

Essential Information for Government Officials



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Safe at Home Address Confidentiality Program

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This document will outline the information that state and local government officials need to be aware of and how to interact with program participants.

The Safe at Home Address Confidentiality Program is open to all victims of domestic abuse, stalking, human trafficking, rape, sexual battery, or any other sexual offense who satisfy eligibility and application requirements at no cost.

All state and local government officials are required to accept a program participant's substitute address as their official legal address, unless specifically otherwise provided by law.

When Can the Substitute Address be Used?

1. Whenever a program participant is required by law to swear to or affirm the participant's address, the participant may use the participant's substitute address. T.C.A. §§ 40-38-602, 606.
2. Wherever a program participant is required by law to establish residency, the participant may use the participant's substitute address. T.C.A. §§ 40-38-602, 606.
3. The substitute address may be used for motor vehicle records and may be printed on a drivers license. T.C.A. § 40-38-602.
4. The substitute address may also be used as your official mailing address for all public utilities and public utility service providers. T.C.A. §§ 40-38-602, 606.
5. Participants may also request that private entities use the substitute address, although they are not required to do so.

When can the Substitute Address NOT be used?

1. When listing, appraising, or assessing property taxes;
2. When collecting property taxes;
3. On any document related to real property recorded with a county clerk or recorder.

Program Participant Records are Not Public Record

After being provided with a Certificate of Program Participation, all state and local government officials are required to maintain the confidentiality of all records containing a program participant's confidential address and all other information contained in a program participant's file maintained by the state or local government entity. These records are not public records and are confidential. T.C.A. § 40-38-602.

This does not apply to:

- Any public record created more than thirty (30) days prior to the date that the program participant applied to be certified in the program; or
- If a program participant voluntarily requests that a state or local governmental entity use the participant's confidential address or voluntarily gives the confidential address to the state or local government agency, except voter registration records and absentee ballot requests shall be confidential.

For any public record created within thirty (30) days prior to the date that the program participant applied to be certified in the program, a state or local government agency shall redact the confidential address from public record or change the confidential address to the substitute address in the public record, if a program participant presents evidence of program participation and requests that the agency that maintain the public record to use the substitute address instead of the confidential address on the public record.

State and Local Government officials, including public school officials, are not permitted to require a program participant to disclose their confidential address for the purposes of enrolling themselves or their minor children in public benefits or public schools. T.C.A. §§ 40-38-602, 606.

What is the process for verifying eligibility for public benefits or public school enrollment?

- When a program participant applies to enroll either themselves or their minor children in a public benefits or a public school, and where residency must be verified in order to establish eligibility for public benefits or enrollment in a public school, the governmental entity or public school requiring verification must accept a copy of the participations Certificate of Program Participation and substitute address and then contact the Safe At Home Program for further verification.
- State or local government or public school officials should then submit an Eligibility Verification Request Form to the Safe At Home Program, along with a statement concerning the residency requirements pertaining to the particular public benefits for which the participant is applying and/or a map outlining the boundaries of the public school district in which the participant is attempting to enroll themselves or their minor children.
- The Office of the Secretary of State will then provide the requesting state or local government officials with a statement concerning the participant's eligibility for enrollment.

Program Participants are not subject to selection for state or municipal jury duty. T.C.A. § 40-38-607.

Program participants should not appear on state or municipal jury selection lists. If a program participant is selected for jury service, the summoning court should excuse the program participant. Program Participants may not fail to respond to a jury summons.

Program Participants must vote by absentee ballot. T.C.A. § 40-38-607.

Program participant absentee ballots must be treated as confidential and must be processed confidentially by the Administrator of Elections. Program participants shall appear in the statewide official voter registration list only by the Participant Identification Number.

As authorized by law, properly designated law enforcement agency officials and administrative agency officials may request disclosure of information relating to a program participant. T.C.A. § 40-38-609.

What information may be available to law enforcement or administrative agency officials?

- Properly designated law enforcement agency officials and administrative agency officials may request confirmation of program participation pertaining to a supposed program participant.
- Properly designated law enforcement agency officials and administrative agency officials may request disclosure of information pertaining to a program participant, including the confidential address, subject to the discretion of the Secretary of State. Program Participants may be entitled to prior notice and appeal rights.
- Disclosure of a participant's confidential address, or any other information contained within a program participant's file, shall be limited to ensure that the disclosure and dissemination of the confidential address will be no greater than necessary for the specific purpose for which it was requested.

For more information, contact the Safe At Home Program or visit sos.tn.gov/safeathome.