

Florida, California and Pennsylvania Open 2026 Liquor License Awards

State agencies have set 2026 terms for releasing new liquor licenses, with Florida offering 63 licenses and Pennsylvania reporting bids up to \$557,777.

LAS VEGAS, NV, UNITED STATES, September 23, 2026 / EINPresswire.com/ -- State alcohol agencies in Florida, California and Pennsylvania have published the terms under which new and expired liquor licenses are being made available in 2026, covering entry periods, fees and transfer conditions.

The Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation announced 63 quota beverage licenses across 30 counties for its 2026 drawing, with entries accepted until 5 p.m. Eastern on September 30, 2026. The department states that selection in the drawing provides the entrant with the right to apply for the license and does not, by itself, constitute issuance of the license. Entrants selected in a prior cycle were given 45 days from the date of the division's notice of selection to file an application to qualify. The entry fee in the 2025 cycle was \$100 per entry. The department has described a fee of \$10,750 collected from each person, firm or corporation issued a new quota liquor license, which is directed to the Florida Department of Children and Families for substance abuse programs.

In California, the Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control accepted applications between September 14 and September 25, 2026 for new off-sale general licenses in 19 counties and on-



sale general licenses in 30 counties, along with special legislation licenses in San Francisco, El Dorado and Placer counties and Type 87 neighborhood restricted licenses in San Francisco and Los Angeles County. Where applications exceed the licenses available in a county, the department holds a drawing, with drawings scheduled for the week of October 26, 2026. Applicants are required to have established California residency at least 90 days prior to the drawing date. Successful applicants have 90 days to complete their application. Unsuccessful applicants receive a refund less a \$100 service charge and retain their priority ranking until August 1 of the following year. The fee for a new original general license in the 2026 process is \$19,840, and an intercounty transfer is \$7,515.

The Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board announced the results of its first excess auction of expired restaurant licenses in June 2026. Ten licenses were awarded from counties including Armstrong, Cambria, Cameron, Greene, Northumberland, Somerset, Sullivan, Warren, Washington and Westmoreland. According to the board, top bids ranged from \$105,000 to \$557,777, and all of the winning bidders proposed transferring their licenses to different counties, which required an additional \$50,000 transfer fee for each license. The board's regular auctions, authorized under Act 39 of 2016, carry a minimum bid of \$25,000 per license, and each bid must be accompanied by a bid surety of \$5,000 or 5 percent of the total bid amount, whichever is higher. Winners have up to six months to submit an application for the license. For those regular auctions, the board states that licenses cannot be transferred across county lines and may only be transferred to another municipality within the same county.

The availability of these licenses is governed by population quotas set in state law. Florida Statute 561.20 provides for one such license to each 7,500 residents within a county. California Business and Professions Code section 23816 limits on-sale general licenses to one for each 2,000 inhabitants of a county. The Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board states that generally there may be only one license for every 3,000 inhabitants in any county, with exemptions for categories including hotels, airports, golf courses, performing arts facilities, retirement communities, racetracks and veterans' organizations.

Similar limits apply in other states. Ohio Revised Code section 4303.29 provides that one C-1 and C-2 permit is issued for each 1,000 population and that not more than one D-3, D-4 or D-5 permit is issued for each 2,000 population. New Mexico Statutes section 60-6A-18 permits not more than one dispenser's or one retailer's license for each 2,000 inhabitants. In New Jersey, where municipalities issue retail licenses, a municipality may not issue a new plenary retail consumption license unless the combined total in the municipality is fewer than one for each 3,000 of its population.

Transfer rules also vary. Arizona Revised Statutes section 4-203 provides that a spirituous liquor license issued to a bar, a liquor store or a beer and wine bar is transferable as to any permitted location within the same county. Under Arizona Revised Statutes section 4-206.01, the director issues additional bar or liquor store licenses each year at the rate of one of each type for each additional 10,000 person increase in county population, and where more than one person

applies for an available license, priority is determined by a random selection method.

Owners who [buy liquor license](#) rights from an existing holder are subject to state approval of the transfer. California Business and Professions Code section 24074 requires that, where a transfer involves consideration, the parties establish a [liquor license escrow](#) with a person, corporation or association that is not a party to the transfer, and the full purchase price must be deposited before the transfer application is filed. The California Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control states that section 23985 of the act requires a 30-day posting period, that most investigations take approximately 45 to 50 days, and that the department estimates roughly 75 days for person-to-person transfers and 90 days for original applications.

Licenses that allow only beer, or beer and wine, generally fall outside these population quotas. Florida Statute 561.20 also provides for a special restaurant license for establishments meeting minimum service area and seating requirements that derive at least 51 percent of gross food and beverage revenue from the sale of food and nonalcoholic beverages. Under the statute, such licenses may not be operated as a package store and generally may not be moved to a new location.

State law in this area continues to change. New Mexico's 2021 liquor law changes created restaurant licenses allowing qualifying restaurants to serve beer and wine, or beer, wine and spirits, without a dispenser license. Holders of dispenser licenses as of June 30, 2021 were made eligible for deductions of up to \$50,000 against personal or corporate income tax through the 2025 tax year, and up to \$50,000 annually from gross receipts for tax years 2022 through 2025.

Renewal requirements apply to licenses that are not in use. In New Jersey, an inactive license may be renewed by a municipality two times after the term in which the license became inactive, after which the local issuing authority cannot renew the license unless the holder has obtained relief from the director of the Division of Alcoholic Beverage Control under N.J.S.A. 33:1-12.39.

Federal requirements apply separately to retailers. The Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau states that every retail dealer of alcohol beverages must file TTB F 5630.5d before commencing operations for the first time, and that retail dealers may not sell distilled spirits, wine or beer to another dealer for purposes of resale until they obtain a wholesaler's basic permit.

About [Liquor License Hub](#)

Liquor License Hub is a marketplace and information website for liquor licenses in the United States. It lists licenses for sale in California, Florida, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Arizona, New Mexico, Ohio, Michigan and Indiana, and publishes state by state guides covering licensing rules, fees and transfer requirements, with citations to the statutes and state agencies that publish them.

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