

PUBLIC PLACE OF AMUSEMENT

DEFINITION

A Public Place of Amusement (PPA) license is required to produce, present, or conduct any type of amusement. Venues charging an admission fee or accepting a donation for any type of entertainment or amusement requires a PPA license. Venues with a capacity of 100 or more people that offer any entertainment or amusement require a PPA, regardless if an admission fee is charged.

This includes but is not limited to:

- Live Theaters
- Movies Theaters
- Concert Halls
- Comedy Clubs
- Nightclubs or dancing
- Karaoke
- DJ's providing music
- Sports Stadiums
- Child Activity Centers
- Bowling Alleys
- Pool Halls or businesses with more than 1 pool table
- Arcades or businesses with more than 3 arcade machines
- Renting out a facility for a party or event open to the public

A complete list of activities requiring a PPA licensing is available in Chapter 4-156 of the Chicago Municipal Code. FEE: \$770-\$13,200 based on occupancy

WHEN IS A PPA NOT REQUIRED?

- Establishments that provide music and dancing or other amusement and the capacity is less than 100 persons with no admission fee or minimum purchase requirements. Capacity is measured by occupancy determination.
- Banquet halls that possess a retail food license which provide events that are not open or advertised to the public with no admission fee or minimum purchase requirements, such as a wedding or birthday party.
- Orchestras of eight pieces or less without any other performer, including a singer, in a restaurant, hotel, or retail establishment with no admission fee or minimum purchase requirements and no dancing or other entertainment permitted.
- Health clubs, racquetball or tennis clubs or similar clubs organized on a membership basis for the recreation of its members and guests.
- Amusements presented within a private club or lodge solely for its members and its guests. A private club is a not-for-profit organization active for at least 3 years with an established membership role of at least 50 dues paying members.

NOTE: Operating without a PPA license is cause for fines of up to \$10,000 or immediate closure.

READY TO APPLY?

You may apply for a license online by visiting ChicagoBusinessDirect.org, or in person at the Small Business Center in City Hall, 121 N. LaSalle Street, Room 800. For general licensing inquiries, call (312) 74-GOBIZ/(312) 744-6249.

PUBLIC PLACE OF AMUSEMENT QUICK FACTS

- Parties become illegal when an admission fee is collected, liquor is sold or the event is advertised or open to the public without the proper licensing.
- A person who has been convicted of a felony, and who has not been found to be rehabilitated, is not eligible to hold a PPA license.
- Making changes to your business name, location, or business ownership requires you to report those changes to the City, ask a BACP business consultant for more information.
- Businesses conducting amusement activity may be required to remit the Chicago Amusement Tax.

APPLICATION PROCESS

1. ZONING

Before investing in a business that requires a Public Place of Amusement (PPA)* license, ensure that the zoning designation of the business location permits the activity. A new PPA license will not be issued within 125 feet of a R1, R2, or R3 Zoning district. Depending on your zoning, parking requirements may also apply. More info can be found on the interactive zoning map at Chicago.gov/Zoning.

2. APPLICATION

A completed PPA license application, PLUS: business structure documents, Illinois Department of Revenue number, Federal Employers Identification Tax number, a lease, financial disclosure documents, an occupancy placard, a detailed floor plan, and a site plan. A criminal background check is required.

3. RESTRICTIONS

PPA licenses are not permitted within 200 feet of a church, school, hospital, or building used exclusively for educational purposes.

4. NEIGHBORHOOD SENTIMENT

Within five days after payment of license fee, BACP will provide written notice to all legal voters residing within 250 feet of the location. Those legal voters have 35 days to file with BACP a written objection to the issuance of the license.

5. PERMITS & INSPECTIONS

The Department of Buildings conducts building inspections and issues building permits. A building permit is required for any structural build-out, including rehab, of a PPA. A building inspection is required after a PPA license application has been submitted to BACP, but prior to obtaining the license. The Chicago Fire Department inspectors will check for safety measures to ensure fire resistance and ease of evacuation in case of an emergency. In addition to issuing business licenses, the Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection require business owners with signs over the public way to obtain a sign permit and a public way use permit. A Certificate of Occupancy may be required.

6. RECURRING INSPECTIONS

Representatives for the fire commissioner or the buildings commissioner will make inspections of PPAs once every two years. This inspection will take place within 90 days preceding the deadline for renewal of the license.

**Before taking out a business loan, signing a lease, or applying for a business license, ensure that the site where you intend to operate is in an appropriately zoned area and complies with the current Chicago Municipal Code.*

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