

Emma: Okay. I'm going to let everyone in.

Allan Peters: [inaudible 00:00:11]. Is this the last session?

Emma: Hi, good evening, everyone. Welcome to the Ontario edition of the National Indigenous Fire Safety Council Project Fireside Information Session. [crosstalk 00:00:57]. Okay, let me just see what is happening. Mute everyone there. I apologize for that, I'm not quite sure that's supposed to happen like that. So yes, welcome everyone. And my name is Emma and I'm a contractor with the National Indigenous Fire Safety Council Project. I'm speaking to you today from Secwepemc Territory near Kamloops, British Columbia. And I'm going to provide you with a little bit of background on the project, to tell you a little bit about what we've been doing and what's going to happen next.

And then we'll hand over to Blaine Wiggins, who's the executive director of AFAC, and he'll do a bit of a question-and-answer session. So, during the presentation, if you do have any questions, just send a message through the chat, and then that will come to me and I will ask those questions of Blaine, when we get to that. Before we do begin the presentation though, I'm going to hand over to our AFAC board member and Elder Allan Peters, and he's going to open the gathering for us.

Allan Peters: [Non-English language 00:02:39] my relations. Creator, thank you for another day. Thank you for bringing us together today. Thank you for the gift of technology so that we are able to meet and stay safe from this strong sickness. We ask that you help us and guide us, so as we can help others. Creator, give us acceptance, patience, and understanding of each other. Thank you, all my relations.

Emma: Wonderful. Thank you, Allan. Okay, let's go back to... Sorry, I'm just getting this share happening here. Here we go. Okay. Thank you for your patience. So firstly, I would like to cover off a little bit about who the Aboriginal Firefighters Association of Canada is, because that way we can better understand how that fits in with the National Indigenous Fire Safety Council Project. So AFAC, or the Aboriginal Firefighters Association of Canada, was established in 1991 by Indigenous firefighters. And it's a united body of regional Indigenous emergency and fire service organizations from across Canada. AFAC is committed to raising awareness of the fire and life safety challenges in Indigenous communities and in improving the outcomes. They work with national, regional, and local, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous organizations and with individual communities to bring about that change. The National Indigenous Fire Safety Council Project is the combination of many years of hard work to get meaningful backing from government to create an organization that would allow communities to determine their own fire and life safety outcomes.

What does 'for us, by us' mean? The National Indigenous Fire Safety Council Project is an Indigenous organization for Indigenous communities. Everything

that we do is grounded in information from Indigenous communities about what you need and want, what has been successful in the past, and of course what hasn't worked so well. Some of the ways that the National Indigenous Fire Safety Council Project supports communities is by helping communities to understand how fire and life safety standards are beneficial, by providing training to achieve, monitor, and maintain standards and by supporting access to adequate funding for sustainable services. We also assist communities in ensuring that capital infrastructure is of quality. So, the National Indigenous Fire Safety Council Project is creating the National Indigenous Fire Safety Council, which will be the ongoing entity.

The AFAC Board of Directors is committed to the inclusion of all Indigenous Peoples in both AFAC's current inception and in the development of the National Indigenous Fire Safety Council. The board is currently undergoing governance changes that include extending invitations to Inuit and Métis people to serve on the current AFAC Board and also to participate in strategic direction and development of the NIFSC. The governance goal of the NIFSC is to reflect all Indigenous Peoples. Because of the limitations of federal policy, we're currently only able to deliver our programs and services on reserve and we're working with the government to remove these barriers. All of the programs that we are developing can be used right now by anyone and we've deliberately designed them that way and we will continue to do so.

This diagram shows how community needs are really at the core of everything we do. This project always has been and always will be driven by community needs. Designed by Indigenous communities for Indigenous communities. Between October 2018 and November 2019, we ran engagement sessions to provide information and gather input. We listened to communities to better understand the current challenges and gaps across the country. And we heard that immediate action is needed to address the multitude of fire and life safety issues in Indigenous communities. As we develop programs and services that are tested in communities, and then that feedback is incorporated into the product. And we're committed to continuous improvement; that means our programs will always be evaluated and redesigned to meet evolving needs.

How is the NIFSC going to make a difference for you in your community? As an ongoing organization with sustainable funding, it means that the NIFSC will always be around. Communities can come to us with your questions and be confident that you'll receive sound advice. You can know that we are a reliable source for quality programs and services. The National Incident Reporting System will make an enormous difference. Currently, there's no data being captured, so that means when we design fire prevention programs it is based on a best guess as to what the leading cause of fires is. If we have that data, we can develop targeted programs to address the actual problems that are occurring.

The NIFSC will be an independent and national organization that decides what programs it's going to offer based on the reality on the ground and the actual

needs of Indigenous communities. Using the data captured in the National Incident Reporting System, we will be able to develop a plan to address fire and life safety issues, according to fact-based priorities. Firefighter training is currently not accessible to most Indigenous Peoples, especially not without leaving your home and your community to work and study. We will develop and deliver training programs that allow people to remain in their community and create flexible working arrangements that meet the needs of the extremely diverse Indigenous communities across this country. The current offering of fire and life safety programs and services is mainly designed for urban populations. We're going to create programs and services that are appropriate for all Indigenous communities, both from a geographic and cultural perspective. There'll be programs that reflect you and your community. Again, all programs and services that we develop can be used by all Indigenous communities across the country. Even if the funding parameters currently limit program delivery to on-reserve communities.

Indigenous communities across Canada are experiencing an unacceptable number of fire-related injuries and deaths. There's a 2008 report by the CMHC, the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, which found that Indigenous Peoples in Canada are 10 times more likely to die in a fire and 2.5 times more likely to be affected by property loss per capita. Many of you would have heard the same statistic from us over and over again. And that's because this is the only data that there is, and that is shocking and unacceptable. There is no national fire protection act that mandates or enforces fire life safety standards. There's no mandated enforcement of occupational health and safety on reserve. There's no national coordination of Indigenous fire service standards and programs and no national coordination of level of service standards.

Each ISC region can provide programs or fund regional services at their discretion. So, support in each region will vary depending on how that ISC region wishes to provide funding. There's no established fire incident reporting. Data collection that was taking place was inconsistent and it was based on band-capital infrastructure. So, the information that was being gathered was looking at a capital asset rather than fire loss reporting. Fire service funding and fire protection in general is based solely on fire suppression. It uses formula funding and is included in flexible funding, which means that communities are not required to utilize fire protection funding for fire protection.

Housing and capital infrastructure is not subject to a national building inspection process. The current process places the liability for the build on the community rather than the builder; whereas off reserve, the builder is liable. And while capital projects are required to be built to national fire protection code, this is based on policy and there's no established independent inspection process. By taking a national-level approach to fire and life safety, the NIFSC is addressing the gap in national fire protection standards. And by addressing these issues collaboratively on a national scale, the coordination of fire service standards programs and services in Indigenous communities becomes possible.

Some of the gaps we're talking about are, Indigenous fire services assume responsibility for departments and community safety, but in the absence of national standards, they have limited training and experience. Because of inadequate funding, there's limited expertise and training, which hinders the adoption of fire service equipment standards. With the exception of on-reserve communities, all other jurisdictions, including provinces, territories, federal jurisdictions, like military bases and airports, seaports, they all have established building and fire codes. Building codes ensure that infrastructure is built to established standards and fire codes ensure that infrastructure is maintained to established standards. This is not the case on reserve. And there were no national standards for the delivery of fire prevention or public education.

How is the NIFSC going to bring about change? We're going to work collaboratively. We're going to share our experience and resources. We're not known to duplicate existing programs and services, and we're going to share our research. Our goal is to help communities to make communities safer, that's at the core of everything we do. The NIFSC project supports internal capacity building.

Take a little bit of a look here at the four NIFSC project areas. Governance and corporate development efforts are the activities and steps that will build the organization and make sure that the project is supported by Indigenous peoples and organizations. This work will establish NIFSC as an independent, Indigenous-run organization that is mandated to improve fire and life safety for Indigenous Peoples and communities across the country. A solid research program will allow for program development and delivery based on evidence. The research program looks for opportunities to enhance the mission of the organization and to advance fire and life safety initiatives. The Indigenous Fire Marshal Services is our program-delivery arm, and we're going to take a closer look at that on the next slide. The National Incident Reporting System allows for data capture, identification of trends, and the sharing of fire prevention training and standards resources. The information gathered here means that we can develop programs that will have the most impact.

We use the term fire marshal for our operations division because the role of a fire marshal is well understood, and it relates to what is being delivered. We work with communities to identify and meet your individual needs. We collaborate with you to develop and test culturally appropriate programs. And our program areas include fire prevention, education, home safety, governance, fire department administration, leadership training, and more.

The programs will be delivered by the IFMS in two languages and through three different delivery formats, although the requirements of each program may dictate which delivery formats are available. Our program development is guided by the National Advisory Committee and by the Technical Advisory Committee.

Right now, the NIFSC Project is working with Indigenous communities, developing and testing fire prevention and public education programs because these have the greatest impact on public safety. When you see our programs listed, they're always in this sequence and that is because this is the order in which they will have the greatest impact on saving lives.

So, first and foremost, community safety education and these programs focus on specific fire safety issues and they're designed to increase awareness. They're programs for specific areas, such as cooking and heating, and they're designed for everyone in the community, from children to Elders and everyone in between. Some of these programs have things like Youth Fire Setter Intervention, Getting to Know Fire, Learn Not to Burn. Next, our fire service-governance programs are designed to support community decision-makers and leaders with developing policies and bylaws, communication plans, fire and emergency plans. These programs will also help community leaders to identify fire and life safety risks and find ways to mitigate them. Examples of these programs are Community Fire Safety Assessment, Community Risk Reduction, and Risk Mitigation and Analysis Services.

Next, the community infrastructure and engineering support programs assist communities in designing and planning fire-related infrastructure, including water systems and hydrants. They identify what communities need and then put appropriate people in place to design and build the necessary infrastructure. Examples of these programs are Fire Protection Research Services, Plans Examination Services, and Plans Examination Training. Our fire department-management programs provide support for fire chiefs and officers at the administrative level to help with creating policies, guidelines, and acquiring apparatus and equipment. These are programs like the Fire Department Assessment, Fire Officer Training, and Policy and Operational Guidelines Support.

Fire inspection services identify fire-related risks in communities and assist leaders with minimizing these risks. They also help provide building and equipment inspections. Examples of these programs are Fire Code Inspection Services, Fire Extinguisher Inspection and Maintenance Services. Investigations programs provide communities with support for both fire investigations and data collection. And these programs include training non-investigators, as well as providing accredited training. Examples of these programs are Fire Investigation Services to examine cause and origin, and to ensure the collection of fire reporting data, Fire Investigator Training and Fire Scene Preservation Training. Finally, our fire department operations training looks at equipment repairs and maintenance education for firefighters and responders. This is for the boots on the ground, people at the instant-response level. Examples of these programs are Accredited Firefighter Training using NFPA standards and also fire Prevention Program Training.

So, the image here is a screenshot from our website where we have a dashboard. And on that dashboard, you can view the current status of various components of the project. We've performed extensive research and analysis in the areas of governance, mandate, and accountability structure to identify what the most appropriate options for the NIFSC governance and organizational structure are. Our research team has created an evaluation instrument to measure program delivery and outcomes. And they've conducted a study to help in collaborating with local communities to develop evidence-based fire risk reduction strategies. We've developed 14 programs, and we have hundreds of deliveries in progress. The interim National Incident Reporting System is being implemented and data from over 2,000 fire incidents in Indigenous communities is being added to that database.

The National Advisory Committee helps us to maintain an inclusive approach that meets the needs of all Indigenous communities by providing advice on the project as it evolves. And our Technical Advisory Committee gives advice on the development and delivery of fire safety programs from a technical perspective. Part of this process is to review programs from both a regional and national level. The TAC brings together a wide range of education, experience, and expertise to share best practices and solve problems. This committee allows for Indigenous fire safety experts to guide the NIFSC programs. And there's an open invitation to all the regional technical organizations to sit on the Technical Advisory Committee.

The National Indigenous Fire Safety Council office will open its doors on April 1st, 2022. Obviously, there's a lot of work to be done to get there, but we're going to take a look at a high level. The NIFSC will consist of a head office and then regional offices across the... We're using the seven regions, so BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, and the Atlantic. The principal component of the National Indigenous Fire Safety Council will be the Indigenous Fire Marshal Service, the IFMS, that's our boots on the ground and they're going to be responsive to regional and community fire and life safety needs.

We're working on finalizing funding to make sure that it's adequate and that it doesn't compete for funding with Indigenous communities and organizations. We're determining the footprint of the organization to balance regional support within a national organization. So literally how many people are going to be physically located where. We're getting policy, infrastructure, and assets in place. Office space, computers, vehicles, that kind of thing. Our research team is developing collaboration memorandums of understanding to work with other research organizations and share relevant information. They're also examining mortality and morbidity in Indigenous communities to establish baseline data of fire-related casualties-

PART 1 OF 4 ENDS [00:24:04]

Emma: ...for us to measure our program performance against. They're examining insurance grading and costs and developing a business case for residential sprinklers. We are of course continuing to develop and deliver programs in the seven IFMS program areas. Community safety education, fire service governance, community infrastructure and engineering support, fire department management, inspections, investigation, and fire department operations. The National Incident Reporting System team will be developing and implementing the permanent and evolving system. And, if you would like to find out more details, I invite you to visit our website at Indigenouxfiresafety.ca, and if you click on projects and then go to the document library, you can search there for all kinds of different documents, but in particular, if you search for the CFA, you'll find our funding agreement and that has the details of what we're actually delivering.

I cannot overemphasize how important it is that we work with communities and organizations, so please connect with us so that our team can collaborate with you and your community to make a difference. You can of course, sign up for our email newsletters and we also have a snail mail newsletter, and please follow us on Facebook, so you've got our contact information there. If you email the info email, the people that receive that will make sure that email gets to the right person and the same with the toll-free numbers. So instead of providing you with a whole bunch of different contact information for, if you want this go here, email the info or call the toll-free number, and then you'll be connected with the people that you need.

And of course, there's a Facebook page there. We are going to be publishing these sessions, so this session has been recorded and we will be publishing it on our YouTube in the next week or so. For those of you who weren't able to join from the beginning, you certainly can review that and also listen to other sessions from other regions, if that's of interest. We'll be posting that information on our Facebook. It's really the easiest way to keep in touch with what's happening, but it will definitely be in our newsletters too.

Now, before I hand over to Blaine to have him introduce himself, I'm just going to go through a quick reminder of how to ask your questions. If you don't see a menu like the one in this screenshot, you just need to move your mouse around or touch the screen if you're on a tablet and that should pop up the menu there and you'll see the chat, and just simply type your question in the chat screen, and then I will present the questions to Blaine. So, let me just hand over here to Blaine and then he can... Okay. You are off mute, Blaine, if you'd like to introduce yourself to everyone.

Blaine: Yes. Good evening to my fellow colleagues in Ontario and those that dialed in from outside of Ontario. My name is Blaine Wiggins, I'm the executive director for the Aboriginal Firefighters Association Canada, coming from **First Nations and the two 12 First Nations** here in BC. I'm originally from the Bay of Quinte Mohawks in Ontario. So, a fellow Ontarian and much itself [inaudible 00:28:02]

for the mountains or not coming back. They're nice here. So, just hopefully you can throw us any questions you have, any comments, any thoughts. The whole point of these sessions are about getting this ongoing dialogue. We will start doing these sessions on a regular basis. The presentations won't be so overall on the project, we'll be more focused on what we've accomplished, what we're working on in the current quarter and finding these are really, it's a good opportunity to connect directly with fire departments, with community leaders, with individuals that are just curious and a) want to know what's going on the project and b) gives us an opportunity to update you and get information that will help us out quite a bit.

So, I did one question here from somebody that lives in a community that is, it's a township not a reserve but it has a high First Nations population. So as articulated in the presentation, currently, we have limitations on jurisdictionally where we can spend ISC-funded resources and expend resources. So, we are working as articulated to try to remove those barriers, but the programs and services that we're designing are designed for it to be accessible by all communities, regardless of what their geographical location are, whether they're in Inuit, Métis, First Nations, and we're also designing different delivery mechanisms. So, well, we can't at this point and I emphasize at this point, hopefully we'll have that transition, can't do direct deliveries with a non-First Nations setting geography off reserve. We're hoping that we work with federal government, work with the provincial governments, and remove any of those perceived or actual barriers to getting to programs and services that are required.

The other thing for those that are in the fire service, you're fully aware that the fire services is a collaborative service. So, we definitely will be working with provincial fire marshals and sharing our programs so that they can deliver them in those non-Indigenous jurisdictions that have high Indigenous populations, relevant type of programs for the population that they're trying to serve too. And we recognize every major city from Vancouver, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Toronto, Montreal, there's these clusters, neighborhoods, Indigenous neighborhoods that could utilize programs and services that are relevant to them.

So, hopefully that answers that first question. And I'll be happy to take some other questions on, and for those that are off reserve too, do not forget to look at the postings that we have on reserve or off reserve. And we're looking for not a few, we're looking for a lot of good people to be a part of this program and engaging careers in the fire services.

Emma: Great. So, I actually, I'm at question tied to the first one there, it's about what about unceded territory First Nations?

Blaine: There's the big conundrum and I just actually want to acknowledge our ISC partners that is part of the project. Of course, we're working with the Métis

National Council, the AFN, ITK, but Indigenous Services Canada and Monte, thank you again for coming on and presenting or representing ISC headquarters and we're very fortunate not only to work with this headquarters, but be collaborative and have an ongoing dialogue with the ISC regional folks too. They're a big part of the work that we do here and can, again it's about information sharing, expertise sharing, and ISC and our NIO partners have a lot of information that's been useful for this project. So again, thank you Monte. So unceded territory. That's a very good question and I'll be really honest. It really comes back to the designation of on reserve and limitations with the funding. So, I think we're all aware of those limitations. So now it, that's probably one of the better questions that we've received this far. Our goal is to work with Chief and Council. So, if there's a unceded territory and it's certainly something we'll just have to engage with on a basis that does happen and figure out how we can get the programs and services and the needs of that specific community met, now that is our goal is not to come to a community and do something and leave. It's come to a community, help the community with what they've identified they need. And that's as a very fundamental and philosophical element of what we're trying to do here is not tell communities what they need is to have them tell us.

And then we help them from a technology subject-matter perspective, even accessing resources that are hard to do. So now let's use an example. I mean, in a fire chief's lifetime, you might build, unless you're a big city, you're only going to build one fire hall in your life. And building fire halls is, it's a complex process where we want to gain the experience and the insight to build, help communities build multiple fire halls so we can take those lessons to the next community that's going to build them, build a fire hall, do it once in a lifetime and have them not learn all the lessons the wrong way. So that is already started. We've actually been working with one of the regions that was purchased specifically to identify what would be the minimal? What is absolutely essential?

It's not a luxury item to have in a fire hall. There's so many occupational health and safety regulations not applicable to the First Nations, but these are driving standards now. And again, because we're not part of those standards, we may be missing the boat. And that's where we as a group, not just AFAC, NIFSC Project, we as a group are bringing these issues forward so that we can identify them and collaborate. And again, we have to include ISC as a partner right now, because they truly are a partner. And they're the ones that will help us navigate some of these funding waters too. If we look ISC as a polar opposite, we're not going to get very far. So, it's working with our partners.

Emma:

Great. Thank you. We have questions coming in hard and fast here. So, I might want to take a drink of tea there. Okay. Would this organization create its own regional training facilities or will you collaborate with existing provincial and private fire training services?

Blaine: All of the above. We're not going to have a cookie cutter approach to anything. Our long-term goal is to have a national training center, and we've already, we did an open call for proposals last year and so we will be making some announcements, but one of the things we were looking for with where to locate our head office was a place where we can actually, they had enough room, enough space and enough capacity to build a training center or allow us to build a training center.

So, we've got that location, again it's a dream, it's a goal, it's not set in stone yet, so having a national coordinated training center, obviously we're designing our training so the majority of training cash should be delivered in the community versus having people come out. But one of the things I was sharing with, I believe it was Manitoba. One of our goals is develop small airport fire operations training, which would be very specialized, bring in people, bring in firefighters from across the country, do a train the trainer model so they can go back to the communities and train on airport fire operations. We have a lot of remote, rural-remote fly-in communities, and we believe that they should have access to those safety components that other non-First Nations communities have that are remote fly-in or serviced by air airports.

Emma: Great. Thank you.

Blaine: Oh, sorry. I didn't answer the other part of the question. So yes, we will be working with basically anybody that wants to work with us to ensure that we can increase training opportunities. And so, if we have, if one of the regions steps up and says, we'd like to develop a regional training center here. I'll just use actually, well, when I was with FNES, we actually developed a couple of regional training centers around the province that are still operating to this day. So, I'll just, I'll use Ontario as an example, we said, hey, you know what, we got one, we're working on one collaboratively in the South, but in the North, we'd like to develop one. Yeah. Let's put all our muscle and combined effort behind that, so that there's some equality and in training and the accessibility to that training.

So again, really it's going to be what is there, working with the Ontario Fire Marshal's Office is a good example, working with, and of course Ontario being a little bit different they've got the OFC fire training center up by Gravenhurst. There's a great center, visited it a couple of times, but making sure that we have access to that training center to utilize for ourselves. And if there's other opportunities, if there's a private company, it says, hey, we can develop some training here and make it accessible. Absolutely. Say nothing. No, there's no such thing as a bad idea, increasing training opportunities.

Emma: Great. Thank you. And you touched on a little bit when you were talking about the head office, but can you please tell us a little bit about how the NIFSC is going to decide where regional offices are going to be located?

Blaine: I still have a lot of work to do around the analytics around where to set up regional offices. We know we're going to need them, but we haven't made, it's just not, we're not making arbitrary decisions. We need to look at a list of data points and have conversations. And more importantly to asking me, data-driven, there are other factors that need to look at beside that. And we also, we're really, we'll talk a little bit more about research, but that's one of the things that we're taking a much different approach at, and that when we say, what are we doing differently? We're trying to make information based on valid research. So, one of the things that we want to know is where are our risks? What are our risks? And that should help place and drive where we put our resources, to best serve the communities that we're trying to serve.

And again, it is called the Indigenous Fire Marshal Service because that's what the members of the service are going to be, there to serve communities. Not come in and tell the community what to do is come and ask me, what is it you need from us? And then we will provide that service. So, as I said, to another group that, it's not as high as calling it, being a missionary overseas, but hey, it still is a calling, and we want those that join the IFMS to feel like it's a calling and really be dedicated to what they're doing, dedicated to communities and populations. But again, say that we could spend probably an hour just talking about where we're going to put offices, where we're going to put employees, the one thing that we are going to do. And it just absolutely makes sense. Nobody can argue against it or give me a rationale not to do it. We may have an office in Ontario, that we're going to have our head office, they have an office Ontario, a regional office that might be in the North because we need that geographic distribution. What we're not going to do is plunk all of our resources in offices. We're going to distribute them around each of the regions so that they're spending, they're serving a group of communities, but they're not spending all their time driving from Toronto up to wherever are. It's a model that I used when I managed FNES, First Nations Emergency Services, in BC and we had resources all over the province.

And we were working virtually then, and we'll work virtually. So, we've done it in the past. We'll do it in the present and certainly in the future. So, and the other kind of component too, is for those that live geographically around Ontario and are interested in careers and don't necessarily want to leave your community. That is another opportunity for you to engage in this project, get a career, but not have to pack up and be away from your territory, your people. You can serve your people and still be at home. So that's an important thing.

Emma: Thank you. Now, since you touched a couple of times there on employment opportunities, I'm going to skip ahead to a question that we had about what employment opportunities are there?

Blaine: So yes, obviously the majority of the staff will be with the Indigenous Fire Marshal Service. We're going to have some corporate opportunities around running it, the normal stuff, human resources, payroll, that sort of thing. But the

main area of employment is going to be the Indigenous Fire Marshal Service. And right now, we're really involved in the development of programming. So, we'll still be doing that. And then the delivery programs, which will be our fire officers and delivery specialists. And so, our entry positions will be fire officers, very similar to the provincial Fire Marshal's Office, official fire commissioners' offices. And one of the things we're going to be doing a little bit differently than, and just be, I like being a straight shooter. So, if you want to get a job with the provincial fire marshal, you have to basically done a career, you know somebody, be retired, collecting a pension then you get a job in a full time.

We're going to do a little bit different. We're going to take people who want to switch careers or starting career who are just dedicated to this field. They may have been a volunteer firefighter for a couple of years, but don't have any certification. That's what we're looking for. Somebody that's just raw, willing to do this, committed to this, and we'll do the mentoring, the training. So, our delivery specialists to be a delivery specialist, basically you have to have three things you need to be, you have to have experience, it's extensive experience with the fire service, whether it be operations, prevention, education, management, whatever, you need to have certifications, our staff will be certified, and they will be professional. And then the third thing delivery specialists need to be is connected, have good connections with communities because that's one of the big things is building these relationships with communities, having those dialogues, being able to have conversations, being able to influence what's happening in communities is going to be a big thing.

So, what we want to see is people that have no experience come into these roles, have us train them, give them the experience, give them the mentorship through each region, having at least one or two delivery specialists. These very experienced people that can pass on their knowledge and eventually move from fire officer to senior fire officer to program delivery specialist. And one day you find yourself working with somebody who's just brand new in the door and you're now giving back to what you've got. So, the other thing that I highlight, when I've talked with, one of the challenges we're going to have is we're going to invest five, six years of training into a young fire officer, and then the big city fire department's going to say, "Hey, come work for us. We'll put you in our fire prevention unit. As a captain, we're going to offer you 120, \$140,000 a year, unionized jobs, four-day work week, holidays, pension plan." We can't compete with that. We know we can't. And that's okay. Because even if we lose our staff, it creates another opportunity for somebody else to come in the door and start their journey, whether they stay with us or they transition into a municipal fire department, but a couple of beneficial things happen. There is one is that, that municipal fire department now has an Indigenous voice in that department. And not just somebody that they did affirmation hiring for, or they need to percentage, you earn that job because you were certified, you're professional and you know what you're doing. But the nice thing about what we're doing, and again, non-First Nation fire chiefs say it's crazy, the best time to lose people.

I say, no, because once you've done your career, you're going to go back and you're going to serve your community. And that, so in 15, 20 years from now, we're going to start seeing the fruits of our labor of this expertise, going back to your communities and providing that support and that service for the communities. And again, what we're doing here, it's not about what we can do in the next five years as both how we can change things forever and keep that rolling forward.

So, but yeah, we don't know the exact number of fire officers, delivery specialists we're going to have, but there will be a substantial amount and we're not going to be a home for retired non-First Nations firefighters. May bring some in, in the beginning to help to get the mentoring, get the training up and running. But this is a home for First Nations people. And again, '*for us, by us.*' We need to create our own experts. We need to solve our own problems. So, I'm going to get off my soap box and get to the next question. So, lots of opportunities, just keep looking at the website. And again, there's opportunities up right now.

Emma: Thank you. And I will just correct you. It is an Indigenous organization for Indigenous Peoples. And so, I just put up a little screen share here. You can see these are the current opportunities that we have, and as you can see, there are technical expertise, but there's also administrative support positions as well. So please do keep visiting this page and see different opportunities that are coming up, and please share them with anyone that you know that may be interested in developing themselves and helping bring about change.

PART 2 OF 4 ENDS [00:48:04]

Emma: Now, I've got a couple of questions here that are similar so I'm going to combine them. Aww, and I see Glenn, nice dog. Always a fan of dogs on Zoom, thank you. Looking at how are we currently doing deliveries, while we're waiting to establish training facilities and also given the current global pandemic?

Blaine: This question comes up in every session and we're glad for it because like questions, so like information. As we say, one of the things we're doing is trying to do things, not different for the sake of doing them different, but just looking at opportunities in how we traditionally, when I say we, our partner organizations and AFAC, how we traditionally delivered programs and services. And it really has been around somebody going to the community, doing a presentation for Chief and Council.

We wanted to shift. And, and one of the things we did when we wrote our initial report, or our research paper around this, is we recognize that let's take the best of what we're doing, what's successful. And then let's look for opportunities of what is happening elsewhere. So there, one of the, and, and as I say don't, don't, don't where, where you can steal good ideas give, give acknowledgement for where you got the idea, but the whole component of, of

us working with communities and putting local firefighters to work, doing deliveries within their own communities, that didn't come from us, we stole that from the Yukon fire marshals.

They've been doing it for a while now. And it's a, it's a great concept. They do it with First Nations and non-First Nations communities where they have basically local fire prevention champions that, that they hire and do deliveries. And that's one of the things we want to develop is a network of, of local champions that, that, again and we get, we always get asked in, in First Nations fire service we need to stop, but you've got to volunteer your time to do it. You know, we think that, that if we're going to treat you like professionals, then we should treat you like professionals. And there, there should be compensation for the work that you're doing, because it is valuable work, saving lives is kind of a valuable component. So that's one of the ways we've been doing deliveries is, is working directly with communities, putting people to work right now, we're all, every one of the programs that we have, like say we have three delivery models that we're, if applicable, we will do them.

And basically, we're, we'll deliver them. When the communities ask us to deliver them, train the trainer model. We'll, we'll where we train the community or a fire department to do the delivery or a self-serve model, which is basically if, if it was a Learn Not to Burn and somebody just wants to run it, they've done it before, but you know, kind of a little rusty. They don't get the training, this download the 'how to' manual and get at it. So, and the other thing about the deliveries, is that they don't necessarily, you don't, necessarily need to be, be a firefighter to actually do some of the deliveries. So, if you're a building officer and you want to do home safety assessments, we will have a model where you can get trained to do that. And then just go in and start doing home safety assessments with your community.

There's some, and I'll just use plan's examinations as an example, to do a proper plans examination you really should be certified, have an NFTA certification number. So that's not a service that we can do a train the trainer model, but we can offer training in plans examination, so I mean we tend to intend to do that, but self-serve modeling if you're a certified plans examiner, you want to do that. Yeah. We'll, we'll provide you with a self-serve model, but we know that that's a really big challenge.

Another one that is going to be a challenge is a certified WETT inspection fire burning certifications. One of the things that is not well known is, I believe it was 80 hours. If you did it, your WETT course, and you need to do 80 hours, that has jumped up to 1,980 hours. Basically, one year you have to work under another WETT-certified inspector to get certified yourself. We know that's going to be a huge barrier. And so, one of the things we're looking at doing is developing a WETT certification program where you'll remotely work with a WETT certified inspector. So, you can still log your hours and do them legitimately, utilizing other technologies, video, zoom recording your inspections and have, have

somebody sign off on them. So again, but there's another example where if you're a WETT-certified inspector, you can't download a self-service tool. So that's where we will provide WETT inspections, as and when needed, when inspections huge for insurance and, and we're, we're starting to link in with insurance, et cetera, et cetera.

So AFAC has always been a virtual organization. So, doing things remotely, not going to an office is basically how we've always done things. So if anything, the current pandemic is, is really been normal. The only thing that hasn't been normal is we haven't been able to go to conferences, do presentations to political groups, meet with Chief's committee on housing and infrastructure from the AFN. So, we're having to use different venues. So, this is a different venue, usually on us and, and Ontario First Nations Tech Corporation, you know, we would have worked with them collaboratively at any meetings that they had to do, presentations just we have in the past, but we know that option's not available to us. So even, even tonight right now is around finding another option to, to engage and connect and have the collaborative dialogue with, with regions and, and hear what's going on. And, and again, get ideas about what we need and get the input that we need.

So, yeah, so COVID, we've just basically carried on and for the most part. The hardest part is just for those communities that do need boots on the ground that need some expertise there, we've just had to find alternative ways to, to provide that support and those services. So, we're not, we're in this for a short time yet probably got another pushing a year of this before we start seeing quotable normality again. But we've learned a lot and, and we're actually, we're, we're forcing ourselves to actually get some adaptive tools. So, one of the tools that we're working on right now is doing Home Safety Assessments without actually having to go into the home. And quite honestly, that's a really good thing to do, is continue on those with an adaptive tool that way we don't have somebody tromping around in a house that's not their house.

And I think, I don't think anybody feels a hundred percent comfortable with somebody coming into their personal space. So, this is a great way to promote Home Safety Assessments without actually having your space invaded. It'll be technically invaded, using technology and video, but not having a local fire department coming in, you had the whatever device and they, you just tell them what you need to look at and what they basically take you for a virtual tour and you do all your assessment work outside and everybody wins. So yeah, some, some great ideas that are coming out of this. So anyway, sorry for the long-winded answer. But there is a lot that we're doing right now during COVID. And I wanted to kind of explain some of those things.

Emma: And so, how will it differ when NIFSC does have training facilities?

Blaine: So, yeah, and that's one of the things that we're going to have to, that we really do need to do is, is basically one of the things we gap is, is knowledge, like what

type of training is needed? Where is it needed? You know, what relative training do we need? You know, what training do we need to adapt? That's one of the things we need to do is figure out what it is we need to do. And once we start there, and figure out who is doing training right now, really get very comprehensive. When, when we have our full resources up and running in Ontario, where we've got more bodies that have more awareness and can bring that information back and again having those dialogues with the OFM and figure out what's going on for you, or what resources they've got available to us, really it's going to start, the scale's going to start tipping in our favor, finally, that we can do this coordinated effort.

And one of the things, I'll just use an example. In my day job, I provide medical first responder training to fire departments. And I'll, a department aid will want to host it and I'll know that there's 15 departments around them. And I'll make sure that they have talked to those other 15 departments in, in if they've got five seats available, make sure that those five seats are run. And that's one of the things that I think we can, really do, take advantage of, is make sure that no seat in a training setting goes empty. You know, that if there's an opportunity to train one more person, we figure out how to do that. And I think there's a lot of seats sitting empty right now that we're not taking advantage of. But again, also too, is trying to figure out how to get the training instead of moving the firefighters to training, let's figure out how to give the training to the firefighters.

It's a lot more cost-effective. And the one thing that we heavily promote is within each fire departments, what is your training plan? You know simple question, what do you train to each year? And it's amazing how many departments go well, we have training nights, but we really don't have any clear goals of what we're training on. What are your risks? Oh, that's a good question too. Yes. Train, train for what you're going to respond to. So, there's some really great examples too, and it's about sharing those examples, sharing those training plans. The, one department's really good at, but another department might be really good at a water rescue training so it's about sharing information. Collaboration is so key. We have worked in isolation for, even from a regional perspective. And, and one thing that's part of this project has done it's brought all, we have some common discussion tables right now, and we have tactical discussion tables. Our technical advisory committee is made up of all the regional organizations and for the first time ever, we're out, we're talking and we're just learning how to share information. We got a long way to go, but again having a national depository of training programs, I think that's huge. Having a national, one place to go to, to find out, Hey, if I'm in BC for a month and, and hey, there's some training going on. I could, I'm in BC on vacation, but I can go to this course for three days and pick up this certification that I just couldn't get anywhere else. So just little things like that just knowing what's going on, where it's going on how to get, how to get access to it. So again, training, every topic we talk about could be an hour-long presentation. So, it's one to hit the high levels.

Emma: Great. Thank you. So, we have a question here, what training programs are currently available?

Blaine: That is a good question. And you're going to make me think. So right now, we, I know we're heavily focusing on service delivery, so basically providing services or Home Safety Assessments. And the reason why our focus is on Home Safety Assessments. And it's, if we were in the room, I'd make, I never let an audience sit there and, and, and just listen, I make them talk and so I'd ask the question were, were are people dying right now. Number one place is in homes. We need to make homes safer. We need to make occupants of homes more aware of what their hazards are. We got to force the issue, that's where people are dying. So that's where our Home Safety Assessments are, are so critical. Our fire department assessments that we're working on, community risk reduction plans, community risk assessments.

So those are some of the areas, the majority of work that we're doing right now, and, and also fire prevention just some of the standard fire prevention programs that are that are out there, Learn Not to Burn, et cetera, et cetera, is making those so that they can be delivered and again, by our staff, but also by fire departments. And I think any firefighter I've never met a firefighter that, that, that could put up his hand and, and, and say, I don't know how to deliver the simplest fire prevention program. You know, firefighters, our egos are way too big to say, I don't know, because we're supposed to know everything. And so, one of the things we're trying to do is, is break that barrier down. So, for those that say, just to do a simple Learn Not to Burn program, or Close Before You Doze program, closed door before you sleep program, how do I do it?

You know, and, and get that into the hands of local, local volunteer fire departments. So, they can actually get these programs to, to it's their kids or grandkids that are going to the schools that they want to deliver this stuff to. So, and we will start focusing on, I know in a later, later part of this year, and next year, we're developing some of the basically fire department training, some of the, there's some management training that is going on right now, there's also some governance training that's being developed.

And that's a really key resource too, is ensuring that our governance is aware and, and takes a, there's no legal requirement for governance. You know, there's a moral and there's an ethical requirement, but just making sure that, that I've met fire chief after fire chief, after fire chief, that, that you know, the governance, Chief and Council has got so many other problems to deal with. If the fire department's running fine, you're doing a great job, but, but you need that support. The, the governance has to take responsibility for the fire service and not put it all on the fire chief. The fire chiefs there to perform a role, but not to manage that role from, from the community level, that is the governance and administration to do so promoting that support.

And I anyway, so I'll go down the rabbit hole. So, I'm just going to put well in my head.

Emma: So, to summarize the main programs that are currently available are focused on that community safety education. And we will be working down through the list to develop more programs.

Blaine: Yes. And a helpful link on our website is the delivery schedule of the programs that are being developed, when they're being developed, and that will be updated constantly.

Emma: Okay, great. I will find that and bring that up in a sec. The next question I have here is, how does the National Indigenous Fire Safety Council differ from, and work with, Ontario First Nations Technical Services Corporation, and Ontario Native Firefighter Society?

Blaine: So, Ontario Tech Corp, they have their mandate to—

Emma: No, evidently that, that question was just too hot. So, we'll just give Blaine a moment here to reconnect. That was not a foreseen technical challenge. Let me see if he's going to rejoin us. And I do see, we have several people here whose names I recognize from Ontario First Nations Technical Services. So hi, and thank you for joining us. Oh, there, he's back. That's unmute. There you are.

Blaine: I don't know what happened there.

Emma: I thought you were just like, this is too hard. I don't like this question. I'm going to take a time out.

Blaine: No, so I, so as I was saying, Ontario Tech Corp, they have their mandate. They have the deliveries that they're doing. They have the services that they offer. Ontario Native Firefighter Society, which the ONFSC Board member from Ontario is on our Board. So we, we have the voice and direction and support and collaboration directly through our governance body. So, honesty is helping direct this project from that level. One of the things that we've been doing and we've actually had meetings scheduled. And, and unfortunately, I, our last meeting with Ontario Tech Corp, we had an interruption in that meeting. So, we're actually waiting to reschedule that meeting. Our number one goal is to basically each regional organization is different in what they do, what they deliver, what they don't do, what they can't do, what they can do, and same thing with us.

And it's really about finding and merging our resources so that we're a) not duplicating, and that's the big goal, let's not duplicate anything, whether it be development, delivery, specialized service, or expertise. So, if Ontario Tech Services has something already in existence that is serving Ontario well, instead of us replicating it, we'll ensure that any requests for that specific service, we

send over to Ontario Tech Services or Tech Corporation so that they can address that. So they, Ontario Tech also sits on our Technical Advisory Committee. And one of the, besides helping us develop programs, services, standards, working with insurance in the insurance industry, the other thing that the TAC does is helps us set a research agenda. So, every research question that we have goes to our Technical Advisory Committee. And so again, our Board sees the research questions and can have input into those research questions.

So that's through, on us at the Board level and through Ontario Tech Corp at our TAC it's to make sure that there's a, we're asking, I mean, we just did a big research piece on morbidity and mortality rates in First Nations communities related to fire. And it specifically was First Nations communities because of our data sets that we're looking at through Stats Canada, we couldn't, we couldn't subset Métis or Inuit. So that's, we always explain why, when it's not Indigenous, pan-Indigenous Peoples. Why, why we do things a little bit differently with First Nations. So that's why that research piece. So, but that, that research question went and, and the reports in which is now it's publicly available report on our website, that those questions go in case there's a regional question that needs to be asked.

And again, it's about sharing information. So, the Ontario coroner service is doing a research piece on mortality rates in Ontario. And so we've had contact with them on that research back and forth and sharing information and helping groom the whole research piece there. So, at the end of the day is what, what makes us different is, is that we will identify gaps within our mandate. Our role is about, it's not directing other regional organizations. It's collaborating, bringing us all together, providing programs and services that aren't available anywhere else. So, if Ontario Tech Services can't do something specific, then we'll pick that up. So, it's going to be an ongoing conversation and an ongoing relationship. One of our mandates with this project is that we did not want to displace any other funded organization. We actually want to help those organizations and make sure that they get their funding on an ongoing basis to the best of our ability.

So again, it's what working with them. Our, one of our other mandates was not to take any, any other regional or national organization's existing funding. We didn't want funding transferred. We recognize that we're still behind. And so we need new funding to, to at least someday be comparable to our non-First Nations communities. Recognizing that here in BC First Nations Emergency Services has two dedicated fire officers in the city of Kamloops, just down the road here has five dedicated fire prevention officers, you know? And so that's just one city so we, we know we're outgunned, we got to figure out how to level the playing field. And it is about moving from a volunteer fire service to a professional fire service. And, and again, that's where we're, we're creating those opportunities.

Emma: Thank you. Okay. We have a couple more questions in the queue here. So, if anyone else out there has got a burning question, please type it to me. How can municipal organizations support the NIFSC? See, that's a good question.

Blaine: So, as I talked earlier, we have large urban First Nations populations off reserve and it will be for us to, to continue working with municipal organizations so that they are aware of the programs that we have. And again, that there's plenty of opportunities for partnerships there that we haven't begun to think about. You know, I mean, one, one example, like I would love to knock on the, the city of Winnipeg's door and say, why don't you subcontract your work to the NIFSC around fire prevention in for your urban Indigenous population so a) that creates work for First Nations and we got First Nations voices in a First Nations environment, albeit a municipal environment. So there there's, like I say, we got to start thinking outside the box and do things a little bit differently than we've done in the past that if we're going to expect some different outcomes.

And, and so I just use that as one concept of, of how we can do things differently and we may do the same thing. They, they may have just Ontario, they, Toronto airport authority has a really good airport training program. We may borrow one of their guys for a year, a non-First Nations person to come help us set up our small airport operations and get us sharing resources, sharing expertise. And the other thing that has been really important for, for both AFAC and one with, AFAC and NIFSC, it's about having an Indigenous voice at these big tables. We've been excluded from a lot of these tables. So, Transport Canada, we've been working very quietly behind the scenes with Transport Canada on transportation, dangerous goods, railways that go through First Nations communities. You know, so again,

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Blaine: Isn't just about municipal authorities, but it's also about provincial and national bodies and ensuring that our voice... That we are being collaborated with and that we are shared with, the information. So yeah, it really is an exciting time. And again, we need more people, so please come join us. It's fun project, and we got a long way to go.

Emma: So, this is a question actually, that came up yesterday, I believe. So, we have someone who's in the process of setting up a fire department in their community and wondering how the NIFSC can support them?

Blaine: Yes. So, I'll give pretty much the same answer I gave yesterday. We said that we don't have a cookie cutter approach if you're doing this, and then we'll pull out this binder and just do what's in here. We really do work as individuals. And again, what is it that that community needs? So, like, a community will contact us and, we will start basically from scratch. We'll learn about each other, learn about what you're doing and figure out how we can best serve that development plan, whether it's a fire officer training, whether it's governance

training, support with bylaws support, with mutual aid agreements, support with equipment selection, building a fire hall. The list is endless on where we can, again, gain knowledge, share knowledge, and transfer knowledge.

That's something that I know this team fundamentally believes in, is we don't go to a community and not leave the knowledge behind that we brought. So, it's about as much... And I said yesterday, I wish we could find a traditional term that we could adopt around knowledge transfer, and make that one of our mottoes, because it really is. It's going to be so significantly important that we don't just leave a training certificate on the wall, that we leave knowledge behind.

Emma: Yeah. All right. So last question. So, if anyone wants to keep Blaine talking, type me another question. Actually, no sorry, there's two, there's two. Is the National Indigenous Fire Safety Council securing seats on NFPA training courses at colleges across Canada, so that our people can access them?

Blaine: We'll do one better. We've been working with... And they've escaped me. So, we actually work very collaboratively with the NFPA. We have been both out of the Canada and United States head office on not just training, but standards and emerging standards, creating risk reduction standards. We were involved in those standards. We've made some recommendations actually, in creating risk reductions around and there's a whole piece that I missed on cultural components of any risk reduction. So, we've made some very strong recommendations, but training itself and... Pro Board, that's the organization. We're working with Pro Board. Once we get up and running, we want to be a Pro Board-certified trainer. So NFPA is a standards... They develop the standards, but there's two certification bodies, Pro Board and the other... It'll come to me. Pro Board is the bigger one and most training organizations have both, but if I had my certifications, I'd be able to tell you without reading some certifications.

So, you may have, like you say, as an example, my 1001... I'm trained to a NFPA standard, but my certification is not Pro Board, the other one that I'm certified by. So, we want to become a certified training body so that we're training to NFPA standards, but the certification that you're getting is good anywhere. It's basically the equivalent of a Red Seal, so that you can take that NFPA certification, not watered down, not less than, and go apply for a job in city of Hamilton, city of Toronto, city of Ottawa and have your training mean something out there in a competitive market.

So, like you say, we will be a certified training agency. And then the new thing too, is once we got the certification, then we can deliver training anywhere in the country and partner with anybody. So, I'll just use an example. I know Six Nations got a great training facility, and I know they are training to NFPA, but if they wanted to partner and do a specific training on, being plans examination they want to do plans examination training to the NFPA standard, but you have

a Pro Board certification so you've got a seal. Then we would extend our seal, make sure that the training is done to the standard. The testing is done to Pro Board standard. And it was actually Pro Board that invited us to come meet with them and start that discussion.

Met some really great guys from Hawaii, some Indigenous fire service personnel from Hawaii, and they were sharing some of how they include their cultural aspects. And it's like, wow, man, I got to go visit you guys. Not just because it's Hawaii but they really are doing some neat stuff. And again, I've gotten the opportunity to visit and work with Australian Fire Service, and they're doing some really neat stuff. And again, we want to take this beyond just Canada. There are Indigenous fire services around the world that we could be a world leader to. So, we're always thinking bigger, better, and set our goals so high that what if we get there [inaudible 01:18:34] right away. So, to answer the question, short answer, yeah. We will be able to deliver certified training.

Emma: Which is great, because another question came in asking about will training be Pro Board accredited? Gosh, you guys are awesome with the questions tonight. Thank you. How do you talk to Chief and Council and get them on board?

Blaine: So, the things that we are not is this national organization, we want this to be not just another not-for-profit. Eventually we want this to be a commission or something that has a little bit more of a legal structure. And through the legal structure, we were not making any bones why we want that is not-for-profits year-to-year funding, or 10-year funding agreement, five-year funding agreement. We want to operate as an ongoing entity, that's going to be around for a long time that people can invest their careers into. We're putting people lives in our hands. Their mortgages, their kids, everything. Their mental health, and that's really important. So, I just derailed myself. Question again, please.

Emma: How would you talk to Chief and Council?

Blaine: Yeah. Chief and Council, yes. I knew it wasn't about the organization. So, we know that when we... So that was the key there, is that we're not going to be an authority-having jurisdiction or an enforcement agency. What we're going to do is work with and serve community. So, if we have a community that wants us to come in and do inspections and enforce their codes or their bylaws, we will perform that on behalf of the Chief and Council, we'll become an agent of the community, of the Chief and Council. But at the end of the day... And here's a story, I've said this story over and over and over again. When there's a fatality on in First Nations community, it's on the news, and I've heard this every time, when they're interviewing Chief and Council and Chief and Counsel always say the same thing. Every Chief and Council says the same thing and that is, "Now is not the time to point fingers, now it's time to grieve."

And I absolutely agree with that, but I will challenge every Chief and Council, when do we start pointing fingers and doing something different? And it's not

about burning anybody at the stake, it's the other part. When are we going to do something different so that we don't cause what just happened to happen again? And I've talked to hundreds of fire chiefs, and I've asked how many fire chiefs have read a cause and determination report where there's been a fatality, learned what happened with that house fire, and then checked to make sure their houses don't have that same thing happening? We've lost so many of our people and we haven't used what we've learned, and we haven't shared that information. It's a very small thing, but it's a really important thing.

And again, steal good ideas. The Department of National Defence, the military, they have thousands of housing units. If there's a dryer fire in a community or a military base in Nova Scotia, do you know how many dryers they check in the country to make sure the same thing doesn't happen? Sorry, I know you guys can't answer the question, but the answer is every one. They check every cause and determination they have, they go and check to make sure that, that issue isn't existing somewhere else. And what do we do? Nothing. And we've got to stop doing nothing, we've got to start doing something. We are being handed gifts of information, but we're not taking or not utilizing. So, somewhere there should be a wall with the names of those that we've lost and something we've learned from that.

So that's one of the things that we will start doing, is we will start publishing cause and determinations and putting out safety notices for communities. Go look for this because this killed one, two, three people. And I know Ontario's had your fair share and my heart bleeds. Nine people in one house fire. To this day I still struggle with that. And I know you guys do too. So, it's a common pain. But let's not do this again. Sorry for getting heavy on you, but part of our work, it is pretty heavy. And the sad thing is... I go back to around 2009, 2010, when there was a fire, anywhere in the country, I'd get 50, 60 requests from media, cameras showing up, radio, interviews, newspapers.

Now when we have a major, major loss, it barely gets the news. Not saying that the public out there doesn't care about us, but we've got to start caring about ourselves. We got to start making our own difference. So again, I might sound a little preachy, but these are things I believe to my core. And there are things that we can do and some of them are simple things, just share the information that we already know that exists. These cause and determination reports are there. We need to go through them. We need to start fixing what we already know is there again and that's linked to our home safety assessments.

Oh, I never answered the question, sorry. So, the educational awareness with Chief and Council, ensuring that they know what their responsibility is, and what their moral and ethical responsibilities are. Knowing that fire departments shouldn't operate off bake sales, that fire departments need to be funded properly. If you're sitting there on a Chief and Council and you're making political decisions for your future, about whether you're going to get elected or not, not making the tough decisions. We will be delivering those tough

messages on occasion. And on occasion, we're going to be told by a Chief and Council "Don't come back for a while. We're not happy with you." But at least we will speak technical truth. We'll not leave that off the table. So, we expect not to have every Chief and Council send us a Christmas card, but we hope that Chief and Counsel that has asked us to go away and not come back, they take a second look and go, you know what? These guys spoke the truth. Maybe we should have them back and help our fire department help our community. Because that's all we're in it for.

We're not a political group, so we don't have to worry about getting re-elected. I know that's a reality for First Nations politicians as it is for any other politician, but we need to start speaking truth to power.

Emma: Okay. So, I'm just mindful that we have about four minutes left, but I do have a few questions. So, if you could reign in your passion a little, please Blaine. Where does the funding come from for the project?

Blaine: So, our current funding came from the 2019 budget, and it's actually articulated in the budget itself around this project. And so, we have a three-year funding window that we're working on right now to develop, and then we need to negotiate with the federal government for ongoing funding, moving past the development of the organization, to the operation of the organization. So again, we are still committed to not taking funding from other organizations, supporting regional organizations and new money. So, Monte, when you find that new money, can you let me know?

Emma: Wonderful. So, question here around, as we all know, firefighters really are the last line of defense. Do you think a good first step would be meeting Ontario building codes and enforcing or implementing fire inspections?

Blaine: Having a community, adopting a standard for building and safety codes is a first step. So, I talked about Kamloops and Secwepemc First Nations, and I'll just use them as an example. If you set up shop on their land, on their lease land, you have to adhere to the provincial codes. And the Sidney Fire Department comes in specs and they are brutal. And the reason why is because they don't want a whole bunch of industrial revenue to be lost because they're running... Basically if you come hide out and not do things properly on the reserve. So, it's been a beneficial model. And recognizing that not all First Nations communities are going to be able to develop a local economy because they're sitting beside a big city, but it really is.

It's about setting those standards that work for the community, whether they use provincial or federal building codes. There is a move and it's a very much in play right now to move to a standard national building code that all will use so that we don't have different provincial and federal building codes to draw from. So, yes, I think that would be a really important first step. Build things properly,

you get the life of it and the houses that we live in are not... They're a danger to the occupant, and secondly, a danger to the firefighter.

Emma: Right. Thank you. So, we do have a couple more questions. We have two minutes though. Question number one. Why haven't we published the fire deaths statistics on First Nations?

Blaine: We haven't published those statistics because we haven't properly collected them. As noted, there was a capital collection of fire statistics, but wasn't fire statistic collection. So, we don't have any good data to publish, but we need to start collecting that data. So, the National Incident Reporting System will start collecting data. We need a baseline. We need to know how bad or how good it really is. And that will be where we start from, and as we move forward, I'd say, if we deliver program X and it starts working, we're seeing less fires from it, we know program X works. Great, let's keep doing it. But if it doesn't work, then let's shift it to program Y because then maybe program Y will have that impact. So, we need research to support what we're doing.

Emma: Great. Thank you. So, thank you everyone for your time this evening, and for the excellent questions, really appreciated. Before I hand back to Allan to close the meeting, I do have a couple of housekeeping items. So, you will be receiving an email with, I promise you, a very brief survey about the session. If you could please take the time to complete that because we do actually read all of the information that we get back, and we incorporate that feedback then into our future offerings. And as Blaine mentioned earlier, we do intend to offer these... not like this, but a similar kind of online format to provide updates and have conversations regionally moving forward. So, any feedback will help us in designing those. And for anyone that didn't hear earlier, we will be posting this session online on YouTube in the next couple of weeks. So, you'll be able to revisit it and hear anything that you did miss, and we'll be posting all of the regional sessions. Blaine, is there anything else that I've missed? Before...

Blaine: No, I think that was great. Again, like you say, we will be doing sessions, I believe in February again. And like you said, there'll be much more focused on here's what we've done in the last couple of months and get that information out and then get the input in on what we should be doing, what we should change, but some really good questions tonight. And I thank you for your time. You being here shows that you guys are invested. We're invested, you're invested, and we will make a difference. We will do this.

Emma: Great. And I think the organization... We have a message here that you were trying to think of is FCAC.

Blaine: Thank you. Yes. I thought that's what it was, but I didn't want to butcher it.

Emma: Great. Okay. I am going to now hand over to Allan to close our meeting.

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Allan Peters: [Non-English 00:20:03] We ask for continued guidance so what we can help others. We ask that you keep us safe from just from this sickness so we can continue to help others until we meet again, all my relations. God bless.

Emma: Wonderful. Allan, thank you so much. And thank you everyone for your time. Please stay safe.

PART 4 OF 4 ENDS [01:33:06]