



Maryland Safe at Home Address Confidentiality Program

The Maryland Safe at Home Address Confidentiality Program (ACP), administered by the **Office of the Secretary of State (SOS)**, and the **Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE)** are working together to help families exposed to domestic violence to keep their residential address confidential.

ACP Program Summary

Since 2006, the goal of the Maryland Safe at Home Address Confidentiality Program has been to help the victims of domestic violence stay safe after they have relocated to flee an abusive situation. The Office of the Secretary of State administers this program so that a substitute address for its program participants will provide safety for the family and children. The substitute address bears **no** relationship to a participant's actual physical location. State, county and local governments agencies **must by law accept this substitute address and use it on all internal and external records.**

All public schools in the State of Maryland participate in the ACP program. When the ACP participant presents her/his authorization card, the school **must** accept the substitute address as though it is a citizen's actual residential address. The substitute address uses the following format for regular, 1st class correspondence:

Student Name and/or Parent/Guardian Name
ACP Number
P.O. Box 2995
Annapolis, MD 21404-2995

School staff are required by law* to accept the substitute address as the address of record for the student. The ACP program will forward all properly addressed 1st class communications from the school to the student and/or parent/guardian.

The ACP issues each participant a laminated authorization card that shows the participant's name, substitute address, ACP authorization number, expiration date and other information. Also on this card is the phone number for the Program Office, 800-633-9657 x3875.

More than half of all ACP participants are school age children. The parent/guardians and children will appreciate sensitivity and thoughtfulness when responding to their requests for confidentiality so they may continue to be safe in their new home.

Verifying Enrollment Eligibility

The ACP and MSDE have established the following procedure for verifying enrollment eligibility. If authorized school registration staff needs verification of an ACP participant's enrollment, please call the ACP office at the number above. Please have the following information available: Name of Student/Student's ACP Authorization Card Number; School name and school district; School staff person's name; and School telephone number.

ACP staff will determine whether the student is a current participant in the program and attempt to verify school enrollment eligibility. In some cases, it may take some time to verify. ACP staff will contact the school with verification.

Student Records

Most of the questions the ACP Office receives from school districts are about how to handle school records for an ACP participant. Under the federal law, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**, the parent/guardian, eligible student, and school officials with legitimate educational interest may have access to the student record. As such, it is important that the student's records show only the substitute address. **THERE SHOULD BE NO RECORD IN THE STUDENT'S FILE INDICATING THE CURRENT RESIDENTIAL ADDRESS. THE ACP ADDRESS MUST BE USED SINCE THE NON-CUSTODIAL PARENT HAS ACCESS TO THE STUDENT RECORD.** The ACP Office will be designated as the Receiving School by initiating the request for school records.

The ACP Office will request that the student records from the sending school (current school) be sent to the attention of the Address Confidentiality Program Manager @ P.O. Box 2995, Annapolis, MD 21404-2995. The school records will then be sent to the student's new school (receiving school). This procedure ensures the confidentiality of the student's new location. The ACP Office will communicate with the sending school on proper Transfer Code to use.

Other

The ACP participant or parent/guardian should provide the school with emergency contact information, such as telephone numbers of responsible individuals at non-confidential addresses, just like for any other student. If the student requests or requires school-provided transportation to her/his home address, the participant should provide drop-off and pick-up location information.

For further information, please contact the ACP Office at the number listed above or the Maryland State Department of Education, Student, Family, and School Support Division, at 410-767-0295.

*Family Law Article, §4-526, Annotated Code of Maryland

** (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99)