Protected Classes

Sexual Violence Sexual Harassment Training (Additional Resources)

California law protects individuals from illegal discrimination by employers based on the following protected classes. For more information, refer to campus resources for SVSH Prevention.

**AGE**

Discrimination based on age is prohibited in California for individuals who are 40 years old or older. This protection ensures that older individuals are not treated unfairly or denied opportunities solely based on their age. Age discrimination protections cover various areas, including employment, housing, and public accommodations, promoting equal treatment and opportunities for individuals of all age groups.

**ANCESTRY, NATIONAL ORIGIN**

In California, both ancestry and national origin are protected classes, providing legal protection against discrimination. Ancestry refers to an individual's familial or ethnic heritage, while national origin relates to the country or geographic region a person, or their ancestors come from. Discrimination based on ancestry or national origin is strictly prohibited in various areas, including employment, housing, education, and public services. These protections ensure that individuals are not subjected to unfair treatment, prejudice, or stereotypes based on their ancestral background or country of origin. California's commitment to protecting these classes fosters a more inclusive and diverse society, promoting equal opportunities and respecting the cultural richness brought by people from different backgrounds.

By recognizing ancestry and national origin as protected classes, California seeks to eliminate discrimination and promote equal treatment for individuals regardless of their heritage or country of origin. Employers are prohibited from making hiring decisions or employment-related decisions based on an individual's ancestry or national origin. Similarly, individuals cannot be denied housing, educational opportunities, or public services based on these factors. These protections help create an environment where diversity is valued, and individuals are judged based on their skills, qualifications, and character rather than their ancestral background or national origin. California's commitment to protecting these classes reinforces the principles of equality and ensures that individuals have the freedom to embrace and celebrate their unique cultural heritage.

**RELIGION, CREED**

Discrimination based on religious beliefs or practices is strictly prohibited in California. This means that individuals are protected from unfair treatment or prejudice due to their religious affiliation or lack thereof. People of all faiths, including different religions or non-religious beliefs, are safeguarded against discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, and other areas. These protections promote religious freedom and tolerance, allowing individuals to practice their faith or hold their own beliefs without fear of prejudice or bias.

**DISABILITY**

California law prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities. People with physical or mental disabilities are protected from unfair treatment in employment, housing, public services, and other areas. These protections include reasonable accommodations to ensure that individuals with disabilities have equal access to opportunities and services, fostering inclusivity and removing barriers to participation.

**SEX & GENDER**

- **Sex**
  -(Including pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding, or related medical conditions)

- **Sexual Orientation**
  Discrimination based on sexual orientation is prohibited in California. Individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or heterosexual are protected from discrimination in areas such as employment, housing, public accommodations, and other important
aspects of life. These protections ensure that people can live authentically and without fear of prejudice or bias based on their sexual orientation, fostering a more accepting and inclusive society.

**Gender & Gender identity**

California provides robust protections against discrimination based on gender and gender identity. Individuals who identify as male, female, transgender, or non-binary are safeguarded from unfair treatment in various aspects of life, including employment, housing, education, and public services. These protections ensure that everyone, regardless of their gender identity, has equal rights, opportunities, and access to resources, fostering a more inclusive and equitable society.

**Gender expression**

Gender expression refers to the way individuals outwardly present their gender to others, including their appearance, behavior, clothing, and personal style. It is an individual's expression of their gender identity, which may or may not align with societal expectations or stereotypes associated with their assigned sex at birth.

**MEDICAL CONDITION**

The California Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA) prohibits discrimination in employment based on various protected characteristics, including disability. While medical conditions themselves may not be explicitly listed as a protected category, individuals with medical conditions that meet the definition of a disability under the law are protected from discrimination. The FEHA defines a disability as a physical or mental impairment that limits a major life activity, which can include conditions such as chronic illnesses, mental health disorders, or other medical conditions that substantially impact a person's ability to perform essential job functions.

**GENETIC INFORMATION**

Discrimination based on genetic information is prohibited in California. This includes discrimination based on an individual's genetic tests, family medical history, or other genetic characteristics. People are protected from unfair treatment or prejudice related to their genetic information, ensuring that individuals can access employment, housing, and public services without fear of discrimination based on their genetic profile.

**MARITAL STATUS**

Discrimination based on marital status is not allowed in California. People who are single, married, divorced, widowed, or in a domestic partnership are protected from unfair treatment in various contexts, including employment, housing, and public accommodations. These protections ensure that individuals are not discriminated against based on their marital status, promoting equal opportunities and fair treatment for all.

**MILITARY OR VETERAN STATUS**

In California, military veteran status is considered a protected class, providing legal safeguards against discrimination. This means that individuals who have served in the military, including those who have been honorably discharged, are protected from unfair treatment based on their veteran status. These protections extend to various areas, such as employment, housing, and public accommodations. Discrimination based on military veteran status encompasses both current and past members of the armed forces, ensuring that their service to the country does not result in prejudice or disadvantage in civilian life. These protections aim to recognize and honor the sacrifices and contributions of military veterans and promote their equal treatment and opportunities in society.

**RACE, COLOR**

Discrimination based on race, color, or national origin is prohibited. Individuals are protected regardless of their racial or ethnic background, skin color, or country of origin.