State Nondiscrimination Laws: Employment

No updates required since January 1, 2024

NOTE:
As a result of a June 2020 U.S. Supreme Court ruling in Bostock v. Clayton County, Georgia, employment discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity is illegal under Title VII of the federal Civil Rights Act. As a result of this ruling, LGBTQ people across the country can continue to file complaints with the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and seek recourse for discrimination in the workplace through federal courts. However, some states also have explicit laws against employment discrimination based on sexual orientation and/or gender identity, and these are reported below. These state laws remain important so that LGBTQ people are protected against discrimination at every level of government, and because they are often passed alongside additional protections not yet enshrined in federal law, such as protections against discrimination in public places.

Alabama
- State employment nondiscrimination law does not enumerate sexual orientation or gender identity, though federal law offers protections (see note)

Alaska
- State agency explicitly interprets existing protections against discrimination based on sex to include both sexual orientation and gender identity
- See Alaska State Commission for Human Rights (Dec 2020), including agency social media posts
  - Following the June 2020 Supreme Court ruling in Bostock (see above), the state agency initially interpreted sex to include sexual orientation and gender identity for employment, housing, public accommodations, credit/lending, and government agencies/practices. However, under pressure from conservative interest groups amid the 2022 election season, the agency rescinded its interpretation for all areas except for employment, which was explicitly covered by the U.S. Supreme Court ruling in Bostock (see above). See this coverage for more details about this reversal, and see also the agency’s August 2022 social media post announcing the change.

Arizona
- State attorney general explicitly interprets existing protections against discrimination based on sex to include both sexual orientation and gender identity

Arkansas
- State employment nondiscrimination law does not enumerate sexual orientation or gender identity, though federal law offers protections (see note)
California
- State employment nondiscrimination law covers sexual orientation and gender identity

Colorado
- State employment nondiscrimination law covers sexual orientation and gender identity
  - See CRS §24-34-402. Amended to include sexual orientation (defined to include “transgender status,” see CRS §24-34-301) in 2007 (SB 07-025).

Connecticut
- State employment nondiscrimination law covers sexual orientation and gender identity
  - See CGS Ch. 814c §46a-60. Amended to include sexual orientation in 1991 (HB 7133) and to include gender identity in 2011 (HB 6599).

Delaware
- State employment nondiscrimination law covers sexual orientation and gender identity

District of Columbia
- State employment nondiscrimination law covers sexual orientation and gender identity

Florida
- State agency explicitly interprets existing protections against discrimination based on sex to include both sexual orientation and gender identity
  - See Florida Commission on Human Rights (2020), including Section 5 of the intake questionnaire for employment discrimination complaints.

Georgia
- State has no employment nondiscrimination law, though federal law offers protections (see note)

Hawai‘i
- State employment nondiscrimination law covers sexual orientation and gender identity
  - See HRS §378-2, amended to include sexual orientation in 1991 and to include gender identity in 2011 (HB 546).

Idaho
- State employment nondiscrimination law does not enumerate sexual orientation or gender identity, though federal law offers protections (see note)
Illinois
- State employment nondiscrimination law covers sexual orientation and gender identity
- See 775 ILCS 5/1-102 (signed into law 2005, effective 2006)

Indiana
- State employment nondiscrimination law does not enumerate sexual orientation or gender identity, though federal law offers protections (see note)

Iowa
- State employment nondiscrimination law covers sexual orientation and gender identity

Kansas
- State agency explicitly interprets existing protections against discrimination based on sex to include both sexual orientation and gender identity

Kentucky
- State agency explicitly interprets existing protections against discrimination based on sex to include both sexual orientation and gender identity
- See Kentucky Commission on Human Rights (2021)

Louisiana
- State employment nondiscrimination law does not enumerate sexual orientation or gender identity, though federal law offers protections (see note)

Maine
- State employment nondiscrimination law covers sexual orientation and gender identity

Maryland
- State employment nondiscrimination law covers sexual orientation and gender identity
- See S.B. 212 (2001 for sexual orientation protection and 2014 for gender identity protection)

Massachusetts
- State employment nondiscrimination law covers sexual orientation and gender identity
Michigan
- State employment nondiscrimination law covers sexual orientation and gender identity
- See SB4 (2023), as well as the Michigan Supreme Court’s decision in Rouch World LLC v. Department of Civil Rights (July 2022).
- Formerly, state agency explicitly interpreted existing protections against discrimination based on sex to include both sexual orientation and gender identity. See Michigan Civil Rights Commission's Interpretive Statement (2018).

Minnesota
- State employment nondiscrimination law covers sexual orientation and gender identity

Mississippi
- State has no employment nondiscrimination law, though federal law offers protections (see note)

Missouri
- State employment nondiscrimination law does not enumerate sexual orientation or gender identity, though federal law offers protections (see note)

Montana
- State employment nondiscrimination law does not enumerate sexual orientation or gender identity, though federal law offers protections (see note)

Nebraska
- State agency explicitly interprets existing protections against discrimination based on sex to include both sexual orientation and gender identity
- See Nebraska Equal Opportunity Commission’s statement (2020).

Nevada
- State employment nondiscrimination law covers sexual orientation and gender identity

New Hampshire
- State employment nondiscrimination law covers sexual orientation and gender identity
- See HB 421 (1997) for sexual orientation and HB 1319 (2018) for gender identity

New Jersey
- State employment nondiscrimination law covers sexual orientation and gender identity
- See N.J. Stat. § 10:5-4, and 10:5-12 amended to include sexual orientation in 1992 and amended to include gender identity in 2007
New Mexico
- State employment nondiscrimination law covers sexual orientation and gender identity

New York
- State employment nondiscrimination law covers sexual orientation and gender identity
- See SB 720 (2002) for sexual orientation and SB 1047 (2019) for gender identity

North Carolina
- State employment nondiscrimination law does not enumerate sexual orientation or gender identity, though federal law offers protections (see note)
- Previously, state law prevented passage or enforcement of local nondiscrimination laws. See HB 2 (2016) and HB 142 (2017). The part of HB 142 that preempted local ordinances expired on December 1, 2020.

North Dakota
- State agency explicitly interprets existing protections against discrimination based on sex to include both sexual orientation and gender identity
- See North Dakota Department of Labor and Human Rights statement (2020)

Ohio
- State agency explicitly interprets existing protections against discrimination based on sex to include both sexual orientation and gender identity
- See Ohio Civil Rights Commission (2021)

Oklahoma
- State employment nondiscrimination law does not enumerate sexual orientation or gender identity, though federal law offers protections (see note)

Oregon
- State employment nondiscrimination law covers sexual orientation and gender identity

Pennsylvania
- State agency explicitly interprets existing protections against discrimination based on sex to include both sexual orientation and gender identity
Rhode Island
- State employment nondiscrimination law covers sexual orientation and gender identity
  - See Rhode Island Stat. § 28-5-7, amended in 1995 to include sexual orientation and in 2001 to include gender identity.

South Carolina
- State employment nondiscrimination law does not enumerate sexual orientation or gender identity, though federal law offers protections (see note)

South Dakota
- State employment nondiscrimination law does not enumerate sexual orientation or gender identity, though federal law offers protections (see note)

Tennessee
- State employment nondiscrimination law does not enumerate sexual orientation or gender identity, though federal law offers protections (see note)

Texas
- Texas 5th Circuit Court of Appeals explicitly interprets existing protections against discrimination based on sex to include both sexual orientation and gender identity

Utah
- State employment nondiscrimination law covers sexual orientation and gender identity

Vermont
- State employment nondiscrimination law covers sexual orientation and gender identity

Virginia
- State employment nondiscrimination law covers sexual orientation and gender identity
  - See SB 868 (2020)

Washington
- State employment nondiscrimination law covers sexual orientation and gender identity

West Virginia
- State employment nondiscrimination law does not enumerate sexual orientation or gender identity, though federal law offers protections (see note)
Wisconsin
- State employment nondiscrimination law enumerates only sexual orientation, though federal law offers protections for gender identity (see note)
- See Wis. Stat. § 111.321, § 111.322, and § 111.36 (1982).

Wyoming
- State employment nondiscrimination law does not enumerate sexual orientation or gender identity, though federal law offers protections (see note)

U.S. Territories

American Samoa
- No territory-level protections against employment discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

Guam
- Territory employment nondiscrimination law covers sexual orientation and gender identity
- See Bill 102-33 (2015)

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
- No territory-level protections against employment discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

Puerto Rico
- Territory employment nondiscrimination law covers sexual orientation and gender identity
- See Act 22 (2013).

U.S. Virgin Islands
- Territory employment nondiscrimination law covers sexual orientation and gender identity
- See Bill 34-0271 (2023) and 10 V.I.C. § 64.