

EDUCATION ★ HOUSING ★ JOBS

# KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

for Parents & Caregivers of LGBTQ+ Youth





## Key Rights and Protections

-  **Fair Housing:** Protected against discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and other characteristics. Includes refusal to rent/sell, different rental conditions, harassment, or denial of reasonable accommodations.
-  **Employment:** Unlawful to discriminate in hiring, promotions, job assignments, discipline, or termination based on protected status, including gender identity and sexual orientation.
-  **Public Accommodations:** Rights to access and equal treatment in any place that is open to the public, including schools, businesses, government offices, and medical facilities.
-  **Harassment:** Any unwelcome conduct based on protected characteristics that impacts a person's housing, employment, or use of public spaces.



# Legally Protected Classes

## Housing

Sexual orientation, gender identity, sex, race, color, disability, religion, marital status, age, familial status, national origin, ancestry, public assistance, abuse victims, immigration status and citizenship

## Employment




Sexual orientation, gender identity, sex, race, color, disability, religion, age, HIV+, crime victim, place of birth, ancestry, pregnancy

## Public Accommodations

Sexual orientation, gender identity, sex, race, color, disability, religion, national origin, immigration status and citizenship



# Harassment and How it's Defined

CONTEXT	DEFINITION OF HARASSMENT	KEY CONSIDERATIONS	ACTIONS TO TAKE IF EXPERIENCED
 <b>School</b>	Unwelcome conduct based on protected status, severe or pervasive enough to affect educational access significantly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schools must adopt and follow clear harassment prevention policies.</li> <li>Schools must investigate and remedy complaints promptly.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Immediately report through school procedures.</li> <li>Request a safety plan if needed.</li> <li>If dissatisfied, file a complaint with the VHRC within one year.</li> </ul>
 <b>Housing &amp; Public Accommodations</b>	Unwelcome conduct interfering with access to housing or use of public spaces based on protected status. Conduct doesn't have to be severe or pervasive.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Single incident can suffice.</li> <li>Conduct doesn't need to cause physical or psychological harm.</li> <li>You don't have to be the direct target.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document the incidents.</li> <li>Complaints can be filed with the Vermont Human Rights Commission (VHRC) within one year.</li> </ul>
 <b>Employment</b>	Unwelcome conduct creating intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environments based on protected status. Conduct doesn't have to be severe or pervasive.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A single incident may qualify.</li> <li>Conduct outside work can be relevant.</li> <li>Continuing to work doesn't negate harassment claims.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document incidents thoroughly.</li> <li>report promptly to your employer if you feel safe</li> <li>File a complaint with the Attorney General's Office <u>or</u> the Vermont Human Rights Commission (VHRC) if it continues.</li> <li>Seek support from advocacy groups.</li> </ul>

Examples of

## What Constitutes Discrimination

### Fair Housing

Refusal to rent or sell due to gender identity, denying reasonable accommodations needed for a disability, hostile housing environments

### Employment

Refusal to hire or promote based on sexual orientation, discriminatory termination, workplace harassment

### Public Accommodations

Denial of services at businesses, unequal treatment at restaurants, refusal to use correct pronouns by public officials







## Contacts

**Document all incidents thoroughly.** Keep a copy of any emails, letters or recordings in case you need them later. For harassment complaints, it can be very helpful to create a chronology of incidents.

### 🏠 **FAIR HOUSING & PUBLIC ACCOMMODATIONS:**

- Contact **Vermont Human Rights Commission (VHRC)** within 1 year of the incident.

**WEBSITE:** [hrc.vermont.gov](http://hrc.vermont.gov)

**EMAIL:** [human.rights@vermont.gov](mailto:human.rights@vermont.gov)

**PHONE:** (802) 828-2480

**SEE:** [HRC's Guide for Complainants and Respondents](#)

### 👜 **EMPLOYMENT DISCRIMINATION:**

- **Vermont Human Rights Commission** (for state employees)

- **Vermont Attorney General's Office, Civil Rights Unit**

**WEBSITE:** [ago.vermont.gov/divisions/civil-rights](http://ago.vermont.gov/divisions/civil-rights)

**PHONE:** (802) 828-3657

- **U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)**

**WEBSITE:** [eeoc.gov](http://eeoc.gov)

**PHONE:** 1-800-669-4000

# FAQ for Parents and Caregivers:

## ? Who is protected under Vermont discrimination laws?

Youth are protected based on gender identity, sexual orientation, sex, race, color, disability, religion, among others.

## ? What do I do if my child faces harassment at school?

Immediately report incidents through school channels. Schools must investigate promptly and take appropriate action. If unsatisfied, contact VHRC.

## ? Can my child request accommodations related to gender identity at school?

Schools must ensure equal access to educational opportunities for all students. You may request changes to school practices or rules to meet the needs of trans/queer students.

## ? What if my child is discriminated against in a public place (like a restaurant or store)?

You may file an HRC complaint within one year of the incident, and you have six years to file a discrimination lawsuit in court.

## ? What does the VHRC complaint process look like?

VHRC will start with an initial intake process. If your complaint is accepted for investigation, a Staff

Attorney Investigator will do a thorough investigation, which may take a year or longer. The VHRC can help the parties resolve the complaint through a settlement or possibly file a lawsuit in court against the person or entity who discriminated against you. See the [VHRC's Guide for Complainants and Respondents](#) for more details about their process.

## ? What if I experience retaliation for complaining about discrimination?

It is unlawful for anyone who reports discrimination or harassment to be subjected to retaliation or other adverse actions as a result. The VHRC can investigate retaliation complaints.

## ? Can changes in federal law, policy, administration, or court decisions affect Vermont's state laws that protect transgender and LGBTQ+ individuals from discrimination?

Changes in federal law, policy, administration, or court decisions do not override Vermont State laws, which explicitly protect transgender and LGBTQ+ individuals from discrimination.

## ? Who can I contact for support or legal assistance?

**ACLU-VT**, Vermont Legal Aid, Outright Vermont, Vermont Pride Center, and National Center for Transgender Equality, Vermont Family Network.





The Mission of the Vermont Human Rights Commission is to advance full civil and human rights in Vermont. The Commission protects people from discrimination by conducting investigations and filing lawsuits to enforce Vermont's Fair Housing and Public Accommodations Act.



The mission of Outright Vermont is to build a Vermont where all LGBTQ+ youth have hope, equity, and power!

