

# BUREAU OF JUSTICE ASSISTANCE FACT SHEET

## NATIONAL ASHANTI ALERT NETWORK

### Background

The Ashanti Alert Act of 2018 (Pub L. 115-401) was signed into law on December 31, 2018. It authorizes the U.S. Attorney General to establish a national communications network to enable and help facilitate regional and local search efforts for missing individuals who fall outside the scope of America's Missing: Broadcast Emergency Response (AMBER) Alerts and Silver Alerts.

The legislation aims to encourage, enhance, and integrate the development of Ashanti Alert Plans and enhance communications among participating states, territories, and tribes in locating missing adults. Participation in this effort is voluntary. The act aims to ensure that states, territories, and tribes that are voluntarily implementing an Ashanti Alert Plan have access to guidance and resources.

### Ashanti Alerts

Ashanti Alerts, once implemented, can provide for rapid dissemination of information to law enforcement agencies, media, and the public about adults who have been reported missing, along with suspect information in cases of suspected abduction. Ashanti Alerts could be transmitted via wireless devices and through the Emergency Alert System (EAS).

### Ashanti Alert Activation Criteria

The Ashanti Alert Act criteria focus on three key areas:

- Individuals over the age of 17
- Missing adults with special needs or circumstances
- Missing adults who are endangered or have been involuntarily abducted or kidnapped



### Who Was Ashanti Billie?

Ashanti Billie was a 19-year-old woman who disappeared on September 18, 2017, in Hampton Roads, Virginia. Two weeks later, authorities discovered her body in Charlotte, North Carolina — 350 miles away.

The amount of time and distance traveled between Ashanti's abduction and the discovery of her body, as well as falling outside the scope of other alert programs, raised questions regarding the lack of a state, regional, or nationwide missing persons alert system that focused on individuals over the age of 17. Named in her honor, the Ashanti Alert Act aims to solve this problem.

### Resources

The Bureau of Justice Assistance provides resources and technical assistance to states, Indian tribes, local governments, law enforcement agencies, and other stakeholders seeking to establish or enhance an existing Ashanti Alert Plan. Examples of available resources include the following:

- Guidance for Developing an Ashanti Alert Plan
- Ashanti Alert Programs Summary

- Ashanti Alert Network State and Territory Points of Contact and Reference Links
- Becoming a Pilot State, Territory, or Tribe
- Program Overview Flyer

## For More Information

Visit the National Ashanti Alert Network section of the BJA website at <https://bja.ojp.gov/program/national-ashanti-alert-network/overview> or email BJA at <https://bja.ojp.gov/askbja>.

For technical assistance, contact: [info@ashanti.riss.net](mailto:info@ashanti.riss.net).

## ABOUT BJA

BJA helps to make American communities safer by strengthening the nation's criminal justice system; its grants, training and technical assistance, and policy development services provide state, local, and tribal governments with the cutting-edge tools and best practices they need to reduce violent and drug-related crime, support law enforcement, and combat victimization. To learn more about BJA, visit [bja.ojp.gov](http://bja.ojp.gov) or follow us on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/DOJBJA](http://www.facebook.com/DOJBJA)) and Twitter (@DOJBJA). BJA is a component of the Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs.