

What is the Address Confidentiality Program?

INTRODUCTION

The Address Confidentiality Program (ACP) helps victims who have recently relocated to a new location unknown to their abusers keep their new addresses confidential. The ACP has three important components:

- The ACP provides participants with a legal substitute address which has no relation to their actual address.
- The ACP provides participants with a free, confidential mail-forwarding service.
- Through the ACP, the Office of the Attorney General acts as an agent for acceptance of service of legal process for participants.

A participant may use the substitute address as his or her legal address for purposes of receiving state and local services, and as his or her mailing address for first-class mail. The actual address of a participant is made available only to the Office of the Attorney General and its employees involved in the ACP and to law enforcement officers for law enforcement purposes.

The ACP limits public disclosure of a participant's actual address; however, the ACP is not retroactive and cannot provide absolute protection. Each ACP participant should seek counseling through a local domestic violence program to determine whether the ACP should be a part of the victim's overall safety plan.



ELIGIBILITY FOR PARTICIPATION

The ACP is intended to help victims of domestic violence, both adults and children, who have confidentially relocated to a location unknown by their abusers.

Participation in the ACP is currently limited to victims living in eighteen localities in Virginia: the Counties of Albemarle, Arlington, Augusta, Dickenson, Fairfax, Henry, Lee, Rockbridge, Russell, Scott, Washington, and Wise, and the Cities of Buena Vista, Charlottesville, Lexington, Martinsville, Norfolk, and Roanoke. Participation in the ACP is not transferable if a participant moves to another state.

Participation in the ACP is not permitted if the applicant is a sex offender required to register on the Sex Offender and Crimes Against Minors Registry, or is on parole and/or probation.

An applicant who is a resident of temporary housing for thirty (30) days or less is not eligible to enroll in the ACP until he or she obtains a permanent residential address.

APPLYING FOR PARTICIPATION

Victims complete an application packet for participation in the ACP through their local domestic violence programs. The completed application packet is then forwarded to the ACP in Richmond, Virginia, for review and certification.

CERTIFICATION OF PARTICIPATION

Each certified participant is assigned a unique authorization code number and is issued an ACP authorization card. The ACP authorization card includes the participant's name, signature, birth date, authorization code, and substitute address. Once a participant receives the ACP authorization card, he or she can begin using the ACP substitute address.

THE ACP SUBSTITUTE ADDRESS

The substitute address has no relation to a participant's actual location. All ACP participants are authorized to use the same post office box (P.O. Box 1133), which is the ACP's post office box located in Richmond. Each participant must use his or her unique authorization code number as part of the substitute address.

MAIL FORWARDING SERVICE

Once a participant begins using the substitute address, the participant's mail will be forwarded to the ACP P.O. Box in Richmond. The ACP receives, sorts, repackages, and forwards all **first class mail** to each participant's actual residential address. The ACP does not forward magazines, catalogs, or "junk" mail. The mail forwarding service does delay the participant's receipt of his or her mail; however, every effort is made to forward the mail as promptly as possible.

SERVICE OF LEGAL PROCESS

The Attorney General acts as the agent for service of process for any legal papers directed to an ACP participant. Once service is received by the Attorney General on behalf of the participant, the participant is immediately notified by the ACP, and the legal papers are immediately forwarded to the participant.

To apply for participation in the ACP, contact the local domestic violence program in your area.

To locate a program near you, call the **Virginia Family Violence and Sexual Assault Hotline, 1-800-838-8238.**