Michigan (USA)

Online casino launch roadmap

Michigan Gaming Control Board (MGCB)

A Detroit casino or a tribe holds the operator licence, you get licensed as its platform provider, and the rules are written in a way that suits a technology company better than New Jersey does.

- Recommended path
- Optional, worth it
- Alternative route

LICENCE	TIME TO LAUNCH	GAMING TAX	SETUP COST	LOCAL PRESENCE	DIFFICULTY
Internet gaming operator licence (commercial casino…	**8-10 months (book estimate)**	**Graduated 20%-28% of adjusted gross receipts for…**	**USD 600K-900K (book estimate); MGCB fees are…**	**Servers or equipment able to receive wagers must be…**	**Medium-high**

STAGE 1 · Weeks 0-8 — Market and legal feasibility

- 1.1 Choose commercial or tribal partner
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STAGE 2 · Months 1-8 — Entity and licensing

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- 5.1 Tax remittance by electronic transfer
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STAGE 6 · Months 5-9 — Certification and testing

- 6.1 GLI-19 certification
- 6.2 Internal controls approval
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- 6.4 Test accounts and soft launch

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- 7.1 Board launch approval
- 7.2 Operations readiness
- 7.3 Responsible marketing

STAGE 8 · After launch — Ongoing obligations

- 8.1 Annual fees and five-year renewal
- 8.2 Monthly tax and reporting
- 8.3 Change control
- 8.4 Incident and breach response

Michigan (USA): launch roadmap in detail

Michigan Gaming Control Board (MGCB) · as of 2026-11

Licence	Internet gaming operator licence (commercial casino or tribe only) under the Lawful Internet Gaming Act, plus an internet gaming platform provider or supplier licence for the technology company
Time to launch	8-10 months (book estimate)
Gaming tax	Graduated 20%-28% of adjusted gross receipts for commercial operators (MCL 432.314), plus a 1.25% Detroit municipal fee; tribal operators pay under their own payment terms, not the graduated tax
Setup cost	USD 600K-900K (book estimate); MGCB fees are small: operator USD 50,000 application and USD 100,000 licence, supplier USD 2,500 application and USD 5,000 licence
Local presence	Servers or equipment able to receive wagers must be in Michigan unless the Board approves otherwise in writing (R 432.634)
Difficulty	Medium-high

1. Market and legal feasibility Weeks 0-8

1.1 Choose commercial or tribal partner RECOMMENDED

Only the Detroit commercial casinos and federally recognized tribes with gaming can hold an internet gaming operator licence. You partner with one as its platform provider, which gives you a skin. Tribal deals differ from commercial deals in tax treatment and sovereign immunity, so have counsel review both before choosing.

In the book: Ch. 06 Licensing Guide, Ch. 07 Casino Implementation Planning and Timeline, Ch. 09 Legal Framework and Contracts

1.2 Model the graduated tax RECOMMENDED

MCL 432.314 sets 20% on adjusted gross receipts below USD 4M a month, rising in steps to 28% at USD 12M and above, with a 1.25% municipal fee on Detroit operators. A bill in late 2024 proposed 21%-29%; I found no sign it was enacted, but check before you finalize your model. Tribal payments are set under the Act and compacts, and the sources I found disagree on the state's exact share.

In the book: Ch. 15 Casino Mathematics and Game Economy, Ch. 30 FinOps Deep Dive

1.3 Check what is already live OPTIONAL

MGCB announces each launch. In 2026 it approved bet365 as a platform provider for a tribe (April) and a White Hat Gaming platform for the Saginaw Chippewa Tribe (November). Read these to see how fast new platform approvals are moving.

In the book: Ch. 03 Global Market Analysis, Ch. 04 Market Analysis and Industry Players

1.4 Platform-provider-only route ALTERNATIVE

If you do not want your own brand, apply only for the internet gaming supplier licence and sell games or services to licensed operators. Costs and timelines are lower, and you avoid operator-facing obligations.

In the book: Ch. 10b Supplier Integration Control Plane, Ch. 47d Casino as a Service: White-Label Provisioning at the Press of a Button

2. Entity and licensing Months 1-8

2.1 Platform provider and supplier licence RECOMMENDED

R 432.624 sets a USD 2,500 nonrefundable supplier application fee, a USD 5,000 licence fee on issue and USD 2,500 each year after. MCL 432.308 matches this. The Board may bill extra if its investigation costs exceed the application fee. A third-party guide listed USD 5,000 for the application, which conflicts with the rule, so rely on the rule.

In the book: Ch. 06 Licensing Guide, Ch. 09 Legal Framework and Contracts

2.2 Operator licence for your partner RECOMMENDED

The operator pays USD 50,000 to apply, USD 100,000 on issue and USD 50,000 annually. Agree in the contract who funds these and the background investigation overruns.

In the book: Ch. 06 Licensing Guide, Ch. 09 Legal Framework and Contracts

2.3 Occupational and key person licences RECOMMENDED

Employees with access to the platform or player data need an occupational licence (USD 250 application and fee). Principals and owners go through the Board's background investigation. Get disclosures ready early.

In the book: Ch. 06 Licensing Guide, Ch. 08 Team Structure and Operations

2.4 Vendor registration, minor suppliers OPTIONAL

Part 2 of the rules covers vendor registration for suppliers that do not need a full supplier licence. Ask MGCB which class applies to each of your subcontractors, and document the answer.

In the book: Ch. 10b Supplier Integration Control Plane, Ch. 09 Legal Framework and Contracts

3. Platform, hosting and suppliers Months 2-8

3.1 Servers in Michigan RECOMMENDED

R 432.634 requires the operator and platform provider to place a server or other equipment capable of receiving wagers in Michigan unless the Board approves otherwise in writing, with adequate security and a report of every location. Cloud storage for duplicate data needs written Board approval. Many teams use a colocation facility in the state; ask early about secondary sites.

In the book: Ch. 29a On-Premises Infrastructure for US-Regulated iGaming, Ch. 29b Datacenter Infrastructure for Regulated Gaming, Ch. 27 Data Residency and Backup/Recovery

3.2 Platform submission to Board or lab RECOMMENDED

R 432.632a requires the platform provider to submit the platform to the Board or an approved lab with descriptions of hardware, software, wagering communications, third-party systems, test history and a risk management framework including AML. Write this package like an audit file.

In the book: Ch. 25 GLI-GSF Compliance Framework: Online Gaming Information Security, Ch. 10 Complete Platform Architecture

3.3 Game submission and RNG RECOMMENDED

All games, including slots, tables, live games, progressives and peer-to-peer, must be submitted for evaluation. Keep RNG documentation, RTP configs and version hashes ready.

In the book: Ch. 17 Random Number Generation (RNG), Ch. 15 Casino Mathematics and Game Economy, Ch. 10b Supplier Integration Control Plane

3.4 Multistate poker OPTIONAL

MGCB has published multistate poker tasks and considerations. If you plan shared liquidity with other states, servers able to take wagers outside Michigan need written Board approval, so raise it in the first meeting.

In the book: Ch. 11 Online Poker Platform Architecture, Ch. 27c Migrating a Single-Jurisdiction Casino Platform to Hub & Spoke

4. Player compliance controls Months 4-9

4.1 Account opening and KYC RECOMMENDED

R 432.655 requires a participant file with legal name, date of birth, SSN or last four digits (or equivalent ID for noncitizens), residential address (no PO box), email, phone, verification method and date. Sensitive fields must be encrypted. Age and identity are verified through reliable ID or multi-source authentication approved by the Board. Players must be 21 or older.

In the book: Ch. 24d KYC Evidence Lifecycle, Ch. 24 Security and Compliance

4.2 Geolocation RECOMMENDED

Operators must confirm the player is physically in Michigan, or in a jurisdiction allowed under an interstate agreement, before play. Use a certified geolocation vendor and test border areas and VPN cases. The geofence rule is R 432.631 for multi-jurisdiction play; check the current text for the single-state requirements.

In the book: Ch. 24e Geofencing and Location Verification, Ch. 27b The Jurisdiction Transfer Gateway and Cookie Consent

4.3 Account suspension and self-exclusion RECOMMENDED

R 432.659 requires a suspended mode that blocks wagering, deposits and withdrawals, and that player-requested suspensions last at least 72 hours. Michigan also runs the Board's internet gaming self-exclusion programs, so integrate the lists in real time.

In the book: Ch. 26 Responsible Gaming and Player Protection Systems, Ch. 26b Self-Exclusion Registries: From API to Audit Trail

4.4 AML and fraud RECOMMENDED

Internal controls need an AML program under the Bank Secrecy Act, with SAR and CTR procedures, and the platform submission must describe fraud detection and risk management.

In the book: Ch. 19 Anti-Fraud System Deep Dive, Ch. 24 Security and Compliance, Ch. 33 Operational Playbooks

5. Payments and treasury Months 4-9

5.1 Tax remittance by electronic transfer RECOMMENDED

R 432.624 requires operators to remit taxes by electronic fund transfer from an account at a designated financial institution, with the monthly timing the Act sets. Build revenue reporting that reconciles to the platform ledger.

In the book: Ch. 36 Financial Operations, Ch. 36b The Financial Truth Layer -- Ledger, Treasury, and Reconciliation, Ch. 25b Regulatory Reporting and Evidence Export

5.2 Player funds handling RECOMMENDED

Keep player balances reconciled and protected, and handle closed account balances as set in the approved internal controls (R 432.657 requires a refund path).

In the book: Ch. 36 Financial Operations, Ch. 36b The Financial Truth Layer -- Ledger, Treasury, and Reconciliation

5.3 Payment methods RECOMMENDED

Cards, ACH, online banking and e-wallets are standard. Test decline handling and retries on gambling merchant codes. Skip crypto for this market.

In the book: Ch. 36 Financial Operations, Ch. 33d Disputes, Chargebacks, and Player Support

6. Certification and testing Months 5-9

6.1 GLI-19 certification RECOMMENDED

R 432.633 adopts GLI-19 version 3.0 (July 2020) by reference and says the Board's rules prevail if they conflict. The platform must be tested by the Board or an approved lab and certified before any internet gaming is offered in Michigan. Ask MGCB whether a newer GLI-19 edition is being applied in practice.

In the book: Ch. 25 GLI-GSF Compliance Framework: Online Gaming Information Security, Ch. 17 Random Number Generation (RNG)

6.2 Internal controls approval RECOMMENDED

The Board approves internal control standards (R 432.663). Draft them from real operating procedures and expect questions about every control.

In the book: Ch. 25 GLI-GSF Compliance Framework: Online Gaming Information Security, Ch. 24 Security and Compliance

6.3 Security and integration testing RECOMMENDED

Run penetration tests and failover tests on the Michigan environment, and test each third-party integration end to end.

In the book: Ch. 24 Security and Compliance, Ch. 32 Testing and QA in Gambling, Ch. 23 DevSecOps for iGaming

6.4 Test accounts and soft launch RECOMMENDED

Confirm with MGCB how a limited launch period will run and what reporting it expects.

In the book: Ch. 32 Testing and QA in Gambling, Ch. 07 Casino Implementation Planning and Timeline

7. Go-live Months 8-10

7.1 Board launch approval RECOMMENDED

MGCB announces each approval and launch publicly. Align your marketing calendar with the actual approval date, not the target date.

In the book: Ch. 07 Casino Implementation Planning and Timeline, Ch. 40 Case Study -- Launching in a New Regulated Market

7.2 Operations readiness RECOMMENDED

Prepare support, fraud, RG and finance teams, and rehearse outage and list-sync failures.

In the book: Ch. 08 Team Structure and Operations, Ch. 33 Operational Playbooks, Ch. 35 Incident Management

7.3 Responsible marketing RECOMMENDED

Get bonus terms and advertising reviewed against the Act and rules, and set up a complaint path that reaches the operator and the Board.

In the book: Ch. 37 Marketing Technology and CRM Systems, Ch. 26 Responsible Gaming and Player Protection Systems

8. Ongoing obligations After launch

8.1 Annual fees and five-year renewal RECOMMENDED

Operators owe USD 50,000 a year and suppliers USD 2,500 a year, with the Board running five-year licence renewals and sending notices in advance.

In the book: Ch. 06 Licensing Guide

8.2 Monthly tax and reporting RECOMMENDED

Tax is due by the 10th of the month per the Act, and MGCB publishes monthly revenue by operator. Keep reconciliations clean.

In the book: Ch. 25b Regulatory Reporting and Evidence Export, Ch. 36b The Financial Truth Layer -- Ledger, Treasury, and Reconciliation

8.3 Change control RECOMMENDED

New games, platform versions and server locations need Board approval or notice. Tie your release pipeline to the approval register.

In the book: Ch. 10b Supplier Integration Control Plane, Ch. 23b DevSecOps Pipeline Implementation: From GitHub Actions to Self-Hosted GitLab CI, Ch. 25 GLI-GSF Compliance Framework: Online Gaming Information Security

8.4 Incident and breach response RECOMMENDED

Have regulator notice timelines in your incident playbook, including data exposure and integrity events.

In the book: Ch. 35 Incident Management, Ch. 35b Cash-Flow Integrity Incident Response

Common pitfalls

- Assuming you can apply for an operator licence yourself. Only commercial casinos and tribes can.
- Using a cloud region outside Michigan without written Board approval. R 432.634 expects servers capable of receiving wagers to be in the state.
- Applying a graduated tax assumption to tribal partners. Their payment terms differ.
- Citing third-party fee guides. They have had figures that conflict with the rules (for example the supplier application fee).
- Launching without Board or lab certification. R 432.633 bars offering internet gaming in Michigan without it.
- Accepting PO box addresses or skipping encryption of SSN and passwords in the participant file.
- Ignoring that the GLI-19 edition is pinned in the rules to version 3.0 while the lab may test to newer material.

Sources

1. Mich. Admin. Code R 432.624 Fees, taxes and payments
   https://www.law.cornell.edu/regulations/michigan/Mich-Admin-Code-R-432-624
2. Mich. Admin. Code R 432.633 Platform and games technical standards
   https://www.law.cornell.edu/regulations/michigan/Mich-Admin-Code-R-432-633
3. Mich. Admin. Code R 432.634 Location of servers
   https://www.law.cornell.edu/regulations/michigan/Mich-Admin-Code-R-432-634
4. Mich. Admin. Code R 432.632a Platform and game submission
   https://www.law.cornell.edu/regulations/michigan/Mich-Admin-Code-R-432-632a
5. Mich. Admin. Code R 432.655 Wagering account requirements
   https://www.law.cornell.edu/regulations/michigan/Mich-Admin-Code-R-432-655
6. Mich. Admin. Code R 432.659 Suspension of accounts
   https://www.law.cornell.edu/regulations/michigan/Mich-Admin-Code-R-432-659
7. Lawful Internet Gaming Act, MCL Act 152 of 2019
   https://ombudsman.legislature.mi.gov/documents/mcl/pdf/MCL-ACT-152-OF-2019.pdf
8. MCL 432.314 Internet gaming tax
   https://ombudsman.legislature.mi.gov/documents/mcl/pdf/MCL-432-314.pdf

9. MGCB approves White Hat Gaming platform for Saginaw Chippewa Tribe (Nov 2026)
https://www.michigan.gov/mgcb/news/2026/11/12/mgcb-approves-white-hat-gaming-platform-for-saginaw-chippewa-tribe

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