



WISCONSIN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ACT MEMO

2015 Wisconsin Act 356
[2015 Senate Bill 488]

Address Confidentiality Program

2015 Wisconsin Act 356 creates an address confidentiality program, which is administered by the Department of Justice (DOJ), for victims of child abuse, domestic abuse, sexual abuse, stalking, and human trafficking.

Under the Act, a person is eligible to participate in the program if he or she is a Wisconsin resident and either: (1) is a victim of abuse,¹ a parent or guardian of a person who is a victim of abuse, or a resident of a household in which a victim of abuse also resides; or (2) fears for his or her physical safety or for the physical safety of his or her child or ward.² In addition, a person must satisfy certain other requirements to participate in the program.

The Act requires DOJ to provide an assigned address to each program participant and forward all mail it receives at the assigned address to the participant's actual address. DOJ may not disclose a participant's actual address to any person, except: (1) pursuant to a court order; or (2) to a law enforcement officer for official purposes. In addition, if a participant submits a written request to a local clerk that he or she keep the participant's actual address private, the clerk may not disclose any record in his or her possession that would reveal the participant's actual address, except pursuant to a court order.

In addition, the Act allows a program participant to use the assigned address provided to him or her for all purposes. No state or local agency or unit of government may refuse to use a participant's assigned address for any official business, unless a specific statutory duty

¹ The Act defines "abuse" as an act or threat of child abuse, domestic abuse, sexual abuse, stalking, or human trafficking.

² The Act provides that a person is eligible regardless of whether any criminal charges have been brought relating to any act or threat against the person, whether the person has sought any restraining order or injunction relating to any act or threat against the person, or whether the person has reported any act or threat against him or her to a law enforcement officer or agency.

This memo provides a brief description of the Act. For more detailed information, consult the text of the law and related legislative documents at the Legislature's Web site at: <http://www.legis.wisconsin.gov>.

requires the agency or unit of government to use the participant's actual address. Further, no person who has received a notification form from a participant may refuse to use the assigned address for the participant, may require a participant to disclose his or her actual address, or may intentionally disclose to another person the actual address of a participant. However, a municipal clerk may require a program participant to provide his or her actual address for voter registration and voter verification purposes.

Lastly, the Act allows a program participant to also participate in the confidential voter program under Wisconsin law, in which a voter's name and address are not disclosed. A municipal clerk must require a participant to disclose his or her actual address to enroll a participant in the confidential voter program. If a voter is enrolled in the confidential voter program, the clerk must keep the program participant's actual address confidential as provided under the confidential voter program.

Effective date: April 1, 2017.

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April 13, 2016

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