

# OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL ADDRESS CONFIDENTIALITY PROGRAM

## INFORMATION SHEET FOR AGENCIES

### What is the Address Confidentiality Program?

The Address Confidentiality Program (ACP) helps victims of domestic violence who have recently relocated to a new location unknown to their abuser keep their new address 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 cost-free, confidential mail-forwarding service.
- The Office of the Attorney General acts as an agent for acceptance of service of legal process on behalf of the participant.



Participants may use the substitute address as their legal address for purposes of receiving state and local services and as their mailing address for first-class mail. The ACP limits public disclosure of a participant's actual address; however, the ACP is not retroactive and cannot provide absolute protection. For this reason, ACP participants are encouraged to seek counseling through a local domestic violence program to determine whether the ACP should be a part of their overall safety plan.

### What is 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 ACP post office box - **P.O. Box 1133, Richmond, Virginia 23218**. The ACP assigns each participant a unique authorization code number which must be used as part of the substitute address.

Any legal documents to be served on an ACP participant should be directed to the Address Confidentiality Program, Office of the Attorney General, 900 E. Main Street, Richmond, Virginia 23219.

### How Do Participants Use the ACP Substitute Address?

Program participants choose when to use the substitute address. It is the participant's responsibility to notify state and local agencies that they are an ACP participant who wishes to use the ACP substitute address. When a program participant presents his or her authorization card, state and local government agencies must accept the ACP substitute address as though it is the person's actual residential address. When an ACP participant chooses to reveal his or her actual address, however, the state or local agency is not legally obligated to keep that information confidential.

In some situations, where a state or local government agency has bona fide statutory or administrative authority for use of or need of an individual's actual address, an agency may petition the Office of the Attorney General for an exemption to the ACP laws. If the Office of the Attorney General grants the agency an ACP exemption, program participants involved with that agency may have to reveal their actual location. Check with your agency to determine if your agency has been granted such an exemption for ACP participants and for what purpose(s).

It should be noted that, even without an exemption, participants will be required to provide their actual address when purchasing firearms from a gun dealership. Participants will also be required to provide their actual address to law enforcement during the issuance of a traffic summons for a traffic violation and during a criminal investigation or arrest situation.

## Will the Office of the Attorney General Disclose a Participant's Address?



The Office of the Attorney General will verify whether or not someone is a participant in the program. However, the Office of the Attorney General will not disclose or make the participant's records (including the participant's address and phone number) accessible for inspection or copying unless directed to do so in a court order, or unless requested by a law enforcement agency in writing. Participant records are exempt from disclosure under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (Va. Code Ann. § 2.2-3700 et. seq.).

A participant's actual address may be entered into the Virginia Criminal Information Network (VCIN) system by the Virginia State Police Control Center so that it may be made known to law-enforcement officers for law enforcement purposes.

## How Do I Verify ACP Participation?

All ACP participants are issued an ACP authorization card. The ACP authorization card is not proof of identification, but includes the participant's name, signature, birth date, authorization code and substitute address. The card also includes an expiration date for each participant.

Agency staff may ask to see the ACP authorization card and make a copy for agency records.

The following is a sample ACP authorization card:

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA <b>Address Confidentiality Program</b>		This program participant is authorized to use the following substitute address:	
<b>Jane Doe</b> (Full legal name of participant or parent/guardian)		<b>Jane Doe</b> PMB ##### P.O. Box 1133 Richmond, VA 23218-1133	
is authorized to participate in the Address Confidentiality Program pursuant to Va. Ann. Code § 2.2-515.2.		Authorized address, name, post office box and zip code MUST be used on all correspondence to this participant.	
Birth Date 00-00-0000	Authorization Code 00000000	Signature 00-00-0000	<i>If you have any questions regarding the Address Confidentiality Program or the valid use of this authorization card, please call: (804) 692-0592.</i> 
Participant Signature			

All ACP participants use the same ACP substitute address: P.O. Box 1133, Richmond, Virginia 23218-1133. Each ACP Participant has a unique ACP authorization code (e.g. 2011PMBxxx).

If you have questions regarding whether someone is a participant in the program, contact the ACP using the contact information provided below.

## How Do I Obtain More Information?

The ACP is administered by the Office of the Attorney General. Laws governing the program are located in Va. Code Ann. § 2.2-515.2.

For any questions regarding the ACP, contact Melissa McMenemy, ACP Coordinator, at (804) 692-0592 or [mmcmenemy@oag.state.va.us](mailto:mmcmenemy@oag.state.va.us).

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