

**DBHDS Independent Housing Curriculum for Community Housing Guides
Module 2 - Affordable Housing and Protections for Renters with Disabilities in
Fair Housing and Landlord-Tenant Laws**

Frequently Asked Questions

Affordable Housing Programs

Q1: Where can I find a list of the public housing agencies (PHAs) in Virginia?

A1: A list of PHAs in Virginia with contact information is available on the HUD website, which can be accessed at <https://www.hud.gov/states/virginia/renting/haweb sites>

Q2: Where can I find out more about local Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) programs?

A2: See the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development HCV Fact Sheet which is available at https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/public_indian_housing/programs/hcv/about/fact_sheet

Q3: How can I learn more about the Housing Choice Voucher Set-aside and Preference available in Virginia for individuals with developmental disabilities?

A3: See the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services Fact Sheet on the HCV Set-Aside and Preference for the Settlement Agreement Population which is available at <https://www.dbhds.virginia.gov/developmental-services/housing/housing-choice-voucher> or contact your Regional Housing Coordinator. Contact information for Regional Housing Coordinators is available at <https://www.dbhds.virginia.gov/developmental-services/housing/housing-team>.

Q4: Where can I find out more about the State Rental Assistance Program (SRAP)?

A4: See the FAQ about SRAP from the DBHDS website at <https://www.dbhds.virginia.gov/developmental-services/housing/state-rental-assistance-program> or contact your Regional Housing Coordinator. Contact information for Regional Housing Coordinators is available at <https://www.dbhds.virginia.gov/developmental-services/housing/housing-team>.

Q5: Where can I find out if there are HCV project based vouchers available in Virginia?

A5: Contact the local public housing agency. A list of PHAs in Virginia with contact information is available on the HUD website, which can be accessed at <https://www.hud.gov/states/virginia/renting/haweb sites>

Q6: What does a “preference” mean in affordable housing programs?

A6: It means that housing providers prioritize eligible applicants who fall within a specific **preference** category. Housing providers can get approval to make preferences for certain populations such as those who are chronically homeless, survivors of domestic violence, or persons with disabilities who are exiting or at risk of entering institutional settings. The purpose of **preferences** is to assist specific populations who greatly need housing assistance.

Q7: Where can I find out the location of federally assisted housing properties in Virginia?

A7: See the HUD Resource Locator website at: <https://resources.hud.gov>. Additional resources for federally-assisted rental housing in rural areas is available at https://rdmfhrentals.sc.egov.usda.gov/RDMFHRentals/select_state.jsp.

Q8: Where can I find Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) properties with available units in Virginia?

A8: Contact your DBHDS Regional Housing Coordinator to obtain a list of LIHTC properties with a preference for individuals with developmental disabilities. Additional LIHTC properties without a preference can be found at www.virginiahousingsearch.com.

Q9: Who can I contact to learn more about affordable housing resources in Virginia?

A9: The key is to develop relationships with professionals who make connections to housing resources, including:

- Your DBHDS Regional Housing Coordinator. A list of Regional Housing Coordinators is available at <https://www.dbhds.virginia.gov/developmental-services/housing/housing-team>
- Your Virginia Housing Community Outreach Strategic Housing Officer. Contact Sue.Armstrong@virginiahousing.com or (804) 343-5550

Q10: Where can I learn more about local affordable housing programs available in a specific locality?

A10: Check the jurisdiction's website for the department of housing, community development or social services. These offices may have a list of local housing programs and program contacts.

Q11: How can I find out about housing opportunities for people who are homeless?

A11: Call 211 and ask for information about housing opportunities for people who are homeless through the local or regional Homeless Coordinated Entry system.

Q12: Where can I find more information on funding sources for reasonable modification requests?

A12: See the following websites:

1. Department of Behavioral Health & Developmental Services Flexible Funding: <https://www.dbhds.virginia.gov/developmental-services/housing/flexible-funding>
2. DBHDS My Life My Community Services and Support Options (environmental modifications are included as a Medicaid Waiver service): <https://www.dbhds.virginia.gov/library/developmental%20services/mlmc%20services%20and%20support%20options%202016%20final%206%2030%2016.pdf>
3. Virginia Housing Development Authority's Accessibility Grants: <https://www.vhda.com/renters/pages/accessiblentalhousing.aspx>

Q13: Where can I find information about income limits for a specific affordable housing program?

A13: The affordable housing program administrator will provide this information, which is typically included on the organization's website or available upon request. For general information about HUD income limits and the area median income in specific communities, visit <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/il.html>.

Q14: What kinds of income are included in income determinations for affordable housing programs?

A14: Affordable housing programs have different rules about what kinds of income are included and what kinds of income are excluded when performing income determinations. The affordable housing program administrator can provide this information upon request. Please note, some affordable housing programs do NOT count income that a person with a disability earns while participating in a federal-, state- or locally-funded vocational or job training program. If the individual you support is participating in supported employment or vocational training through the Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services, a Medicaid Waiver for people with developmental disabilities, or a high school vocational program, be sure to inform the program staff who are conducting the income determination and ask if this income should be counted.

Q15: Where can I find information about payment standards and fair market rents for a specific affordable housing program?

A15: The affordable housing program administrator will provide this information, which is typically included on the organization's website or available upon request. For general information about fair market rents in specific communities, visit <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/fmr.html>.

Fair Housing & Landlord-Tenant Protections for Renters

Q16: Where can I find more information about Fair Housing laws and reasonable accommodations and modifications?

A16: Visit the following links for additional information on Fair Housing laws and examples of accommodations and modifications:

1. Housing Opportunities Made Equal Guide for Reasonable Accommodations:
<https://homeofva.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/GuideforReasonableAccommodations.pdf>
2. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development overview of reasonable accommodations and modifications:
https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/fair_housing_equal_opp/reasonable_accommodations_and_modifications
3. U.S. Department of Justice:
 - Fair Housing Act: <https://www.justice.gov/crt/fair-housing-act-1>
 - Fair Housing Policy Statements and Guidance (including Joint Statements with HUD on Reasonable Accommodations and Modifications under the Fair Housing Act):
<https://www.justice.gov/crt/fair-housing-policy-statements-and-guidance>
4. Virginia Fair Housing Law: <https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title36/chapter5.1/>

5. Virginia Fair Housing Office, Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation overview of reasonable accommodations and modifications:

http://www.dpor.virginia.gov/FairHousing/Housing_People_with_Disabilities/

Q17: What is “source of funds” discrimination and what must landlords do to comply with Virginia’s Fair Housing law that protects people who receive rent assistance?

Q17: Virginia Fair Housing Office, Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation has a fact sheet that explains what “source of funds” discrimination means and requirements for landlords to comply with the law: <http://www.dpor.virginia.gov/FairHousing/>

Q18: Where can I get more information about Fair Housing training opportunities?

A18: See the Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation’s Fair Housing Training webpage at <http://www.dpor.virginia.gov/FairHousing/> and click on “Outreach and Training.”

Q19: Where can I find additional resources about the Virginia Residential Landlord and Tenant Act (VRLTA) and how it protects renters?

A19: The Virginia Department of Housing & Community Development’s website has a helpful handbook about VRLTA which provides information on rights and responsibilities of landlords and renters. See <https://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/landlord-tenant-resources>

Q20: What resources can I use to help someone file a complaint if accommodations or modifications are not made according to the law?

A20: The following are helpful resources:

- Contact the Center for Fair Housing at Housing Opportunities Made Equal for guidance: www.homeofva.org or 804-354-0641
- Help the person file a complaint with Virginia Department of Professional & Occupational Regulation: <http://www.dpor.virginia.gov/FairHousing/> or 804-367-8530
- File a complaint with HUD (within one year of denial). Call to 1-800-669-9777 or TTY 1-800-927-9275 or complete on-line complaint form at https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/fair_housing_equal_opp/complaint-process

Q21: Where can I go to help someone obtain legal assistance related to landlord-tenant issues?

A21: The following are helpful resources:

- Civil legal aid programs – Call 866-LEGLAID
- Eviction legal help line – Call 833-NOEVICT
- On-line *pro bono* question & answer website <https://Virginia.freelegalanswers.org>
- Legal information – www.VaLegalAid.org
- Virginia’s information and referral line for health & human services: Call “211” on the phone
- [Housing Opportunities Made Equal - https://homeofva.org/](https://homeofva.org/)
- Find your local Department of Social Services at <https://www.dss.virginia.gov/localagency/index.cgi>

- Virginia Department of Housing & Community Development’s handbook about VRLTA has contact information for local legal aid programs. See <https://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/landlord-tenant-resources>

Q22: Where can I get training on the Virginia Residential Landlord and Tenant Act and landlord-tenant issues?

A22: See the Virginia Poverty Law Center’s webpage on housing law at <https://vplc.org/advocacy/economic-justice/housing-law/> for information about their workshops on Virginia Residential Landlord and Tenant Act issues. Also check out Virginia Housing’s on-line renter education program at <https://www.vhda.com/Renters/Pages/Renter-Education.aspx> - Click “Renter Education Online Course” on the right side of the webpage. You will have to sign up for a login ID and password to access the course.

Additional Video Resources on Affordable Housing Programs

HUD Programs

What is affordable housing? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VUWWGB-vDAI>

Who needs affordable housing? https://youtu.be/KGvWR7v-uBk?list=PLTmHdy8wLfsItf0-K4jJfvPpJH7_8K999

What is Section 8? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=STeZXb4qz54>

How to Apply for Section 8 Housing <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MsZ--zsf9PA>

LIHTC

How do housing credits work? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wUtDfyyNbc4>

Virginia Housing Search – Find a great place to live

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MFDiEyObnpw>