NASS
National Association of Secretaries of State

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ISSUE BRIEFING: Voting and State Address Confidentiality Programs

Summary

Address Confidentiality Programs (ACP), also known as Safe at Home programs in some states, are designed to protect the locations of individuals whose safety and livelihoods have been compromised by life-threatening circumstances, such as domestic violence, stalking, harassment, or rape. Although each program varies by state, ACPs essentially provide alternate mailing addresses for the victims and their families to lower the risk of assailants locating their residences. As a result, those who utilize these services may safely exercise their right to vote since their actual address is not listed in public voter registration records. Most ACPs are managed by the Secretary of State, but others are maintained through the state Attorney General or other state government entities.

How the Programs Work

The below information is a general explanation of how most ACPs function in relation to voter registration, participation, and processes. As a note, each state's program will differ.

- **Enrollment**

  Typically, applicants must schedule an in-person appointment with an ACP counselor or application assistant to verify their eligibility. These counselors are available throughout the state and are usually found at victim assistance centers. In most cases, the applicants indicate the reason they are applying, such as domestic violence or harassment. The counselor collects the necessary information, and the application is sent to the ACP office for review. Once accepted, the applicants are assigned a free, forwardable address or a P.O. box to use in place of their actual address. In most states, this alternate address can be used for driver's licenses, school enrollment, voter registration, and other public records so their true place of residence is kept confidential. Most states provide membership cards to the program's participants, which can be used to register and apply for the aforementioned services.

- **Voter Registration**

  When registering to vote or updating voter registration information, most states require ACP members to provide their actual address and forwardable address when completing the voter registration application. They will also need to provide their ACP membership card to confirm their participation in the program. Once the application is processed, the voter is registered under their ACP-assigned substitute address, and the voter's actual address will not appear on public voting records.

Some states require the ACP participants to register solely under their physical address, but the applicants can request to have their voter registration record flagged as confidential to protect their information from public access.

- **Voting**
  Once ACP participants are registered to vote, their voting experience will vary based on their state of residence. Some states require ACP participants to cast their vote early and in person at their assigned county election office, while other states allow the option to request or automatically receive an absentee ballot for each election. Moreover, some states allow ACP members to vote in person at the polls on Election Day if they are comfortable with doing so. For those who choose to vote in person at the polls on Election Day, the voting process is the same as a voter who is not registered under an ACP. Further details can be provided by the state's ACP program.

ACPs Managed by the Secretary of State

The following states currently offer Address Confidentiality/Safe at Home Programs and/or resources through the Secretary of State:

Alabama*	Arizona	California
Connecticut	Georgia	Idaho
Iowa	Kentucky	Louisiana
Maine	Maryland	Massachusetts
Minnesota	Missouri	Nebraska
New Mexico	New York	Ohio
Rhode Island	Tennessee	Vermont
Washington	West Virginia	

*Application can be acquired from the Secretary of State and processed by the Board of Registrars in the applicant's county of residence.

ACPs Managed by the State Attorney General/Department of Justice

The following states currently offer Address Confidentiality/Safe at Home Programs and/or resources through the state Attorney General/Department of Justice:

Delaware	Florida	Illinois
Indiana	Kansas*	Michigan
Mississippi	Montana	New Hampshire
North Carolina	Oklahoma	Oregon
South Carolina	Texas	Virginia
Wisconsin		

*Formerly managed by the Secretary of State until the program was moved to the Attorney General's Office in May 2021.

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ACPs Managed by Other State Government Agencies

The following states currently offer Address Confidentiality Programs and/or resources through other government state agencies outside of the Secretary of State and the state Attorney General:

State:	Agency:
Arkansas	Office of Driver Services
Colorado*	Department of Personnel & Administration
Hawaii	Department of Law Enforcement
Nevada	Department of Health-Child & Family Services
New Jersey	Department of Children & Families
Pennsylvania	Office of Victim Services
Utah	UT Commission on Criminal & Juvenile Justice

*Formerly managed by the Secretary of State.

States without ACPs

The following states do not currently have an Address Confidentiality Program:

Alaska	North Dakota	South Dakota
Wyoming		

Additional Resources

Domestic Violence National Statistics
National Association of Confidential Address Programs
Nonprofit Vote