

Current State of Gambling in the Bay State

Massachusetts is one of the most popular states for Tourism in the US, with the vibrant city of Boston, the islands of Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard and historical sites like Plymouth Rock drawing millions of visitors from around the world each year. As tourism numbers continue to grow, state officials have spotted the potential and are looking to turn Massachusetts into a big name in gambling. The Expanded Gaming Act, passed in 2011, has allowed several casino licenses to be offered to the best tender. There is already one casino open and two others under construction, with voters being asked as part of the recent presidential election ballot whether another slot casino license should be granted.

Alongside the confirmed or completed casinos, there is also an expectation for a further resort to be built in South Eastern Massachusetts, although a large development plan fell through in the coastal city of New Bedford in 2015. The goal of expanding the number of casinos in the state follows on from projected growth in the gaming industry, as well as the desire to compete with Las Vegas as the United States' major gaming centre. The initial phase of casinos has already passed but more license grants should follow.

The MGM resort in Springfield is slated for a 2018 opening and will be the first big-name casino to open in the state. MGM are [taking a huge gamble](#) on Massachusetts becoming a successful gaming hub and have committed millions to the Springfield project. The Wynn Boston Harbour is also taking advantage of the relaxation of casino licenses in the state, breaking ground in 2014. This huge complex will not only feature a hotel and casino, but public amenities such as parks, boating docks and gardens.

Both of the federally recognised Native American tribes in Massachusetts have also applied for gaming licenses, with the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe campaigning hard to open a Casino on an industrial site in Taunton. The Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head also plan to open a casino in Aquinnah on the

island of Martha's Vineyard, although full planning and sign off are still required.

One casino is already open to the public, offering modern slot gaming to the general public. Horse racing has been popular in Massachusetts for decades and the states only racetrack, Plainridge Park, is now home to a luxury casino which opened in 2015. The main gambling floor features slot machines, video poker and video blackjack. Make sure you brush up on your blackjack skills by reading a comprehensive blackjack guide before paying a visit.

It is clear that Massachusetts will continue to develop their gaming industry to benefit from an increasing interest in gambling and a more relaxed government outlook toward licensing and regulation. When president elect Donald Trump is sworn in in 2017, it will be interesting to see if the deals for big casino and resort brands will get better and possibly even become incentivised. Trump himself has invested heavily in resorts and casinos, so it may become more likely that the Massachusetts gaming regulators will continue to take steps to become more like Nevada.

The Plainridge Casino has not only shown what the state is capable of, but has also debunked the link between casinos and crime over a yearlong study. This should hopefully pave the way for more successful resorts to appear throughout the state and help Massachusetts develop into a world-class gambling destination.