

**Disability**  
**Race**  
**Color**  
**Religion**  
**National Origin**  
**Sex**  
**Familial Status**  
**Elderliness**

**YOU ARE  
PROTECTED**

**HOME's Mission:**

*Ensuring equal access to  
housing for all people*

If you feel you may be a victim of housing discrimination because of your disability or any other protected class, please email:  
**fairhousing@HOMEofVA.org**  
or call our office at **804.354.0641**

**You can file a complaint online:**  
[HOMEofVA.org/ComplaintForm](http://HOMEofVA.org/ComplaintForm)

*Information from HOME is  
not intended to be legal advice.  
Please consult an attorney for legal advice.*

*Alternative formats will be  
available when requested.*



**HOME**  
*Housing Opportunities Made Equal*

**Housing Opportunities Made Equal (HOME)**

626 East Broad Street, Suite 400  
Richmond, VA 23219

804.354.0641 FAX 804.354.0690

VA Relay: 711

[www.HOMEofVA.org](http://www.HOMEofVA.org)

6-11-2015

**FAIR HOUSING**  
**FOR PERSONS WITH  
DISABILITIES**



**HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES  
MADE EQUAL OF VIRGINIA, INC.**

# KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

## What is Fair Housing?

The Virginia and federal fair housing laws provide protection in housing to groups of persons based on certain characteristics. A group sharing a protected characteristic is described as a "protected class."



Together, the Virginia and federal fair housing laws prohibit discrimination in housing-related transactions (rental, sales, lending, insurance, zoning) based on the protected classes of:

- Disability
- Color
- Sex
- Religion
- Race
- National Origin
- Familial Status
- Elderliness

## How is Disability Defined?

Federal law defines a person with a disability as **"Any person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; has a record of such impairment; or is regarded as having such an impairment."**

A physical or mental impairment can include hearing, mobility and visual impairments, chronic alcoholism, mental illness, HIV/AIDS, AIDS Related Complex, or intellectual or developmental disabilities that substantially limits one or more major life activities such as walking, talking, hearing, seeing, breathing, learning, performing manual tasks, and caring for oneself.

# FAIR HOUSING PROTECTIONS

## Housing Discrimination May Include:

- **Refusing to rent or sell to a person with a disability.** For example, refusing to rent to a person using a wheelchair for fear a unit may be damaged. This could also include refusing to rent to someone because of a mental illness, such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).
- **Setting different lease conditions, rates, or security deposits for a person with a disability.** For example, telling a tenant "since you use a walker, you need additional insurance coverage."
- **Refusing to allow, or charging a deposit for, a service animal.** Because service animals are not pets, they are not subject to pet restrictions or fees.
- **Refusing to allow a necessary reasonable accommodation or modification to a property.** For example, refusing to let a tenant using a wheelchair build a ramp to access the property.

## Reasonable Accommodations & Modifications

A person with a disability is legally entitled to certain housing accommodations and modifications. A **reasonable accommodation** is an exception or change that a housing provider makes to rules, policies, services or regulations that will assist a resident or applicant with a disability to take full advantage of a housing program and/or dwelling. A **reasonable modification** is an alteration to the physical premises allowing a person with a disability to overcome obstacles that interfere with his/her use of the dwelling and/or common areas. These are typically structural changes to the housing unit (such as a ramp) which are necessary to accommodate a person with a disability.

Call HOME or visit our website for more information and assistance in requesting a reasonable accommodation or reasonable modification.

For more information, visit: [HOMEofVA.org/Disability](http://HOMEofVA.org/Disability)

# HOME IS HERE TO HELP

## Are There Legitimate Reasons for Someone Not to Rent or Sell a Dwelling?

Yes. These may include: insufficient income, poor credit history, criminal history or no stable source of income.

The legality of discriminating based on disability income is a gray area and a question that is still being considered. If you have been turned down in renting an apartment because of a reliance on disability income, contact HOME to discuss your options.

## What Can HOME Do?

HOME will help you determine whether what has happened is unlawful discrimination, and may help you seek the remedies that are available to everyone under fair housing laws. In certain situations, HOME will file (or assist in filing) complaints to ensure that uncovered discriminatory housing practices cease.

HOME will also provide technical assistance to educate housing providers on fair housing laws so they do not discriminate.

Housing Opportunities Made Equal of Virginia, Inc. (HOME) is a private, non-profit fair housing organization founded in 1971. HOME serves the commonwealth of Virginia with a mission of ensuring equal access to housing for all people.

