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# The Industrial Heart of the Nation: Illinois

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Illinois's \$26.5 billion in exports ranks sixth among U.S. states. The state is a leader in the production of farm machinery, cereals, magazines, plastic products and machine tool products.

Located at the industrial and geographic heart of the nation, Illinois companies are able to ship and receive finished goods, semi-finished products or resources without high transport fees and expenses or costly delays. One-fifth of the Gross National Product is produced in the Midwest and nearly half of all the goods and services created in the U.S. are produced within one day's drive of the state line. In short, Illinois is a convenient and cost-effective location for growing companies.

Illinois's gross state product is fifth among the states with an estimated \$475 billion in 2001. If Illinois were a country it would rank 12th in the world. The state of Illinois has many opportunities for investors who are seeking new markets and customers.

According to data provided by the most recent Economic Census, Illinois is the top state in sugar and confectionary product manufacturing; converted paper product manufacturing; forging and stamping; spring and wire product manufacturing; agriculture, construction, and mining machinery manufacturing; and grain and oilseed milling.

On Illinois's official business website, Governor Rod Blagojevich states that one of his top priorities is to listen and respond to the needs and the priorities of Illinois's business community. "To make government work for you, we have created a site that puts all the information you need in one convenient and accessible place," he adds.

## WHY COME TO ILLINOIS

**First Class Workforce** – Illinois boasts a first-class workforce that is both well-educated and among the most productive in the country. And through its innovative job training programs, Illinois is constantly working to stay ahead of the pack.

**Unparalleled Infrastructure** – Not only does Illinois offer one of the best Interstate Highway networks in the nation, but Illinois is also at the center of the national rail network, is home to O'Hare International Airport, the world's 2nd busiest airport, as well as major commuter hubs both at Midway Airport and throughout downstate Illinois. In addition, Illinois is home to a dozen port districts, some located in Foreign Trade Zones, which provide low-cost production and warehousing facilities for imported and export-bound products. And if you are looking to transport information, Illinois has one of the most technologically advanced and cost-effective telecommunications infrastructures in the nation.

**Abundant Energy Resources** – The abundant supply of Illinois's electric capacity ensures long term rate stability for consumers and businesses alike. In addition, Illinois is the nation's leader in generating nuclear power, and alone accounts for almost 1/8 of the total U.S. reserves of coal.

**Diverse Landscape** – The diversity of the state's landscape – from the urban Chicagoland region, to the rolling hills of Southern Illinois, and all the medium sized communities in-between, you will be able to find the right region of Illinois to do business in.

**Access to Key Industries** – The diverse nature of Illinois makes it a proven location for many key industries. From manufacturing, to agriculture, to warehousing, to the new emerging fields in technology, Illinois is a successful home for all, and can be for your business as well.

**Quality Living** – From its impressive post-graduate education facilities, to its moderate climate, to its sports and recreation opportunities; Illinois offers a great quality of life.

**Business Incentive Programs** – In addition, the state of Illinois offers a wide variety of incentive programs to prospective and existing businesses.

## THE TOP EXPORT SECTOR

Illinois's \$26.5 billion in exports ranked sixth among U.S. states in 2003. The top export sector was Machinery Manufacturing (excluding electrical) at \$6.9 billion. Other sectors with exports of at least \$1 billion include: Chemicals (\$3.9 billion); Computer and Electronic Products (\$3.7 billion); Transportation Equipment (\$2.9 billion); Electronic Equipment, Appliances, and Components (\$1.7 billion); Food and Kindred Products (\$1.3 billion); and Fabricated Metal Products (\$1.1 billion).

## ENTERPRISE ZONES

There are currently 94 Enterprise Zones in Illinois, the maximum number that may be designated according to Illinois law. All offer the same mix of state incentives designed to encourage companies to locate or expand within a zone. In addition, each zone offers distinctive local incentives to enhance business or neighborhood development efforts. Such local incentives include abatement of property taxes on new improvements, homesteading and shopsteading programs, waiver of business licensing and permit fees, streamlined building code and zoning requirements, and special local financing programs and resources.

## FIRST STOP BUSINESS

Starting a new business or operating an existing one can be an intimidating experience, for it is difficult to wade through what seems to be an endless sea of governmental regulations and red tape. To overcome this challenge, the State of Illinois created the First Stop Business Information Center of Illinois (First Stop). First Stop's central mission is to

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provide individuals and businesses with the information and assistance that will guide them through permitting, licensing and regulatory processes when starting a business. Through the toll free small business helpline (800/252-2923) and a Web site [http://www.illinoisbiz.biz/bus/step\\_by\\_step.html](http://www.illinoisbiz.biz/bus/step_by_step.html) or by e-mail at [firststop@illinoisbiz.biz](mailto:firststop@illinoisbiz.biz).

## MARKETS AND RESOURCES

Illinois has the resources needed to help manufacturers` achieve their goals. In 2001, about 18,000 manufacturing companies operated in the state, generating a gross output of \$73.4 billion and 15.7 percent of the gross state product. Major industries concentrated in Illinois include primary and secondary metals, industrial and farm equipment, electric equipment and appliances, electronic components, food processing, and printing. Illinois ranks first among the states in the production of construction machinery, cookies, candy, service industry machines and environmental controls. The state is also a leader in the production of farm machinery, cereals, magazines, plastic products and machine tool products.

## MANUFACTURING IN ILLINOIS

Illinois is one of the nation's manufacturing leaders, boasting annual value added productivity by the manufacturing of more than \$94 billion in 2001. About two-thirds of the state's manufacturers are located in the Governor's Northeastern Economic Development region, with more than 40 percent of Illinois's approximately 17,000 manufacturing plants located in Cook County. Food manufacturing, with an annual value added by manufacturing of \$14.0 billion, is the leading industry in the state. Chemicals is second with a value added of \$12.7 billion. Non-electrical machinery, particularly construction, farming, and metalworking machinery, is third with an annual value added of \$11.6 billion.

## SMALL BUSINESS PROFILE

Number of Businesses: 1,087,700

Firms Employed: 290,866 (2005)

Women-Owned Firms: 284,950 (2002)

Women-Owned Firms Generated: \$46.9 billion (2002)

Asian-Owned Firms: 44,480. Generated \$14.6 billion (2002)

Black-Owned Firms: 68,704. Generated \$5 billion (2002)

Hispanic-Owned Firms: 39,542. Created \$7.4 billion (2002)

New Employer: 30,445 (2005)

Business Bankruptcies: 1,042 (2005)

Business Terminations: 32,846 (2005)

Employment: 251,599 employer firms with fewer than 500 employees in 2003; they provided 2,614,232 jobs in the state.

Small Business Income: \$38.6 billion (2005)

(Sources: U.S. Dept. of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics; U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Census Bureau, Employment and Training Administration)

## LINKS FOR BUSINESS PEOPLE

[illinois.gov](http://illinois.gov)

[illinoisdata.com](http://illinoisdata.com)

<http://business.illinois.gov>

[commerce.state.il.us](http://commerce.state.il.us)

[agr.state.il.us](http://agr.state.il.us)

[igpa.uiuc.edu/Abstract](http://igpa.uiuc.edu/Abstract)

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