



# PROGRAM PARTICIPATION ANNUAL REPORT JANUARY 2021

Reporting Period: January 1, 2020 - December 31, 2020



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 \$4290.92. 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).

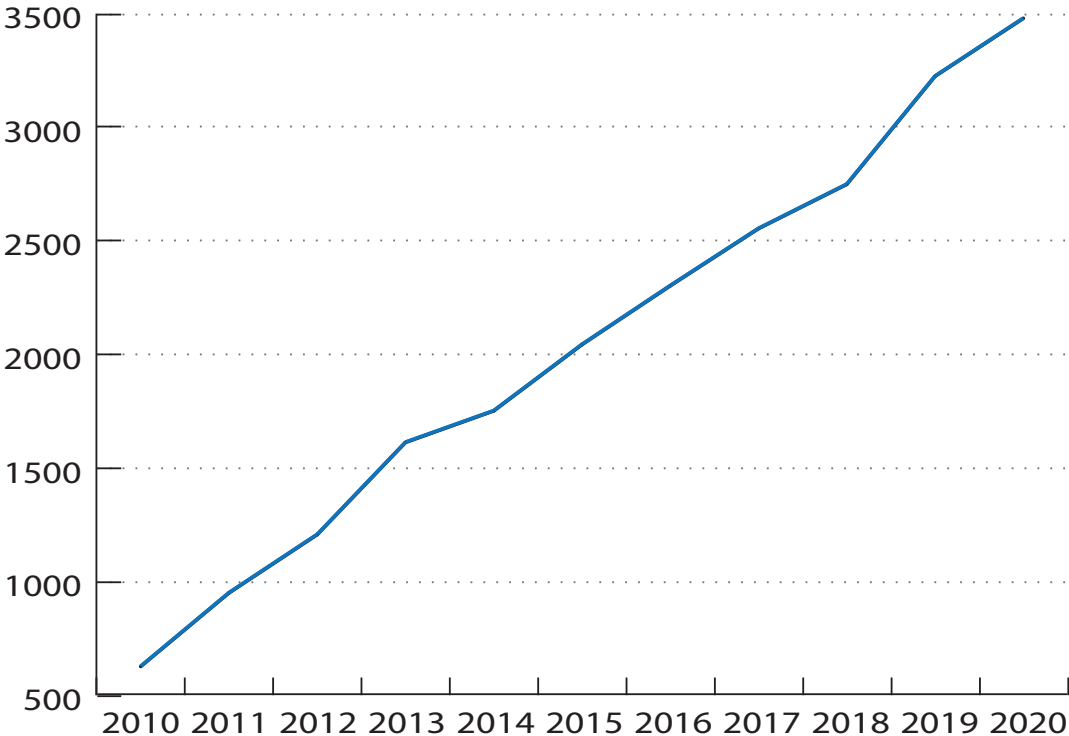
*Chart 1 Program Participation*

Participants and Applicants Served in 2020	4,451
Participant Households December 31, 2020	1,570
Individual Program Participants December 31, 2020	3,489
Average Yearly Net Growth 2010 - 2020	23%

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 11,000 different participants and applicants have received multiple services, and the program continues to grow annually. In fact, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, which limited the ability for people to relocate - a necessary action for Safe at Home to be truly effective for new enrollees - the program experienced an overall net growth just as it has every year since its inception. Between the years of 2010-2020, the average yearly net growth of program participants was 23%.

*Graph 1 Year Increase of Program Participants*



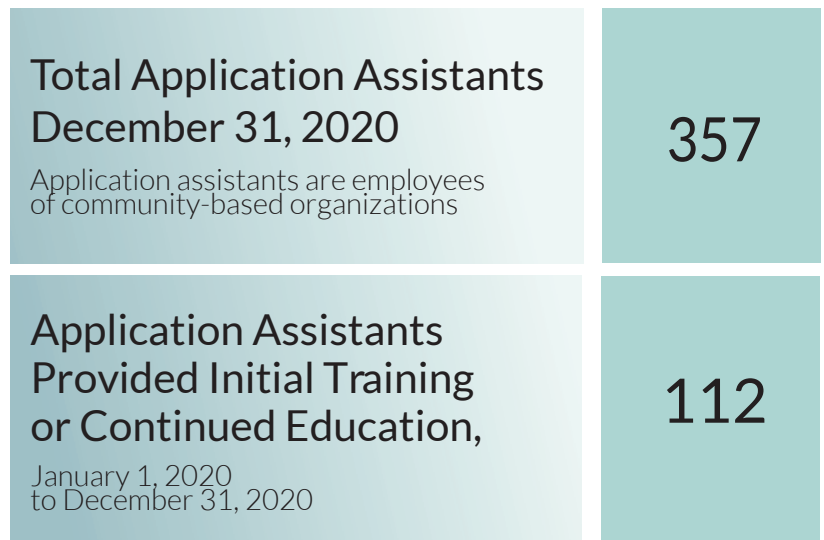
## Safe at Home Application Assistants

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, 2020 Safe at Home had partnerships with 88 different community-based organizations and 357 individual application assistants. In 2020, the Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State provided training to 112 victim advocates in Minnesota so that they could assist eligible people in applying to the program.

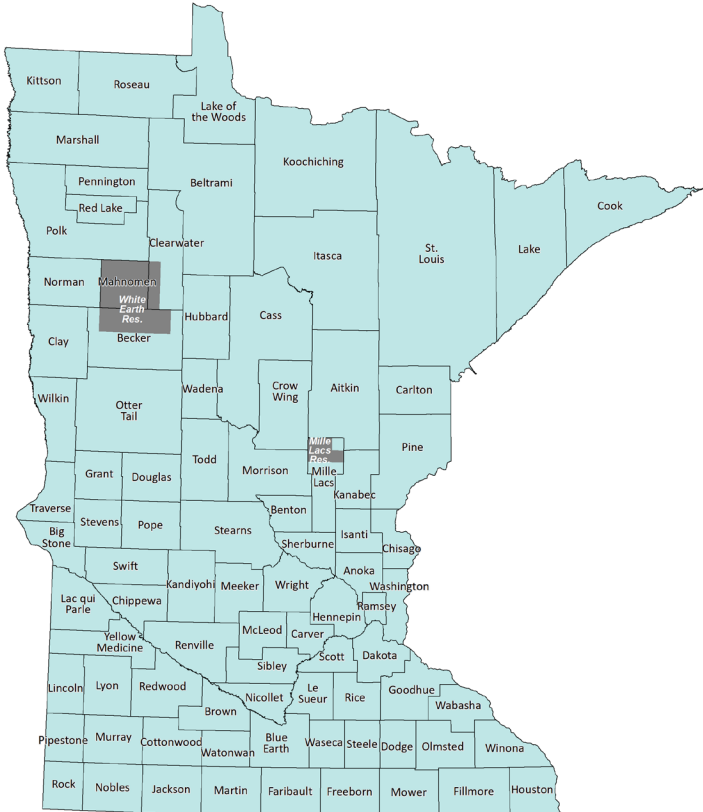
The role of the application assistant is vital. The Safe at Home Application Assistant meets one-on-one with a potential applicant to discuss their situation and help them determine whether applying to Safe at Home is an appropriate safety step for them to take. During this process, the application assistant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

Chart 2 Application Assistant Activity



As you can see in Chart 2, Safe at Home Application Assistant Activity, shows the number of application assistants accredited to assist with the Safe at Home application process as of December 31, 2020, as well as the number of victim advocates who were either initially trained to be partners or who were provided with continuing education during the 2020 calendar year in order to keep their application assistant skills up to date.



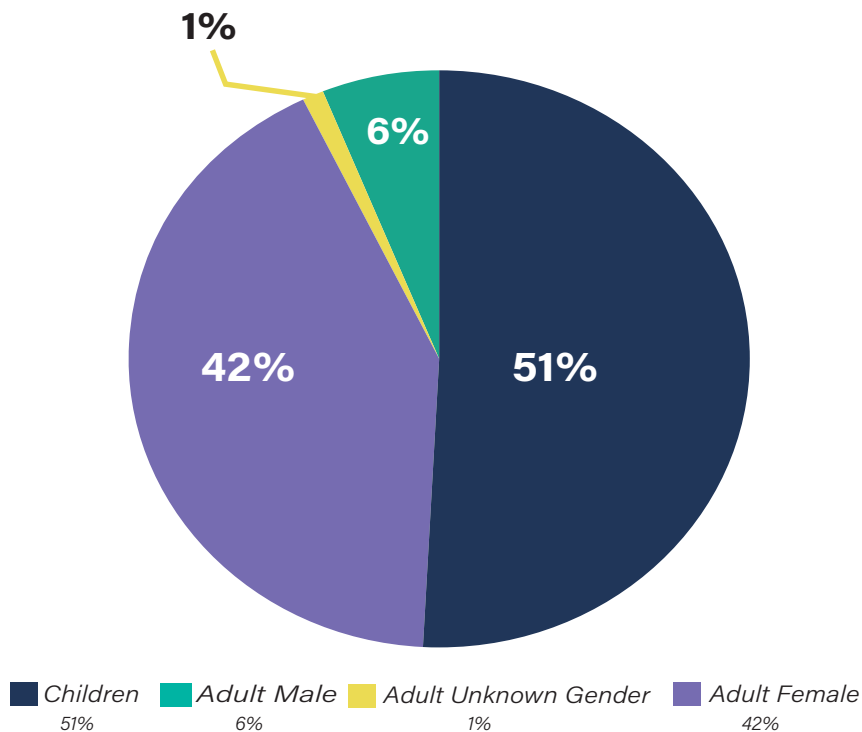
This map shows the geographical coverage of counties and tribal governments served by community-based organizations where application assistants were able to assist victims with the application process as of December 31, 2020. Comprehensive state coverage continued. Every county in Minnesota was served by at least one partnering community based organization.

Every county in Minnesota, as well as the White Earth and Mille Lacs reservations, is served by Safe at Home Application Assistants (as of December 31, 2020).

## Demographic Makeup

The majority of Safe at Home participants are children who were enrolled simultaneously with one of their parents. Most commonly, that parent was their mother. It is not uncommon for an adult female to enroll with numerous children. A participant household with a singular adult female is also very common. The demographic breakdown has remained fairly consistent since the program began in 2007 and can be seen in the chart below.

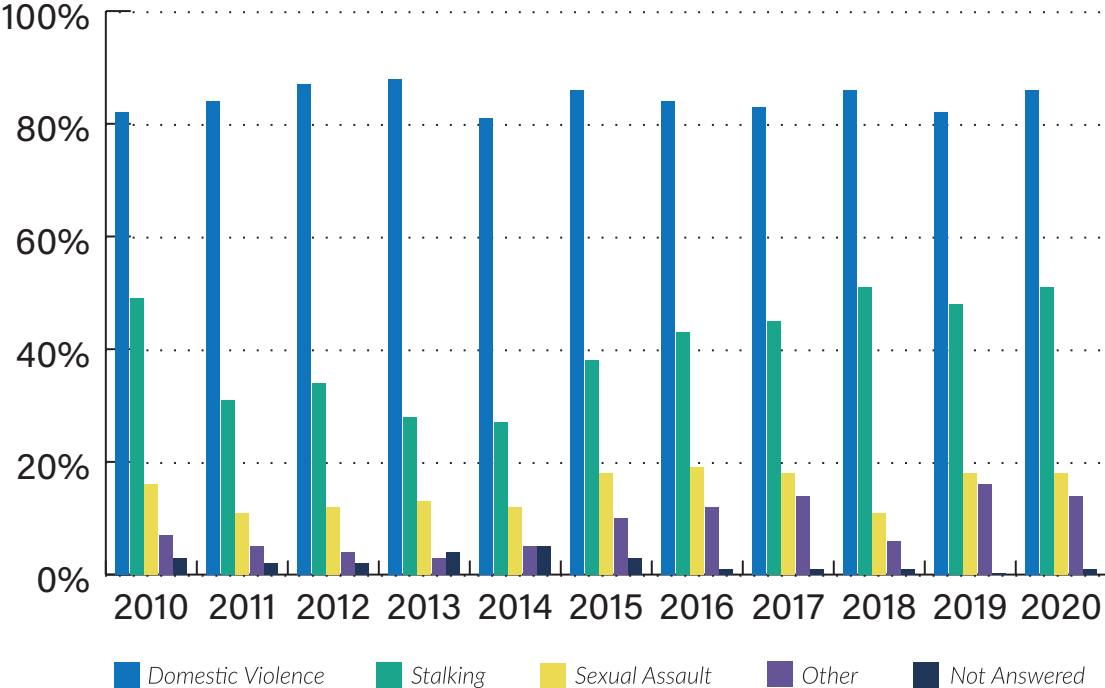
Chart 3 Household Demographics



## 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. On average, 98% choose to self-report. The graph below shows self-reported victimization data from 2010 through 2020. Consistently, domestic violence was the number one reason for enrollment in Safe at Home – 81% or more of applicants each year indicated it was the reason or was one of the reasons for enrolling.

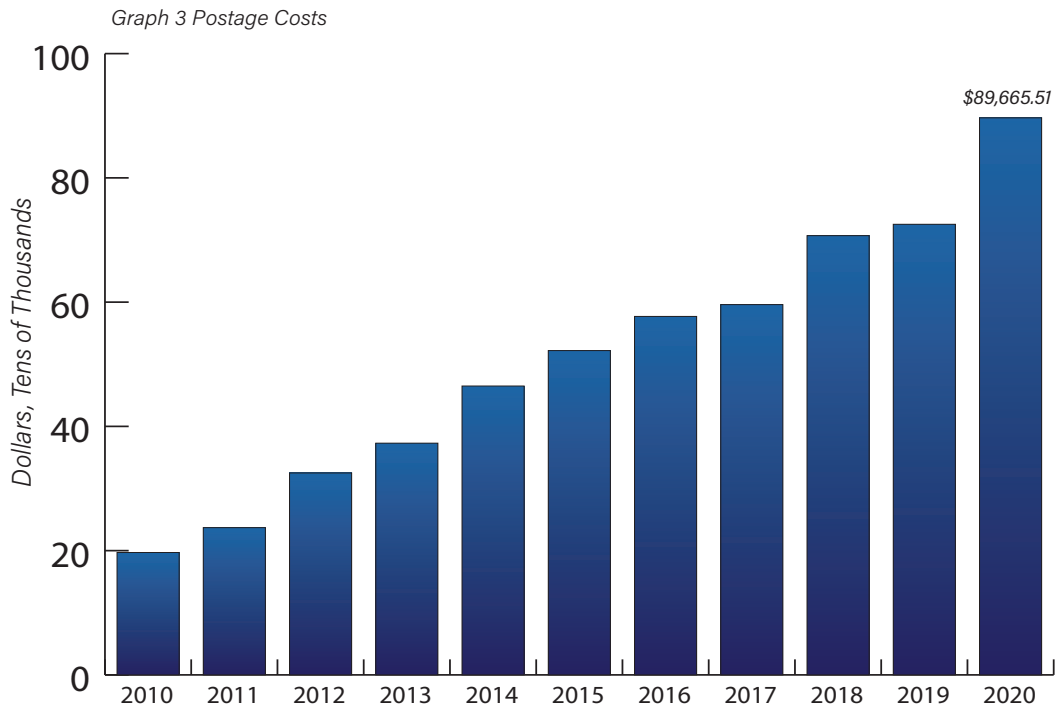
Graph 2 Self-reported Reasons for Enrollment



## Postage Costs

In accordance with Minn. Stat. § 5B.05(a), when another party learns that someone is a Safe at Home participant they are required to mail correspondence to the participant's Safe at Home address. As the agent to receive mail for all program participants, the Office of the Secretary of State pays for and manages the post office box where all Safe at Home mail is sent. Therefore, one of the main functions of the Safe at Home office is to process all participant mail. The office is required to forward to participants their properly addressed First Class Mail, identifiable pharmaceuticals, and packages that are sent by a state or county government agency. Other mail is either refused at the post office, returned to sender, or in cases of bulk advertisement or junk mail, shredded or recycled.

In calendar year 2020, the office processed approximately 500,000 incoming and outgoing pieces of mail, including mail sent directly to program participants, enrollments materials, absentee ballots and voting materials, office correspondence to participants, and outreach such as brochures sent to stakeholders at their request. Each year, the mail volume as well as the program's postage expenses continue to climb. The chart below shows yearly postage costs 2010 - 2020.





Questions about this report can be directed to:

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