



STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES
BUREAU OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES AND LOTTERY OPERATIONS
DIVISION OF LIQUOR LICENSING AND ENFORCEMENT
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How to Become an Agency Liquor Store in Maine

The licensing process for agency liquor stores is different from licensing to sell beer and/or wine for off premises consumption.

Based on a population formula found in Title 28-A, section 453, every municipality that has voted to allow the sale of spirits for off premises consumption, the bureau may issue at least one (1) and up to eleven (11) licenses. The population formula is as follows:

- Eleven (11) agency liquor store licenses in a municipality with a population over 60,000
- Ten (10) agency liquor store licenses in a municipality with a population over 45,000 but less than 60,001
- Nine (9) agency liquor stores in a municipality with a population over 30,000 but less than 45,001
- Eight (8) agency liquor stores in a municipality with a population over 20,000 but less than 30,001
- Seven (7) agency liquor stores in a municipality with a population of at least 15,000 but less than 20,001
- Six (6) agency liquor stores in a municipality with a population of at least 10,000 but less than 15,001
- Four (4) agency liquor stores in a municipality with a population of at least 5,000 but less than 10,001
- Three (3) agency liquor stores in a municipality with a population of at least 2,000 but less than 5,001
- One (1) agency liquor store in a municipality where the population is less than 2,000

The Bureau has the sole authority to determine which municipalities to open to seek applicants to fill available agency liquor store licensing slots. Generally, the Bureau announces the opening of municipalities twice annually in the January/February and July/August timeframes. In determining whether to open a municipality, the Bureau reviews at the following:

- Does the municipality have a strategic opportunity to increase sales for the State's spirits business?
- Is the municipality's population underserved relative to access to the sale of spirits?
- Has any business shown interest in becoming licensed as an agency liquor store?
- What is the mix of types of businesses of the existing agency liquor stores in the municipality and is the municipality missing a type of business needed to meet consumers' needs in that municipality?

The process after a municipality is opened for licensing consists of completing the application process by a specific deadline, getting the proposed location inspected by the Bureau's licensing staff and conducting a public hearing to hear testimony and take evidence in support of the applications being considered.

Once licensed, there are on-going requirements for agency liquor stores that include maintaining on-hand inventory of spirit products based on the population of the municipality. If the population is over 1,000, the inventory is at least \$10,000 and 100 SKUs and if under 1,000, the inventory is at least \$5,000 and 50 SKUs.

For those interested in becoming an agency liquor store, an email of interest can be sent to the Bureau at MaineLiquor@Maine.gov. Your interest will be noted for the future and if the municipality that you are seeking to be licensed in is opened, you will be automatically notified of the application process.