

# Online Guides *from OVC*

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## Resource Guide for Serving U.S. Citizens Victimized Abroad

Advancing technology, widespread use of the Internet, increased international tourism, overseas job opportunities, and a stronger threat of terrorist acts against U.S. citizens have prompted growing concern about crime abroad and its impact on victims.

As greater numbers of U.S. citizens live or travel overseas for business, study, or vacation they may be more vulnerable to crime than local citizens because they are more likely to lack the language skills, geographic bearings, or "street smarts" that apply in a particular country.

Yet many U.S. citizens victimized abroad receive only a patchwork of assistance, or sometimes none at all. Many cultures do not acknowledge the impact of victimization or recognize victim assistance as a responsibility of the society as a whole or of segments such as law enforcement. Even if victims receive some emergency assistance overseas, they often find themselves starting over when it comes to seeking assistance upon their return to the United States.

With information and support from the Office for Victims of Crime, a component of the Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice, and other federal agencies, U.S.-based victim service providers can prepare to deliver comprehensive and effective services to victims of overseas crimes by facilitating access to resources both abroad and in the United States.

### Message From the Director

Today, U.S. citizens travel and live in virtually every part of the world. More than 60 million Americans go abroad each year and approximately 3 million Americans study, work, or reside in foreign lands. Unfortunately, some of these people become victims of crime while far from home. Language barriers, cultural differences, unfamiliar laws, a different criminal justice system, and distance from family and other support systems compound the devastating toll victimization exacts.

Internationally, policies and practices that address these victims' needs are still evolving. As U.S. citizens go abroad in greater numbers, the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) anticipates that requests for assistance will escalate as well.

Being victimized while abroad may be more devastating because the victims are away from familiar settings, family members, and medical providers who speak their native language. Victim service providers in this country have a tremendous opportunity to enhance the services U.S. citizens are eligible for and receive abroad. This resource guide will help victim service providers develop strategic plans and carry out constructive actions to ensure key personnel, resources, and protocols are in place for effective response.

The information and essential resources featured here underscore OVC's belief that responding to victims of crime with timely, compassionate, coordinated, and valuable assistance need not be constrained by geographic boundaries.

John W. Gillis  
*Director*  
Office for Victims of Crime

### About This Guide

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#### RELATED RESOURCES

##### OVC Web Pages

- [International/Global Victims' Issues](#)
- [Resources for International Victims](#)
- [Victims' Rights and Services](#)

##### Related Web Pages

- [NIJ International Center](#)

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## Acknowledgments

The Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) would like to acknowledge the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs, Office of Overseas Citizens Services, for lending its expertise and assistance to the preparation of this resource guide. In particular, OVC appreciates the contributions of Edward A. Betancourt, Director of Policy Review and Interagency Liaison, and Victim Assistance Specialist Jane N. Sigmon, Ph.D., throughout the preparation of this publication.

This resource guide would not have been possible without the support of Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) administrators, Steve Derene of the National Association of VOCA Assistance Administrators, Dan Eddy of the National Association of Crime Victim Compensation Boards, and victim advocates from across the country. OVC values their contributions and ongoing commitment to serving U.S. citizens who are victims of crime, wherever they are in the world.

OVC also would like to acknowledge the work of its Training and Technical Assistance Center in the development and production of this publication.

## Purpose of This Publication

This resource guide is designed for domestic service providers, allied professionals, volunteers, and victim advocates who work on behalf of U.S. citizens who have been victimized abroad. Because many victim service providers in the United States only occasionally handle cases with an international element, this resource guide seeks to enhance awareness and understanding of the exceptional circumstances these victims encounter. It will also present the obstacles domestic service providers might meet and help them prepare to respond swiftly to alleviate the stress and confusion victims might feel.

Drawing on the experience and insights of consular officers, with a deep comprehension of the laws, cultures, languages, and services of host countries, this resource guide presents the expertise of victim service providers in the United States who support victims as they cope with the physical, psychological, and emotional effects of a crime.

This publication can provide useful information to those who plan, coordinate, and implement comprehensive services, and it can guide victim service providers as they assist—

- U.S. citizens and surviving family members and legal guardians.
- Officers and employees of the U.S. Government, their family members, and legal guardians.
- U.S. emergency personnel who assist victims of international crime.

## Using This Publication

This publication is based on a review of resources sponsored by federal agencies, state governments, nonprofit organizations, and other groups working on behalf of U.S. citizens who are victims of crime overseas.

Although the information contained in this resource guide is substantive and practical, it cannot address every circumstance or concern a victim service provider might encounter when responding to the needs of U.S. citizens who are victimized abroad. Nor can this resource guide detail all the laws, criminal procedures, and cultural variables a victim of crime might encounter in every country overseas.

Nevertheless, this resource guide illustrates some of the challenges and obstacles that U.S. citizens face when they are victimized overseas and is a valuable starting point for victim service providers to begin understanding the opportunities and options they have for identifying and delivering pertinent and timely assistance.

The easy-to-navigate format allows victim service providers to proceed through the resource guide at their own pace and return to any section, at any time, to review information. Within this

publication, links to electronic resources are highlighted for quick and direct access to key information.

The Web addresses and contact information featured in this resource guide were valid at the time it was produced, but the material is subject to change. Victim service providers are encouraged to return to these resources frequently for the most up-to-date information.

OVC neither endorses, has any responsibility for, nor exercises any control over the organizations' views or the accuracy of the information contained in electronic resources outside of [OVC's Web site](#).

## Victim Services: An International Outlook

### Taking a Global Perspective

In many cases, U.S. citizens who have been victims of crime abroad require the same types of assistance as victims of crimes that occur in the United States, ranging from the practical and immediate—such as replacing money—to the complex and long-term—such as participating in the prosecution of a violent crime.

U.S. citizens often expect comprehensive and detailed services for victims of crime and their families, similar to those currently offered throughout the United States. Unfortunately, systems for thorough, appropriate, and timely victim assistance have not been established in many parts of the world. This lack of adequate victim services poses distinct challenges for both U.S. citizens victimized abroad and service providers in the United States who are helping victims deal with the aftermath of the crime.

To assist U.S. citizens who have been victimized abroad, domestic victim service providers must do the following:

- Realize that victimization abroad generates unique consequences.
- Recognize that providing effective services demands a perspective unlike that for cases in the United States.
- Suspend the assumption that prior strategies and methods will continue to be successful.
- Adopt a broad, creative approach to collaborating with new agencies and organizations to gain access to diverse information and resources.

### **Resources:**

Victim Assistance Online  
(Information on victim assistance programs in approximately 20 countries)  
[www.vaonline.org](http://www.vaonline.org)

World Society of Victimology  
[www.worldsocietyofvictimology.org](http://www.worldsocietyofvictimology.org)

### Special Needs of U.S. Citizens Victimized Abroad

Although most U.S. citizens do not become victims of crime while in a foreign country, crimes against them and other international visitors take place daily and worldwide.

When a U.S. citizen becomes the victim of a crime overseas, he or she might suffer physical, emotional, or financial injuries. In addition, the emotional impact of the crime can be intensified because the victim is in unfamiliar surroundings. The victim also may not be near sources of comfort or support, fluent in the local language, or knowledgeable about local laws and customs.

U.S. citizens victimized abroad are especially vulnerable to the adverse effects of crime because of—

- Isolation.

- Culture shock.
- Language barriers.
- Travel stress.
- Lack of familiar social supports.

In addition, most international visitors are unfamiliar with the laws; criminal justice system; social, medical, and mental health services; or the procedures that must be followed to apply for and access any available benefits of the country they are visiting.

**Resources:**

U.S. Department of State  
Help for American Victims of Crime Overseas  
[travel.state.gov/travel/tips/emergencies/emergencies\\_1748.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/emergencies/emergencies_1748.html)

National Criminal Justice Reference Service  
[virlib.ncjrs.org/International.asp](http://virlib.ncjrs.org/International.asp)

Central Intelligence Agency  
The World Factbook  
[www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook](http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook)

Victim Assistance Worldwide

Although the United Nations has established and promoted the basic crime victim rights individuals should have if victimized overseas, implementation of these rights is left to the discretion of individual countries. Therefore, services for victims of crimes differ dramatically from country to country and are shaped by a variety of cultural, social, and economic variables.

Overall, more victim assistance resources are available in Europe, Asia, and Latin America than in other regions. In many nations, services for victims of crime either are limited or do not exist at all. The notion of a victim advocate who can provide basic victim assistance to a U.S. citizen abroad, such as crisis intervention, referrals, counseling, court accompaniment, financial assistance, safety planning, advocacy, or case management, is typically rare. Additionally, in most countries, victim compensation programs, legal assistance, specialized police involvement, and other resources might not be available to foreign visitors.

Consequently, domestic service providers who assist U.S. citizens who have been victimized abroad should not—

- Presume the levels or types of services available in the United States are available elsewhere.
- Foster unrealistic expectations for the victim or victim's family in terms of services provided to them or what they can do for themselves.
- Impose preexisting ideas of professional inadequacy when assisting in cases with unfamiliar international components.

Nevertheless, in pursuing assistance for U.S. citizens who have been victims of crime abroad, U.S.-based service providers can take advantage of resources in the United States and overseas that offer strong foreign experience.

**Resources:**

United Nations  
Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power  
<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/victims.htm>

U.S. Department of State  
Bureau of Consular Affairs, Office of Overseas Citizens Services  
<http://travel.state.gov>

888-407-4747 (8 a.m.–8 p.m. e.t.)  
202-647-5225 (all other times)

## Responding to Victimization Abroad

### Important First Steps

In most cases, if U.S. citizens become victims of crime abroad, they should immediately—

- Contact local police to report the incident.
- Obtain help regarding safety concerns.
- Request a copy of the local police report.
- Contact the nearest U.S. embassy, consulate, or consular agency for assistance.

If a victim or domestic service provider contacts a U.S. embassy directly over a weekend, he or she should be aware that personnel might reply that the embassy is closed. In such cases, the caller should report the call as an emergency and ask to be connected with a consular officer. Every embassy or consulate has a 24/7 duty program. A victim or domestic service provider should make clear that he or she needs to speak to the duty officer and, if available, a consular duty officer.

Government officials, consuls, or consular officers at embassies and consulates in nearly 250 cities throughout the world are responsible for assisting U.S. citizens who may be traveling, working, or residing overseas. In addition, consular agents and local employees work in 50 additional cities to provide emergency and nonemergency assistance to U.S. citizens.

To expedite assistance to victims, the Office of Overseas Citizens Services acts as a liaison between U.S. embassies or consulates and victim service providers. With its substantial resources and understanding of embassy operations across the globe, the Office of Overseas Citizens Services is committed to assisting U.S. citizens who become victims of crime while traveling, working, or residing abroad. It is the recommended first point of contact and a valuable partner for victim service providers.

#### **Resource:**

U.S. Department of State  
Bureau of Consular Affairs, Office of Overseas Citizens Services  
<http://travel.state.gov>  
888-407-4747 (8 a.m.–8 p.m. e.t.)  
202-647-5225 (all other times)

### A Federal Presence Overseas

The U.S. Department of State provides advice, guidance, and assistance to its embassies and consulates and, through the Office of Overseas Citizens Services, facilitates the exchange of information between U.S. embassies and consulates and victim service providers.

The overseas representatives of the U.S. Department of State at embassies and consulates apply their resources to provide—

- Immediate assistance, in person or on the telephone.
- Information about the role and services of local law enforcement.
- Practical assistance.
- Coordination of services with local governments and resources.
- Emotional support.
- Assistance for victims of crime who must return to a country to testify.

Keep in mind, however, that consular officers are not solely victim advocates. Therefore, the time and effort they can spend assisting victims of crime from initial victimization to recovery may appear minimal compared with U.S. standards for victim advocates providing victim assistance.

**Resource:**

U.S. Department of State  
U.S. Embassies and Consulates  
<http://usembassy.state.gov>

## Types of Victim Assistance Abroad

Consuls, consular agents, and local employees at overseas posts are familiar with local government agencies and resources in the countries in which they work and can provide valuable assistance in cases of—

- Death of a U.S. citizen abroad.
- Robbery of a U.S. citizen abroad.
- Sexual assault of a U.S. citizen abroad.
- U.S. citizens missing abroad.
- Crises abroad involving U.S. citizens.
- International parental child abduction.

Time zones differ between the United States and countries overseas; therefore, embassy staff might not always be available during traditional U.S. business hours. Moreover, embassy staff members rotate regularly and are responsible for scores of other duties in addition to victim assistance. The victim assistance specialists in the Office of Overseas Citizens Services headquarters in Washington, D.C., should be the initial points of contact for victim service providers, rather than an individual embassy or consulate.

**Resource:**

U.S. Department of State  
Bureau of Consular Affairs  
Office of Overseas Citizens Services  
888-407-4747 (8 a.m.–8 p.m. e.t.)  
202-647-5225 (all other times)  
[travel.state.gov/travel/tips/emergencies/emergencies\\_1748.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/emergencies/emergencies_1748.html)

## Coordinating Victim Services

### Planning for a Broad Scope of Services

Thorough planning and coordination of resources are vital components for optimizing assistance and compensation to U.S. citizens who are victims of crime abroad. U.S.-based victim service providers should form working relationships early with the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs, Office of Overseas Citizens Services, and other agencies or entities that maintain a presence, and could be of assistance, in foreign countries.

As planning and implementation of services for victims abroad are executed, communication among victim advocates is important to providing access to the right services and preventing duplication of effort. This allows all who work on behalf of U.S. citizens abroad the opportunity to be instrumental in their physical, emotional, and economic recovery.

U.S. citizens who have been victimized abroad often require ongoing services and assistance when they return to the United States. To ensure a continuum of care, U.S.-based victim service providers should coordinate services in advance of the victim returning home, when possible.

In addition, domestic victim service providers should expand their scope of services to include efforts customized to the specific circumstances of cases with an international component. For example, children who are U.S. citizens but have lived their entire lives abroad might need English as a Second Language instruction upon arrival in the United States. Offering tailored victim services might include contacting the local school system to advocate on behalf of the children.

## Establishing Relationships for Victim Assistance

By collaborating and coordinating services early with the Office of Overseas Citizens Services, domestic advocates for U.S. citizens victimized overseas can enhance the quality, appropriateness, and timeliness of services.

During the initial contact with the Office of Overseas Citizens Services, U.S.-based victim service providers should have the following details available to help the agency's victim assistance specialists assess information and services that will be valuable to both the victim service provider and victim:

- Victim name and contact information.
- Victim date and place of birth.
- Current location of the victim (United States versus overseas).
- Date crime occurred (at least approximately).
- Whether the victim reported the crime to the police.
- Whether the victim reported the crime to the embassy or consulate in the country where the crime took place.
- Whether the U.S.-based service provider is the first assistance provider contacted by the victim, or if steps toward assistance are already underway.

Domestic victim service providers should not hesitate to contact the Office of Overseas Citizens Services if they do not have all this information at the time of the call.

### Resource:

U.S. Department of State  
Bureau of Consular Affairs  
Office of Overseas Citizens Services  
888-407-4747 (8 a.m.–8 p.m. e.t.)  
202-647-5225 (all other times)  
[travel.state.gov/travel/tips/emergencies/emergencies\\_1748.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/emergencies/emergencies_1748.html)

## Role of the Office of Overseas Citizens Services

As an intermediary between U.S.-based victim service providers and embassies and consulates abroad, the Office of Overseas Citizens Services has extensive experience and capacity in both the victim services field and embassy operations worldwide.

### The Office of Overseas Citizens Services—

- Acts as a liaison with embassies and consulates to expedite requests for information or assistance.
- Promotes understanding of victims' needs and the impact of victimization.
- Identifies ways that embassies or consulates can provide support for victim assistance.
- Receives requests for information and assistance and formulates them in ways that embassies or consulates can use to take action.

- Helps define expectations for victim assistance based on country-specific variables.

### **Resource:**

U.S. Department of State  
International Travel Information  
(Consular information sheets, public announcements, travel warnings)  
[travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/cis\\_pa\\_tw\\_1168.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis_pa_tw_1168.html)

### Privacy and Confidentiality

In accordance with the Privacy Act (PL 93-579) passed by Congress in 1974, U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs, Office of Overseas Citizens Services personnel are not permitted to release any information not deemed to be in the public domain regarding private individuals without the express written consent of the citizens involved.

U.S. citizens who are victims of crime and present themselves to a U.S. embassy or consulate are asked to complete a Privacy Act Waiver Form that specifies persons or organizations that may be contacted regarding their case. This waiver is adhered to during any communication on behalf of the victim, such as consular officers contacting the next of kin or victim assistance specialists contacting U.S.-based victim service providers.

Contact the Office of Overseas Citizens Services in Washington, D.C., to obtain a form that authorizes the agency and victim service providers to share information on behalf of victims of crime.

### Working With Other Federal Agencies

In the course of assisting U.S. citizens who have been victims of crime overseas, victim service providers might find it valuable to interact and collaborate with multiple federal agencies.

The Office of Overseas Citizens Services maintains a comprehensive roster of federal agencies, their responsibilities, and resources. Many federal agencies, including the Social Security Administration, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, have international divisions with which the Office of Overseas Citizens Services has established relationships.

Victim service providers working on behalf of U.S. citizens who have been victimized abroad can gain access to information and resources across the federal system by coordinating efforts with the Office of Overseas Citizens Services in Washington, D.C.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and United States Attorneys' Offices offer key resources for domestic victim service providers.

### FBI

The FBI becomes involved in investigating crimes against U.S. citizens under the following two circumstances:

- When the FBI has authority under the U.S. criminal code to investigate certain crimes such as terrorism, the homicide or kidnapping of U.S. citizens, or international family abduction.
- When a foreign government requests FBI assistance with an investigation.

The FBI has more than 100 full-time victim specialists located at its headquarters and in field offices around the country. Once the FBI officially opens an investigation, it assumes responsibility for managing the assistance and information provided to victims and families, coordinating closely with the U.S. Department of State.

### United States Attorney's Office

Each United States Attorney's Office has a victim witness coordinator who is the primary point of contact for victim/witness assistance services. If a United States Attorney's Office opens a case, the victim witness coordinator will arrange for travel for international witnesses to attend court proceedings and conferences with prosecutors in the United States. Victims of international crimes who are prosecuted by a United States Attorney's Office can receive the

same services domestic victims of crime receive, including the following:

- Assistance with restitution and crime victim compensation.
- Referrals for counseling and other social services.
- Information about their rights.
- Information about the criminal justice process.

United States Attorneys' Offices victim witness coordinators also assist with any security concerns the victim or witness might experience.

**Resources:**

FBI Office for Victim Assistance  
[www.fbi.gov/hq/cid/victimassist/home.htm](http://www.fbi.gov/hq/cid/victimassist/home.htm)

United States Attorneys Office  
[www.justice.gov/usao](http://www.justice.gov/usao)

The Office of Justice for Victims of Overseas Terrorism  
U.S. Department of Justice Criminal Division  
[www.justice.gov/nsd/ojvot.htm](http://www.justice.gov/nsd/ojvot.htm)  
202-532-4100

## If the Victim Remains Abroad

When a U.S. citizen is a victim of crime overseas, domestic victim service providers should consider the following:

- Victim needs can vary dramatically based on the country and its culture, systems, and resources.
- Victim advocacy at all stages, from victimization through recovery, may not be institutionalized in the country in which the crime occurred.
- Obtaining information on behalf of victims will be more challenging than in U.S. cases.
- Gaining access to police or court records may be particularly difficult.

In addition, where a crime should be reported can vary from location to location. In some countries, for a variety of reasons, it is not recommended that a victim report a crime to the local police. Embassies and consulates have people onsite who are familiar with local conditions, and victims should be advised to report crimes to a consular officer who can help them follow a prudent approach to reporting or taking other action.

### Directory of Crime Victim Services

The *Directory of Crime Victim Services* is an online directory sponsored by OVC and administered by the OVC Resource Center. The directory is designed to help service providers and individuals locate services for victims of crime in the United States and other countries.

The directory is searchable by location, type of victimization, service needed, and agency type. The directory features services that offer to—

- Provide victims of crime with a measure of safety and security.
- Respond to the emotional and physical needs of crime victims.
- Help primary and secondary victims of crime to stabilize their lives after victimization.
- Help victims understand and participate in the criminal justice system.

**Resource:**

## Office for Victims of Crime

### *Directory of Crime Victim Services*

<http://ovc.ncjrs.gov/findvictimservices>

## Safety and Security

When a U.S. citizen who is a victim of crime abroad remains abroad, safety and security might be the initial issues a victim service provider addresses. Very few shelters abroad are equipped to serve U.S. citizens. Helping victims feel and remain safe is a crucial step toward providing comprehensive assistance. Victim service providers should do the following:

- Ensure that the victim is staying or living in a safe location.
- Contact, or encourage victims to contact, the nearest U.S. embassy, consulate, or consular agency for assistance.
- Offer to contact family members, friends, or others in the United States or elsewhere.
- Coordinate services for the victim and any children involved, in cases of domestic violence.
- Assure victims of the confidentiality of your conversations.
- Urge victims to tell the whole story and prompt them with open-ended questions, avoiding questions that can be answered by yes or no.
- Ask victims about any special needs or concerns they have.
- Coordinate safe lodging for the victim's family, particularly if they witnessed a violent crime and could become targets of a subsequent crime themselves.
- Provide victims with your contact information, particularly an e-mail address because telephone calls from abroad might be expensive or confusing due to language barriers.
- Encourage victims to contact you if they have any questions or if you can be of additional help.

## Medical Care

In the aftermath of a crime abroad, victims might not obtain all the medical care they require. To help ensure the victim receives adequate medical evaluation and health care, victim service providers can do the following:

- Contact the nearest embassy or consulate for assistance in obtaining and coordinating prompt and appropriate medical care. In an emergency, the duty officer or consular officer at post can provide immediate support.
- Help assess the care the victim already has received and contact appropriate facilities or health professionals who can treat the victim's continuing medical needs.
- Contact the victim's insurance provider to determine eligibility for coverage of medical expenses.
- Determine whether forensic examinations are carried out routinely in the country and who typically performs them, because forensic exams can be especially traumatic for victims of sexual assault in foreign countries.
- Talk with the victim about how he or she is feeling and make sure all medical issues and concerns stemming from the crime are addressed.
- With the victim's consent, contact medical professionals who might provide ongoing care.

## Practical Assistance

When a crime occurs in a foreign country, victims might face difficulty returning home, reaching family members, or having their families reach them. Guided by the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs, Overseas Citizens Services, consular officers at embassies can provide practical assistance for these and other obstacles to help victims regain their sense of safety and control after a crime. Consular officers might do the following:

- Help the victim contact family, friends, or employers.
- Provide, in some cases, a loan if the victim's money was stolen.
- Assist with locating different lodging, if necessary.
- Arrange for translation services.

U.S.-based service providers should understand the following issues:

- Consular officers have many additional responsibilities and might have contact with a victim only one time.
- Different time zones and the host government's observation of national holidays can affect responses to victims' needs.
- Legal and cultural procedures can differ significantly from procedures that are common and expected of U.S. victim service providers.

Victim assistance specialists at the Office of Overseas Citizens Services can help U.S.-based victim service providers determine the types of assistance victims need while still overseas, such as translation services, hotel accommodations, telephone access, or transportation. They can also help service providers plan for the assistance victims might need to return to the United States, such as airline travel or season-appropriate clothing.

The Office of Overseas Citizens Services helps provide guidance and recommendations to domestic victim service agencies on comprehensive plans to assist individual victims and their families.

#### **Resources:**

Operation Hope  
(Economic Counseling)  
[www.operationhope.org](http://www.operationhope.org)

U.S. Department of State  
Emergency Financial Assistance for U.S. Citizens Abroad  
[travel.state.gov/travel/tips/emergencies/emergencies\\_1198.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/emergencies/emergencies_1198.html)

#### Law Enforcement and Legal Assistance

Victims might have concerns about the investigation of the crime and their role in the country's unfamiliar criminal justice system. Victims want to know what comes next after the crime and their expectations might be based on the U.S. judicial system and mechanisms in place for victim assistance.

Victim service providers should understand and communicate the following:

- Cultural variables can influence police perspectives on victimization or victims' rights and needs.
- Consular officers can offer guidance on how a victim should report the crime to the local police.
- Criminal justice systems in many countries have paper-based recordkeeping or limited technology for fulfilling requests for information promptly.
- In some countries, victims cannot gain access to their case information unless they hire an attorney, at their own expense, to act on their behalf within the criminal justice

system.

The Office of Overseas Citizens Services, through its representatives in embassies and consulates overseas, can explain standard practices in individual countries for the following:

- Law enforcement procedures.
- Filing reports.
- Obtaining copies of police reports.
- Conducting interviews.
- Performing medical forensic examinations.
- Investigating the crime.
- Arresting a suspect.
- Prosecuting the perpetrator.

The Office of Overseas Citizens Services also offers information on international judicial assistance and, through embassy and consulate Web sites, maintains a list of American attorneys licensed to practice in foreign countries or who work as foreign legal consultants.

**Resource:**

U.S. Department of State  
Obtaining Evidence Abroad  
[http://travel.state.gov/law/judicial/judicial\\_2514.html](http://travel.state.gov/law/judicial/judicial_2514.html)

## Psychological Care

How individuals react to being the victim of a crime varies from person to person. Reactions are affected by the following:

- How the victim handles stress.
- The nature and duration of the crime.
- The physical safety of the victim.
- The number and type of support systems available.

These reactions can be intensified by the victim being in unfamiliar surroundings, not speaking the local language, or being far from normal support systems. Even if victim assistance is available abroad, the victim advocates might not have crisis intervention training or experience in scheduling and conducting support groups.

U.S.-based victim service providers should do the following:

- Listen attentively, without judgment, to the victim's account of the crime. Victims need to express their emotions and tell their story about the crime and the trauma they experienced.
- Prepare victims for the reactions and feelings that might come days or weeks after the crime has occurred.
- Coordinate ongoing or long-term psychological care or counseling to help victims deal with the complex feelings and stages of grief that often follow the trauma of victimization.

**Resources:**

American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry  
[www.aacap.org](http://www.aacap.org)

American Psychological Association  
(Information on posttraumatic stress disorder)  
[www.apa.org](http://www.apa.org)

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration  
Managing Anxiety in Times of Crisis  
[www.mentalhealth.org/cmhs/managinganxiety](http://www.mentalhealth.org/cmhs/managinganxiety)

National Domestic Violence Hotline  
800-799-SAFE  
TTY: 800-787-3224

Mental Health America  
[www.nmha.org](http://www.nmha.org)

## If the Victim Returns to the United States

U.S. citizens who are victims of crime abroad might not know where to go for help or what kind of help they are entitled to while they are still overseas. Consequently, many U.S. citizens may not receive all the services for which they are eligible abroad. Additionally, victims might not even discuss the crime with anyone until they return to the United States.

Some victims of crime abroad have immediate medical and safety concerns that are addressed in the country where the crime occurred. Nevertheless, after they return to the United States, victims may have intermediate and long-term medical needs or unanswered questions about their rights in a foreign legal system.

In addition to the special needs precipitated by victimization abroad, victim service providers can facilitate wide-ranging services by continuing to coordinate with familiar resources in the United States such as—

- Rape crisis counseling programs.
- Shelter and counseling programs for battered women.
- Support groups and bereavement counseling for family members of homicide victims.
- Diagnostic and treatment programs for child abuse victims.
- Assistance for victims of drunk-driving crashes.

These resources can be especially important for U.S. citizens who return home after being victims of crime abroad.

### Travel Assistance

Assistance for victims wishing to return to the United States can be complicated because international travel is expensive, assisting victims can involve assisting multiple family members, and all members of the victim's family unit might not be U.S. citizens. Cases of international abduction can pose particularly complex problems when a parent's presence in the United States is important to resolution of the case.

The Office of Overseas Citizens Services coordinates with U.S. embassies and consulates to assist with—

- Replacing or issuing passports or visas.
- Providing repatriation loans to victims who are U.S. citizens and without other resources.
- Coordinating and booking travel arrangements for victims who are U.S. citizens and their families.
- Offering information about financial assistance that might be available to cover the costs of the victim's or family members' travel, returning remains to the United States, attending criminal proceedings, helping to pay for moving, and so forth.

The Office of Overseas Citizens Services also works with U.S.-based victim service providers to facilitate family reunifications and repatriations, coordinate with other agencies to arrange for a companion to meet victims at the airport, or act as a liaison with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to secure emergency visas for a victim's alien relatives.

**Resources:**

U.S. Department of State  
Travel and Business  
[www.state.gov/travel](http://www.state.gov/travel)

U.S. Department of State  
National Passport Information Center  
[http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport\\_1738.html](http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html)

U.S. Department of State  
Foreign Entry Requirements  
[http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/brochures/brochures\\_1231.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/brochures/brochures_1231.html)

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services  
<http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis>

American Immigration Center  
<http://www.us-immigration.com/>

Destination USA  
[http://travel.state.gov/visa/visa\\_1750.html](http://travel.state.gov/visa/visa_1750.html)

### Investigation and Prosecution

All victims of crime have concerns about their role in the investigation of the crime and in the legal proceedings. For U.S. citizens who are victimized abroad, these concerns are complicated by language, cultural norms, unfamiliarity with procedures, and other issues.

U.S. victim assistance providers might not have sufficient funding to subsidize a victim's return to the country where the crime occurred. Therefore, victims might have to decide if they have the means to pursue and participate in prosecution.

Victim service providers can prepare the victim to participate in the country's legal system by obtaining and sharing information with the Office of Overseas Citizens Services, which can offer details about the local criminal justice process and facilitate obtaining information about the victim's case. In addition, in many cases of victimization abroad, when the local U.S. embassy expresses an interest in the case, information and access might be more easily obtained.

Nevertheless, consular officials cannot—

- Investigate crimes.
- Provide legal advice.
- Represent U.S. citizens in court.
- Serve as official interpreters or translators.
- Pay legal, medical, or other fees for the victim.

**Resources:**

Southern Methodist University Underwood Law Library  
(International law and organizations)  
<http://library.law.smu.edu/>

### Criminal Proceedings

In some jurisdictions around the world, victims cannot receive an update on their case without hiring and paying for an attorney. In addition, most local courts abroad will not pay travel expenses for a victim to return to the country to testify. Even if they return to testify, victims or

witnesses might discover that, unlike U.S. courts, courts overseas may not offer some of the basic options U.S. victim service providers consider customary, such as separation from the accused.

Consular officers can help acquire information about the legal case and provide details about the country's criminal justice process and any rights of crime victims. They also can facilitate communication with prosecutors and other court officers affiliated with the case.

Through the Office of Overseas Citizens Services, domestic victim service providers can—

- Obtain details about what will happen at each stage of the criminal proceedings and convey the information to the victim.
- Identify a local point of contact to keep the victim informed of case information and developments.
- Identify, in some cases, a local individual to support the victim and family members while they attend criminal proceedings, which can be particularly intimidating to victims who do not speak the language and are unfamiliar with the legal process.

## Emotional Support

Some victims report feelings of anxiety, fear, hypervigilance, guilt, anger, or isolation. Some experience difficulty making decisions, short-term memory problems, difficulty concentrating, or recurring memories of the crime. It is important to realize these are normal feelings, behaviors, and reactions to an abnormal event. For most victims, these reactions will diminish over time. If they continue and threaten to disrupt the victim's life, or become worse after several weeks, the victim should consider seeking professional assistance.

### **Resources:**

National Center for PTSD

[www.ncptsd.va.gov](http://www.ncptsd.va.gov)

National Domestic Violence Hotline

800-799-SAFE

TTY: 800-787-3224

Sidran Institute

[www.sidran.org](http://www.sidran.org)

## International Terrorism

### The Unique Impact of Terrorism

In recent years, the threat of international terrorism abroad has risen dramatically. The devastation a single act of terrorism can inflict presents U.S. and international victim service providers with difficult tasks. These tasks include facilitating immediate care, compensation, counseling, and other assistance to victims who suffer the severe physical, emotional, and mental trauma associated with criminal mass victimization.

Because of complicated international investigations that frequently involve multiple jurisdictions, the rights and needs of victims of international terrorism might be overlooked and services might not be identified or accessed. U.S. citizens who are victims of terrorist attacks abroad may need help to acquire the types of assistance, compensation, and support that are available to victims of violent crime or domestic terrorism that occur within U.S. borders.

### **Resources:**

OVC Terrorism and Mass Violence Resources

[www.ovc.gov/help/terrorism.htm](http://www.ovc.gov/help/terrorism.htm)

American Psychological Association

(Mental health services to disaster survivors and relief workers)

[www.apa.org](http://www.apa.org)

Gift From Within

[www.gifffromwithin.org](http://www.gifffromwithin.org)

International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies

[www.istss.org](http://www.istss.org)

## Assisting Victims of International Terrorism

Once an event is determined to be an act of terrorism and a case is opened, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) is responsible for coordinating and providing assistance to victims and their families as soon as possible after the crime occurs.

The FBI Office for Victim Assistance—

- Coordinates with the U.S. Department of State to ensure that the remains of murdered victims of terrorism are returned to the United States for autopsy by the U.S. Government.
- Discusses postmortem concerns with family members.
- Assists injured victims with medical evacuation and their families with emergency travel.
- Provides information about compensation.
- Arranges for preparation and return of remains to families following autopsy.
- Arranges for the cleaning and return of personal effects to victims' families.

OVC and the FBI have established the Crime Victim Assistance Emergency Fund for Victims of Terrorism and/or Mass Violence. The purpose of the emergency fund is to assist U.S. nationals, or U.S. Government employees and their families, who are victims of terrorism or mass violence occurring outside the United States. The emergency fund, derived from the Antiterrorism Emergency Reserve, is not intended to create a separate system of services for victims but rather to support services for victims who are in immediate need of assistance when no other resources are available.

In addition, the U.S. Congress has amended the Victims of Crime Act of 1984 by authorizing an International Terrorism Victim Expense Reimbursement Program (ITVERP) so victims of acts of international terrorism, as determined by the Attorney General and occurring abroad on or after December 21, 1988, may receive reimbursement for specific expenses associated with that victimization. In order to qualify for this benefit, you must be a U.S. national or a U.S. Government officer or employee. The law requires that the individual victim must have “suffered direct physical or emotional injury or death as a result of an act of international terrorism” [42 U.S.C. § 10603c (a)(3)(A)(i)]. Victims may be eligible for reimbursement of medical costs, mental health costs, property loss, funeral and burial costs, and miscellaneous expenses.

### **Resources:**

FBI

Office for Victim Assistance

[www.fbi.gov/hq/cid/victimassist/home.htm](http://www.fbi.gov/hq/cid/victimassist/home.htm)

International Terrorism Victim Expense Reimbursement Program Resource Center

Phone: 800-363-0441

E-mail: [ITVERP@usdoj.gov](mailto:ITVERP@usdoj.gov)

[www.ovc.gov/intdir/itverp/index.html](http://www.ovc.gov/intdir/itverp/index.html)

OVC International Terrorism Victim Expense Reimbursement Program

February 2006 Report to Congress

## Crime Victim Compensation

### State Crime Victim Compensation

Some states and territories, through their crime victim compensation programs, offer benefits to

residents who are victims of crime abroad. Visit the [Web site](#) and click on the State Links tab for Web sites for participating states. Other states currently do not offer benefits to residents who are victimized overseas.

## Directory of International Crime Victim Compensation Programs

The *Directory of International Crime Victim Compensation Programs*, published by OVC, lists contact information for victim compensation programs in the United States and 35 other countries.

The U.S. Department of State surveyed countries, territories, and possessions that have full diplomatic relations with the United States to determine whether they had crime victim compensation programs. The survey revealed that some countries require victims to file a police report before they leave the country to be eligible for compensation. The survey also revealed the following:

- Victims of terrorism: Some countries specify that compensation benefits be made available to victims of terrorism.
- Maximum award limits: Some countries do not place limits on compensation benefits. Others award compensation on a case-by-case basis, by applicable statutes on victim compensation and liability for damages, and according to the victim's financial well-being and ability to cover losses.
- Foreign visitors: Some countries offering assistance to foreign visitors limit eligibility by requiring the visitor to be a member of a European Union country or have a similar affiliation, having residency restrictions (be a temporary or permanent resident or resident of a country with a reciprocal agreement in place), or restricting eligibility to victims of acts of terrorism.
- Victim compensation for expenses: The majority of international crime victim compensation programs cover expenses that typically fall under U.S. crime victim compensation programs such as funeral and burial, disability, medical expenses, mental health counseling, and lost wages or support.
- Compensation for ancillary expenses: Some countries provide compensation for ancillary expenses such as court expenses and expenses incurred by the court (translation fees, photocopying of files or documents, expert fees), temporary living support, and replacement of personal effects and clothing.

### **Resource:**

Directory of International Crime Victim Compensation Programs  
[www.ovc.gov/publications/infores/intdir2005](http://www.ovc.gov/publications/infores/intdir2005)

## Conclusion

Assisting U.S. citizens who have been victimized abroad calls for a thorough understanding of the unique challenges they are likely to encounter, comprehensive knowledge of available resources, and systematic advance planning. As victim service providers plan and implement innovative approaches for responding to the needs of U.S. citizens who are victims of crimes overseas, effective case management will be increasingly important to pinpointing the most significant services and ensuring that victims have access to them.

The checklists that accompany this guide provide a structured way to ensure that victim service providers cover key issues in assessing and responding to the needs of U.S. citizens victimized abroad. At the same time, the structure is flexible enough to allow customization of services for individual circumstances and requirements.

## Victim Assistance Checklists

- [Safety and Security](#)
- [Ventilation and Validation](#)
- [Prediction and Preparation](#)

- [Other Victim Assistance Checklists](#)

Victim service providers responding to the needs of U.S. citizens who have been victimized overseas rely heavily on effective case management to help them identify the unique needs of these victims and ensure timely access to the services they require. This guide includes four comprehensive checklists to help ensure that victim service providers cover key issues in assessing and responding to the needs of U.S. citizens victimized abroad.

These checklists, in conjunction with early collaboration with resources in the United States and abroad, are helpful tools for serving U.S. citizens who have been victimized, no matter where they currently reside or where the crime took place.

The first checklist is organized by the following three important categories of victim needs:

- **Safety and security:** Because victims often are physically and emotionally devastated by the crime, service providers should first address their physical needs, including medical care and basic daily necessities.
- **Ventilation and validation:** Victims of crime often need to talk to someone about what has happened to them. Service providers can listen to victims and help them understand that their feelings are normal and justifiable.
- **Prediction and preparation:** Victims, particularly those who are affected by a crime overseas, often are not sure what will happen next. By providing timely information, service providers can help offset the feelings of powerlessness and loss of control victims often experience after a crime.

## Safety and Security

Ensure the victim's physical safety.

Is the victim living or staying in a safe location?

Has the victim discussed safety or safety planning with anyone?

Encourage victims to obtain appropriate medical care, if needed.

Does the victim understand potential long-term physical effects of the crime?

Address the victim's feelings of personal safety.

Does the victim feel safe in the current living situation? Why or why not?

If the victim does not feel safe, what can be done to enhance the feeling of safety?

Ask victims if there are any family members, friends, employers, or others they would like you to contact in the United States.

Determine what services the victim received overseas at the time of the crime and which agencies, organizations, or individuals provided help with the following:

Safety considerations.

Medical care.

Counseling.

Police investigation.

Criminal justice proceedings.

Identify services the victim still needs.

### Ventilation and Validation

Offer to answer any questions victims might have and provide any further assistance they might need.

Allow the victim to share thoughts, feelings, and reactions.

Urge victims to receive counseling.

Provide referrals to resources in the United States for—

Victim assistance.

Victim compensation.

Victim support groups.

Determine the victim's support system.

What short-term support does the victim have?

What long-term support does the victim have?

### Prediction and Preparation

Explain that the victim might experience posttraumatic stress symptoms and describe what those symptoms might be.

Discuss potential medical issues.

Discuss potential travel issues.

Discuss potential legal issues.

Discuss the role of the consular officer.

Anticipate reactions or feelings that might surface days or weeks after the crime occurs.

### Other Victim Assistance Checklists

Provide information about the criminal justice process.

Is there a point of contact designated for case information?

Is someone identified to assist the victim if he or she returns to the country to testify?

Is someone identified who can attend the trial or other key criminal proceedings with, or on behalf of, the victim?

[Special Considerations for Homicide](#)

[Special Considerations for Sexual Assault](#)

[Special Considerations for Domestic Violence](#)

[Special Considerations for Child Victims](#)

Special Considerations for Homicide

Accept survivors' reactions in a nonjudgmental, empathetic manner.

Exhibit empathy for survivors' pain and suffering, but do not say "I understand" when you most likely cannot.

Show respect for survivors' personal and religious or nonreligious understandings of death.

Assist relatives who are not U.S. citizens who want to travel with the survivors.

Encourage survivors to be supportive of one another.

Help survivors cover expenses and coordinate transportation of the victim's remains and survivors' travel to the funeral.

**Resources:**

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

[www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov)

U.S. Department of State

[http://travel.state.gov/visa/visa\\_1750.html](http://travel.state.gov/visa/visa_1750.html)

U.S. Immigration Online

[www.usaimmigrationservice.org](http://www.usaimmigrationservice.org)

Social Security Online

[www.ssa.gov/ww&os1.htm](http://www.ssa.gov/ww&os1.htm)

"Working with Grieving Children After Violent Death"

[www.ovc.gov/publications/infores/grieve/welcome.html](http://www.ovc.gov/publications/infores/grieve/welcome.html)

## Special Considerations for Sexual Assault

Encourage victims to obtain medical attention, which can provide evidence for the apprehension and prosecution of the assailant.

Urge the victim to obtain a forensic examination, if appropriate, even if more than 72 hours have passed.

Ask victims about their living situation and ensure that they believe they are now safe.

Be unconditionally supportive of any type of emotional reaction by victims.

Encourage survivors to be supportive of one another.

Offer to help identify a sexual assault crisis counselor.

Discuss possible followup medical care.

Legal definitions of rape and sexual assault vary from country to country. Contact the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs, Office of Overseas Citizens Services to learn what laws apply.

**Resources:**

It Happened to Alexa Foundation

National Sexual Violence Resource Center  
[www.nsvrc.org](http://www.nsvrc.org)

Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network  
[www.rainn.org](http://www.rainn.org)

National Sexual Assault Hotline: 800-656-4673

### Special Considerations for Domestic Violence

Contact the Office of Overseas Citizens Services to learn how law enforcement, prosecutors, and the courts in the country respond to domestic violence cases and whether criminal charges can be filed and the abuser prosecuted.

Find out if restraining orders are available in the country, how the victim can obtain one, and what the victim should do if the order is violated.

Find out how the courts in the country address child custody issues in cases of domestic violence.

Facilitate loans or reimbursement for victims who wish to return to the United States to escape domestic abuse.

Avoid judging victims or personally commenting on the crime.

Provide victims with referral information on domestic violence shelters and battered women's programs, if available.

In some cases, a victim fleeing domestic violence who leaves the country with his or her children could be accused of international parental child abduction. Contact the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate for clarification and referral information.

**Resources:**

Safe Horizon International Domestic Violence Resources  
[www.safehorizon.org/index/get-help-8/domestic-violence-and-abusive-relationships-35/tour-a-domestic-violence-shelter-3.html](http://www.safehorizon.org/index/get-help-8/domestic-violence-and-abusive-relationships-35/tour-a-domestic-violence-shelter-3.html)

Social Security Administration  
Domestic Violence  
(Information on how to apply for a new Social Security number)

[www.ssa.gov/pressoffice/domestic\\_fact.html](http://www.ssa.gov/pressoffice/domestic_fact.html)

U.S. Department of Justice  
Office on Violence Against Women  
(Contact information for state domestic violence coalitions)  
[www.justice.gov/ovw/statedomestic.htm](http://www.justice.gov/ovw/statedomestic.htm)

U.S. Department of State  
Office of Children's Issues  
Toll Free: 888-407-4747 (8 a.m.–8 p.m. e.t.)  
Phone: 202-736-9090  
Fax: 202-736-9133  
[travel.state.gov/abduction/abduction\\_580.html](http://travel.state.gov/abduction/abduction_580.html)

## Special Considerations for Child Victims

Recognize that children react to crimes in ways that can be very different from adults.

Understand that children tend to regress emotionally during times of stress.

Consult a social worker or child psychologist before interviewing a child victim and consider having the social worker or child psychologist present during the meeting.

Be consistent with the terms you use and repeat important information often.

Be aware of the limited attention span of children during interviews.

Provide referrals for counselors who specialize in children's trauma.

Provide referrals to counselors for parents or other family members.

Civil and criminal laws governing child abuse vary widely throughout the world. Contact the Office of Overseas Citizens Services for an explanation of country-specific laws.

Ask the Office of Overseas Citizens Services about legal requirements for creating new custody arrangements for the child, if necessary.

### **Resource:**

U.S. Department of State  
Office of Overseas Citizens Services  
Office of Children's Issues, Children & Family  
Toll Free: 888-407-4747 (8 a.m.–8 p.m. e.t.)  
Phone: 202-736-9090  
Fax: 202-736-9133  
[travel.state.gov/abduction/abduction\\_580.html](http://travel.state.gov/abduction/abduction_580.html)

## Resources

- [Unites States Embassy and Consulate Web Sites](#)

- [Federal Web Sites](#)
- [State Victim Assistance and Compensation Web Sites](#)
- [Organizations and Programs](#)
  - [Homicide](#)
  - [Sexual Assault](#)
  - [Domestic Violence](#)
  - [Children's Issues](#)
  - [Mental Health](#)

## United States Embassy and Consulate Web Sites

The U.S. Department of State offers information on U.S. embassies and consulates, grouped by region.

U.S. Department of State  
<http://usembassy.state.gov>

## Federal Web Sites

Federal Bureau of Investigation  
Office for Victim Assistance  
[www.fbi.gov/hq/cid/victimassist/home.htm](http://www.fbi.gov/hq/cid/victimassist/home.htm)

Passport to Safer Travel  
United States Attorney's Office  
District of Vermont  
[www.justice.gov/usao/vt](http://www.justice.gov/usao/vt)

U.S. Department of Justice  
Office for Victims of Crime  
[www.ovc.gov](http://www.ovc.gov)

U.S. Department of Justice  
Office for Victims of Crime  
Homicide Support  
[www.ovc.gov/help/hv.htm](http://www.ovc.gov/help/hv.htm)

U.S. Department of Justice  
Office for Victims of Crime  
Terrorism and International Victim Assistance Services  
[www.ovc.gov/publications/factshts/tivu/welcome.html](http://www.ovc.gov/publications/factshts/tivu/welcome.html)

U.S. Department of Justice  
Office on Violence Against Women  
(Contact information for state sexual assault coalitions)  
[www.ovv.usdoj.gov/](http://www.ovv.usdoj.gov/)

U.S. Department of State  
Bureau of Consular Affairs, Office of Overseas Citizens Services  
<http://travel.state.gov>

## State Victim Assistance and Compensation Web Sites

National Association of Crime Victim Compensation Boards  
[www.nacvcb.org](http://www.nacvcb.org)

National Association of VOCA Assistance Administrators  
[www.navaa.org](http://www.navaa.org)

State victim assistance and compensation Web sites  
[www.ovc.gov/map.html](http://www.ovc.gov/map.html)

## Organizations and Programs

[Homicide](#)

The Compassionate Friends  
[www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)

National Crime Victims Research and Treatment Center  
[www.musc.edu/cvc](http://www.musc.edu/cvc)

National Organization of Parents of Murdered Children, Inc.  
888-818-POMC  
[www.pomc.org](http://www.pomc.org)

### Sexual Assault

FaithTrust Institute  
[www.faithtrustinstitute.org](http://www.faithtrustinstitute.org)

Institute on Violence, Abuse and Trauma  
[www.ivatcenters.org](http://www.ivatcenters.org)

It Happened to Alexa Foundation

National Sexual Assault Hotline: 800-656-4673

National Sexual Violence Resource Center  
[www.nsvrc.org](http://www.nsvrc.org)

Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network  
[www.rainn.org](http://www.rainn.org)

### Domestic Violence

American Bar Association Domestic Violence Safety Plan  
[www.abanet.org/tips/dvsafety.html](http://www.abanet.org/tips/dvsafety.html)

Battered Women's Justice Project  
800-903-0111

FaithTrust Institute  
[www.faithtrustinstitute.org](http://www.faithtrustinstitute.org)

Family Violence Prevention Fund  
<http://endabuse.org>

Family Violence Prevention Fund/Health Resource Center  
888-RX-ABUSE

Institute on Violence, Abuse and Trauma  
[www.ivatcenters.org](http://www.ivatcenters.org)

National Coalition Against Domestic Violence  
[www.ncadv.org](http://www.ncadv.org)

National Domestic Violence Hotline  
[www.ndvh.org](http://www.ndvh.org)  
800-799-SAFE

National Resource Center on Domestic Violence  
800-537-2238  
TTY Hotline: 800-553-2508

National Violence Against Women Prevention Research Center  
[www.musc.edu/vawprevention](http://www.musc.edu/vawprevention)

Resource Center on Domestic Violence, Child Protection and Custody  
800-527-3223

### Children's Issues

About Our Kids  
[www.aboutourkids.org](http://www.aboutourkids.org)

Alliance for Children and Families

[www.alliance1.org](http://www.alliance1.org)

Child Find of America, Inc.

[www.childfindofamerica.org](http://www.childfindofamerica.org)

ChildHelp National Child Abuse Hotline

800-4-A-CHILD

ChildHelp, USA

[www.childhelpusa.org](http://www.childhelpusa.org)

The Dougy Center National Center for Grieving Children and Families

[www.dougy.org](http://www.dougy.org)

International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children

[www.icmec.org](http://www.icmec.org)

The National Children's Alliance

[www.nca-online.org](http://www.nca-online.org)

Stop It Now

[www.stopitnow.com](http://www.stopitnow.com)

### Mental Health

American Psychiatric Association

<http://healthyminds.org>

Association of Traumatic Stress Specialists

[www.atss.info](http://www.atss.info)