



104TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

State of Illinois

2025 and 2026

SB4169

Introduced 3/10/2026, by Sen. Celina Villanueva

SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

20 ILCS 605/605-1058 new

Amends the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity Law of the Civil Administrative Code of Illinois. Requires the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity to establish criteria and guidelines for designation of a flagship cultural district. Provides that, no later than September 30, 2026, the Department shall award one flagship cultural district. Provides that the criteria that the Department must develop for a flagship cultural district shall include a demonstration that the applicant and the community (1) can provide a unified and inclusive approach to creating cultural engagement opportunities within its designated geographical area and (2) can provide strong community support for the flagship cultural district designation through participation by community organizations and state, regional, and municipal government agencies or officials. Provides that, within 12 months after being designated a flagship cultural district, the flagship cultural district shall submit a report to the Department detailing its current programs and goals for the next 4 years of its designation. Provides that, each year the district remains a flagship cultural district, it shall submit a report to the Department on the status of the programs and future developments of the district. Provides that, any flagship cultural district that fails to file a report for 2 consecutive years shall lose its status as a flagship cultural district. Effective immediately.

LRB104 21015 RTM 34910 b

1 AN ACT concerning State government.

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

4 Section 5. The Department of Commerce and Economic
5 Opportunity Law of the Civil Administrative Code of Illinois
6 is amended by adding Section 605-1058 as follows:

7 (20 ILCS 605/605-1058 new)

8 Sec. 605-1058. Flagship cultural district.

9 (a) As used in this Section, "flagship cultural district"
10 means a geographic area in a municipality with a population
11 greater than 500,000 that is certified under this Section as
12 an area in which the arts, entertainment, history, and culture
13 are provided.

14 (b) Municipalities or organizations working on behalf of a
15 certified flagship cultural district should seek to:

16 (1) promote the State and the flagship cultural
17 district's host municipality as a flagship world hub for
18 arts, entertainment, history, and culture;

19 (2) encourage economic development and support
20 entrepreneurship in the certified geographic area and
21 community, particularly in the fields of arts,
22 entertainment, and culture and supporting industries;

23 (3) encourage the preservation and development of

1 historic and culturally significant structures,
2 traditions, and languages;

3 (4) foster local cultural development and education;

4 (5) provide a focal point for celebrating and
5 strengthening the unique cultural identity of the State
6 and the flagship cultural district's host municipality;

7 (6) promote growth and opportunity without generating
8 displacement or expanding inequality; and

9 (7) promote tourism and further enhance the State and
10 the flagship cultural district's host municipality's place
11 as a global destination.

12 (c) The Department shall establish criteria and guidelines
13 for designation of a flagship cultural district by rule in
14 accordance with qualifying criteria outlined in subsection
15 (d). In executing its powers and duties under this Section,
16 the Department shall:

17 (1) establish an application system by which a
18 501(c)(3) organization may apply for certification as a
19 flagship cultural district;

20 (2) provide technical assistance for a flagship
21 cultural district by collaborating with all relevant
22 offices and grantees of the Department to help them
23 identify and achieve their goals for cultural
24 preservation, including, but not limited to, promotional
25 support of the flagship cultural district and support for
26 small businesses looking to access resources; and

1 (3) collaborate with other State agencies, units of
2 local government, community organizations, and private
3 entities to maximize the benefits of the flagship cultural
4 district.

5 (d) A geographic area in a municipality with a population
6 greater than 500,000 may be certified as a flagship cultural
7 district by applying to the Department for certification.
8 Certification as a flagship cultural district shall be for a
9 period of 10 years, after which the district may renew
10 certification every 5 years. Any applicant for certification
11 on behalf of a geographic area shall be a 501(c)(3)
12 organization. The applying entity is responsible for complying
13 with reporting requirements under subsection (f). The
14 Department shall develop criteria to assess whether an
15 applicant qualifies for certification under this Section. That
16 criteria must include a demonstration that the applicant and
17 the community:

18 (1) can provide a unified and inclusive approach to
19 creating cultural engagement opportunities within its
20 designated geographic area; and

21 (2) can provide strong community support for the
22 flagship cultural district designation through
23 participation by community organizations and state,
24 regional, and municipal government agencies or officials.

25 (e) No later than September 30, 2026, the Department shall
26 award one flagship cultural district.

1 (f) Within 12 months after being designated a flagship
2 cultural district, the flagship cultural district shall submit
3 a report to the Department detailing its current programs and
4 goals for the next 4 years of its designation. For each year
5 thereafter that the district remains a flagship cultural
6 district, it shall submit a report to the Department on the
7 status of the programs and future developments of the
8 district. Any flagship cultural district that fails to file a
9 report for 2 consecutive years shall lose its status as a
10 flagship cultural district.

11 Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon
12 becoming law.