

**December 28, 2020**

**ATTORNEY GENERAL RAOUL: ADDRESS CONFIDENTIALITY PROGRAM PROTECTS SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT, STALKING, DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

**Chicago** — Attorney General Kwame Raoul today announced that beginning Jan. 1, survivors of sexual assault and stalking, as well as domestic violence, can participate in the Illinois Address Confidentiality Program (ACP). Raoul encouraged survivors to apply to participate in the ACP, which gives survivors added protections from their perpetrators by allowing them to obtain a substitute address to use instead of their real addresses.

Survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking can apply for the ACP through the Attorney General's office in order to receive a substitute address that can be used to create or update public records or personal use. Additionally, the ACP functions as a mail-forwarding system for all first-class mail. Raoul cautions that, while the ACP is not a witness protection program that can assist with relocation or a change of identity, it can be a valuable addition to a comprehensive safety plan.

"The Address Confidentiality Program is an important added layer of protection and peace of mind for survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking," Raoul said. "I am committed to ensuring that survivors have access to the resources and support needed to aid their recoveries, and I encourage survivors to participate in this program that can help protect them from the individuals who perpetrated crimes against them."

"A woman had been divorced for years but kept her address private, not wanting her ex-husband to find her. One day out of the blue she received a letter from him, just letting her know that he had found her and she couldn't hide from him," said Vickie Smith, executive director of Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence. "The Address Confidentiality Program is critical for protection from abusers who refuse to let go of someone with whom they once had an intimate relationship."

"Everyone deserves to feel safe in their communities. The Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault applauds the expansion of the Illinois Address Confidentiality Program eligibility criteria to include victims of sexual assault and stalking," said Carrie Ward, executive director, Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault. "Access to this program provides an important option for victims in the recovery process who fear for their safety. ICASA thanks the Attorney General's office for its implementation of the program's expansion and looks forward to continuing to work together to support survivors throughout Illinois."

Participants in the ACP will receive a substitute address they can use on their driver's license or state-issued identification card. All state and local government agencies are required to accept the substitute address in place of the participant's home, work or school address, but they are not required to change existing public records. The substitute address functions like any new address in that the participant's mail will be sent to the substitute address, and then forwarded to the participant's actual address. The ACP forwards all first-class mail, including bills and other personal mail, and packages sent through the U.S. Postal Service. The ACP will not forward magazines and junk mail or packages delivered by a shipping service, such as the UPS, FedEx, or Amazon.

The ACP is most effective when the applicant relocates to a new address, unknown to the perpetrator, around the time they apply for the program. Enrollment lasts for a period of four years, and participants can renew their enrollment at the end of the period. Participants are free to voluntarily withdraw from the ACP at any time.

Survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking who fear for their safety are eligible to apply for the ACP. Additionally, parents or guardians can apply on behalf of minors and people with disabilities if there is good reason to believe that those individuals are victims of domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking, and fear for their safety. Other members of the participant's household should also participate in the program in order to best protect the address. An applicant is not required to report the domestic violence to law enforcement in order to be eligible for the ACP.

Applying to participate in the ACP is free of charge, and the Attorney General's office is prohibited from disclosing a participant's address unless the office receives a request from law enforcement or a court order requiring disclosure to a specific individual.

Participating in the ACP alone will not adequately protect against violence. The Attorney General urges survivors to work with an advocate to develop a comprehensive safety plan. To locate an advocate, please contact the Illinois Domestic Violence hotline at (877) 863-6338 or visit <https://icasa.org/crisis-centers> to locate a Rape Crisis Center in your area.

For more information about the Address Confidentiality Program, please visit the [Attorney General's website](#), or call 1-844-916-0295 or 1-877-398-1130 (TTY).