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Many people unfortunately become the victims of crimes at some point in their lives. In many cases, the victim finds themselves in a situation they've never been in before. In these cases, victims have many questions. The Sioux County Sheriff's Office wants you to be aware of different options available in case you become a victim of crime.

Crimes come in many forms; burglary, theft, vandalism, assault, domestic violence, identity theft are some of the main ones, but there are many others. Some of the most common questions are:

Can I be compensated for damages caused to me in cases of crime? If you or a loved one has suffered injuries from a violent crime, the Crime Victim Compensation Program may be able to help. This program helps victims with some out-of-pocket expenses related to injuries from violent crime. It's funded entirely by fines and penalties paid by criminals (not by taxpayers). The program pays for crime-related expenses such as medical care, counseling, lost wages and funeral expenses (when costs are not covered by insurance or other sources). The program can also pay for crime-scene clean-up, replacement of clothing held as evidence, replacement of security items, child or dependent care, housing or shelter expenses, relocation expenses and travel. More information about this compensation program can be found at: <https://www.iowaattorneygeneral.gov/for-crime-victims/crime-victim-compensation-program>

How can I get information about registered sex offenders living or working near me? Many people want to know how to protect themselves from individuals who have committed an offense that requires registration on the Sex Offender Registry. The Sioux County Sheriff's Office has an App you can download which gives the user updated information on current sex offenders. The App can be found by searching for Sioux County Sheriff on the Google Play or Apple App Store. This App contains the Iowa Sex Offender Registry website: <http://www.iowasexoffender.com>. This website is updated hourly and not only allows you to search for offenders, but also gives you the option to sign up for email notifications when any additions or changes are made.

How can I get information about offenders? IowaVINE is a voluntary service where crime victims can get information and register for notification. Victims can go to the website to get information on the status and location of an offender. This information will soon be available from our Sheriff's App as well. A victim may also register for automated telephone or email notification of a change in the offender's status or location. IowaVINE also empowers victims. They can either call or check a website for offender-status information 24-hours a day, 7-days a week. A victim can also register for immediate notification of a change in the status of an offender incarcerated in the Sioux County Jail. IowaVINE is an anonymous and cost-free method for a victim to receive information, notification and peace of mind regarding an offender who harmed them and who they may fear. IowaVINE also provides cost-free operator assistance 24-hours a day to ensure victims have all the help they need to get the information that they want. Victims can access IowaVINE from our Sheriff's App, through a toll free number, 1-888-7-IAVINE (1-888-742-8463), or from their website, www.vinelink.com

Iowa Safe at Home. Safe at Home (SAH) is an address confidentiality program that helps survivors improve their lives. Participants can be assigned a substitute address used with any city, county and state offices, as well as with private organizations that require a mailing address. Your physical, actual address will not appear in public records. With mail forwarding services, first-class, legal and certified mail, as well as packages of prescriptions, will be securely handled and forwarded to the participant's confidential address. Participants can also register to vote and not be listed on the public voter registration list. More information can be found by calling an advocate program or the Secretary of State's Office at 515-281-0145, or by going to the SAH website, <http://safeathome.iowa.gov/>

Family Crisis Centers (FCC) and Centers Against Abuse and Sexual Assault (CAASA). Domestic violence is the pattern of controlling behavior by one intimate partner against another. It can involve physical, sexual, economic, emotional and psychological abuse. You don't have to face a violent or abusive relationship alone—help is available 24 hours a day by calling 800-382-5603 or visiting their website at www.familycrisiscenters.org

Victims of sexual assault can also find services at CAASA. Their mission is to eliminate personal, institutional and societal violence against individuals by providing supportive programs and services. Sexual violence can happen to anyone. CAASA can also be contacted anytime by calling 877-362-4612 or visiting their website at www.caasaonline.org

Victims of Identity Theft. A growing problem in this area is the number of identity theft victims. Identity Theft is a serious crime that disrupts finances, credit history and your reputation. It takes time, money and patience to resolve. Identity theft happens when someone steals your personal information and uses it without your permission. A good way to monitor if you have become a victim is to read your credit report. You have a right to a free credit report every 12 months from each of the three nationwide credit reporting companies. Order all three reports at once, or order one report every four months. To order, go to www.annualcreditreport.com or call 877-322-8228. If your identity is stolen, call one of the three nationwide credit reporting companies and ask for a fraud alert on your credit report. The company you choose must call the other two so they can put fraud alerts on your files. The three companies are: *Equifax*, 800-525-6285, *Experian*, 888-397-3742 and *TransUnion*, 800-680-7289. If you are a victim of Identity theft, report this crime to your local law enforcement agency.

