringing community in to your Child Abduction Response Team and letting your community be involved. Having events, talking about it, letting the community have their input is a vital component to CART. So challenges for CART in Indian Country. MOUs-- working with non-tribal agencies-- that can become an issue. How are you going to design that?

The sovereignty of a tribe and the importance of that sovereignty-- and how are you going to address issues that need to be addressed, that people that are non-tribal won't understand? We see that a lot when it comes to searching on tribal lands. What needs to be culturally considered before searching a certain area? If they're non-tribal agencies that get involved, they need to be trained on that. They need to have that tribal perspective when they come in to help. That's very important. Our goal is to find the child, but our goal is also to respect those cultural-- those cultural items that we have. Go ahead, Val.

And we have to work together. That's the bottom line. When we go in and we talk about AMBER Alert in Indian Country, the first thing we say to the community is, what would you do today if a child was missing in your community? We talk about resources, but it's all about collaboration and working together. I know that, through the historical distrust and all that era that came prior-- I know that a lot of our elders still hold that in their hearts. But these are times where, you know what? Our bottom line right now is just to find that child. And sometimes we just have to let those go and let that go and just get out there and work together as a team, and that's really, really important.

Yeah. And we know that things can change. We've got rural areas, obviously, with tribes, so all those challenges that you see listed there with environmental and landscape considerations. Cultural-- we talked about that. Keep it in mind-- different barriers and language barriers, things like that. And then high risk factors for Native American children.

We're running out of time, and we had a really good group discussion on implementing a CART and what roadblocks we might see, and we've had some come up in the chat. What would you recommend to non-indigenous-- to a non-indigenous person in terms of how to introduce the need for CART their community?

So if we're talking off-tribal-- off-tribal lands, go to law enforcement. That's a good way to get started with CART. Talk to them about the need for a rapid response to missing children. That's something that is-- a lot of these start with law enforcement. But even if-- it could be emergency management or somebody like that that is somebody that gets it started. You need a champion for the cause, is what I'm saying. And it usually starts with law enforcement, but it doesn't have to start there. They have to be a partner, but it doesn't have to start there.

Get buy-in from law enforcement, tribal council, leadership and the community. We have a three-day basic CART training that goes over a lot of what I've talked about today-- those components, broke down even further. We have a program of an implementation guide on our website that you can look at. Those are all things that you can start out with implementing a CART, and also getting a hold of me or Val. We can help you out there, too.

We also have a tabletop exercise for Indian Country that-- and basically, it's just a test for your resources, for initiating an AMBER Alert. How do you do it? And it's a tabletop exercise, and we go through it and discuss. It's about a four-hour exercise, but it really narrows down what your resources are and what's available for your community.

Absolutely. And reaching out, building that resource list, stakeholders who you want to be on the team, and develop those CART protocols. And rely on us to do that. That's why we're here, is to help you do that. Getting that CART implemented-- it's going to take a team effort, and it's going to take everybody coming to the table and getting an organized proactive response when a child goes missing.

So with that, I don't have anything else. Val, do you have anything to add?

No, I don't. I think that this was well received. And there's so much more to it, but this is the introduction, just to give an overview of what CART is in Indian Country. But there's so many different components that are also available to you. So please take advantage of them. Look at the training, and see what we can offer and provide to your communities.

Yeah, absolutely. And I really appreciate everybody being on today. And I have a passion for this stuff. I mean, it is something that I just think needs to be in every community. And I just think that, at the National Criminal Justice Training Center, we want to bring it there because we are passionate about it, and we want to bring to you as many resources as we can. But I sure appreciate your time today. And Val, thank you very much for helping me out, and it's always good to co-teach with you. So with that, I'll hand it back over to our friend, Julian.

For additional information on general TTA services, links to featured offerings, and request TTA, please visit our website. Finally, watch your inbox for information on upcoming webinars and virtual TTA opportunities. This course was developed by the US Department of Justice, Office of Justice programs, and Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and its AMBER Alert Training and Technical Assistance Program. This concludes our webinar today. Thank you again, Derek and Val, for sharing your time and knowledge with us. And thank you to our attendees for joining us today. We hope you can join us again in the future for our future webinars. Have a wonderful day.