

# Program Overview



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Secretary of State

## Safe at Home Address Confidentiality Program

### Department of State

State of Tennessee

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[sos.tn.gov/safeathome](http://sos.tn.gov/safeathome)

This document will provide a basic overview of the Safe At Home Address Confidentiality Program.

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.

### **What is the Purpose of the Program? How does the Program accomplish this purpose?**

The purpose of the Safe At Home Program is to protect the confidentiality of a program participant's confidential address, which will most often be their residential address. Once a program participant has been approved to participate in the program, they will be provided with a 'substitute' address. The program participant will then be able to use 'substitute' address as their official mailing address for all state and local government purposes and for their children, including public school or public benefits enrollment, subject only to a few limited exceptions. By doing so, the participant's confidential address will not appear in public records relating to either themselves or their children.

### **What happens to mail sent to the substitute address?**

The Safe At Home Program will receive all first class and certified mail sent to the substitute address and then forward that mail to the participant at their designated mailing address.

### **Why is the program necessary? What is the Tennessee Public Records Act?**

Under the Tennessee Public Records Act, T.C.A. § 10-7-501 *et. seq.*, all state or local government records are considered public and are available for public inspection and copying, unless specifically protected by other law. This means that any member of the public can request that a state or local government official allow them to inspect and/or take a copy of certain records, which may contain another individual's name, address, or phone number. This means that an abuser may be able to track or discover the residential address of a victim through public records. The primary goal of the Safe at Home Address Confidentiality Program is to prevent this from happening and provide victims of domestic violence and other crimes with a sense of security in their own homes and freedom from intimidation or further abuse.

### **Who should consider applying to participate in the program?**

Victims of domestic abuse, stalking, human trafficking, or any sexual offense,

- Who are currently residing in a domestic violence shelter or other crisis shelter;
- Who are currently temporarily residing with family or friends;
- Who have moved to a new home within the previous 30 days;
- Who are attempting to escape an abuser, stalker, or other aggressor;
- Who have children; or
- Who rely upon, or will need to rely upon, public assistance programs.

For more information about the Safe At Home Program, or to find a list of Certified Application Assistants in your area, visit [sos.tn.gov/safeathome](http://sos.tn.gov/safeathome) or contact the Safe At Home Program at (615) 253-3043.