

exchange that you use. Please report any abuse to the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation's Division of Financial Institutions, Currency Exchange Section at:

**Currency Exchange Section**  
[FPR.CurrencyExchange@illinois.gov](mailto:FPR.CurrencyExchange@illinois.gov)

312-814-5153

**Q: How do I know if a money order purchased at a currency exchange is safe?**

A: The law requires each currency exchange to maintain a bond that guarantees every money order. The bond is like insurance. If a currency exchange fails to pay out a money order you bought from them, you can complain to the Currency Exchange Section and we may pay your money order from the currency exchange bond. Should a currency exchange fail to fund a money order, a claim may be made with the Currency Exchange Section. The bond safeguards customers who purchase money orders.

**Q: If I have a problem at a currency exchange or money transmitter, where can I get help?**

A: The Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation's Division of Financial Institutions Currency Exchange Section at:

**Currency Exchange Section**  
[FPR.CurrencyExchange@illinois.gov](mailto:FPR.CurrencyExchange@illinois.gov)

312-814-5153

## Money Transmitters

**Q: What is a money transmitter?**

A: Money transmitters send money on behalf of a customer, charging a transaction fee that generally increases based on the

amount of money sent. Money transmitters also facilitate electronic bill payments and provide stored value cards. Western Union and MoneyGram are two of the larger known money transmitters licensed in Illinois. To verify whether a location is authorized to transmit money, please visit our website at:

<https://www.obresecureclear.state.il.us/CLEAROnlineWeb/Lookup/LicenseLookup.aspx>.

**Q: What are the requirements to be a money transmitter?**

A: For a business to transmit money in Illinois or to a resident of Illinois, it must obtain an Illinois license and comply with the Transmitters of Money Act.

**Q. Does a licensee have to use its own name at each place of business or may it use a dba or fictitious name?**

A. A licensee may use a dba that is different from the licensee's name but must be registered with the department of business oversight prior to conducting any business under the dba name.

**Q: What if the money I sent did not reach its destination?**

A. As soon as you can, file a request with the licensee requesting a full refund of the transaction in question. Contact the Currency Exchange Section if you are not satisfied with the licensee's response.

**Q: Are stored-value cards and electronic deposit to apps covered by money transmitters?**

A: Yes, the Transmitters of Money Act, including the bond requirements, covers these types of transactions.

**Q: What is a stored-value card?**

A: Stored-value cards are also known as "prepaid cards." Gift cards and prepaid debit cards are examples of stored-value cards. As the name says, when you use a stored-value card, you decrease the funds on the card itself. When you use a regular debit card, you decrease the funds in the associated bank account. Stored-value cards may have a VISA or Mastercard logo and may be used where credit or debit cards are accepted.

## Currency Exchange Section

### Chicago Office

555 West Monroe Street - Suite 500  
Chicago, Illinois 60661  
312-814-5153

### Springfield Office

320 West Washington Street, 5th Floor  
Springfield, Illinois 62786  
General Assistance: 1-888-473-4858

**Email the Currency Exchange Section:**  
[FPR.CurrencyExchange@illinois.gov](mailto:FPR.CurrencyExchange@illinois.gov)

[www.idfpr.com/DFI/CED/ced\\_main.asp](http://www.idfpr.com/DFI/CED/ced_main.asp)

TTY Line: 1-866-325-4949

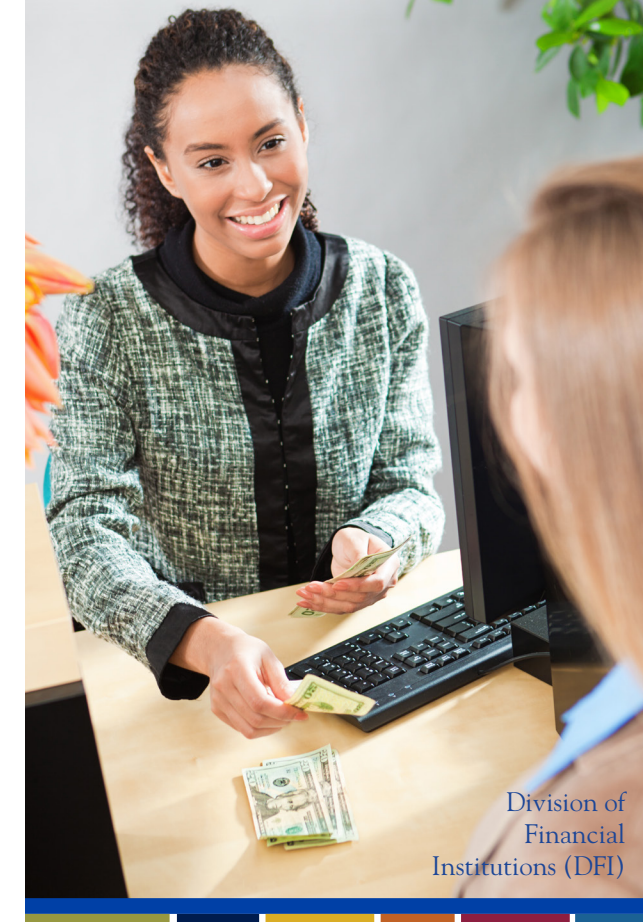
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State of Illinois  
Illinois Department of Financial  
and Professional Regulation

# Currency Exchange Section



Division of  
Financial  
Institutions (DFI)



**IDFPR**  
Illinois Department of  
Financial and Professional Regulation

## Division of Financial Institutions Protects Consumers

The Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation's Division of Financial Institutions has several key responsibilities, including:

- **Licensing** – Financial institutions operating in Illinois must be licensed or chartered in accordance with various laws. We pursue unlicensed entities to protect consumers against fraud, theft, and other abuses.
- **Application Review** – We review license applications and renewals to ensure that all lenders, credit unions, creditors, and other licensees meet licensing or chartering requirements.
- **Examinations** – The law requires us to examine financial institutions periodically. When necessary, we conduct additional exams to ensure that licensees are financially sound and complying with the law.
- **Education** – We participate in seminars and educational forums to educate consumers and the public.
- **Investigations** – We investigate all complaints against financial institutions in Illinois.
- **Disciplinary Actions** – We take disciplinary action against financial institutions in Illinois that violate the law or fail to meet licensing requirements. Discipline may include fines, corrective action plans, consumer relief, or license suspension or revocation.

- **Legislation** – We collaborate with the governor, legislators, and other stakeholders to create legislation that improves our regulated industries and promotes consumer protection.

### Currency Exchange Section Background and Overview

In 1943, the Illinois General Assembly passed the Currency Exchange Act to establish a set of requirements that all Illinois currency exchanges must follow.

The Currency Exchange Act requires the Department of Financial and Professional Regulation to annually examine each currency exchange company's financial condition and operations. Examinations ensure that each currency exchange complies with the Act, administrative rules, and any other applicable laws.

The Currency Exchange Section also licenses and regulates money transmitters. Money transmitters transmit money for a fee or sell, issue, or exchange payment instruments, including U.S. and foreign currency. The Transmitters of Money Act governs money transmitters.

### Currency Exchange Section FAQs

#### Q: What are the duties and responsibilities of the Currency Exchange Section?

A: The Section licenses and regulates currency exchanges and ambulatory currency exchanges (mobile check cashers) according to the Currency Exchange Act, administrative rules, and other applicable laws.

#### Q: What services are provided at currency exchanges?

A: Currency Exchanges can cash checks, sell money orders, process motor vehicle and title registration forms, accept utility bill payments, distribute public aid services, process money transfers, exchange foreign currency, offer credit card cash advances, offer notary public services, sell public transit passes, make photocopies, and send fax transmissions. Services do vary; contact your local currency exchange for specific information on the services they offer.

#### Q. What rates can a currency exchange charge for check-cashing and money orders?

A: The rate charged depends on the type of check and its amount.

- All public assistance checks will be charged a 1.5% rate of face value.
- Government checks will be charged a rate of 2.4% of face value + \$1, 2.33% of face value, or 3% of face value (depending on the check's amount).
- Personal checks will be charged a rate of 2.45% of face value + \$1, 3% of face value, or 3.5% of face value (depending on the check's amount).
- Printed payroll checks will be charged a rate of 2.4% of face value + \$1, 2.33% of face value, or 3.5% of face value (depending on the check's amount).
- All other checks will be charged a rate of 2.4% of face value + \$1, 2.4% of face value, or 3.5% of face value (depending on the check's amount).

#### Q. Must currency exchanges be licensed to operate in Illinois?

A. Yes.

#### Q: How do I know a currency exchange is licensed to operate in Illinois?

A: Each licensed currency exchange is required to post its license in a place where it will be clearly visible to the public. If you do not see it, ask to see it or contact the Currency Exchange Section. Unlicensed currency exchanges are dangerous because they're not examined for compliance with the law. Please report any unlicensed currency exchange to the Department. You may also visit our website to verify that the currency exchange is licensed at: [www.idfpr.com/DFI/CED/license/CELicensees.pdf](http://www.idfpr.com/DFI/CED/license/CELicensees.pdf).

#### Q: Can I pay most or all of my bills at a currency exchange?

A: Check with the issuer of a bill or with your local currency exchange to determine whether the currency exchange can process the bill payment you want to make.

#### Q: Must a currency exchange cash my check?

A: No. A currency exchange can refuse to cash any check it believes may not clear when deposited. The currency exchange may contact the bank the check is written against to verify funds or contact the check issuer in its effort to determine the legitimacy of the check.

#### Q: How can I be sure the currency exchange will pay my bill?

A: Daily records and activity at currency exchanges must be maintained for all licensed currency exchange locations. To be prudent, verify payment of the bill by phone until you are confident in the quality of the service at the currency