

Promotions and Games of Chance Advisory

Promotional advertising requiring that the public pay a fee to be eligible to participate and win is NOT LEGAL in Illinois. Games of chance that require the public to spend money in order to have a chance to win are considered “gambling” and not legal in the state of Illinois.

The only exceptions to this law are certain not-for-profit organizations that are registered with the State of Illinois; the Illinois state lottery and state licensed gambling boats and racetracks.

Any promotion that results in the awarding of prizes or money must be open to the public, with no purchase necessary.

Example: An advertiser can not tie the chance to win a free trip to Florida to the purchase of a service or product. The advertiser can give away a free trip to Florida to anyone who wants to register to win the trip. The chance to win can not be associated with the expenditure of money or the purchase of a service or product. Anyone wishing to enter to win must be given the opportunity.

Example: A newspaper can not solicit the public to run an ad or participate in any special promotion with the enticement of winning a prize. The newspaper can solicit the public to run an ad or participate in a special promotion that offers a prize as long as there is no cost associated with entering to win. Anyone wishing to enter to win must be given the opportunity...even if they did not run an ad or participate in the special promotion.

A promotion that offers a free gift or service in connection with a purchase of a product or service is a legal promotion.