

## USE OF 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 participant'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.

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.

Private companies (such as banks, stores, utility companies, and insurance companies) are not required to accept the substitute address, however, certain businesses may be willing to accept the substitute address as the participant's mailing address for purposes of delivery of first-class mail.

## DISCLOSURE OF RECORDS

The Office of the Attorney General will not make a participant's records (including a 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 for law enforcement purposes. Records are exempt from disclosure under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (Va. Code Ann. § 2.2-3700 et. seq.).

## CANCELLATION OF CERTIFICATION

Participants are certified for one year following the date of certification unless the participant withdraws from or is cancelled by the ACP before that date. A participant may voluntarily withdraw from the ACP at any time. The ACP may cancel a participant's certification in the following instances:

- If the participant obtains a name change;
- If the participant changes his/her address and does not notify the ACP within seven (7) days;
- If mail forwarded to the participant is returned as non-deliverable;
- If the participant knowingly uses false information during the application process;
- If the one-year certification period has expired and the participant has not submitted a renewal form;
- If the participant is placed on parole or probation while in the ACP; or
- If the participant is required to register as a sex offender (Va. Code Ann. § 9.1-900 et. seq.) while in the ACP.

**For questions regarding the Address Confidentiality Program, please contact:**

**Address Confidentiality Program (ACP)  
Post Office Box 1133  
Richmond, Virginia 23218-1133  
(804) 786-2071  
[domesticviolence@oag.state.va.us](mailto:domesticviolence@oag.state.va.us)**

## Commonwealth of Virginia



# Address Confidentiality Program

*A cost-free, confidential mail-forwarding service for victims of domestic violence who have recently relocated to a location unknown to their abuser*

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**Office of the Attorney General**  
**Mark R. Herring, Attorney General**

## 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 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.
- Through the ACP, 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 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 her or his overall safety plan.

### ELIGIBILITY FOR ACP 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 abuser.

**Effective July 1, 2011, the ACP is available to participants statewide.**

Participation in the ACP is not permitted if the applicant is a sex offender required to register under the Sex Offender and Crimes Against Minors Registry program (Chapter 9, of Title 9.1 of the Code of Virginia), or is on parole and/or probation.

Applicants who are residents of temporary housing for thirty (30) days or less are not eligible to enroll in the ACP until a permanent residential address is obtained.

Participation in the ACP is not transferable if a participant moves to another state.

### APPLYING FOR ACP 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 at the Office of the Attorney General in Richmond, Virginia where it is reviewed and certified.

### CERTIFICATION OF ACP PARTICIPATION

Upon approval of a completed application, the applicant is certified as a program participant. An applicant is certified for one year following the date of the approval, unless the certification is withdrawn or invalidated before that date. A program participant may apply for recertification every year. Each certified participant is assigned an individual authorization code number and an ACP authorization card.

### 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, which is the ACP's post office box (P.O. Box 1133, Richmond, Virginia 23218-1133). The ACP assigns each participant a unique authorization code number which must be used as part of the substitute address. The ACP authorization card is not proof of identification, but includes the participant's name, signature, birth date, authorization code and 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, Virginia. 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, the ACP forwards participant mail as promptly as possible.

### SERVICE OF LEGAL PROCESS

Through the ACP, the Attorney General acts as 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.**