



104TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

State of Illinois

2025 and 2026

HB5604

Introduced 2/13/2026, by Rep. Lilian Jiménez

SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

New Act

Creates the Cultural Districts Act. Provides that, if an area successfully establishes itself as a cultural district under the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity Law, then the area may be incorporated as a cultural district. Creates 15 cultural districts. Sets forth the method to create additional cultural districts. Provides that, unless the boundaries of a cultural district are the same as the boundaries of a county or municipality, the affairs of a cultural district shall be managed by a board of commissioners consisting of not less than 5 but not more than 9 commissioners, who shall be appointed by the presiding officer of the county board of the county in which the majority of the cultural district is located, with the advice and consent of the county board. Provides that a cultural district may sue and be sued, enter into contracts, acquire and hold real and personal property necessary for its corporate purposes, and adopt a seal. Provides that the board of commissioners of a cultural district may, for any of its authorized purposes, borrow money upon the faith and credit of the cultural district and may issue bonds. Provides that a cultural district may acquire lands for its purposes (i) by lease, (ii) in fee simple by gift, grant, legacy, purchase, or condemnation, or (iii) by easement.

LRB104 20103 RTM 33554 b

1 AN ACT concerning government.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 1. Short title. This Act may be cited as the
5 Cultural Districts Act.

6 Section 5. Cultural district. If an area successfully
7 establishes itself as a cultural district under subsection (c)
8 of Section 605-1057 of the Department of Commerce and Economic
9 Opportunity Law, then the area may be incorporated as a
10 cultural district as provided in this Act.

11 Section 10. Initial districts. The following districts are
12 created as cultural districts:

13 (1) the North First Street Cultural District in the
14 City of Champaign;

15 (2) the Bronzeville District in the City of Chicago;

16 (3) the Chinatown District in the City of Chicago;

17 (4) the Clark Street/Camino Clark District in the City
18 of Chicago;

19 (5) the Mahalia Jackson 79th Street Cultural District
20 in the City of Chicago;

21 (6) the Little Village District in the City of
22 Chicago;

1 (7) the Puerto Rico Town District in the City of
2 Chicago;

3 (8) the South Chicago Cultural District in the City of
4 Chicago;

5 (9) the Central East Cultural District in the City of
6 Springfield;

7 (10) the Southtown Cultural District in the City of
8 Springfield;

9 (11) the Soul City District in the City of Chicago;

10 (12) the City of Bloomington Downtown Cultural
11 District;

12 (13) the Heritage District in the City of Rockford;

13 (14) the Historic District of the City of Vienna; and

14 (15) the Ukrainian Village District in the City of
15 Chicago;

16 Section 15. Petition for referendum.

17 (a) Any 200 legal voters residing within the limits of a
18 proposed district may petition the circuit court of the county
19 in which the proposed district lies for an order to submit the
20 question to the electors of the proposed district whether or
21 not it shall be organized as a cultural district under this
22 Act.

23 (b) The petition must contain a definite description of
24 the territory to be included within the district, the proposed
25 name of the district, the name of each municipality within the

1 district, and a copy of certification as a State-designated
2 cultural district under Section 605-1057 of the Department of
3 Commerce and Economic Opportunity Law.

4 (c) Upon filing the petition in the office of the clerk of
5 the circuit court of the county in which the territory lies,
6 the circuit court shall fix a day and hour for a hearing on the
7 petition, which shall be at least 15 days after the filing of
8 the petition. The clerk of the circuit court shall cause a
9 notice of the time and place of hearing to be published 3
10 successive days in a newspaper having a general circulation in
11 the territory of the proposed district. The date of the last
12 publication of the notice must be at least 5 days before the
13 time set for the hearing.

14 (d) At the hearing on the petition the court shall hear any
15 person owning property or residing within the proposed
16 district who desires to be heard. If the court finds that all
17 of the provisions of this Act have been complied with, the
18 court shall enter an order fixing and defining the boundaries
19 and the name of the proposed district in accordance with the
20 prayer of the petition.

21 (e) If any other petition for the organization of a
22 cultural district in the same county is filed under this Act
23 before the time fixed for the hearing of the first petition,
24 the court shall postpone the hearing on the first petition,
25 and the hearing on all petitions shall be set for the same day
26 and hour. All petitions filed after the first petition shall

1 be assigned to the judge to whom the first petition is assigned
2 so that all petitions may be heard by the same judge. If 2 or
3 more petitions are filed under this Act and come on for hearing
4 at the same time and the court finds that any of the territory
5 included within any one of the petitions is included within or
6 contiguous to the territory included in any other petition,
7 the court may include all of the territory described in the
8 petitions in one district and shall fix the name proposed in
9 the petition first filed as the name of the district.

10 (f) After the entry of the order fixing and defining the
11 boundaries and the name of a proposed district, the circuit
12 court shall order that the question of organization of the
13 proposed district be submitted to the electors of the proposed
14 district. The clerk of the circuit court shall certify the
15 order and the question to the proper election officials, who
16 shall submit the question to the electors of the proposed
17 district in accordance with the general election law. Notice
18 of the referendum shall contain a definite description of the
19 territory of the district and the proposed name of the
20 district.

21 (g) The proposition shall be substantially in the
22 following form:

23 "Shall the (name of cultural district) be organized in
24 the territory described as follows: (insert
25 description)?" If a majority of the votes cast on the
26 question are in the affirmative, the district shall then

1 be an organized cultural district under this Act.

2 Section 20. Governing body and officers.

3 (a) Unless the boundaries of a cultural district are the
4 same as the boundaries of a county or municipality, the
5 affairs of a cultural district shall be managed by a board of
6 commissioners consisting of not less than 5 but not more than 9
7 commissioners, who shall be appointed by the presiding officer
8 of the county board of the county in which the majority of the
9 cultural district is located, with the advice and consent of
10 the county board. The first appointments shall be made more
11 than 60 days but not more than 90 days after the district is
12 created. Each commissioner must be a legal voter in the
13 district. The first commissioners shall be appointed for terms
14 ending June 30, one, 2, 3, 4, and 5 years after the district is
15 organized, as determined by lot. Thereafter, successor
16 commissioners shall be appointed for terms of 5 years.
17 Commissioners shall receive no compensation but shall be
18 reimbursed for their reasonable and necessary expenses
19 incurred in the performance of official duties.

20 (b) If a commissioner is no longer a legal voter of the
21 district, then the office shall immediately become vacant. If
22 a vacancy in the office of commissioner occurs for any reason,
23 then a successor shall be appointed for the remainder of the
24 term in the same manner as other commissioners are appointed.

25 (c) If the boundaries of a cultural district are the same

1 as the boundaries of a county or municipality, then the
2 corporate authorities of the county or municipality shall have
3 the powers and perform the duties of the commissioners and no
4 commissioners shall be appointed for the district. The
5 corporate authorities shall receive no additional compensation
6 for governing the cultural district.

7 (d) The board of commissioners of a cultural district
8 shall appoint the treasurer of the cultural district by
9 majority vote.

10 Section 25. Powers and duties. A cultural district may sue
11 and be sued, enter into contracts, acquire and hold real and
12 personal property necessary for its corporate purposes, and
13 adopt a seal and alter the same at its pleasure.

14 Section 30. Real estate. A cultural district may acquire
15 lands for its purposes (i) by lease, (ii) in fee simple by
16 gift, grant, legacy, purchase, or condemnation, or (iii) by
17 easement.

18 Section 35. Funds of the district.

19 (a) The board of commissioners, when requested by the
20 treasurer of the district, shall designate one or more banks
21 or savings and loan associations where the funds of the
22 district received by the treasurer may be deposited. When a
23 bank or savings and loan association has been designated as a

1 depository, it shall continue as a depository until 10 days
2 after a new depository is designated and is qualified by
3 furnishing the statements of resources and liabilities
4 required by this Section. When a new depository is designated,
5 the board of commissioners shall notify the sureties of the
6 treasurer of that fact in writing at least 5 days before the
7 transfer of funds. The treasurer of the district shall be
8 discharged from responsibility for all funds and moneys while
9 they are deposited in a designated bank or depository.

10 (b) A bank or savings and loan association shall not
11 receive public funds as provided in this Section unless it has
12 complied with the requirements of Section 6 of the Public
13 Funds Investment Act.

14 Section 40. Records and reports.

15 (a) The board of commissioners shall keep a record of all
16 proceedings which shall be open to the inspection of any
17 person residing in the district at all reasonable and proper
18 times. The board of commissioners shall report annually to the
19 county board in which a majority of the cultural district is
20 located concerning its revenues, expenditures, construction
21 work, property, and other matters acted upon by the board of
22 commissioners during the previous year.

23 (b) An action of the board of commissioners of a cultural
24 district requires the affirmative vote of the majority of
25 commissioners.

1 Section 45. Debt and bonds. The board of commissioners of
2 a cultural district may, for any of its authorized purposes,
3 borrow money upon the faith and credit of the cultural
4 district and may issue bonds. A district may not, however,
5 become indebted in any manner or for any purpose to an amount
6 including existing indebtedness in the aggregate exceeding
7 1.5% of the assessed value, as equalized by the Department of
8 Revenue, of the taxable property in the district. A district
9 may not incur indebtedness in excess of 0.3% of the assessed
10 value, as equalized by the Department of Revenue, of taxable
11 property in the district for the development of historical
12 sites, together with related lands and facilities, held by the
13 district. Before or at the time of issuing bonds, the board of
14 commissioners shall provide by ordinance for the collection of
15 an annual tax sufficient to pay the interest on the bonds as it
16 falls due and to pay the principal of the bonds as they mature.
17 The bonds shall mature not later than 20 years after the date
18 thereof. The bonds shall bear interest at such rate or rates as
19 do not exceed those set forth in the Bond Authorization Act and
20 shall be issuable upon any terms and may have provisions as
21 make use of any authority as may be provided in the Local
22 Government Debt Reform Act.