Legislative Services Agency
State Capitol, 1007 E. Grand Avenue, Des Moines, Iowa 50319, 515.281.3566

Fiscal Services Division

Fiscal Topic

Sex Offender Registry

November 12, 2026

Purpose and History

The Sex Offender Registry (SOR) was established in Iowa Code chapter 692A on July 1, 1995. The SOR and related investigative support fall under the purview of the Support Operations Bureau of the Division of Criminal Investigation (DCI) within the Department of Public Safety (DPS). The Bureau is responsible for maintaining the SOR and provides public notifications, ensures the SOR follows federal guidelines, and investigates acts of noncompliance by registered sex offenders.

Registration and Verification

In accordance with Iowa Code section 692.103, an individual is required to register with the SOR if the individual is convicted or adjudicated of a sex offense in Iowa. Registration is also required if the individual resides, is employed, or attends school in Iowa and is required to register with the SOR of another jurisdiction. An offender is not required to register while incarcerated as time spent incarcerated does not count toward the required registration period, and the offender must register once placed on probation, released on parole or work release, or released from incarceration.

2026 Iowa Acts, chapter 1079 (Criminal Law — Victim Counselors, Protective Orders, Sex Offender Registration, Sexual Abuse Evidence, Victim Rights, Restoration of Mental Competency, and Restitution Act), amended Iowa code Code sections 692A.104 and 692A.105 stating an offender must take the following actions within three business days of being required to register for a change in residence, in employment, in attendance as a student, or in other relevant information:

- Register in person with the sheriff of each county where the offender resides, is employed, or attends school.
- Provide an in-person notification to the sheriff of the offender's county of primary residence and to the sheriff of each county where a change in residence, employment, or attendance as a student occurs.
- Notify the sheriff of the offender's county of primary residence concerning any change in relevant information as defined in 661 IAC 83.2.
- Provide an in-person notification to the sheriff of the offender's county of primary residence of a change in the offender's temporary lodging that exceeds five days.

In addition, 2026 Iowa Acts, chapter 1079, created Iowa Code section 692A.105A, requiring an offender to provide an in-person notification to the sheriff of the offender's county of primary residence within three days of a change in the following:

- The name, address, and telephone number of the sex offender's place of employment.
- The license plate number and a physical description, including make, model, and color, of any vehicle owned or regularly operated by the sex offender.

After the initial registration, an offender must appear in person to verify relevant information. A Tier I offender must verify relevant information every year, a Tier II offender must verify relevant information every six months, and a Tier III offender must verify relevant information every three months. Pursuant to Iowa Code section 692A.108, a sheriff may require an offender to appear in person more frequently to verify information if good cause is shown. The circumstances requiring more frequent appearances shall be reasonable, documented by the sheriff, and provided in writing to the offender and to the DPS.

Tier System

Individuals on the SOR are classified as either a Tier I, Tier II, or Tier III offender, and the tiers ascend in order of severity. For example, a Tier II offender has been convicted of a more serious offense than a Tier I offender. The tier designation is based on the offense for which an individual is convicted, regardless of the original charge. Convictions of more than one sex offense that are prosecuted in a single indictment are considered a single offense for registration purposes.

Pursuant to Iowa Code section 692A.102, an offender's tier designation can be reclassified to a higher tier in the following circumstances:

- A Tier I offender with one previous conviction for a Tier I offense is reclassified as a Tier II offender.
- A Tier II offender with a previous conviction of a Tier II offense is reclassified as a Tier III offender.
- A Tier II offense, if committed against a person under 13 years of age, is considered a Tier III offense.
- Any sex offense that would qualify the offender as a sexually violent predator as defined in the federal Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 is a Tier III offense.

Registration Duration

Unless otherwise provided in Iowa Code section 692A.106, an offender remains on the SOR for a period of 10 years. An offender who is convicted of a violation of any of the registry requirements must register for an additional 10-year term at the conclusion of the original 10-year term. An offender placed on probation, parole, or work release who has the probation, parole, or work release revoked must start a new registration period on the SOR upon release from custody.

An offender may be required to register for life under the following circumstances:

- The offender is sentenced to a special sentence under Iowa Code section 903B.1.
- The offender is convicted of a second or subsequent offense that requires registration on the SOR.
- The offender is convicted of an aggravated offense as defined in Iowa Code section 692A.101(1)(a).
- The offender is a sexually violent predator.

An offender who no longer maintains a residence, employment, or attendance as a student in Iowa does not have to register on the Iowa SOR after the DPS verifies compliance with registration requirements in another jurisdiction. An offender who establishes residence, employment, or attendance as a student in Iowa from another jurisdiction must register on the Iowa SOR for a duration equal to the time required by the other jurisdiction or under Iowa law, whichever is longer.

Restrictions

Upon registration, an offender must comply with restrictions regarding residence, employment, and certain public spaces. An offender is prohibited from loitering or being an employee or volunteer at facilities that provide services to dependent adults or at events where dependent adults participate in programming.

An offender convicted of an aggravated offense against a minor is prohibited from residing within 2,000 feet of a child care facility or a school. This restriction does not apply if the offender is a minor, is incarcerated, or meets other parameters under Iowa Code section 692A.114(3).

Except as stated in Iowa Code section 692A.113(2), an offender convicted of a sex offense against a minor is prohibited from doing the following:

- Being present, unless granted written permission, upon the real property of a public or nonpublic elementary or secondary school, child care facility, or public library or being present in any vehicle owned, leased, or contracted by a school unless the offender is a student or the vehicle is made available as public transportation.
- Loitering within 300 feet of the real property of a school (unless the offender is a student), a child care facility, a public library, or any other place in use by a minor, including but not limited to a public playground or children's play area, recreational or sport-related activity area, public swimming or wading pool, or beach.
- Operating, managing, being employed by, or acting as a contractor or volunteer at, when a minor is present on the premises, a municipal, county, or state fair or carnival; an arcade; an amusement center; a facility providing programs or services intended primarily for minors; or any place intended primarily for use by minors, including but not limited to a playground, children's play area, recreational or sport-related activity area, swimming or wading pool, or beach. An offender is also prohibited from operating, managing, being employed by, or acting as a contractor or volunteer at a public or nonpublic school, a child care facility, a public library, or an ice cream or food truck marketing and dispensing food products to minors.

Funding

The SOR receives funding through a General Fund appropriation to the DCI. The SOR also receives funding from the SOR Fund. When an offender is convicted of an offense that requires registration on the SOR, pursuant to Iowa Code section 692A.110, the offender is required to pay an annual fee of $25 to the sheriff of the county where the offender primarily resides. In addition, the offender is assessed a one-time $250 civil penalty. The annual fee administered by the county sheriff is used to cover costs related to registering an offender and keeping relevant information up to date. In addition, pursuant to Iowa Code section 602.1808(10), the distribution is 10.0% of the civil penalty, or $25, is deposited into the Court Technology and Modernization Fund and 90.0%, or $225, is deposited into the SOR Fund.

Related Statutes and Administrative Rules

Iowa Code chapters 602, 692A, 709, and 903B
661 IAC 83

Additional Information

For additional information, visit

- Department of Public Safety – Division of Criminal Investigation: dps.iowa.gov/divisions-iowa-department-public-safety/iowa-division-criminal-investigation/support-operations-bureau
- Iowa Sex Offender Registry: iowasexoffender.gov

LSA Staff Contact

Nathan Moore
(515.725.0155)
nathan.moore@legis.iowa.gov

Doc ID 1615531