



Sports and Esports



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Illinois Legalizes Sports Gambling

Illinois has joined the growing list of states to legalize sports gambling, becoming the 15th state to do so. Gov. J. B. Pritzker signed into law a sprawling \$45 billion capital plan, which included a major statewide gambling expansion and authorization for both retail and online sports betting.

Key features of the state's new expanded gambling platform include:

- The Illinois Gaming Board will oversee sports gambling in the state. The board will set up rules and review applications for licenses.
- All in-state casinos, racetracks and sports venues that hold 17,000 people or more may apply for a license to offer sports gambling and may begin offering sports gambling in-person and online immediately after the license is issued.
- The cost of the initial license, which lasts for four years, is based on a percentage of the licensee's gross gaming revenue from the previous year — 5% up, to a maximum of \$10 million.
- Wagering on minor league sporting events or any sporting event involving an in-state collegiate team is prohibited.
- The statute imposes a tax of 15% on the adjusted gross sports wagering revenue of licensees, plus an additional 2% on wagers placed in Cook County.
- Online sports betting is allowed, but requires in-person registration at casinos for the first 18 months. The law contemplates the issuance of a limited number of on-line only licenses after 18 months.
- Sports gambling (parlay bets only) at lottery terminals is also permitted at certain retailer locations as part of a pilot program limited to 2,500 locations in the first year and an additional 2,500 locations in the second year.
- Illinois becomes the second state, following Tennessee, to require official league data for all proposition or "prop" bets – wagers on individual players or the happening of an event during a game. The professional sports leagues will not receive an "integrity fee" as part of the law, but will be paid for providing the official data.

Other elements of the overall gaming expansion include increased gaming positions at existing casinos; the allowance of slot machines at racetracks and Chicago's airports; and licenses for six new privately owned casinos across the state, including one mega-casino in Chicago.

Illinois's new law was made possible by the U.S. Supreme Court's May 2018 decision striking down the Professional and Amateur Sports Protection Act, a federal ban on sports betting.

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