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Legal Rights

What are Legal Rights?

Legal rights are laws that protect people. There are many different types of laws. Laws that apply to everyone in the United States are called Federal laws. Some are based on the Constitution of the United States. Laws that apply to everyone in a state are called State laws or statutes. These can be different depending on the state where you live.

If you are a senior and/or an individual with a disability, there are extra Federal and State laws to protect you from discrimination. Discrimination means that someone is treating you unfairly or differently just because you are a senior or because you have a disability. Some examples are:

- **Housing Discrimination.** This means that you are denied housing or asked to move from your current housing because of your age or disability.
- **Employment Discrimination.** This means that you are not hired for a job, not promoted or fired because of your age or disability.
- **Credit Discrimination.** This means that you are denied credit, offered a lower amount of credit or offered different conditions because of your age or disability.

What programs and services are available to protect your rights?

If you think you are being discriminated against because of your age or disability, you may wish to contact a lawyer to protect your legal rights. There are also Federal, State and private agencies and organizations that may be able to help you free of charge.

Where can I find out more?

Below are websites that offer more detail on Federal and State laws that protect your legal rights. They also tell you how to file a complaint. There are also some very good contacts for agencies and organizations that may support you, called advocacy, free of charge.

Discrimination Based on Disability (regardless of age)

- (Federal Law) [The Americans with Disabilities Act](#) including information about reasonable accommodation
- (State Law) [The Virginians with Disabilities Act](#) [Rights of Persons with Disabilities]
- [Disability Law Handbook](#). Please note that this handbook is a broad overview of rights and obligations under federal disability laws. It was prepared by the DBTAC Southwest ADA Center and is intended to inform rather than to provide legal advice. Therefore, you should refer also to Virginia state laws and, if needed, consult an attorney for advice about your particular situation.

Discrimination Based on Age, Disability and other factors

- (State Law) [The Virginia Human Rights Act](#)

Housing Discrimination Based on Age, Disability and other factors

- (Federal Law) [Federal Fair Housing Laws](#)
- (State Law) [Virginia Fair Housing Law](#)
- (State Law) [Virginia Fair Housing Office](#)
- (State Law) [Zoning Law for group homes](#)
- The Virginia Landlord/Tenant Handbook. Link to this handbook on the [Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development's](#) website.
- [Housing Opportunities Made Equal](#)

Employment Discrimination Based on Age

- (Federal Law) [Age Discrimination in Employment Act](#)

Legal Assistance

- [dLCV](#) (disAbility Law Center of Virginia) (serving persons with disabilities of all ages)
- Local [Centers for Independent Living](#) (serving persons with disabilities of all ages)

- [Virginia Legal Aid](#) (serving persons of all ages)

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