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Earned Programming Sentence Credits in Illinois (730 ILCS 5/3-6-3)

****This guide is current as of March 2026. Look out for changes in the law, which has been amended many times over the past few years.**

You may earn sentence credits for programs completed in the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC), Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice (IDJJ), or county jails in Illinois. There are several exceptions, so read this entire guide carefully.

Calculating Sentencing Credits

- 1) **One day of credit for every day** spent in IDOC
- 2) **One day of credit for each day in full-time programming** for programs that you completed (full-time means 3 hours per day or more):
 - a. Substance abuse programs
 - b. Correctional industry assignments or work release programs
 - c. Educational programs
 - d. Behavior modification programs
 - e. Life skills courses
 - f. Re-entry programming
 - g. 60-day or longer programs in county jail (only if noted in judge's sentencing order)

****Any program credits earned before July 1, 2021, must be recalculated.**

****If you cannot complete a program because of reasons beyond your control (e.g. illness, transfer, lockdown), you can earn credits for each day you spent in the program. You may not earn credits if you choose to drop out of a program.**

- 3) **Extra credits for earning educational degrees** while in IDOC or county jail:
 - a. 90 days for high school equivalency (GED)
 - b. 120 days for associate degree
 - c. 180 days for bachelor's degree
 - d. 180 days for master's or professional degree

- 4) **One half-day of credit for each day in other programming:**
 - a. Self-improvement programs
 - b. Volunteer work
 - c. Work assignments (other than work release or Correctional Industry)

- 5) For good conduct, the IDOC director *might* grant extra sentencing credits:
 - a. People serving sentences of less than 5 years can get up to 180 days.
 - b. People serving sentences of 5 years or longer can get up to 365 days.

How to Prove You Earned Credits

There are two ways to show that you are entitled to credits:

- 1) Documents from IDOC that show you completed full-time programming.
- 2) Your testimony: a sworn statement and/or documents showing that you completed full-time programming.
 - a. ****Make sure you show how many *hours per day* you were in programs.**
 - b. A sworn statement or affidavit just needs to include your signature and the following language: “I swear under penalty of perjury that this information is correct to the best of my knowledge.”

Exceptions and Limitations on Earning Credits

There are many exceptions to the normal credit calculations. These are based on **the crime you were convicted of** and the **date that the crime occurred** (*not* the date of conviction/sentencing). The exceptions limit how many credits you can earn.

Offense type:	Committed on or after:	Credit restrictions:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First degree murder • Terrorism 	June 19, 1998	Not eligible for any sentencing credits.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attempt to commit first degree murder • Solicitation of murder (and for hire) • Intentional homicide of an unborn child • Predatory criminal sexual assault of a child • Criminal sexual assault (or aggravated) • Aggravated kidnapping • Aggravated battery with a firearm • Heinous battery • Aggravated battery of a senior citizen or a child 	June 19, 1998	No more than 4.5 days of credits for each month served.

Aggravated battery or aggravated discharge of a machine gun or firearm equipped with a silencer	July 15, 1999	No more than 4.5 days of credits for each month served.
Aggravated arson	July 27, 2001	No more than 4.5 days of credits for each month served.
Certain crimes with a court finding of great bodily harm: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home invasion • Armed robbery • Aggravated vehicular hijacking • Aggravated discharge of a firearm • Armed violence with a category I or II weapon 	June 23, 2005	No more than 4.5 days of credits for each month served.
Unlawful possession of a firearm by a repeat felony offender	August 2, 2005	No more than 4.5 days of credits for each month served.
Certain drug related crimes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gunrunning • Narcotics racketeering • Controlled substance or meth trafficking • Drug-induced homicide • Aggravated meth-related child endangerment • Money laundering Class X felony convictions for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of a controlled substance • Possession of a controlled substance with intent to manufacture or deliver • Criminal drug conspiracy (including calculated and street gang criminal drug conspiracy) • Participation in meth manufacturing (and aggravated) • Delivery of or possession with intent to deliver meth (and aggravated) • Methamphetamine conspiracy (100 g or more) 	August 13, 2007	No more than 7.5 days sentence credit for each month served.
Aggravated discharge of a firearm (with or without great bodily harm)	June 1, 2008	No more than 4.5 days of credits for each month served.

Aggravated domestic battery	July 23, 2010	No more than 4.5 days of credits for each month served.
Aggravated driving under the influence of alcohol, drugs, and/or intoxicating compounds	January 1, 2011	No more than 4.5 days of credits for each month served.
Attempt to commit terrorism	January 1, 2013	No more than 4.5 days of credits for each month served.
Luring a minor (only for second or subsequent offense)	Any time	No more than 4.5 days of credits for each month served.
Any crime resulting in a sentence of natural life imprisonment	Any time	Not eligible for sentencing credits
Sex offenses listed in the Sex Offender Registration Act	Any time	Only eligible <i>after</i> completing sex offender treatment
If judge's sentencing order recommends substance abuse treatment	September 1, 2003	Only eligible <i>after</i> completing substance abuse treatment program (unless IDOC waives this requirement)

Serving Percentages of a Sentence

In addition to these exceptions, if you are required to serve a certain percentage of your sentence, your sentencing credits cannot reduce your sentence further than:

- If 85%: you must serve the full 85% regardless of the credits you earned
- If 75%: you only need to serve 60% of your sentence (unless you were convicted of gunrunning, then you need to serve the full 75%)
- If 100%: you must serve the full 100% of your sentence

Revoking Sentencing Credits

- If you earned sentencing credits, IDOC must go through certain procedures to revoke them. This right is called due process.
 - IDOC has a chart showing how many credits can be revoked based on the rule that you violated. See A.D. 05.15.100 on Restrictive Housing.
 - IDOC must bring charges to the PRB if they revoke more than 30 days.
- In some situations, the PRB may revoke up to one year of your earned credits. This is explained further in 730 ICLS 3-3-9(a)(3)(i)(B).
- IDOC can revoke up to 180 days (6 months) of your earned credits if a judge rules that you have filed a frivolous lawsuit or motion in court.