Increased Safety for Victims of Sexual and Domestic Violence

Stalkers can easily access information about their victims through public records, especially those posted online. To protect these individuals, the Safe at Home program ensures that a participant's personal details are concealed from public records, empowering survivors to reclaim their sense of security within their homes. Ohio's Safe at Home laws contain a range of protections and services for those who have endured domestic violence, sexual battery, human trafficking, rape, or menacing by stalking. Staffed by experts, the program upholds the privacy of participant information, arranges mail forwarding, and offers legal support with state and local government agencies, fostering an environment where Ohioans can feel safe at home again.

Quick Facts:

- **EASY TO JOIN:** This program does NOT require an attorney or court appearance. The enrollment process is often handled by social workers, case managers, and specially trained law enforcement personnel. Safe at Home's laws are entirely separate from protection orders.
- **THE ENROLLMENT PROCESS IS SAFE:** Enrollment is handled by Application Assistants who provide victim services, receive specialized training, and are certified by the Secretary of State. Application Assistants and Safe at Home personnel understand your situation and have helped thousands of people stay safe. They can help, one step at a time.
- **NOT A COMPLETE SAFETY PLAN:** This is one part of a larger overall safety plan that survivors should develop with an advocate. The program is powerful, but it should never be the only tool to keep someone safe.
- **NOT AUTOMATIC:** Enrolling in Safe at Home does not automatically shield a program participant's new home address from all public records. Participants must show their ID card and request their substitute address be used.
- **THE INTERNET IS FOREVER:** Safe at Home cannot remove existing addresses that appear online. A participant should discuss how to handle existing online records as part of safety planning.
- **THIS IS AN OHIO LAW:** Ohio's laws only apply to state and local offices – they do not control how things work in other states or at the federal level.
- **SLIGHT MAIL DELAY:** A program participant's mail may be delayed several days as it is routed through Columbus, repackaged at the Secretary of State's office, then sent to the participant's location.
- **VOTING:** Participants who are eligible voters may apply for a confidential voter registration record. This protects their address and other information from publicly available voter registration databases.
- **PROGRAM LENGTH:** Certification lasts four (4) years, but participants who remain eligible may renew their certification. There is no limit to the number of times a participant can renew.

Safe at Home

SafeAtHomeOhio.gov | 614.995.2255

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Frank LaRose
Ohio Secretary of State

Safe at Home

OHIO'S ADDRESS CONFIDENTIALITY PROGRAM

SafeAtHomeOhio.gov

WHAT
is Safe at Home?

A STATE PROGRAM THAT:

Creates a Legal Substitute Address

This substitute address can be used by almost every type of government office that requires an address – from law enforcement, to public school records, and court documents. State and local governmental offices **must** accept the substitute address at the program participant's request. Keeping participant contact information out of public records is the most powerful aspect of Ohio's safe at home laws.

To help limit access to their true address, participants may also provide the substitute address to **other organizations**. For example, they could provide this address for a church newsletter, grocery store rewards program, or mail-order pharmacies.

Authorizes the BMV to create a safe ID

Participants may have the BMV replace their true address on their driver's license or state ID with the address of the Secretary of State's office in Columbus. Participants never need to fear providing their ID, or being found if their wallet is missing.

Forwards Participant Mail

Participants may have all their mail and certain packages sent to their substitute address (a PO Box in Columbus). Safe at Home will collect, repackage, and forward the mail to a location chosen by the participant (usually their new home).

Provides a Safe Option for Voting

An eligible voter can participate in the democratic process without fear of their address being listed on the public voter registration database.

Conceals Real Estate Records

Ohio law ensures that survivors in Safe at Home can buy a home without their name and address appearing in county tax and land public records. To benefit from this law, the person must FIRST enter Safe at Home, then acquire their new home.

WHO
qualifies for Safe at Home?

A survivor, or someone who lives in the same household as a survivor, of:

- domestic violence
- menacing by stalking
- human trafficking
- rape
- sexual battery

Break away, then hide your new address

The law does not require a person to move before joining, but Safe at Home is not effective if an attacker already knows where the program participant lives. The program helps most when the participant has just moved or will move in the near future.

Almost every survivor that is provided this pamphlet qualifies

Not all crime victims report their attacks. This program does not require a victim to report the crime or abuse to law enforcement.

Aside from a person convicted of a sex offense, all victims of the crimes listed above are welcome to apply.

HOW
do I apply for Safe at Home?

1. Find an Application Assistant certified by the Secretary of State's office:

Apply through an Application Assistant at an agency that specializes in helping survivors of human trafficking or domestic and sexual violence, and who knows about the available community resources. Survivors choose the Application Assistant they feel most comfortable with, whether it's someone close to their community or from an organization they believe would be most helpful.

A list of Application Assistants is available at:
SafeAtHomeOhio.gov
Or call 614.995.2255

2. Meet with the Application Assistant

The Application Assistant will help with your safety planning and determine whether this program is a good fit. Qualifying applicants will then be instructed to complete a program application and return it to the Safe at Home office at:

Ohio Secretary of State
PO Box 16395
Columbus, Ohio 43216

3. Safe at Home staff follow-up

The applicant will be contacted if there are any issues with the application. Once the application is complete and certified, participants will receive a welcome packet and Safe at Home ID card in the mail. The card **must be provided** to government officials to hide a true address.