

Protected Classes under Virginia Law

No one can face discrimination in housing (rental and buying) due to being a member of a protected class. This means landlords, realtors, and mortgage companies cannot treat people differently just because they are a certain race, gender, have a disability, or any of the other classes explained below. A person may face discrimination under more than one protected class. Some of these classes are also protected under the federal Fair Housing Act.

Race: whether a person is White, Black/African American, Asian, American Indian, Native Alaskan, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander, or some mixture of two or more of these groups

Color: visible color or shade of one's skin; regardless of race, people cannot be treated differently due to the lightness or darkness of skin tone

Religion: people of all religions are protected, even those without a religion

National Origin: where you are from or perceived to be from including ancestry, ethnicity, birthplace, culture, and language; Fair Housing laws apply regardless of immigration status

Sex: gender; includes sexual harassment

Disability: a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities

Familial Status: families with children; includes all types of families such as those with biological parents, single parents, stepparents, foster parents, grandparents, or other relatives; it also includes families expecting a child either through pregnancy or adoption

Elderliness: age 55 or older

Source of Funds: any income or funds provided to or on behalf of a person; includes assistance, benefits, and subsidies from any governmental or nongovernmental entity

Sexual Orientation: actual or perceived heterosexuality, bisexuality, or homosexuality

Gender Identity: gender-related identity, appearance, or other gender-related characteristics of an individual regardless of their gender assigned at birth

Military Status: those on active duty, veterans, and their families; "veterans" is defined as anyone who actively served in the military and was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable