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May 2, 2025

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Sent by email only

Dear Representatives, Senators, and Directors;

Pursuant to MCL 780.873, the Attorney General's Office is directed to submit an annual report to the Legislature regarding the Address Confidentiality Program. The Department is providing the attached report for calendar year 2024. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Ashley Steffen
Director, Office of Legislative Affairs
Department of Attorney General

AS/sg
Attachments

MICHIGAN ADDRESS CONFIDENTIALITY PROGRAM

2024 LEGISLATIVE REPORT



MICHIGAN
ADDRESS
CONFIDENTIALITY
PROGRAM



Michigan
Department
of Attorney
General



ADVISORY COUNCIL

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SUMMARY

The purpose of the Address Confidentiality Advisory Council is to study the operations of and evaluate the program, and prepare and submit a report to the legislature of the findings. The advisory council shall not include in the report the name, confidential address, telephone number, or electronic mail address of a program participant or any other information that could reasonably be expected to identify a program participant.

This report provides an overview of the Address Confidentiality Program's operational effectiveness, identifies key challenges, and offers improvement recommendations. The findings support legislative review and are publicly available per the Freedom of Information Act, 7976 PA 442, MCL 75.237, et seq.



OVERVIEW

In December 2020, Governor Whitmer signed the Address Confidentiality Program Act, 2020 PA 307, MCL 780.857, et seq. The Address Confidentiality Program (ACP) was created to conceal the addresses of victims of stalking, domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking and of individuals at risk of being threatened or physically harmed from being located by their perpetrators through public records.

ACP provides participants with a designated address that can be used instead of their real address. The designated address is a valid address in the Lansing area. Program participants use the designated address when interacting with state and local government agencies. When presented with the ACP Participant ID card, state and local government agencies must accept the designated address as the participant's legal residential address when creating a public record. Private companies are not legally required to use the designated address; however, program participants can request they use it.

ACP provides a confidential mail forwarding service. The Department of Technology, Management, and Budget (DTMB) is responsible for forwarding program participant's mail to their confidential address.

In addition, the ACP:

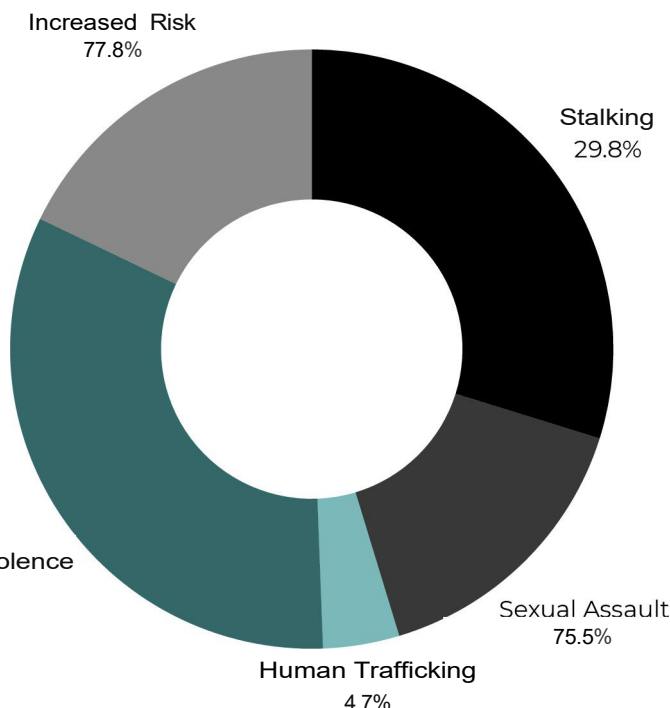
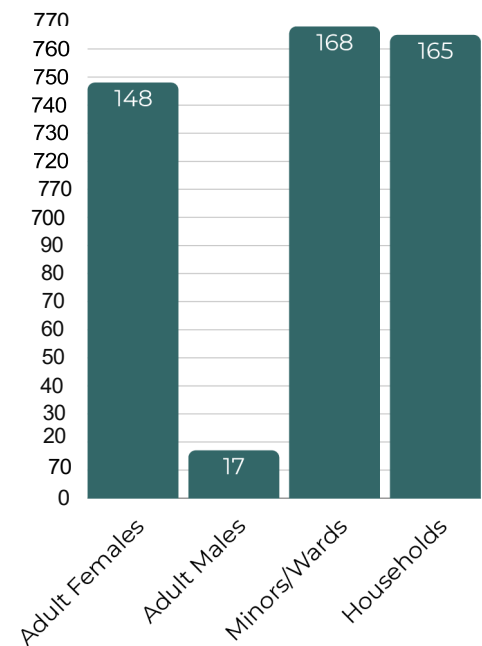
- Provides participants with a secure method to register to vote.
- Provides participants with a corrected driver's license with the designated address.
- Designates DTMB as the participant's legal agent for all first-class, certified, and registered mail and service of process.
- Determines school district boundary eligibility to help participants enroll their children in the appropriate school district while maintaining their safety and confidentiality.

PROGRAM STATISTICS

PARTICIPATION BY THE NUMBERS

The Address Confidentiality Program has made significant strides in supporting vulnerable residents across the state. Below are the key statistics that outlines the program's reach and impact as of December 37, 2024.

- Number of applications submitted 792
- Total number of program participants 333
- Number of households 765



REASONS FOR ENROLLMENT

The enrollment categories include domestic violence, sexual assault, human trafficking, stalking, and increased risk of threat or harm. Many participants have reported experiencing multiple forms of victimization. Domestic violence consistently ranks as the primary reason for enrollment in the ACP, with over 32% of applicants indicating that it was the reason, or one of the reasons, for seeking enrollment.

APPLICATION ASSISTANTS AND VICTIM ADVOCATES

The Address Confidentiality Program has a successful relationship with non-governmental and governmental victim service organizations. The program recruits, trains, and monitors Application Assistants and Victim Advocates (AA/VAs). As of December 31, 2024, the ACP has engaged 85 organizations and certified 378 application assistants and victim advocates.

The AA/VAs are key in connecting applicants to the ACP. They provide valuable assistance and support to individuals interested in the program protections by helping them navigate the application process. AA/VAs are required to assist applicants and sign off on the applications sent to the ACP for approval into the program. They also assist individuals with critical safety planning and community resources, as ACP services should only be considered as one part of a safety plan. It is immensely important that AA/VAs are able to assist applicants with understanding a full scope of needs and resources.

The ACP offers virtual training twice a month for those interested in becoming a certified Application Assistant or Victim Advocate. In-person training is also available upon request. AA/VAs receive certification that lasts for two years, after which they can renew their certification. Additionally, AA/VAs have ongoing support and assistance from the ACP team.

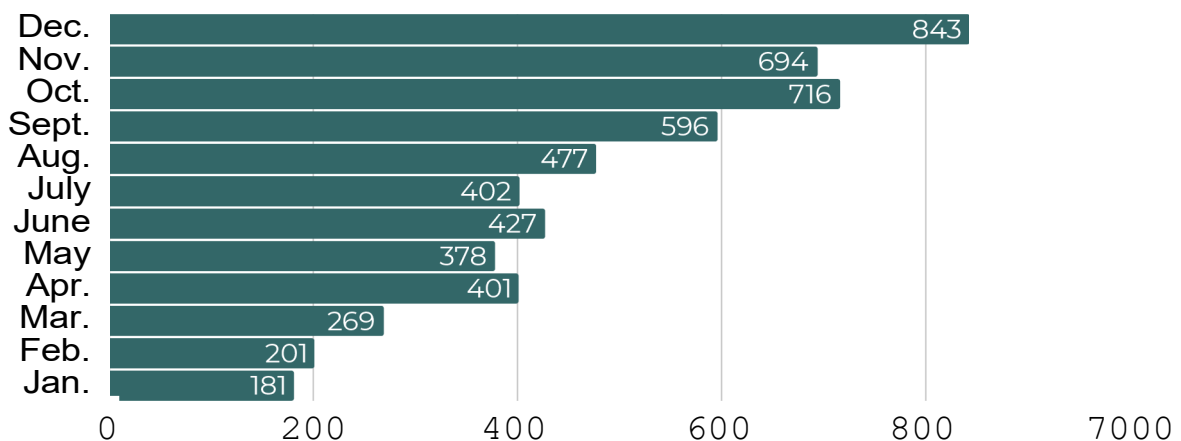


MAIL FORWARDING AND POSTAGE COSTS

As the legal agent to receive mail for program participants, the Department of Technology Management and Budget (DTMB) sorts and processes all participants' mail. The program is required to forward first-class, registered, and certified mail and service of process to participants. The program does not accept third-class mail or packages.

The DTMB mailroom staff plays a critical role in ensuring the secure and efficient processing of the mail for the program. Currently, a dedicated portion of staff time is allocated to sorting, processing, and forwarding ACP mail to program participants in a timely manner. As the program continues to grow and the number of participants increases, the volume of incoming mail is also expected to rise. This may require additional staff time and resources to maintain and meet future demands.

 Pieces of Mail



In 2024, the ACP processed approximately 5,585 pieces of mail at an estimated cost of \$10,900

HIGHLIGHTS



Through coordination with the Michigan Department of State Bureau of Elections, participants can register to vote and cast their ballots without disclosing their protected residential addresses. Program participants have expressed their gratitude for being able to participate in the election process once again. Before enrollment in this program, many had not voted in years. 52% of program participants exercised their right to vote in the 2024 elections.



Program participants can utilize library services without fearing their address will be disclosed. This program allows individuals who have been hiding in the shadows an opportunity to step into the light and gain some normalcy.



The Department of Technology, Management and Budget (DTMB) work creating the Address Confidentiality Program's database was recognized as a finalist among all 50 states for the 2024 NASCIO (National Association of State CIOs) award, ICT Innovation category. This category recognizes projects which leverage communication technologies to transform government, promote economic development or interoperability, or improve quality of life.



The Michigan Address Confidentiality Program has sparked interest in other states to provide presentations on how the program integrates technology to give the end user a better experience.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

The Address Confidentiality Program Advisory Council meets quarterly to evaluate processes and identify solutions to new challenges. Key topics discussed include:

EMAIL SECURITY STANDARDS FOR APPLICATION ASSISTANTS

- **Issue:** Some Application Assistants were using personal email accounts (such as Yahoo and Gmail) to conduct official business, raising security concerns under the State's technology policy.
- **Resolution:** After consulting with the Department of Technology, Management, and Budget (DTMB), the council determined that these email providers do not align with the State's security requirements. In the future, Application Assistants must use an agency-affiliated email address for program-related communication. This policy improves data security and maintains compliance with state protocols.

CERTIFIED MAIL PROCESS ADJUSTMENT

- **Issue:** Many participants were not home during the attempted delivery to sign for certified mail and were unable to retrieve it from the post office, leading to critical delays and missed information from courts, prosecutors' offices, and law firms.
- **Resolution:** The council recommended changing the certified mail process. Mail from legal entities will now be sent as certified mail without a required signature. This change ensures that participants receive time-sensitive information in a more accessible manner without the additional requirement of being present to sign for deliveries. Additionally, the program retains the ability to track certified mail, providing assurance that important documents are delivered.

ON THE HORIZON

LEGISLATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

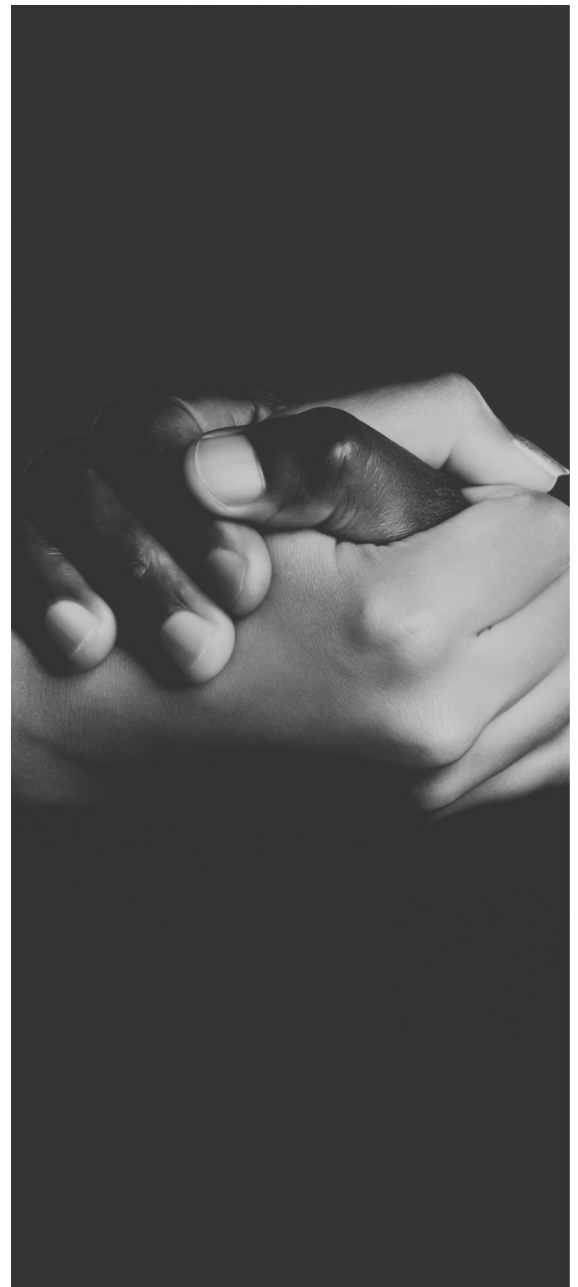
As the Address Confidentiality Program continues to evolve, legislative updates may be necessary to address existing gaps and strengthen protections for participants. One critical area of focus is enhancing safeguards to ensure program participants can securely engage in essential life activities such as purchasing a home, without compromising their confidentiality.



ON THE HORIZON

GOALS

- Develop a Limited English Proficiency Plan to include translating our welcome booklet into different languages and strategically targeting Application Assistants who speak languages other than English.
- The program will target areas of the state for training where we have identified a lack of Application Assistants/Victim Advocates.
- Develop a participant's feedback form to evaluate the services.
- Hire additional staff to provide technical support to our applicants, participants, and Application Assistants.
- Increase outreach to the public and program stakeholders.
- Increase training opportunities by creating an ACP video for law enforcement that can be used during roll calls and at the police academy.



CONCLUSION

The Michigan Address Confidentiality Program has established essential protections for survivors across the state, and the recent process improvements aim to bolster the program's integrity and efficiency. The adjustments made by the council-such as certified mail process changes and email security enforcement-reflect the program's commitment to participant safety and administrative effectiveness. Continued support and periodic evaluations will ensure that ACP remains a reliable resource for Michiganders needing address confidentiality services.

MICHIGAN ADDRESS CONFIDENTIALITY PROGRAM

