



Filing a Fair Housing Complaint

If you think your Fair Housing rights have been violated, you have several options for filing a complaint. There are two agencies that enforce the Fair Housing Act for Virginians, the Virginia Fair Housing Office and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). You can file a complaint with either office or both.

Virginia Fair Housing Office

(804) 367-8530 or (888) 551-3247

<http://www.dpor.virginia.gov/FairHousing/>

There is information on their webpage about your rights, the investigative process, and a link to file a Fair Housing complaint.

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

You can file a complaint with HUD in several different ways:

- Online: <https://portalapps.hud.gov/FHEO903/Form903/Form903Start.action>
- Email or postal mail: download the form, fill it out and mail it to the regional office listed in the form: https://www.hud.gov/sites/documents/DOC_12150.PDF (the form is available in several languages which can be found at this address https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/fair_housing_equal_opp/complaint_filing_languages_other_english)
- Phone: you can speak to an intake specialist at 1-800-669-9777 or 1-800-877-8339 (TTY)

If you decide to file a complaint, do so as soon as possible because there are time limits on filing a complaint. Generally, complaints must be filed within one year of the alleged violation.

Some people are hesitant to file a complaint because they fear the housing provider will retaliate against them. It is illegal to retaliate against any person for making a complaint and if the housing provider does retaliate, you can file another complaint for that behavior. People who testify on your behalf or assist you in filing a complaint are also protected against retaliation under the Fair Housing Act.

If the process at the state or federal level ends with a determination that there is probable cause to believe that discrimination occurred, you can have your case heard by a court and be represented by an attorney from either the Virginia Attorney General's Office or the U.S. Department of Justice.

You also have the right to file a private civil lawsuit either before or after you file a complaint with Virginia Fair Housing Office or HUD. You have a two-year limit to file such a suit and you are responsible for hiring and paying for an attorney. If you want to hire an attorney but don't know where to start looking, you can contact the Virginia Lawyer Referral Service. Through this service, you can get the contact information for attorneys in your area who agree to provide a 30-minute consultation for \$35. You can get more information by calling them at (804)775-0808 or on their website: <https://vlrs.community.lawyer/>.

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