

# Webinar Transcript | AMBER in Indian Country Update 2023

---

Welcome to the National Criminal Justice Training Center webinar, AMBER Alert in Indian Country Update of 2023, presented by Tyesha Wood and Valerie Bribiescas. My name is Tanea Parmenter. And I will be moderating for you today. Before we begin the presentation, there are some items that I need to go over.

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 in Indian Country program. The opinions expressed by the presenters in their oral or written material are theirs alone and do not necessarily represent those of the National Criminal Justice Training Center, of Fox Valley Technical College, or OJJDP.

In conjunction with our mission, our webinar series works together to bring state, local, and tribal subject matter experts to present and discuss critical issues related to missing, abducted, and exploited children.

I'm pleased to introduce you today to today's presenters, Tyesha Wood and Valerie Bribiescas. Tyesha Wood is the Program Manager for the AMBER Alert in Indian Country program. She is a former police detective with 17 years of law enforcement experience with tribal nations in Arizona.

A majority of her police career comprised of work in criminal investigations. Specifically, she was a detective of sex crimes and crimes against children for over 15 years. She has experience in working with multidisciplinary teams in tribal family advocacy centers and served as an executive protection officer for the Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President for two years.

Valerie Bribiescas is a Project Coordinator with the AMBER Alert in Indian Country program. She's a retired detective with the Maricopa County Attorney's office in Arizona. She has over 25 years experience, with the majority of her policing career with tribal law enforcement.

Valerie is a nationally recognized expert on tribal cultural complexities of law enforcement operations on tribal lands and advanced forensics interview. Full biographies will be shared in the chat box. Tyesha and Valerie, thank you for being here with us today. The time is now yours.

Hello, everyone As Tanea mentioned and said thank you for your time today. The things that we will talk about is our program AMBER Alert in Indian country. We're going to provide an update on the work that we've been doing the past couple of years and our most recent events this year, the outreach that we've had.

We'll, one, review the Ashlyne Mike AMBER Alert Indian Country Act. We'll talk a little bit about where it came from, why we have this act, and the importance of the act. As I mentioned, we'll go through updates on our curriculum, our toolkits, and our new resources. We're going to pivot back to the purpose of the Ashlyne Mike AMBER Alert in Indian Country Act. And that's the state and tribal implementation meetings.

So we'll talk a little bit about the work that we're doing with those meetings and provide any additional information or we'll have time for questions for anything that you may ask or have about the program, about the work that we're doing. Again, really happy that you're here, you're joining us. Let's get started.

So this beautiful angel is Ashlynn Mike. She is a member of the Navajo Nation. She and her family are from the northern New Mexico area, specifically Shiprock, New Mexico. In 2016, Ashlynn was only 11 years old. And in May, just as school was getting out, she was riding a school bus home with her brother. And her brother's name is Ian. So Ashlynn and Ian were both abducted within the boundaries of Shiprock, New Mexico, which is within the Navajo Nation.

Ian recalls that the person that abducted them was a familiar face in the community. They didn't know him personally or his name, but they said he was a familiar face. And Ashlynn and Ian were taken to a deserted area within the Shiprock community. Ian was actually able to escape the abductor after a few hours. He's the one who reported what happened to them.

Unfortunately, through a series of confusion and misunderstandings, the AMBER alert for Ashlynn's abduction did not happen until about 10 to 13 hours later. But when the alert came out, they were able to locate the suspect the next morning. Ashlynn's body was recovered in a remote area in desert land of Shiprock, New Mexico. Now, because of this incident-- again, everybody was responding, the community wanted to help, the family was doing search parties, there was a lot of agencies there to help.

Because of the delay, things were heightened in the community and across Indian country. And what I'm referring to is a lot of issues surfaced. And this is specifically on the gaps in communication, the gaps in public safety preparedness for these types of incidents, the coordination within the tribal and other outside agencies. Again, all these things surfaced. And there was a lot of people asking, why did this happen? Why is it this way? It shouldn't have to be this way for Indian country?

So Ashlynn's family, specifically her mother, Pamela Foster, advocated for the passage of resources and training available to Indian country, that Indian country and those federally sovereign nations within Indian country have the same resources and have the same education and training opportunities. Congress passed this act. And they amended the Protect Act. And this allowed for tribal nations-- federally recognized tribes to receive fundings.

They amended the act and is now called the Ashlynn Mike AMBER Alert Indian Country Act of 2018. And that's the premise of our program. That's the focus of our program.

Both Val and I work in this program. And again, our work is directly with tribal nations-- federally recognized tribes within the United States to increase their learning capacity through resources, through outreach, through meetings. And the biggest point is implementation meetings. And that is making sure the tribes and the state coordinators to an abducted or missing child, they are connected and they have that communication and that network available.

Now let's talk a little bit about the implementation meetings. Again, this is the focus of our program. So here, you'll see the goals and really the mission of our program. One, we want to make sure all federally recognized tribes understand the AMBER Alert process for their state. I believe there's 35 states that have federally recognized tribes within their states. So we're working with those 35 states to connect with those federally recognized tribes within their states.

And everybody's different, meaning every state plan is different and they have different criteria. So we want to educate the tribes on their Amber alert response. We want to make sure that there, again, is that connection between the tribes and the states. So for example, Arizona has 22 federally recognized tribes within their states Wyoming has two.

So we want to make sure those two tribes in Wyoming and the 22 tribes in Arizona know who to call if they have questions regarding Amber alert or if they want more training regarding Amber alert. We want to make sure that they have those numbers. And then, on the other side of that spectrum, we want to make sure the coordinators from each state know how to connect with the tribes in their state. For example, in Maine, we want the Maine coordinators in the state of Maine to connect with those federally recognized tribes within their state. And they have those direct access numbers.

Now, thinking back to Ashlyne's case we want to, again, bridge those gaps of communication, really avoid any confusion on who the responding agencies are within that jurisdiction. Jurisdiction is huge in Indian country. It's kind of-- well, a huge web. Sometimes we know who's the responding agency is. Sometimes we don't. Sometimes there's multi agencies involved. And we want to basically, when we have these plans, identify who the first responding agency would be. And then, if there was any supplemental agencies involved, put those in that plan. Again, everybody needs to be on the same plan. And that's what we encourage.

There are a lot of issues in Indian country that our program works with. One is sometimes some communities, when they call 911, they don't have that direct access and connection to the local dispatch of that tribal police department. Sometimes this 911 call is patched through different agencies until they find the correct area.

We've been seeing more and more communities now have an increase in that where they actually, when you call 911, you get your local agency. But there are still some communities that don't have this advantage. There are also some communities-- and I think some of us may connect with this-- is that there's no broadband across Indian country, like there are some areas where there's dead zones, there's some areas where it's patchy service, there's some areas where people rely on Wi-Fi calling and maybe some alerts don't go through those Wi-Fi apps. So when there's an alert, they don't receive alerts.

So again, when we come to your community and we talk to the state coordinators, we talk about these gaps in service or these gaps in response or these lack of resources. Another good thing about our program we're going to share is the tribal response plan. Again, having a community response is important within Indian country. And these community responses are integral to tribal communities.

As you know, sometimes within a community organization, we wear several hats. Sometimes an emergency manager could actually be the police chief of that police department. Sometimes the emergency manager is also a member of council. These things happen.

And these things are common within all the nations across the United States. So we definitely encourage and support a community response, so everybody knows the plan, everybody knows, again, those numbers and those connections. These implementation meetings that we have, we ask the community to invite who you want to these meetings. It could be just the police department.

Or it could be the police department and the fire department. It could be the school board attending the meetings. It could be the clinic-- the front desk at the clinic. It could be the dispatchers or the dispatcher coordinator, victim services. Again, we encourage this. We leave it up to community that we're visiting to make these decisions.

And I want to make that apparently clear that we offer resources to you. Our program does not tell you how to do things. We offer assistance. We make suggestions. Every community is different that we work with, and again, the state plans are different. So again, we are a resource. We are a tool for you and your community.

Now the implementation meetings, as I was referring to in the previous slide, if we were to come to this community-- so this photo is of a community in New Mexico. We held a community meeting with them and told them about our program. We actually talked about the response plan. Their dispatcher was there. Their police officers were there.

The AMBER Alert coordinator from New Mexico was present. And we talked about that response plan. We talked about the criteria for an AMBER Alert. But the AMBER Alert coordinator also talked about all the other alerts that were available through New Mexico. And we also provided some training. And later in our discussion, we're going to talk a little bit more about the training that's available to your community.

And here's just a glimpse of the stuff that we've been doing within our program. Now, the Ashlynnne Mike Act was passed in 2018, hence the name, the Ashlynnne Mike AMBER Alert Act of 2018. We received funding from Congress through a grant. And we officially started about in 2019.

We were introducing our program, talking about who we are, and then COVID hit. And we all know everybody kind of took a break. And we were addressing the bigger needs of our communities at that time with health and safety. So for about two years, our program was virtual. We've been on the road and doing in-person trainings and in-person meetings for a full year now. And we've been able to visit a few communities, which is what we prefer. We prefer to come to you and talk to you in person, shake hands, and meet and see your community.

And we want to hear firsthand and see firsthand the dynamics of your community, whether it's the-- maybe your response plan includes river patrol because there's a large river in your area or there's lakes in your area. And then we'd travel all the way to Northern Nevada where it's desert and they use drones or they use dogs. So it's important that we come see your community, we learn and we share and we see what's happening because when we go to the next community-- so if we're traveling from Montana and we go to Nevada or we have a meeting in Utah-- we share what we've seen, we share what we've learned from other communities, and then we talk about those needs.

Because sometimes there may be something working in Utah and they've got it down, and we'll go to Maine, and we'll share, like, this is what's happening in Utah. Maybe it'll apply to the state, to the tribe in Maine, maybe it won't. But again, it's about sharing. We hope that we don't have to start from scratch at every location that we go to. I can't say enough that, because there's 574 federally recognized tribes, we're all different, we have different landscapes and maybe culture where we're also kind of the same. So we're big on sharing ideas and sharing resources and talking about the experiences that we've had with other communities.

I've heard it once from New Mexico that basically we're all in this together, right? We don't want what happened to Ashlynnne's family-- to Ashlynnne, what happened with her, we don't want that to happen again. And from what she left, the legacy she is leaving for Indian country, it is our duty as program managers, as program coordinators, as those people in AMBER Alert, it is our duty within our communities as parents, as teachers, as leaders, as elders, we need to protect our children. So we're in this together. So when we talk to you, we're definitely going to continue to share information with our tribal communities.

A little bit about what we've done this year. We have Texas. We're going to be meeting with three tribes in Texas in a couple of weeks. We've met recently with-- we're starting to work with the tribes in Nebraska. So if you're in Nebraska right now and you're from a tribal community, drop that in the chat. Tell me where you're from. And we'll talk about what we're doing with your community. If you're in Idaho, we will talk about the things that we're doing in Idaho.

Our most recent events have been Northern Nevada. We've met with the communities there. We've done some networking outreach in Minnesota. We've also been working with some community leadership from different areas.

Yurok tribe, in California, we have visited them in their community. They are very active in their missing and murdered Indigenous people, indigenous women projects and advocacy. So we've been working with them. And that's definitely something we can do, on another note, when we have these state meetings. We want to know about those events that are happening in your community. So please understand that we're there to listen and learn just as much as we're able to provide our resources for you.

One of our biggest events for our program is our yearly symposium. So the AMBER Alert Indian Country Program is under the big umbrella of the national AMBER Alert Training and Technical Assistance Program. So we have one symposium for both our programs. So we have AMBER alert coordinators from all the states attend a symposium or are invited and encouraged to attend the symposium.

And then we bring our tribal leadership. We bring our tribal police. We bring BIA. We bring all those people-- it could be prosecutor from a tribal community. We bring them all to the table. And we train about-- we give updates on any legislation for AMBER alerts, we talk about missing and exploited children, we provide them with training.

This year, we had our AMBER Alert symposium in Southern Arizona. We were able to host the event with the Pascua Yaqui community in Tucson. It was an amazing experience because it was our first time meeting in person after two years. Again, through COVID, we were doing virtual seminars. And then I think a lot of us can relate. It was really nice to get out in the open and shake hands with members of our organization we haven't seen in a while. It was really good to connect with tribal communities and see them network with other communities.

What you see here on the slide is a few of the classes that we offered in our symposium. So we connected with the Yurok tribe. And they talked about their legislation. Because they are a Public Law 280 state, they talked about how to adapt Indian country procedures and policies with the consideration of a Public Law 280 state.

We had some great presenters from the North Dakota State Patrol Office. They actually have a cultural liaison program, so there's-- I believe they're deputies in the state patrol. Our tribal liaisons that work directly with the tribe, they are working on some memorandums of understanding with the tribes to work with the state and offer agency assistance. You can look more into that program if you Google their North Dakota patrol-- State Patrol Cultural Liaison Program.

We also have some great associates that work with us-- former CIA, former FBI, former tribal law enforcement, detectives, and officers. One of the presentations that we provided there during our symposium was a case study on a child that went missing from Wyoming. And the family name was Littlelight, so we talked about when that alert went out and the response plan that occurred within-- I'm sorry, not Wyoming, it was Montana. Forgive me for that. It was Montana. And we'll talk about that response plan. And that particular class was provided by a former BIA law enforcement agent from Montana.

I want to share this slide-- the picture-- and talk a little bit about the picture that you see. If you look closely, you'll see that it's a drawing. This was made by a child from the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community Elementary School. And they provided their artwork and wrote a little message to our attendees in the symposium. Each attendee was given a card. And on the card, it says, "good day," which is symbolic of thank you or gratitude from within the Salt River O'odham language. But these were provided to our community.

Again, we're really trying to increase our AMBER Alert in Indian country understanding and component so that everybody knows that there are still tribal nations within the / you'd be astonished at sometimes the questions that we have, like we didn't know there was tribes in our state, or knowing that there's 574 federally recognized tribes. Some people don't know that we're still here. So this card that was made by Salt River, we shared that with everybody.

And think it was just a really good component of our symposium. Again, if you're interested in helping or doing something with our program, we are open to listening and hearing and helping in any way we can. I wanted to throw that out there for you. So you'll hear from Valerie here.

Good morning, everyone. Again, my name is Valerie Bribiescas. I am the Project Coordinator for AMBER Alert in Indian country. I work alongside Tyesha. And she has talked about just the communication and working together with tribes.

And in this program, all I've learned that it's just a joy to work with other tribes from throughout the United States, to include Alaska. I mean, we go out and we visit. And she's absolutely right. It's so nice to go out, visit, shake hands, eat food, buy jewelry. And that's what we do, Tyesha and I, and we love it.

And I think, number one, that's the most important thing when you're working for any type of job you're in is to like it. I'm retired. And when I started working for AMBER Alert in Indian country, I was really thrilled. And I love working with tribal communities. I'm a tribal member. So it just opens a lot of doors for us in Indian country to open up the program for those tribes that need resources, that need help, basically, in trying to get information when a child goes missing within their community.

So when we started the program, we started going out, having implementation meetings with tribes, and meeting people, and then COVID hit. Wah-wah. So we ended up having to be stuck.

And here we are, what are we going to do, what are we going to do. And trying to get on the phone and call a tribal community wasn't working for us because the tribal communities would be closed. And we'd go to voicemail.

And we were so frustrated at that time. So what else could we do in the form of meeting other tribes and talking to other tribes and giving them more resources? So we had extra funds left over. So what we used them for is what we call our AMBER Alert in Indian Country Technology Toolkits. And basically, it's what you see here.

We have been provided the opportunity to give all federally recognized tribes a toolkit. And as you can see, within this toolkit, the following items are available. So you've got the Toughbook. You've got a webcam.

And a story about the webcam. We went and spoke to a tribe in Tesuque. And it's a very small pueblo in New Mexico. And we were with the chief of police. And we were looking over the items in the toolkit. And he says, you know, I love this multifunctional printer you have, this printer-scanner is what it is. And he says, basically, when we go out to community members, and if a child goes missing, we want to ask for a photograph.

And he says, a lot of tribal members won't give up that photograph because maybe that's the only photograph they have of that child. So they have a hard time giving that up. So we feel bad taking their photographs. So the scanner's in the toolkit. So hey, we said, you know what, he says, now we can just scan it and give the photo right back to the parents.

So we were like, yay, that's good for our toolkit. That'll help you guys. So that was one area that we were-- phew-- glad that we have that in our toolkit. We have a camera. And then we have other-- batteries, and memory cards. And we also have links in our AMBER Alert in Indian Country web page where you can download resources.

Maybe a child goes missing and you're a patrol officer, and you want to have a checklist of the questions to ask. Maybe you're a detective and you oversee missing children. You want a checklist. There's a checklist for you. Maybe there's a supervisor that wants to see what I need to do as a supervisor when a child goes missing, then there's a checklist for all those. Those can be downloaded on your handy-dandy Toughbook tablet. And there you go, everything's there.

One of the things that we have added to the toolkit is the capability of possibly providing some Wi-Fi service to some tribes. And it's just a service for a certain amount of months. And you can utilize it for whatever timeframe is given to you. And if you choose to continue it, you can use the service through the company that we're working with or partnering with, which is FirstNet. And so that was something that was added to our toolkits.

So right now, our toolkits have been sent out-- a lot of them have been sent out. Probably about a hundred have been sent out. And some of these are some of the tribes that received them. So we've got Comanche tribe, Lovelock PD, and then Kickapoo, they all received their toolkits. And they were so happy when they got these. And for tribes that have six officers-- in Alaska, we have a tribe that has one officer. I mean, for them, this is so important.

But there are those other tribes that are very-- they don't need the toolkit. They're very well-off as a tribe. So these tribes will say to us, you know, we'll forego our toolkit. We'll let you go ahead and give it to a tribe that really needs it, which is just so wonderful for Tyesha and I, because that just says, we're working together in communities.

And it says so much for those tribes that say, you know what? We don't need it. We have everything we need here as far as that. You go ahead and give it to a tribe that needs it. So we've been going out. We've been talking with tribes. We have associates that work under us that actually make contact and do some outreach and introduce themselves and introduce the toolkit to them. So that's how we've been going about and making contact with tribes as far as the toolkit goes.

We also have made contact with several communities, several states. And we've done what is called a "media day," where we have gone out and we have-- say they're having a tribal meeting and all of the tribal members-- maybe a chief of police meeting for the state of Wisconsin. They're going to have a meeting there. And all the tribes are going to be present, Chief of Police are going to be present for that meeting, we will have all the toolkits for each of those communities present at that meeting. And we'll do a delivery of all the toolkits to all those tribes within that state.

So as far as that goes, Navajo Nation has received all of their toolkits. Minnesota has received their toolkits. And I see Kaylee's watching. Hey, Kaylee. And then I'm going out to Montana. And I will do the same thing at a meeting there next week. We are working with Wisconsin.

And I see Melissa's on. Hey, Melissa. She's the AMBER Alert coordinator for Wisconsin. And then, hopefully we will get more states. And Tyesha and I feel like this is the best way to get everybody in one area and explain to all of the tribes within that state what's available for them. And everybody's at the table. Everybody's working together. So it's really a blessing when we can all go out and talk to all these tribes from one state at one time. So that's something new as well.

So other resources that we provide is our AMBER Alert in Indian Country website. And there's our website. And on there, as you can see, it's just AMBER Alert in Indian country. There is another big AMBER website. But ours is specifically for amber alert in Indian country.

And this is where we share. We share training. We share all our resources. Partner programs-- we have other partners that we work with. And we share information on this website. And this truly is open to all of those tribal members in the community. All you have to do is get on it and look at the training modules and see what's available. And you should be able to get on there and get whatever training you need.

So we do have what's called a AMBER Alert in Indian Country Resources Secure Portal. So to get within the AMBER Alert Training for Indian country, this is for the coordinators, clearinghouse managers, and the CART team leaders for AMBER Alert in Indian country. It's a partner portal where you can work with each other and work together on anything having to do with each state in Indian country.

So say you're in Washington and you get on the portal, you've already signed in, you have to just get a email and do a password. And then it goes through-- it's a secure portal, so we have to go through a little bit more to get there. But it's a very simple process.

Once you get on there, say you're an officer or something from Washington and you want to look at something that's happened in Oklahoma, you can get on the portal and it should show all the people that are from Oklahoma that you can connect with and work together with. We also have what's called a interactive map. So we have, right here in the coded colors, all the regions for the big AMBER.

But if you were to be in Indian country and you were to click on Colorado, you'd click on that, and it'll bring up the coordinator, it'll bring up the clearinghouse manager that's in charge of that state, and it'll give you a list of the tribes. So right now, this is a constant, ongoing process because we know in Indian country, we're always changing hats. So the community-- the chief of police that was in Southern Ute maybe two years ago may not be the same person now.

So the contacts may be changing, as we know, all the time. So this is kind of a work in progress all the time for us in Indian country. And I think you guys all understand how that works.

So other trainings that we have offered are Missing Child Investigations in Indian Country, Unresolved Missing Persons in Indian Country, we have an Indian Country Tabletop Exercise, and then the eLearning courses. So when we started looking at this curriculum for Indian country, we notice that a lot of the curriculum was not tailored to provide those cultural considerations, to provide the history, to provide culture, to provide jurisdiction issues. And they were not-- it was kind of, I want to say, not totally-- and Tyesha and I say "indigenized."

So our job right now, for these courses, is to make sure that they are made for Indian country, which will include all that. Say, for instance, for the tabletop exercise, if we're talking about that and we talk about the scenario and we go out, we talk about all those cultural competencies. Say when you're doing a CART and you're going to look for a child, one of the things that we know that is in Indian country and is nowhere is burial sites, right, ceremonial burial sites.

They're not in the cities. They're not in the counties. But they are in Indian country. So how do we go about that? How do we know that?

How do we have people understand when they come from the outside entities to help us to look for these children, how do they know that? How do we teach them? So this training is opportunity for them to learn about all the cultural competencies that they may have to go against when they're working in tribal communities. So we incorporate all of that into these training modules, which makes it easier for tribal communities to understand and also for the outside entities, because we all know that if a child goes missing in Indian country, that perpetrator is not going to keep that child in Indian country.

He is going to take that perpetrator or she's going to take that perpetrator out of Indian country. And they're going to go somewhere else with that child. And whether it's on a State Route, whether it's on a different city, they're going to take them somewhere. So then it becomes a whole community plus outside entities working together to get this child back into our community. So we have to incorporate all of those areas so that those outside entities understand how to work with tribes when this may happen in a tribal community.

So we have completed several tabletop exercises. And we completed two in Alaska. We just did those virtual. Those were virtual. We completed three in New Mexico for the three pueblos. We've completed two in Colorado. We've done those, one in North Dakota, one in North Carolina, one in Minnesota, two in Nevada. So we are trying to get these tabletop scenarios out to our community members so they understand.

And basically, it's a fictitious scenario of a child missing in Indian country. And there's discussion points where everybody speaks, everybody gets a chance to discuss, and we go through it. It's about a four-hour exercise. But that is the exercise that everybody is asking for.



So please, if your community needs that, put your name in the chat and just let us know what you need. And we will help you with whatever area you need, whether it be the unresolved missing persons training, whether it be the missing persons, whether it be the tabletop exercise. Any of those are available for you. We also have an eLearning exercise as well that you can do at your self-pace. And it's Missing Children in Indian Country.

Just want to reiterate what Val was saying. So you mentioned the few locations where we've done this tabletop. So I want you guys to see it on the slide. This is the Indian country. It's called CATE, Child Abduction Tabletop Exercise. So if you want to put it in chat or you want to send us an email to say, I want to know a little bit more about CATE, again, Child Abduction Tabletop Exercise. This is the scenario. We run through it, basically situations in missing child.

So when we do the implementation meetings with your community, we talk about those resources within your community. We have the AMBER Alert coordinator for the state come out and talk about all the alerts besides AMBER that's available so you're aware of that. And then it's really good to jump into this CATE, to jump into this scenario and say, OK, we've given you the meat and potatoes, let's go test it based on what you know.

And there's no pass or fail with this CATE. We don't go and put it in our records and take it back to DOJ or back to our little corner and say, these guys didn't do well. They don't know what we're doing. That's not what it's about. What it is about is talking, engaging, communicating with those people in your community, whether it's the fire department, whether it's the Head Start staff, whether it's the dispatchers. But again, everybody's on the same page.

And then you have your AMBER Alert coordinator. We have some amazing AMBER Alert coordinators who are so vested and want to help tribal communities. We have them there to answer questions for you, or really for them to learn about your community as well because that's just as important. It's not just a one-way communication. It's about everybody knowing-- and Val talked about that, why it's so important to bring in those cultural considerations in this type of response.

So again, we are happy to do that. I don't even think we talked about price yet. Today only, until 5:00 Pacific Time, it's free-- free. I'm kidding. It's always free, not just today. It's free all the time. We don't ask anything of you or from your community.

Well, actually we do ask that you provide us a location. So find us a place to meet and teach and then find us the audience. That's all we ask. We work with you on those things. We send out the registration link. We can send you something to send out to everybody else to invite them to this meeting or to this training.

It's really important that you, as a tribal leader, as a community leader, decide who needs to be a part of this meeting because we're not the experts in your community. You are. So we need your help on that. But everything is free. We will come to you. We will bring our best teachers and instructors there. So I encourage you to take that initiative and reach out to us and talk.

Hi, Tyesha, can I say something real quick?

Of course.

So my friends, when we went out to other tribes and they have what is called a CERT team, so their CERT team is basically the Community Emergency Response Team that the community puts together that works on fires, disasters, floodings. And they all get together. And the CERT team is one of those pieces that can be a part of this training. Just putting it out there. If you have one in place, those entities are excellent for this tabletop exercise. Thank you.

Right. So again, this particular training, CATE, is essential. And taking it back to Ashlynn's incident, the misunderstandings, the gaps in communication, and knowing and understanding when you call 911, where does it go, and then even law enforcement questions or community questions-- what can I do to help right now.

We want law enforcement to do their best investigation. They do have their own response. We support all law enforcement response plan, which is why it's important that the community understands what that process is so that they don't impede any investigations or any response plan. We've got to work together. We're all in this together. I can't say that enough.

So next steps, what can you do or how can you get us out there? We talked about sending us a message and requesting more information. And we want to connect you with your state AMBER Alert coordinator. We want to connect you and understand those AMBER Alert response plans with that already in place for your state.

We want you guys to know and meet the AMBER Alert coordinator so when Val and I are in Louisiana talking to them and you're in Nebraska, you won't be calling Val and I. It'd be great to hear from you. But, you know what, let me call Jason Brandt from Nebraska. He's our AMBER Alert coordinator. He can help me with my question. We want to make sure that you have those acts, that you have that access where you are with your state coordinator.

So we have done quite a few implementation meetings. And we've been to communities. Like I said, we were in Wind River. We follow up with our coordinators and our contacts. So it's not just one meeting we're done. We actually call you back and talk to you and say, how are things, do you think?

We have been asked to come back out and train again. As Val mentioned, sometimes the people, the roles that they played four years ago, they're not there anymore, new leadership, new chief of police. We can certainly come back out and talk about educating you again and reconnecting you. What we hope to develop is really a contact within your community, an AMBER Alert tribal coordinator or community liaison for AMBER Alert so that they could be in our network and have access to the portal.

But they could also be trained and be that trainer when new leadership comes in. I think that's very important that you have somebody within your community whose role it is to be updated on any legislation, but to understand that with people coming in, this is things that need to be consistent. Training needs to be updated on a regular basis. So again, that's something we can talk about when we go to your community.

OK, I believe we have some questions. I think we're ready for questions right now. So if you have any questions, feel free to use the Chat feature.

All right, we have a couple questions. Are there any CART teams in Indian country that you're aware of?

There are a few CARTs, which is the Child Abduction Response Team. It's basically a portion of AMBER Alert Training and Technical Assistance that we train on and teach on, have resources for. Val and I worked within the child law enforcement agencies in Arizona. And at that time, the tribes that we worked for, specifically it was Gila River, they were a part of the CART team.

It's been a few years since we've been back. I'm not sure if they're still involved. I know there are other communities. For example, Navajo Nation, they've had some involvement with the CART team in Arizona. There are-- I believe it's Kansas, they've worked with their response team. But what we're seeing is basically those tribal police departments are involved with the bigger CART program.

There's not one that I know of where there's a tribally-led CART program. They're working on it. We've heard discussions from a few tribes who are interested in leading that project. So that would be really good development. Maybe next year, when we do our updates, we'll tell you about some tribal nations who stepped up and said, we want to lead CART for our community or for our state. We are working in, and probably going to be putting out some CART in Indian Country training. So Nancy, be looking out for that or reach out to us and we'll talk a little bit more about that CART Indian Country.

The next question is, "What is currently going on in South Dakota, specifically in the Black Hills? How is it tied with the traditional AMBER Alert? And how are missing Indigenous children tied in with the human trafficking, sex trafficking element, and any ties in Ohio?"

OK, Nancy, I love all your curiosity. And if I don't answer all these questions fully, feel free to reach out to Val and I and we'll talk offline. So first question, think I can answer first-- first question. We actually got connected with a contact this week from South Dakota. She's requesting us to come out. We provided information for the link to access and request us for the unresolved missing person cases component.

I think we're going to try to see if we can kind of-- right now we're starting with three tribes. And think the idea is to move across the state. And this works with all the states. Sometimes there's-- in Nevada, there's 30 colonies. So we obviously cannot meet with 30 at once.

So we'll just move throughout the state, going from East to West or whatever works for the communities at that time. So Nancy, in South Dakota, we do have a request to start work out there. I know the Oglala Sioux community received their toolkit. They reached out to us early in our program and our outreach, and they said, we want a toolkit. So they received their toolkit. And Val, there may be another tribe that's on the list for toolkit disbursement? I'm not sure.

Any insight on that?

I don't remember. I think it was Cheyenne River.

OK.

But the three areas that we're looking to train for is the Oglala Sioux, Rosebud, and Cheyenne for South Dakota. And basically, what she's looking at is the victim services tie into the CART team. And so we're going to try to do it-- we're going to look to do a tabletop exercise and incorporate what a victim services person does and their role, which is really important because, as cops, we're like this.

And we are out looking for the child and we forget about-- the family, we forget about because we're so focused on trying to find that child. So victim services brings in a lot of perspective. So that's what we're going to hit on most likely with the South Dakota training.

OK, and then, your next question, how is it tied in with traditional AMBER Alert? This is one of our components of educating communities. Everybody is protected under their state AMBER Alert Response Plan. Arizona has a plan. Minnesota has a plan. Wisconsin has a plan. North Carolina has a plan.

They cover the entire state. So all tribes, right now, are covered under that traditional AMBER Alert plan. What our program is involved in and asked to do is to have the tribes know and understand that AMBER Alert response plan and how to better work with the state and how the state can better work with you so that everybody knows that they're part of that plan. And if there's some sort of gap in having that alert process or implemented, we're going to try to help you with that.

Some tribes-- well actually, all tribes have the power to have their own AMBER Alert response plan if they desire. Navajo Nation is one community and one tribe that decided we're going to go, we're going to have our own alert response plan, which works with their state. So they didn't say, no, we don't want the state plan. We have our own.

They said, OK, this is an addition to the state plan. That's probably the best source because, rather, if you want to make your own plan, well, you can do so, but you always have the umbrella of the AMBER state plan. Should you have your own plan, you would, in essence, have two plans available for your community. We can talk a little bit more about that if you want us to come out.

And then, your last question, how are missing Indigenous children tied in with human trafficking, sex trafficking elements? This is a question we could probably take another hour to answer, Nancy. And we do have some training that answers this question. And I don't think we have the time right now to answer it. But we will connect with you. Or if you could connect with us, we can certainly chat offline.

In terms of ties in Ohio, there are no federally recognized tribes in Ohio. There are probably state recognized tribes. Our funding only covers federally recognized tribes. But that doesn't mean we can't come to anybody in Hawaii-- that too, but Ohio-- we can't go to Ohio and talk about our program, because there are a lot of Native Americans, American Indians that live in Ohio and that have relatives in other tribal agencies.

We can still talk about it. For example, Chicago, which I know is not in Ohio, we were asked recently to do a presentation at the Native American Resource program or center in Chicago, which I understand is one of the biggest programs there for people who live off the community. So we can still educate in areas like that.

And we still work with tribes in states don't have tribes because we think it's important and relevant that they know that these communities are faced with some issues and that they sit in and understand how to work with those states that have tribes so that they're able to, if there is a alert that has to cross state lines, they know that, OK, this is from a tribal community. Lot of movement there. If I didn't answer your question, can Nancy give us a call back?

So Jessica, you had asked-- I'm just taking over tonight. Jessica, you had asked about receiving a tool kit for one of your MMIP groups. And we're not really looking at AMBER Alerts, are we?

She said she's in Alaska and currently looking at an AMBER plan. So I put in the chat our email, the askamber@foxvalley.edu if anybody wants assistance with that.

Right.

I sent Tyesha a contact.

Right, thank you, Tanea. But again, if you need to reach us. But Jessica, I think the first question was you were asking about the MMIP, if you were available for a toolkit. Our toolkits are specifically for tribal police officers. And if you are a nation that works in your community and responds, we will still give that tribal nation the toolkit. But we will assign it to their emergency manager or to the fire department or whatever response person is deemed suitable.

We just can't give it to the BIA and law enforcement because, of course, their DOJ. We much prefer the tribe to have it. So we don't give the tool kit to grassroots organizations or MMIP coalitions, because it's intended for law enforcement response. But we have done work in Alaska. We have been talking to the SPOs in Alaska that are through Alaska State Patrol and the Tenaya Chiefs Conference on identifying villages that could receive a toolkit.

So a lot of work happening there. Please connect with us, Jessica. Let's talk offline about the other things that we could do for Alaska, because there is a notion that we could be offering specific equipment to you that's not included in the toolkit because Alaska is-- the resources and the dynamics are a little bit different than what we see down in the lower 48. Val, you want to add anything to that Alaska?

No, I think that, Jessica, just get in touch with us. And I think that we can do this offline. And we can answer your questions. Just get a hold of us and we'll talk about it, absolutely.

Thanks, everybody. Thank you, Tyesha and Valerie for your presentation today. For additional information on general technical assistance services, links to featured offerings, and request technical assistance or training, please visit our website. Finally, watch your inbox for information on upcoming webinars and virtual technical training opportunities.

Thank you again for your participation and attendance. And this course was developed by the US Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and AMBER Alert Training and Technical Assistance Program. This concludes our webinar today. And thank you again, Tyesha and Valerie, for your time and knowledge with us. We hope you can attend in the future. Have a wonderful day.