



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



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**CITY OF CHICAGO SOLICITS IDEAS AND INDUSTRY INPUT FOR A CASINO BY  
ISSUING A REQUEST FOR INFORMATION**

*RFI serves as first step in City's planning process to bolster key drivers to Chicago's  
economy*

CHICAGO—The City of Chicago today issued a Request for Information (RFI) to solicit creative ideas and potential strategies to develop and operate a world-class casino in Chicago. The RFI presents an opportunity for the City to get the perspective of leading casino operators and real estate developers on key issues that will be considered when it evaluates proposals for a Chicago casino and is an exciting first step in bringing gaming and associated economic development to the city.

“After securing favorable legislation that had eluded us for decades, Chicago can finally pursue a once in a generation opportunity to bring a casino to our city, generating hundreds of millions in new gaming revenues to shore up the City’s pension obligations and drive huge levels of infrastructure funding in Illinois as well as creating thousands of new and much needed jobs for local residents,” said Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot. “This is the right time to begin having these discussions as we continue to lay the foundation to make a strong recovery from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.”

Following many unsuccessful attempts for decades, gaming expansion legislation was signed into law by the Illinois legislature in June 2019, authorizing a Chicago casino, however, the approved bill imposed an effective tax rate of approximately 72 percent making it nearly impossible to develop a profitable Chicago casino, according to a feasibility study published by Union Gaming Analytics. Earlier this year, Mayor Lightfoot redoubled efforts and worked with the state legislature to amend the law to lower the tax rates and make a Chicago casino a reality.

As the third largest metropolitan area in the country with over 9.5 million residents, the City represents the largest untapped gaming opportunity in the country. The City’s scale and connectivity provide an immense market to serve as a gaming complex. A global gateway and leading hub for domestic and international travel,



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Chicago offers a robust public transit infrastructure unmatched in the broader Midwest region. With more than three million working-age adults within a 50-minute commute to downtown Chicago, a business-friendly climate that generates a highly diversified economy, and a vibrant and renowned cultural and restaurant scene, Chicago serves as a premier destination for gaming and broader development in a world class city.

"The Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce supports initiatives that spur economic development, jobs, opportunities and revenue for both businesses and Chicago. When Mayor Lightfoot spoke to me about the possibility of a Chicago casino, we lent our support and continue to be a strong advocate for this project. Now, more than ever, our city needs a project like this to help revitalize Chicago's economy, provide jobs for working men and women and invigorate the direct and indirect support for small businesses at a time which is sorely needed. I'm thrilled to see the Chicago casino take this important next step and the Chicagoland Chamber looks forward to continuing its work with Mayor Lightfoot and the City to make it a reality," said Jack Lavin, president & CEO, Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce.

"Construction of a casino complex would become an economic driver for the region, attracting jobs and providing a boost to the Chicago entertainment and tourism industry," said Jennie Bennett, Chicago Chief Financial Officer. "Importantly, it will generate new revenue which will be dedicated to the City's police and fire pension funds and provide budgetary relief to the City's corporate fund."

The gaming industry came to a standstill during the spring as the coronavirus began spreading from state to state, and many casino operators went into survival mode. As cities began to reopen their economies after following health and safety guidelines and taking steps to reduce the spread of the virus, casinos began to come back online. While casino re-openings are still in their early phases, the results are encouraging and lead the City to believe that the industry will be ready to pursue new development opportunities in 2021.

RFI respondents will be asked to share their views on critical issues such as the requirements for operating a temporary casino, recommendations on the size and scope/physical footprint of a gaming complex, their vision for leveraging Chicago's existing urban assets and how they imagine addressing COVID-19 as part of the development. The RFI is meant as a first step in the casino development process.

Responses to the RFI must be emailed to the City by October 21 at [chicagocasino@cityofchicago.org](mailto:chicagocasino@cityofchicago.org). To review the RFI, visit [www.chicago.gov/chicagocasino](http://www.chicago.gov/chicagocasino).

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