

Illinois Facts*

General

Capital – Springfield

State abbreviation / Postal code – Ill. / IL

U.S. Senators: 2

U.S. Representatives: 18

Illinois has 20 electoral votes.


The Illinois General Assembly consists of a Senate with 59 members and a House of Representatives with 118 members.

Organized as a territory: Feb. 3, 1809

Entered Union (rank): Dec. 3, 1818 (21)

Present constitution adopted: 1970

The Illinois State Motto: State Sovereignty, National Union

The 2020 population of Illinois is 12,671,821. 

Illinois State Song: *Illinois*. The words were written by C.H. Chamberlain. The music was composed by Archibald Johnston.

Illinois is known as the *Prairie State*.

Illinois State Slogan – Land of Lincoln

Illinois State Tree – white oak

Illinois State Bird – cardinal

Illinois State Fish – bluegill

Illinois State Animal – white-tailed deer

Illinois State Insect – monarch butterfly

Illinois State Mineral – fluorite

Illinois State Fossil – Tully monster

Illinois State Prairie Grass – big bluestem

Illinois State Reptile – painted turtle

Illinois State Amphibian – eastern tiger salamander

Illinois State Flower – violet

*Pending the results of the 2020 U.S. Census and potential legislative action regarding the data, some of the numbers in this document may change. Updates will be made, as necessary.

Illinois State Soil – drummer silty clay loam
Illinois State Dance – square dance
Illinois State Snack – popcorn
Illinois State Fruit – goldrush apple
Illinois State Tartan – Illinois Saint Andrew Society Tartan
Illinois State Vegetable – sweet corn
Illinois State Pie – pumpkin pie
Illinois State Exercise – cycling
Illinois State Pet – shelter dogs and shelter cats
Illinois State Microbe – *Penicillium rubens*
Illinois State Grain – corn
Illinois State Artifact – pirogue
Illinois State Theatre – The Great American People Show

Origin of name: Algonquin for “tribe of superior men.”

Official Language – English

Number of counties: 102

10 largest cities (2010): Chicago, 2,695,598; Aurora, 197,899; Rockford, 152,817; Joliet, 147,433; Naperville, 141,853; Springfield, 116,250; Peoria, 115,007; Elgin, 108,188; Waukegan, 89,078; Cicero, 83,891

Largest county by population and area: Cook, 5,194,675 (2010); McLean, 1,184 sq mi.

Population density in 2010: 85.5 people per square kilometer (221.5 per square mile)

Distribution in 2009 (estimate): 87% Urban, 13% Rural

Illinois is the fifth most populous state in the country.

2010 resident census population (rank): 12,830,632 (5). Male: 6,080,336 (49.0%); Female: 6,338,957 (51.0%). White: 9,177,877 (71.5%); Black: 1,866,414 (14.5%); American Indian: 43,963 (0.3%); Asian: 586,934 (4.6%); Other race: 861,412 (56.7%); Two or more races: 289,982 (2.3%); Hispanic/Latino: 2,029,578 (15.8%). 2010 percent population 18 and over: 75.6; 65 and over: 12.1; median age: 34.7.

Resident: Illinoisan

Public use areas: 186 (275,000 ac.), including state parks, memorials, forests and conservation areas

Geographic center: In Logan County, 28 miles northeast of Springfield.

Highest point: Charles Mound, 1,235 feet

Lowest point: Mississippi River, 279 feet

Land Area: 57,918 square miles.

Illinois ranks third in the nation in the number of interstate highway miles.

Illinois has more units of government than any other state (i.e., city, county, township, etc.), more than six thousand.

The first birth on record in Chicago was of Eulalia Pointe du Sable, daughter of Jean-Baptiste Pointe du Sable and his Potawatomi Indian wife in 1796.

Chicago's Mercy Hospital was the first hospital opened in Illinois.

Chicago's O'Hare International Airport is the busiest airport in the world. A plane takes off or lands there every 23 seconds.

The Chicago Public Library is the world's largest public library with a collection of more than 2 million books.

The Chicago Post Office at 433 West Van Buren is the only postal facility in the world you can drive a car through.

History

Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site in Collinsville is the location of the most sophisticated prehistoric native civilization north of Mexico.

Illinois was explored by Jacques Marquette and Louis Joliet in 1673.

Peoria is the oldest community in Illinois. It was founded in 1813.

Illinois became the 21st state on December 3, 1818.

Illinois had two capital cities, Kaskaskia, 1709, and Vandalia, 1820, before Springfield became the permanent capital city in 1837.

The first Mormon Temple in Illinois was constructed in Nauvoo in the 1840s.

Before Abraham Lincoln was elected president, he served in the Illinois legislature and practiced law in Springfield. Abraham Lincoln is buried in Springfield at Lincoln Tomb State Historic Site.

Ottawa, Freeport, Jonesboro, Charleston, Galesburg, Quincy and Alton hosted the famous Lincoln-Douglas debates that stirred interest all over the country in the slavery issue, 1858.

Illinois was the first state to ratify the 13th Amendment to the Constitution abolishing slavery, 1865.

Illinois was home to President Ulysses S. Grant, whose home is preserved in Galena.

The Chicago Water Tower and Pumping Station were the only buildings to survive the Great Chicago Fire, 1871.

The world's first skyscraper was built in Chicago, 1885.

The first aquarium opened in Chicago, 1893.

The National Historic Site home of President and Mrs. Abraham Lincoln is in Springfield.

Ronald Wilson Reagan from Tampico became the 40th president of the United States in 1980.

Barack Obama was elected the 44th president of the United States in 2008.

Geography

Water area: 6,022 square kilometers (2,325 square miles)

Illinois measures about 400 miles from its northern border to its southernmost tip. Temperatures generally vary by 10 to 12 degrees from one end of the state to the other. Cold, fairly dry winters and warm, humid summers with ample rainfall allow the land to support many kinds of crops and livestock.

Much of Illinois is comprised of fertile flat loess, left behind by glaciers and wind millions of years ago. About 89 percent of the state's cropland is considered prime farmland, ranking the state third nationally in total prime farmland acreage. Prime farmland is important because it provides an environmentally sound base for crop production. The central three-fourths of the state are especially well suited for growing crops, while hilly areas in the northwest and south provide excellent pasture for livestock.

Illinois is bordered on the west by the Mississippi River. Kaskaskia Island is the only part of Illinois that lies west of the Mississippi River.

Carlyle Lake is the largest man-made lake in Illinois. It covers 26,000 acres.

The Chicago River is known as the river that flows backward because it flowed into Lake Michigan until 1900, when engineers reversed the flow by completing the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal. The river now flows from the lake. The flow of the Chicago River was reversed to control the waste waters entering Lake Michigan.

Science

On December 2, 1942, Enrico Fermi and a small band of scientists and engineers demonstrated that a simple construction of graphite bricks and uranium lumps could produce controlled heat. The space chosen for the first nuclear fission reactor was a squash court under the football stadium at the University of Chicago.

According to the latest figures from the National Science Foundation, Illinois ranked sixth in the U.S. with 1,332 Science and Engineering Doctorates awarded in 2005. These graduates are joining the existing 25,320 Doctorial Scientists and Engineers working in the state. US News and World Reports ranked The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign fifth nationally for their graduate engineering program, while Northwestern University was ranked at 21 and the University of Chicago also ranked among the top 20 Medical Schools. Illinois is home to hundreds of federal research labs. Argonne National Laboratory is the leading federal laboratory in the state, focusing on advanced materials, chemicals and energy technologies, as well as transportation technology and biotechnology. Illinois' assets also include Fermilab, the National Center for Supercomputing Applications, the USDA National Center for Agricultural Utilization Research, and the National Center for Food Safety. In addition, the state is home to nonprofit research centers including the Gas Technology Institute. A number of research centers also specialize in the emerging field of nanotechnology, including facilities at Argonne, Northwestern University and the University of Illinois' Beckman Institute.

Illinois is known for its wide variety of weather, including major winter storms, deadly tornadoes and spectacular heat and cold waves.

The warmest temperature ever recorded in Illinois is 117°F on July 14, 1954, in East St. Louis.

The coldest temperature ever recorded in Illinois is -36°F on January 5, 1999, in Congerville.

A study using the Illinois Wetlands Inventory found some 918,000 acres of "natural" wetlands (that is, not diked, impounded, or excavated) remained statewide in the 1980s--less than a tenth of their original extent. Remaining natural wetlands cover only about 2.6% of the state's land area. These are concentrated in the northeast (along major rivers such as the Fox, Illinois, Des Plaines, and Kankakee) and in southern Illinois. Of the surviving wetlands, only about 6,000 acres are high in ecological quality and undisturbed. Illinois has 2,300 acres of high quality prairie remaining, compared to 22 million in 1820.

Illinois has 4.4 million acres of forested land, compared to 13.8 million acres prior to European settlement. Ninety-seven percent of Illinois' forests are classified as hardwoods; three percent of Illinois' forests are classified as conifers.

Illinois ranks 49th among states in percent of land remaining in original vegetation.

About 54,000 species have been identified in Illinois, including about 400 bird species, 200 fish species and 60 mammal species.

Technology

Illinois is a top location for high tech industry. In 2007 Illinois ranked in the top 15 states in the nation for total venture capital investments. Illinois ranks seventh in research and development (R&D) expenditures by universities and colleges, and eighth in industry performed R&D.

Illinois is home more than 1,800 telecommunications establishments that collectively employ about 58,700 workers. Leading telecommunications firms located in the state include Tellabs, Andrew Corporation, Motorola, Shure, and Westell.

The information technology cluster employs 73,000 workers at over 7,200 Illinois establishments.

Illinois' 1,254 electronics establishments employ 36,890 workers.

Illinois has a strong presence in the fields of medical technology, biotechnology and pharmaceuticals.

More than 1,160 establishments manufacture advanced materials in Illinois, employing 64,400 workers.

Over 8,200 establishments comprise the advanced manufacturing cluster in Illinois. This cluster employs nearly 282,800 workers, accounting for 23 percent of high tech employment in the state. Advanced manufacturing firms are technology-intensive and innovative.

The logistics-related service sector employs nearly 209,000 Illinois workers at more than 11,000 establishments.

Nearly 17,300 people are employed at 284 transportation technology establishments, primarily in two major sectors: engine technology and aerospace.

Nearly 8,900 technology support establishments in Illinois employ more than 100,000 workers.

One of Illinois' largest and most established clusters is financial services, making the state a global leader in the securities and brokerage businesses, banking and insurance.

Illinois is a global leader with a strong economy. Per capita Gross State Product (GSP) in Illinois is among the highest in the U.S., and overall GSP is fifth highest in the country. Illinois is also the fifth largest exporting state in the nation. Seventy-five nations maintain consulates in the state and over 30 international banks have established branches or representative offices in Chicago. Illinois ranks first in the Midwest as a destination for foreign investment, as well.

Logistics

Illinois is among the top states in total value of truck shipments with \$858 billion and is ranked number four in value of shipments originating in the state with \$442.1 billion worth of goods shipped.

Illinois has the second largest airport system in the country with 137 airports (83 public and 54 private), 270 heliports and over 840 aviation facilities.

Illinois has 1,118 miles of navigable waterways that provide the state with a direct link between the Atlantic Ocean (through the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Seaway) and the Gulf of Mexico.

Commerce

Gross State Product - \$528 Billion (2004)

Personal income per Capita - \$32,965 (2003)

The round silo for farm storage of silage was first constructed on a farm in Spring Grove.

The world's largest cookie and cracker factory, where Nabisco made 16 billion Oreo cookies in 1995, is located in Chicago.

Illinois is not only the nation's leading pumpkin producer, but also its leading pumpkin processor. Libby's plants 5,000 acres of Dickinson Select pumpkins each year in and around Morton, Illinois. Morton, where 80 percent of the world's canned pumpkin is packed at the Libby's factory, is known as the "Pumpkin Capital of the World." The town hosts an annual Pumpkin Festival to celebrate the start of the pumpkin canning season.

Illinois is a leading producer of soybeans, corn and hogs. The state's climate and varied soil types enable farmers to grow and raise many other agricultural commodities, including cattle, wheat, oats, sorghum, hay, sheep, poultry, fruits and vegetables. Illinois also produces several specialty crops, such as buckwheat, horseradish, ostriches, fish and Christmas trees.

Illinois' 76,000 farms cover more than 28 million acres -- nearly 80 percent of the state's total land area. The large number of farms, coupled with the diversity of commodities produced, makes it difficult to describe a typical operation. However, statistics provide some indication about what it means to farm in Illinois. The average size of an Illinois farm is 368 acres. Most farm acreage is devoted to grain, mainly corn and soybeans. Nearly 10 percent of Illinois farms have swine. Beef cows are found on about 23 percent of farms, while about three percent have dairy cows. Some farms produce specialty crops and livestock, including alfalfa, canola, nursery products, emus and fish. Many farming operations also support recreational activities, such as hunting and fishing.

Marketing of Illinois' agricultural commodities generates more than \$9 billion annually. Corn accounts for nearly 40 percent of that total. Marketing of soybeans contributes about one-third, with the combined marketings of livestock, dairy and poultry generating about 23 percent.

Billions of dollars flow into the state's economy from ag-related industries, such as farm machinery manufacturing, agricultural real estate and production and sale of value-added food products. Rural Illinois benefits principally from agricultural production, while agricultural processing and manufacturing strengthen urban economies.

With more than 950 food manufacturing companies, Illinois is well-equipped to turn the state's crops and livestock into food and industrial products. Food processing is the state's number-one manufacturing activity, adding almost \$13.4 billion annually to the value of Illinois' raw agricultural commodities.

Illinois' agricultural commodities also provide the base for such products as animal feed, ink, paint, adhesives, clothing, soap, wax, cosmetics, medicines, furniture, paper and lumber. Each year, 274 million bushels of Illinois corn are used to produce more ethanol than any other state -- about 678 million gallons. Illinois also markets other renewable fuels, including soybean-based biodiesel.

Although Illinois' food and fiber industry employs nearly one million people, there are only 76,000 farm operators, down from 164,000 in 1959. During the same time period, the average farm size more than doubled as sophisticated technology made many aspects of the industry less labor-intensive. Illinois farmers are generally more than 50 years old. About 39 percent hold jobs off the farm and consider farming their secondary occupation. Family farms still dominate, though some of these have incorporated.

Illinois has a competitive edge over many other states due to its central location and superior transportation system. More than 2,000 miles of interstate highways and 34,500 miles of other state

highways make trucking of goods fast and efficient. Chicago is home to the largest rail gateway in the nation, connecting the eastern and western United States. The state boasts some 1,100 airports, landing areas and heliports, including Chicago's O'Hare International, through which more than 65 million travelers pass annually. Illinois' 1,118 miles of navigable waterways, including the Illinois and Mississippi rivers, make barge traffic an excellent option for shipment of grain to the Gulf of Mexico.

Illinois ranks second nationally in the export of agricultural commodities with nearly \$4 billion worth of goods shipped to other countries each year. Exports from Illinois account for nearly 7 percent of all U.S. agricultural exports. Illinois is the nation's second leading exporter of both soybeans and feed grains and related products. More than 44 percent of grain produced in Illinois is sold for export. The Illinois Department of Agriculture promotes items produced, processed or packaged in Illinois through international and domestic marketing exhibits, trade missions, industry tours, publications, the Illinois Product Logo program and an electronic database for trade leads. Illinois ranks second in food processing. Most processors are located in the Chicago metropolitan area, which contains one of the largest concentrations of food-related businesses in the world.

In 1997, the value of shipments by manufacturers totaled \$205 billion. Major industrial items that Illinois produced in 1999 included construction machinery, farm equipment, cellular phones, electrical house wares, commercial printing, metal coatings, appliances and containers, various industrial machinery, and cooking products.

By far the leading industrial center is Chicago, followed by Rockford, the East St. Louis area, Rock Island and Moline in the Quad Cities region, and Peoria.

As of 1997, there were 39 Fortune 500 companies headquartered in Illinois (the 3rd most in the nation), including some of the world's "100 best managed companies": Abbott Laboratories, Amaco, BP, Baxter International, Caterpillar, Deere & Co., Illinois Tool Works, Morton International, Motorola, and Sarah Lee.

Earnings of persons employed in Illinois increased from \$247.9 billion in 1997 to \$263.4 billion in 1998, an increase of 6.2%. The largest industries in 1998 were services, 28.6% of earnings; durable goods manufacturing, 12.0%; and finance, insurance, and real estate, 9.9%. Of the industries that accounted for at least 5% of earnings in 1998, the slowest growing from 1997 to 1998 was state and local government (9.8% of earnings in 1998), which increased 4.6%; the fastest was finance, insurance, and real estate, which increased 9.0%.

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