



UPWARDLY MOBILE



APRIL IS FAIR HOUSING MONTH

The Fair Housing Act, as amended in 1988, prohibits housing discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, disability, familial status, and national origin.

But, who is Considered a Person with a Disability?

Federal and state fair housing laws prohibit housing discrimination based on disability. You are protected under the fair housing laws if you (or someone living with or associated with you):

- Have a physical or mental disability that substantially limits one or more major life activities, or
- Have a record of having such a disability, or
- Are regarded as having such a disability

Disabilities include, but are not limited to:

- Hearing, mobility, and visual impairments
- Cancer
- Chronic mental illness
- AIDS/HIV
- Developmental disabilities
- Alcoholism or past drug abuse

What are the Accessibility Requirements?

Certain multi-family buildings, built for first occupancy after March 13, 1991, must be accessible as defined by the Fair Housing Amendments Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and local building codes. For more information, please contact The Fair Housing Center.

What is Prohibited?

These actions are illegal if they are based on a person's disability:

- Refusal to rent, sell, or negotiate for housing
- Set different terms, conditions, privileges, or provide different services, access to facilities, or membership in a facility or service related to sale or rental of housing
- Make housing unavailable or otherwise restrict choice
- Refuse to make or purchase a loan
- Refuse to provide information regarding mortgage loans or homeowners' insurance
- Refuse to provide homeowners or renters insurance
- Set different terms or conditions on a loan, such as different interest rates or fees
- Discriminate in appraisal of property
- Falsely deny that housing is available
- Persuade owners to sell or rent (blockbusting)
- Advertise or make any statement that indicates a limitation or preference based on disability or other protected class
- No inquiries into existence or nature of disability are permitted. (Landlord can require proof of disability for reasonable accommodations and modifications.)



Continued page 2

Are there Additional Protections?

Reasonable Accommodations:

A housing provider must make reasonable accommodations to rules, policies, practices, or services if necessary for a person with a disability to use and enjoy the home such as:

- Allowing a service animal, despite a “no pet” policy
- Giving a tenant with a disability a reserved parking space
- Allowing the tenant to have a live-in aid
- Allowing a tenant with a disability to move from one apartment to another, for example from the third floor to the first floor in a non-elevator building, without charging a fee

Reasonable Modifications:

A housing provider must let individuals with disabilities make reasonable modifications to their home or to common use areas, if necessary for them to fully use and enjoy the housing.

Modifications generally must be made at the tenant’s expense and can be made at any time. The request must be reasonable, and the landlord can ask that the tenant return the interior of his or her unit to its original condition when it is vacated. Examples of reasonable modifications include:

- Widening doorways
- Installing grab bars in the bathroom
- Installing a ramp
- Lowering the height of cabinets
- Installing an automatic faucet shutoff



If you need additional information about Fair Housing or how to request a reasonable accommodation or modification, please contact BRILC at 540-342-1231, or VA Relay 711, or at our toll free number 1-866-244-0740.

WHAT DID BRILC DO IN THE LAST FISCAL YEAR?

From October 1, 2024 until September 30, 2025, we assisted **326** individuals with disabilities. Most of the individuals we assisted (**203**) were **65 and older**. **Five** were **between 5-19**, **3** were **between 20-24**, and **115** were **between the ages of 25 and 59**. We served **189 females** and **137 males**. One hundred twenty-nine (**129**) of our consumers were **black or African American**, **181** were **white**, **16** were **American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian, two or more races or Hispanic**.

Consumers established **488** independent living goals in areas like self-advocacy/self-empowerment, communication, mobility/transportation, community services, education, vocational, self-care, and personal resource management. At the end of September, consumers met **433** of their goals. We assisted **4** individuals to successfully relocate from nursing homes or other institutions to community-based living. Because of the services we provided **55** individuals did not enter a nursing or other institution.

We spent **546** hours doing **outreach** and **519** hours doing **community and systems advocacy**. We also provided **660** hours of **community education/integration** services and spent **105** hours providing **information and referral**. We spent **1,914** hours **collaborating and networking** with other agencies on your behalf, and another **122** hours providing **technical assistance**.

Our operating budget of **\$1,297,019** paid for normal operating expenses like rent, utilities, office supplies, printing and mailing our newsletter, and it also paid for the salaries and fringe benefits for our 12 staff. Through grants we received, we assisted more than **100** individuals with disabilities with home modifications such as railings, ramps, grab bars, etc.

We continue to advocate to make sure the community is accessible to you and to assist you to remain or become independent in your own home and the community. We’re here to work with **you!** Let us know what else we can do to assist you.



HOME AND COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES RESEARCH STUDY

Researchers in the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Home and Community-Based Services at Shirley Ryan AbilityLab are looking for people who receive HCBS to pilot test surveys designed to evaluate the person-centeredness of their services. Participants will undergo a brief screening and consent call (Zoom or phone, unpaid) and will complete two or more 10-minute surveys on different aspects of their HCBS (online, via Zoom with a research assistant, or via phone) and will receive a \$30 gift card for each completed survey. Participants will complete the same surveys 2 to 9 months later for \$40 per completed survey. Participants can complete up to 6 surveys for a total of \$200.

To see if you are eligible for the study, take this quick screener: <https://redcap.link/hcbsquality> For more information email hcbs-rrtc@sralab.org.

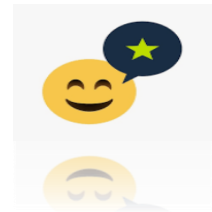
This research is funded by the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living and Rehabilitation Research (IRB#: STU00214517).

The RRTC on HCBS is located within the Center for Rehabilitation Outcomes Research (CROR) at Shirley Ryan AbilityLab. CROR shares content on Facebook, X and LinkedIn: Facebook: @rehaboutcomes, X: @rehab_outcomes, LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/company/center-for-rehabilitation-outcomes-research.



CONSUMER KUDOS FOR BATHROOM MODIFICATION

Ms. L. called to let us know that the three gentlemen who came to their house “worked their butts off.” She reported that the contractors came in like “the professionals they are, told the family what they were gonna (sic) do” and then told the family to “get out of the way.” She wanted us to know that they did an “excellent job.”



VIRGINIA WESTERN DENTAL CLINIC

Virginia Western Community College’s Dental Hygiene Clinic provides dental hygiene care to patients at its on-campus site in Roanoke, Virginia. The dental hygiene students offer a variety of oral health services under faculty supervision. Each patient is assured of receiving quality care and the personal attention of the students, faculty and staff.

It is important for you to understand that your care will be provided by dental hygiene students who are directly supervised by licensed dental hygiene faculty. The students’ grades depend on your full cooperation. All patients under the age of 18 must be accompanied by a parent or responsible adult who is available for the entire appointment in the waiting area.

The Dental Hygiene Clinic is open weekly, Monday thru Friday during the **academic year** with the exception of holidays and semester breaks. Clinic business hours vary from semester to semester according to program schedules. Call the clinic at 540-857-7221.

Virginia Western students are unable to provide babysitting services at the school; therefore, it is necessary to have someone care for your child while you are being treated. VWCC thanks you for making an appointment with them and look forward to working with you.



SNAP EBT SCAM PREVENTION HOME

The Virginia Department of Social Services is aware of criminal attempts to steal SNAP EBT card information. Protect your benefits by never providing personal information to any unknown source and by changing your card PIN often. Please know that you will never be contacted and asked to provide your EBT card number or PIN.

- 1. Do not respond to unsolicited texts, emails or phone calls concerning your EBT account.**
 - Scammers may attempt to contact you with links to access your account or alert that your account is locked. VDSS will NEVER contact you through these methods and will only discuss your account through the official EBT Client Customer Service Helpdesk line 866-281-2448 if you call the helpdesk line.
- 2. Routinely check your EBT card balance for unauthorized purchases and change your card PIN often, This is one of the best ways to prevent card skimming.** You can do both today by:
 - Using the connectEBT web portal, or download the mobile app.
 - a) Get it on Google Play/Download on the Apple App Store.
 - b) Select Virginia EBT from the dropdown.
 - c) The ConnectEBT app is the fast and easy way to monitor your EBT Card's available balance, deposits, and transaction activity.
 - Calling Virginia EBT Client Customer Service Helpdesk at 866-281-2448 (accessible 24 Hours a day, 7 days a week).
- 3. Create a strong password for your client portal account and mobile app.** A strong password must:
 - Be a least eight characters long, but no more than 16 characters long, but no more than 16 characters long, with a combination of uppercase letters, and numbers.
 - Be significantly different from your previous passwords.
 - Be easy for you to remember, but difficult for others to guess.
 - Not use repeat or consecutive numbers (example 1111, 1234, 4321).
- 4. Do not give your EBT card, card number, password, or PIN to anyone not authorized to use your card.** Virginia EBT will never ask for EBT card number online or via text.
- 5. Examine card payment devices for signs of tampering before inserting or swiping your card.** More information on how to protect your card before you make a purchase can be found below. If you have responded to any unsolicited call, text or website link about your benefits, please immediately contact the Virginia EBT client customer service helpdesk at 866-281-2448.

What is a card skimmer?

- Devices that criminals attach to point-of-sale (POS) machines/PIN pads to steal card numbers and other information from credit, debit, and EBT cards.
- Criminals make card skimmers look like a normal part of a POS machine /PIN pad.
- They are easy to place and hard to spot.
- Criminals use skimmed EBT card numbers and PINs to steal SNAP benefits from SNAP recipients. For individuals and families who rely on SNAP benefits to meet their food needs, losing benefits can have a devastating impact.



EBT SCAM PREVENTION continued:

The Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) has introduced a new card lock/unlock security feature to protect Supplement Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. This feature helps safeguard customers' Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) cards from skimming and other fraudulent activities that attempt to steal card numbers and PINs.

Through the official ConnectEBT app (free from Apple and Google app stores) or online portal, you can easily lock and unlock your EBT card at the grocery store with just a few taps on your phone. This added layer of security is an additional tool you can use to help protect your SNAP benefits while giving you full control over your account.

If you have more than one card for your household's SNAP account, each card must be locked for the security feature to work.

While the card is locked, all purchases will be blocked, but you will still be able to receive deposits, credits and refund for online returns.

The ConnectEBT app is the only officially licensed app for your Virginia SNAP EBT benefits.

AMPUTEE & LIMB DIFFERENCE SUPPORT NETWORK

The Amputee & Limb Difference Support Network (ALDSN) is a support group for adults with all forms of limb difference.

ALDSN provides an opportunity for adults with all forms of limb difference to come together in a safe space to discuss their changes, share success stories and provide moral support. Topics like phantom pain management techniques, residual limb care and prosthetic options will also be discussed.

The ALDSN meets bi-weekly, on Mondays, from 1:00 pm to 2:30 pm. Dates may fluctuate due to consumer availability and changes in office hours. Please call for specifics. Caregivers and members of patient's support networks are encouraged to attend as well. We hope to see you soon!

If you know of someone who may have interest in joining the ALDSN, please have them contact Marc Davis @540-342-1231 x106 or VA Relay 711 or send and email to mdavis@brilc.org.



Blue Ridge
Independent
Living Center

FREE EQUIPMENT AVAILABLE

If you are a person with a disability or know someone with a disability who needs a piece of equipment to help maintain their independence, please call BRILC.

We have a variety of used but usable equipment including commode chairs, rolling walkers, transfer benches, shower chairs, walkers, and wheelchairs. Call BRILC at (540)-342-1231 or VA Relay 711.



WE'RE MEETING IN PERSON!!!

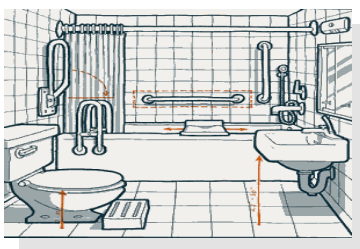
BRILC has a support group for all people with disabilities. Both men and women of all ages are invited to join us on the 4th Wednesday of each month from 1 p.m. until 2:30 p.m. We discuss issues or concerns that you might have, socialize and play games. The group is run by the members. We hope you'll join at the next meeting. If you have any questions, contact Jon Weems at (540)-342-1231 or VA Relay 711.



HAVE A DISABILITY? NEED HOME MODIFICATIONS?

Are you a person with a disability? Would a home modification help you to remain independent in your home? BRILC might be able to assist you.

Want to learn more about this program? Contact us at 540-342-1231 or VA Relay 711.



BRILC YOUTH TRANSITION PROGRAM

We are currently looking for youth with disabilities between the ages of 17-24 who had an IEP and have completed high school. We will assist youth with transitioning from high school to college and/or employment by providing peer mentorship, goal planning, and providing a youth group support meeting. Please contact us, or email at BRILC at brilc.org or at 540 342-1231 or VA Relay 711 for more information.



Thank You!

For Your Contribution to BRILC

Margie Charlton, Charles Harlow,
J. Spencer and Joy Frantz Donor
Advised Fund of Community Foundation
Serving Western Virginia

Board of Directors

- * Terry Winborne, Chair
- * Garrett Brumfield
- * Matt Crookshank
- * Byron Hamlar
- * Ira Mott
- * Jessica Swanson
- * Karen Willis

Staff

- * **Karen Michalski-Karney**
Executive Director
- * **Sallee Ebbett**
Finance & Operations
Manager
- * **Avis Collins**
Administrative Office Assistant
- * **Teresa Link**
Receptionist/Clerk
- * **Marc Davis**
Community Services Manager
- * **Rob Roberts**
Employment & Representative
Services Manager
- * **Katherine Wells**
Program Services Manager
- * **Mary Worthington**
Transition Coordinator
- * **Bill Duncan**
Independent Living Coordinator
- * **Beth Ann Gregg**
Independent Living Coordinator
- * **Jon Weems**
Independent Living Coordinator
- * **Darnita Stone**
Social Support Specialist

