



## 11. Address Confidentiality Program

*Description of issue and how recommending the agency's request furthers the agency's mandates:* The Address Confidentiality Program (ACP) primarily was created to protect victims of stalking, domestic violence and sexual assault from those who would use public records, such as voter or driver's license registries, to locate, harass, intimidate and/or abuse them. These services provided survivors with 1) a way to register to vote and 2) a way to keep their actual address out of all public records.

In 2011, the Arizona Legislature established the ACP within AZSOS. Arizona was the 27th state to create a confidential address program. On June 4, 2012, the program began assisting individuals and families. Part of the enabling legislation created the ACP Fund, which is made up of a \$50 fine assessed as part of court fines included when there is a conviction for domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

When this ACP Fund was created, the fine was used to generate funding to support the cost of providing the statutorily mandated services without relying on general funds from the legislature. But for some time, the fine revenue has been insufficient. ACP operating costs were supplemented with revenue from the federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) grant administered by the Arizona Department of Public Safety, but these funds were never intended to be permanent and have expired.

In its FY2024 budget proposal, AZSOS requested an appropriation of \$250,000 from the state general fund in anticipation of a 55% reduction in VOCA revenues that fiscal year. While AZSOS received the appropriation based on the anticipated 55% reduction, the VOCA revenues were not reduced by 55%; it was eliminated completely. AZSOS was able to offset some of the loss of VOCA revenue; however, it did so at the cost of program quality.

Since then, participation in ACP has continued to increase year over year by approximately 15-20%. Servicing these new members has required additional frontline and management staff. The increase in membership also results in increased materials cost such as custom envelopes, other supplies, as well as postage, the cost of which has increased 17% since the beginning of FY2023.

Combined, these factors led AZSOS to request a \$400,000 increase of ACP annual, on-going appropriation from the state general fund from \$250,000 to \$650,000 in its FY2025 budget proposal. Though the enacted FY2025 budget did not include the \$400,000 increase, AZSOS was able to secure temporary grant funding sufficient to operate ACP for the duration of FY2025. This temporary funding will not be available in FY2026 and beyond. As such, a

permanent funding source must be found if the state is to fulfill its statutory obligations to victims of stalking, domestic violence and sexual assault.

*Proposal:* Appropriate an additional \$400,000 from the state general fund in FY2026 and thereafter so that AZSOS may fulfill the statutory requirements of operating ACP.

*Alternatives considered and reasons for rejection:* N/A

*Impact of not funding this fiscal year:* If additional funding is provided in FY2026, ACP may have to cap the number of participants it serves or reduce services provided.

*Statutory reference:* A.R.S. Title 41

*Equipment to be purchased:* N/A

*Classification of new positions:* N/A

*Annualization:* \$400,000