

Gaming Law



What is Gaming Law?

Gaming law is the body of law that governs wagers, bets, gambling, and lotteries in the United States and abroad. Nevada legalized casino gambling in 1931 to spur their economy during the Great Depression and remained the only state with legal gaming until New Jersey legalized it in 1977. In the 1980s and 1990s, many Native American Reservations began legalizing gambling and building casinos to grow their own economies. Now some form of gaming is legal in all fifty states, though most do not allow casino gambling. Sports bets and state-sponsored lotteries are the most common forms of gaming outside Las Vegas. States with government-sponsored lotteries often use lottery ticket sales to fund education or other public services. Gaming law intersects with contract law, employment law, tort law, real estate law, tax law, business law, administrative law, criminal law, and Native American law. Additionally, as gaming has become increasingly web-based, gaming law has also come to encompass intellectual property law and international law ([ABA](#), [Harris](#)).

Gaming law differs by state, except in cases of interstate commerce where federal law takes precedence. The [Wire Act of 1961](#) outlawed wire transfers related to wagers; the [Indian Gaming Regulatory Act of 1988](#) regulates gaming activities on Native American Reservations; the [Unlawful Internet Gaming Enforcement Act of 2006](#) prohibits nearly all types of Internet gambling. In 2019, the Department of Justice extended the Wire Act to cover sports betting as well as non-sports related gambling ([Doyle](#), [Murphy](#)).

Gaming lawyers work with issues related to gaming regulation and gaming disputes. They also represent their clients before gaming regulatory bodies. Gaming lawyers might advise casinos and gaming technology companies about gaming regulations or lobby for gaming companies before legislative bodies. Gaming attorneys working for Native American groups and companies should be experts in the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act in addition to tribal-state politics and other gaming laws. Gaming lawyers usually work in areas with high rates of gambling, such as Nevada, or overseas such as in Macau, China ([University of Nevada](#)).

Where Do Gaming Lawyers Work?

Private Sector

In-house at a casino or gaming technology company
Firms that handle gaming cases, especially in areas with large casinos

Government

Tribal attorneys—[Native American Bar](#)
Department of Justice—[Careers](#)
Governor's Offices in states with state lotteries
State legislatures
State Attorney General's Offices—[Tennessee](#)

What Classes Should I Take?

Administrative Law
Business Organizations
Commercial Law
Conflicts of Law
Consumer Law
Corporate Finance
Corporate Governance and Compliance
Corporate Tax
Information Privacy Law
Intellectual Property Survey
International Business Transactions
Realty Transactions

Gaming Law Resources



Resume Boosters for Gaming Law

Consider pursuing an [LLM in Native American Law](#)

Intern or extern with a firm that handles gaming law cases

Work for a casino or gaming technology company to gain experience in the business

Learn another language if you are interested in international issues related to gaming

Professional Associations

American Bar Association

All University of Memphis law students have free membership to the [American Bar Association](#). Their website provides routinely updated information and interest-specific career advice. Join different sections to find out what they offer. Check out the [Gaming Law Committee of the Business Law Section](#).

International Association of Gaming Regulators

The [International Association of Gaming Regulators](#) is a representative body of gaming regulators that advances gaming regulation around the world. Members collaborate on gaming issues and have access to webinars and guides.

North American Gaming Regulators Association

The [North American Gaming Regulators Association](#) is a group of government gaming regulators. Members enjoy access to resources, collaboration, and special events.

Gaming Law Links

[“American Indian Tribes and Canadian First Nations: The Impact of Gaming Law and Policy on the Industry”](#)

This article examines the intersections of Native American law and gaming law. September 20, 2016, American Bar Association.

[“Gam\(bl\)ing 2.0: Old Laws in an Era of New Games”](#)

This article by Andrew Kim provides an overview of recent advances in the gaming industry and gaming law. December 20, 2018, American Bar Association.