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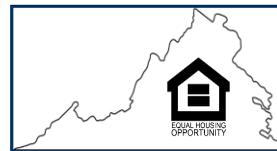
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# VIRGINIA FAIR HOUSING OFFICE



**KNOWLEDGE IS KEY!**

## Fair Housing Is Your Right, Not a Privilege!



## VIRGINIA FAIR HOUSING LAW

§ 36-96.1.B



It is the policy of the Commonwealth of Virginia to provide for fair housing throughout the Commonwealth, to all its citizens, regardless of:

- race,
- color,
- religion,
- national origin,
- sex,
- elderliness,
- familial status, or
- handicap,

and to that end to prohibit discriminatory practices with respect to residential housing by any person or group of persons, in order that the peace, health, safety, prosperity, and general welfare of all the inhabitants of the Commonwealth may be protected and insured. This law shall be deemed an exercise of the police power of the Commonwealth of Virginia for the protection of the people of the Commonwealth.

## WHO SHOULD KNOW THE FAIR HOUSING LAW?

- Real Estate Agents/Brokers
- Real Estate Appraisers
- Real Estate Developers
- Engineers
- Builders
- Multifamily Property Owners
- Landlords
- Property Managers
- Maintenance Staff
- Architects
- Leasing Agents
- Public Housing Authorities
- Housing Grant Recipients
- Insurance Companies
- Mortgage Companies
- Print and Online Advertisers
- Manufactured Housing Providers
- Homeowners Associations
- Common Interest Community Managers and Boards of Directors
- General Public

## PROTECTED CLASSES UNDER THE VIRGINIA FAIR HOUSING LAW

### WHAT IS A "PROTECTED CLASS"?

The term "**protected class**" is an anti-discrimination term that is used in state and federal law. It refers to a group of people who share a common characteristic and need protection from discrimination and harassment.

### COMPLAINTS | FISCAL YEAR 2013

The Virginia Fair Housing Office continues to receive complaints from individuals who believe that they are victims of discrimination.

FY 2013 complaints received:

<b>Disability</b>	<b>41%</b>
<b>Race</b>	<b>26%</b>
<b>Familial Status</b>	<b>12%</b>
<b>Color/Sex/ National Origin/ Religion/Elderliness</b>	<b>22%</b>



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### UNLAWFUL DISCRIMINATORY HOUSING PRACTICES:

- To refuse to rent, sell or negotiate, or otherwise make a dwelling unavailable;
- To discriminate in the terms or conditions of a rental or sale, or in the provision of services or facilities connected to the rental or sale;
- To make, print, or publish a discriminatory statement or advertisement related to the sale or rental of a dwelling;
- To misrepresent the availability of a dwelling;
- To refuse to make a **reasonable accommodation** for a person with a disability, or to refuse to permit a person with a disability to make a **reasonable modification**

As a good housing practice, housing providers should set objective criteria to screen ALL applicants fairly.

The goal of the Fair Housing Law is to afford every qualified individual housing choices where there is equal access to, and equity in the use and enjoyment of, a dwelling or property.



### Timely Filing of Complaints

A complaint must be received by the Fair Housing Office in writing within **one year** after the alleged discriminatory housing practice occurred or ended.

### OTHER HOUSING TRANSACTIONS REGULATED BY FAIR HOUSING LAW:

#### Construction of Accessible Covered Multifamily Housing

consisting of four (4) units or more—built for first occupancy after March 13, 1991.

**Mortgage Banking:** The fair housing law protects applicants seeking mortgage financing from practices such as "**redlining**" where race and the ethnic make-up of the community are the determining factors.

**Homeowners Insurance Redlining:** The law prohibits the practice of refusing to do business with certain communities due to their racial and ethnic make-up.

**Appraisals:** Real estate appraisers must not consider race, color, religion, national origin, sex, elderliness, familial status, or handicap of the residents of the property or neighborhood when appraising residential property.

**Advertising:** Housing ads must welcome all qualified applicants. Such ads should not indicate any preference (unless specified under law) or limitation.

**Interference:** It is unlawful to coerce, intimidate, threaten, or interfere with any person in the exercise or enjoyment of any right granted or protected by the fair housing law.