



Michigan.gov

# Michigan Address Confidentiality Program

**Category:** Information Communications  
Technology Innovations

**State:** Michigan

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**Project End:** October 2023

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In December 2020, the State of Michigan's Governor Whitmer signed the Address Confidentiality Program Act, Act 301 of 2020. The Address Confidentiality Program (ACP) was created to provide certain protections for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, human trafficking, or those who fear that disclosure of their physical address will increase their risk of harm.

ACP operates to shield a program participant's actual physical address by providing an official designated/substitute address and free mail forwarding service. The participant will receive an ID card to show as proof of participation in the program and a corrected driver's license or state ID. The designated (substitute) address can be used instead of the program participant's real address. The designated address can be used by governmental entities, employers, schools, or institutions of higher education, whenever an address is required by public agencies. Private companies are not required by law to use the substitute address; however, program participants can request they use it.

While 34 other states have laws pertaining to an Address Confidentiality Program, Michigan's ACP solution is the only one in the nation to allow Participants to manage their data via an online portal. The system developed is comprised of a software solution which stores applicant data and supporting business processes, procedures, and workflows utilized by the various SOM departments involved.

Funding for this program was made available through the Crime Victims Rights fund. Statute allowed for two (2) years from the time funding was disbursed (October 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021) to create the system that would house the confidential information for the victims and provide mail forwarding services through DTMB Mailing Services. As a result of the exceptional teamwork, creativity, and commitment in addressing this challenging project, the ACP system went live one month prior to the Legislative requirement, having significant impact on the community.

## IDEA

In 2016 there were over 92,000 reports of domestic violence in the state of Michigan, according to the Michigan Incident Crime Report. There were over 3,000 cases of 1<sup>st</sup> degree Criminal Sexual Conduct (CSC) alone reported in that year. In 20% of those cases, the victim was an acquaintance of the offender, and the majority of time, the crime was committed in the home.

Too often, children are also involved in these types of cases. If a child is at risk of being threatened or physically harmed or they or their parents are victims of domestic violence, stalking, human trafficking, rape, or sexual battery, they too can apply to become a program participant and receive an identification number. For these victims to be able to flee their offenders and to get a fresh start, the State must help keep these victims' locations hidden from their offenders. This system, as a part of a victim's overall safety plan, will allow participants to replace their physical address with a substitute address for use by governmental entities. This is one step in the overall process of helping program participants secure their physical safety when a need arises in conjunction with other legal remedies that may be taken.

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*Michigan is the only state that has designed a portal solution for participants that allows them to manage their data.*

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This initiative includes the following NASCIO 2024 priorities which are incorporated in the design and use of the system:

- Accessibility
- Agile Development
- Business Process Automation
- Cybersecurity Enhancement Tools
- Digital Services / Government
- Disaster Recovery / Business Continuity
- Identity and Access Management
- IT Service Automation

The ACP System is the first undertaking the State of Michigan has made in this area. The overall goal of improving the personal safety of Michigan citizens when displaced due to the threat of physical violence is a top priority. For Michigan residents to flourish and participate effectively as citizens of this great State, they must feel and secure in their residences.

While other states are venturing into this area and providing processes for addressing the concerns of address suppression for their state residents who are at risk, Michigan has taken steps to make this process easily accessible, secure, and provide control to the participants.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

Michigan is actively pursuing low-code to no-code solutions which provides pathways for quicker implementation efforts for meeting the needs and demands of our citizens.

The ACP System is housed on the Microsoft Dynamics platform and an Agile Project

Management approach was used to develop and track this effort.

The project team for this initiative was comprised of stakeholders from multiple state departments: Attorney General, State Police, Secretary of State, Health, and Human Services; Technology, Management and Budget, and entities from local governments. The United States Postal Service was also an integral partner.

The requirement was to design, develop and implement an address confidentiality system for Michigan residents to align with State legislative deadlines. The success of this effort was defined by implementing the new system before or by the predefined dates established by the Michigan Legislature.

By working across many State agencies and divisions to combine the address confidentiality system with other essential IT systems fostered collaboration and synergy. The successful implementation of the solution on the Microsoft Dynamics platform effectively displays the team's adaptability and technical proficiency. The project team developed a fully customized IT system from inception to precisely accommodate the ACP program's unique operational specifications. The team Exhibited a strong commitment to continuous improvement by actively seeking feedback from stakeholders and performing iterative enhancements to the system to better serve the needs of the victims and other system users. New business processes were developed in alignment with legislative requirements, ensuring compliance, legal safeguards, and IT security compliance.

The objective was to create a system which allows crime victims to request and maintain a substitute address to keep their physical address confidential. The solution needed to provide:

- Online access to the system is key to quickly serve Applicants and Participants in obtaining and maintaining their involvement in the program.
- Search capabilities for DTMB Mailing Services is also vital to offer the mail forwarding services necessary to protect the Participants address.
- Access by the Michigan State Police is essential to ensure the safety and security of Participants and their families.
- Interfaces with Department of State systems for Qualified Voter File (QVF) and Customer and Automotive Records System (CARS) necessary to ensure continuous service and Participant safety.

## **IMPACT**

For anyone who is at an increased risk of physical harm or threats – including the victims of stalking, domestic violence, sexual assault, or human trafficking – the fear of being found by their perpetrator can be overwhelming.

The Address Confidentiality Program will help victims of violent crimes, and individuals at risk of being threatened or physically harmed, keep their address confidential.



To view video message from Michigan’s Attorney General Dana Nessel, click [here](#).

Participation in the program will be relatively low initially but grow over time as information is disseminated throughout the state, and as more people meet the specific requirements to apply Initial statistics are promising, and indicate that Michigan has enrolled more residents currently than other similarly situated states, and include:

- 200 Victim Advocates trained and certified across 34 counties.
- 62 Participants (34 adults, 28 children) approved with six more pending review.
- 107 team members across eight departments and seven organizations provided input, feedback, and expertise.
- One of the first systems in the State of Michigan to utilize the Microsoft Dynamics 365 platform.
- DTMB Mailing Services has forwarded over 1,100 pieces of mail since the program went live.

Benefits of successful implementation:

- It will allow victims of domestic abuse, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking, or those at risk of being threatened or physically harmed, to obtain a confidential address to protect themselves from their past offenders.
- This address will be used on official documentations, as well as mailing address.
- The State will act as a shield of the victim’s actual physical address, by providing a confidential address. This will decrease the risk that the victim will be threatened or harmed by a past offender.

- A person who is victim of domestic violence, stalking, human trafficking, or sexual assault, or those at risk of being threatened or physically harmed, can submit an application to the State to become an Address Confidentiality Program Participant.
- The program participant will receive a designated address. This address will serve as the victim's address on public documents, as well as governmental entities.
- If the program participant is eligible to vote, the designated address will be used in the Qualified Voter File (QVF) System. The participant will be able to vote absentee instead of going to a polling location which might reveal their physical address.
- A school will not be allowed to disclose the address of a pupil or a pupil's parent if they are program participants.
- The program participant may ask their employer to use their designated address as their address for employment.
- Mail: A program participant's mail will be sent to their designated address and then the state will forward it on to the participant's physical address.
- Program participants will also be exempt from jury duty services, which are chosen by geographical locations.

Funding: A fund will be created for the operational costs of this program. We expect to attach an assessment fee to be paid by individuals convicted of these types of crimes.