



**Safe at Home**

*Minnesota's Address Confidentiality Program*

# PROGRAM PARTICIPATION ANNUAL REPORT JANUARY 2020

*Reporting Period: January 1, 2019 - December 31, 2019*



OFFICE OF THE MINNESOTA  
SECRETARY OF STATE  
STEVE SIMON

## Cost of Report Preparation

The total cost for the Office of the Secretary of State to prepare this report was approximately \$970.81. Most of these costs involved staff time in analyzing data and preparing the written report. Incidental costs include paper, copying, and other office supplies. Estimated costs are provided in accordance with Minnesota Statutes 2016, Section 3.197, requiring the cost for preparing a report to be provided at the beginning of a report to the legislature.

## Safe at Home Program Overview

The Safe at Home address confidentiality program is managed by the Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State. The program, which began September 1, 2007, is open to survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and those who otherwise fear for their safety, including law enforcement and judicial personnel.

Participants in Safe at Home are assigned a designated address (a PO Box in Saint Paul) that can legally be used for all of their interactions with others. The designated address allows the participant to go about their daily life without disclosing their actual home, employment, or school address. All private and public entities in the state of Minnesota must accept the Safe at Home address as a participant’s actual address per Minn. Stat. § 5B.05(a).

Chart 1 Program Participation

Participants and Applicants Served in 2019	4,351
Participant Households, December 31, 2019	1,437
Individual Program Participants, December 31, 2019	3,234

Safe at Home receives participants’ mail, forwards their First Class Mail to them, and assists them with their interactions with third parties should problems arise when giving the Safe at Home address to others. Staff also works with third party stakeholders, such as county offices, utility companies, banks, and schools, to ensure legal compliance and to make sure their business practices accommodate the safety needs of Safe at Home participants. Since the program’s inception, more than 10,200 different participants and applicants have received multiple services. Some participants have been in the program for more than 10 years. Current participation numbers are indicated in Chart 1, 2019 Program Participation.

## *Safe at Home Application Assistants*

Safe at Home is a successful private sector–government partnership that utilizes limited state resources to recruit, train, and monitor application assistants. Application assistants are victim advocates who are employed by community-based organizations throughout Minnesota. As of December 31, 2019 Safe at Home had partnerships with 83 different community-based organizations and 315 individual application assistants. Overall, since the inception of the program in 2007, the Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State provided training to nearly 1,000 victim advocates in Minnesota.

The role of the application assistant is vital. The Safe at Home Application Assistant meets one-on-one with a potential applicant to discuss their situation and help them determine whether applying to Safe at Home is an appropriate safety step for them to take. During this process, the application assistant helps them understand the program basics, performs individualized safety planning, and guides the application process.

In order to ensure enough application assistants are available throughout the state at all times, Safe at Home provides initial trainings to advocates several times a year. Continuing education is provided on an as-needed basis to teach application assistants about legislative changes to the program, to train victim advocates about the unique safety needs of Safe at Home participants, and to keep application skills up to date. Beyond this training and ongoing support, the community-based organizations and individual staff are not compensated by Safe at Home.

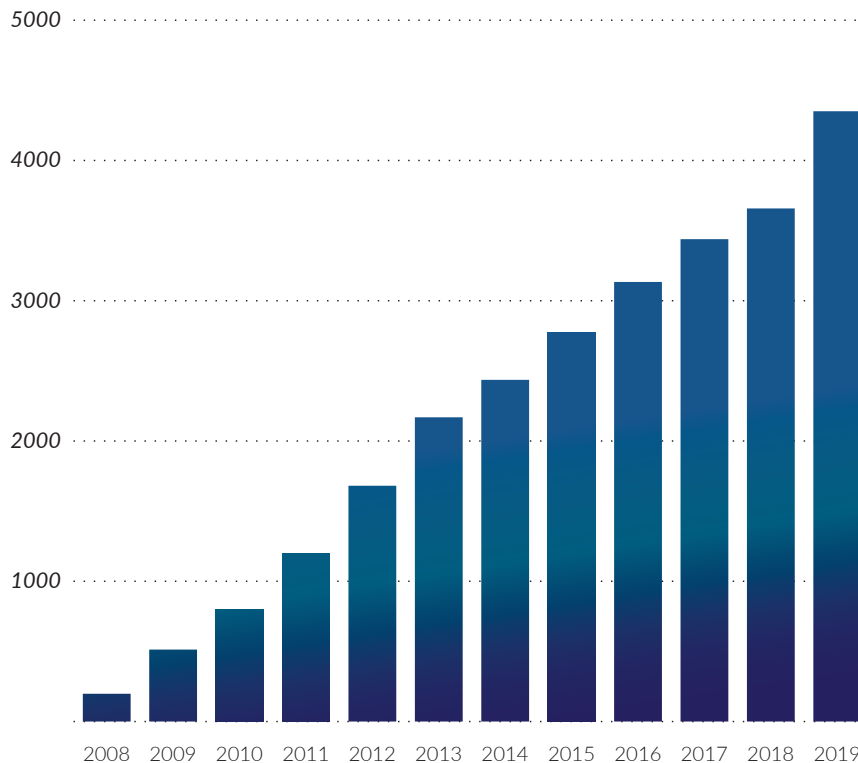


## People Served Annually

Since the program began September 1, 2007, the number of Minnesotans served by Safe at Home has steadily increased each year. A person “served” is defined as someone who was either an active participant at some time during the calendar year or someone who applied for enrollment but failed to respond to subsequent requests for additional information required to certify their application. “Total Served” does not include other services Safe at Home provides to the public on a daily basis, such as in-depth discussions with victims who ultimately choose not to apply for enrollment and discussions with third party stakeholders who need a better understanding of Safe at Home laws and how they should develop safe procedures for program participants. Therefore, “Total Served” has a limited scope.

In 2019, the program saw the largest year-over-year increase in number of people served. 4,351 people were served, 783 more than in 2018, or a 22% increase.

Graph 1 Total Served by Calendar Year

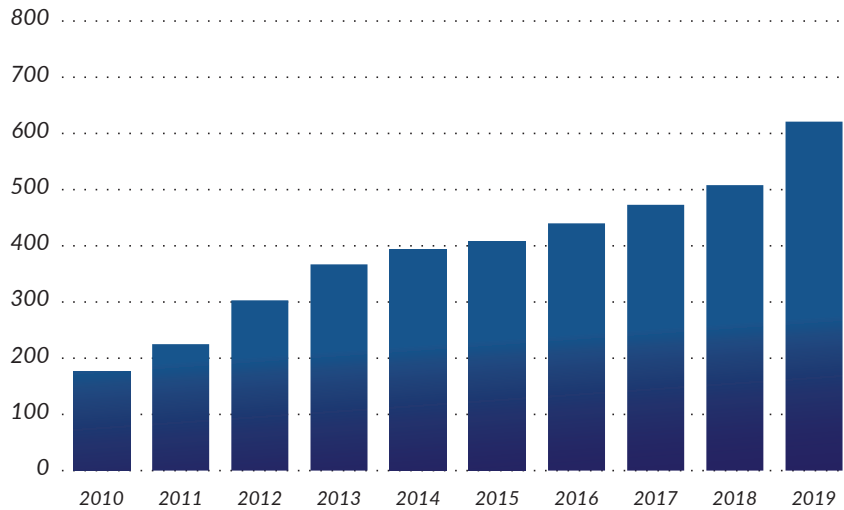


## Enrollment During the Last Decade

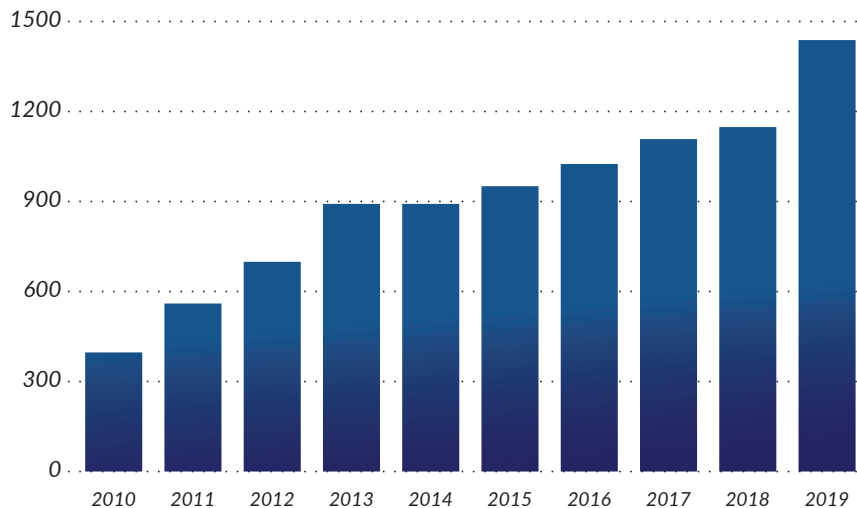
The number of people enrolling in Safe at Home has steadily increased every year since the program began. Graphs 2 and 3 show yearly enrollment numbers for the last decade. “Enrollment” is defined as a newly certified application. It does not include an application submitted for renewal. The information provided is broken down by year, showing the number of individuals who enrolled and the number of households that enrolled.

In 2019, the program saw the largest increase in number of people enrolled. A total of 1,438 individuals were enrolled in the program, a 25% increase from the year prior and the largest percentage increase since 2013.

Graph 2 New Households Enrolled



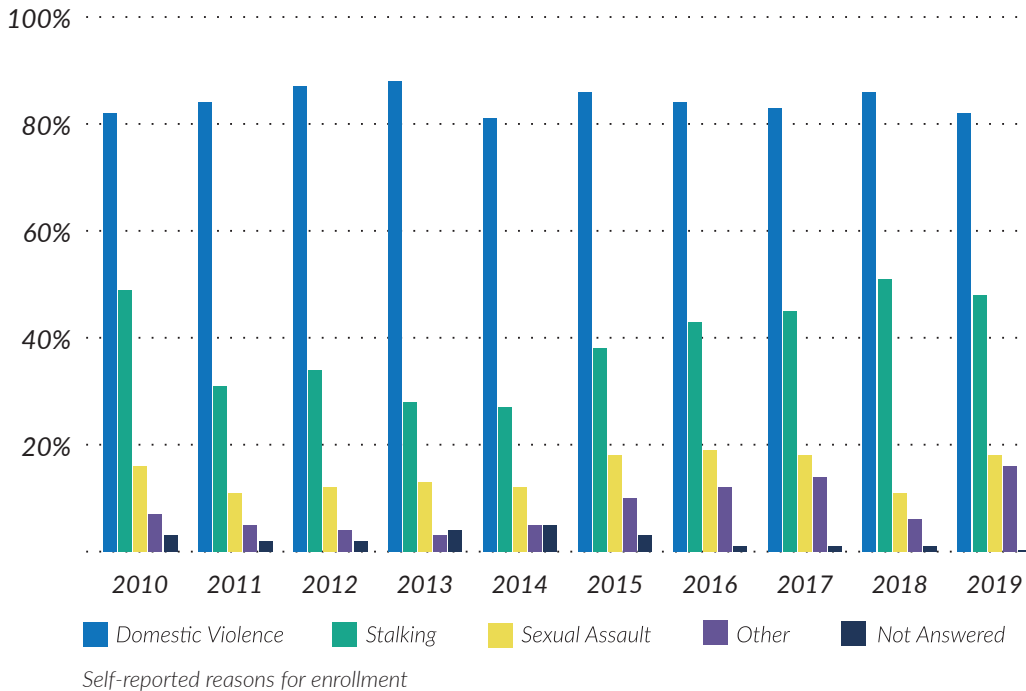
Graph 3 New Individuals Enrolled



## Reasons for Enrollment

Although an applicant discusses the specifics of their safety concerns with a Safe at Home Application Assistant, a person who applies for enrollment is not required to disclose to Safe at Home the reason they are applying. However, in 2009, the application form was changed to include the opportunity for applicants to self-disclose the reason for enrollment. On the application form the applicant can check one or more types of victimization they feel warrant their need for participation in an address confidentiality program. Applicants can choose from domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and other. Self-reporting is optional and is not required for certification. Over the last decade, an average of 98% chose to self-report. Graph 4 shows self-reported victimization data from 2010 through 2019. Consistently, domestic violence was the number one reason for enrollment in Safe at Home – 81% or more of applicants each year indicated it as one of the reasons or the only reason for enrolling.

Graph 4 Self-reported Reason for Enrollment



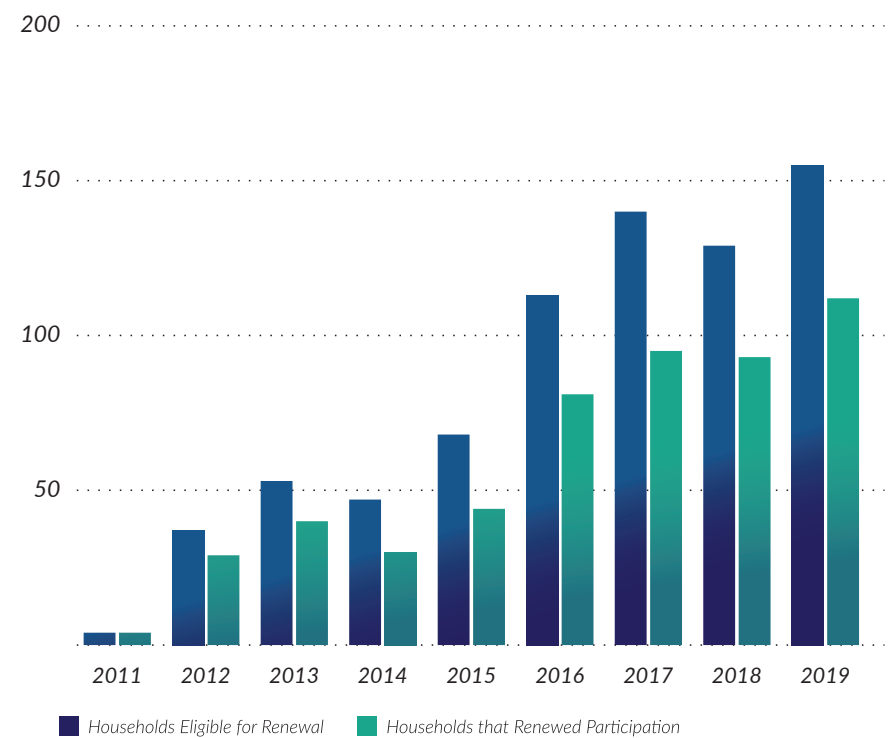
## Renewals, 2011-2019

Enrollment in Safe at Home is valid for up to four years. The participant may choose to withdraw at any time or, under certain circumstances, the participant’s program participation may be cancelled. The most common reason for cancellation is the participant’s failure to update the Safe at Home office by providing their new physical address.

If a participant’s program participation is still active four years after certification, the participant is given the opportunity to renew their participation. The participant is sent a Renewal Application form that they complete and return to the Safe at Home office if they desire to remain in the program. The Renewal Application submitted indicates the names of all parties in the household who will continue their Safe at Home program participation.

Because Safe at Home began September of 2007 and certification is valid for four years, renewals began September 2011. Graph 5 shows the number of households that, between September 2011 and December 2019, were eligible for renewal and the number that chose to renew their program participation. Consistently, more than 60% of all households that were eligible to continue their program participation chose to do so.

Graph 5 Household Renewals by Year





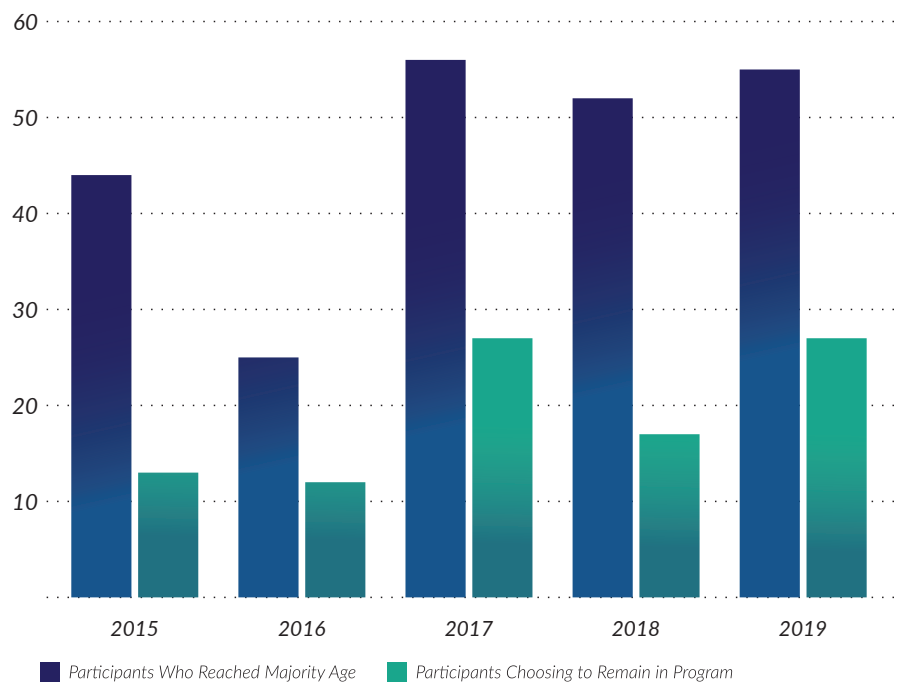
## Children Who Became Adults, 2015-2019

When an active participant reaches majority age (18 years-old), they are required to formally indicate their desire to remain in Safe at Home. A form entitled Certification of Continuance is mailed to them. If the young adult continues to reside with the parent who enrolled them as a minor, the Safe at Home office must receive the completed form within 30 days of their 18th birthday in order to avoid cancellation. Graph 6 below shows, by year, the number of participants who reached majority age and the number of those participants who chose to remain in the program as they entered adulthood.

If the young adult has moved out of their parent's home and the young adult desires to maintain their program participation, they are required to meet with a Safe at Home Application Assistant to complete an initial program application and participate in individualized safety planning with the victim advocate. This requirement is in the best interest of the participant's personal safety and is mandated per Minnesota Rules, part 8290.0600, subpart 3. These occurrences

are rare. Most young adults who continue their program participation still reside with the parent who enrolled them. Therefore, they simply return the completed Certification of Continuance form to the Safe at Home office. Overall, less than half of young adults whose parent enrolled them as a small child chose to continue their program participation as they enter adulthood and the conclusion can reasonably be made that they no longer reside with that parent.

Graph 6 Participants Reaching Age of Majority



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