

## What Is a Protected Class?

A protected class is a group of people who share a common characteristic and who are legally protected from being discriminated against on the basis of that characteristic. Usually members of a protected class have endured long histories of discrimination and violence.

South Dakota recognizes the following protected classes: sex, race, color, creed, religion, ancestry, disability, national origin, and familial status. It is **against the law** to deny, prevent, limit, or otherwise adversely affect a person based on these characteristics.

South Dakota currently **does not** recognize the following as protected classes: marital status, military or veteran status, age, gender identity and expression, and sexual orientation. Even though the VHRC cannot investigate complaints based on these characteristics, you may still bring them to our attention for referral purposes.

## Contact Us

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[www.vermillion.us](http://www.vermillion.us)



Your city. Your rights.



## Our Purpose

The Vermillion Human Relations Commission (VHRC) was created in 2018 with the purpose of promoting human and civil rights for all citizens and visitors of the city. Our primary mission is to spread information to the Vermillion community about the legal rights of citizens. We hold public meetings and work with persons and groups with similar rights-protection objectives.

We are also charged with receiving and addressing complaints alleging any discriminatory or unfair practices. If a Vermillion citizen believes they have been discriminated against on the job, as a labor union member, in a matter of property rights or housing accommodations, in an education

setting, or while receiving public services or public accommodations, they can bring that complaint to the VHRC. We will then conduct an investigation and inquiry as permitted by Vermillion City Code of Ordinances.

It's important to note that the VHRC is **not** a legal body. We cannot prosecute instances of discrimination, even for protected classes of citizens. What we can do is provide an objective hearing of discrimination complaints and recommend a course of action.

## Complaint Process

Any person who has experienced a discriminatory practice within the city limits of Vermillion may submit a complaint to the VHRC within 180 days of the last incident. An official complaint questionnaire can be picked up from and returned to City Hall.

Once received, complaints will be promptly reviewed by the VHRC. The commission looks at the facts to determine how likely it is that a discriminatory act might have taken place. Ultimately, the VHRC can refer the complainant to resources that may help remedy the matter.

## VHRC Members

Shannon Cole	Jalatama Omar
Mark Daniels	Calvin Peterson
Wendy Hess	Lamont Sellers
Travis Letellier	
John Prescott <i>City Manager</i>	James Purdy <i>Asst. City Manager</i>

## Get Involved

Three vacancies open every May:

- Two members of the community are selected for three-year terms
- One post-secondary student is selected for a one-year term

All VHRC meetings are open to the public. Meeting times are published on the city calendar.

