

Judge approves \$100 million Google privacy deal. Here's how much Illinois residents will get

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Illinois residents who filed claims for a cut of Google's \$100 million class-action settlement over alleged violations of state privacy law could receive checks of about \$154 each.

Cook County Circuit Judge Anna M. Loftus granted final approval of the settlement Wednesday. She granted preliminary approval of the agreement in April.

The payout comes after Google settled a class-action lawsuit alleging its face grouping tool, which sorts faces on Google Photos by similarity, violated Illinois' biometric privacy law. State law requires companies to obtain affirmative consent from users before collecting and saving their biometric information.

The deadline to claim a cut of the settlement was last week. Those eligible included people who appeared in a photo on Google Photos between May 2015 and this April while they were residents of Illinois.

According to Loftus, about 420,000 people have filed valid claims. That would put payments at about \$154 per person, less than the \$200 to \$400 attorneys originally estimated residents might receive.

The payment amounts remain lower than earlier estimates despite Loftus Wednesday reducing attorneys' fees from 40% of the settlement fund to 35%. Attorneys for the plaintiffs are now eligible to collect \$35 million in fees plus costs and expenses. The five named plaintiffs in the case are eligible for payments of \$5,000 each.

Google did not admit wrongdoing as part of the settlement. The company has rolled out opt-in consent for face grouping in Illinois, spokesperson José Castañeda said last week.

In April, Castañeda said the company was "pleased to resolve this matter

relating to specific laws in Illinois" and remained "committed to building easy-to-use controls for our users." He declined to comment Wednesday.

Claimants could receive payments within 90 days of the settlement approval, but any appeals could delay the process.

After Facebook reached a \$650 million biometric privacy settlement agreement in February 2021, Illinois residents did not receive their \$397 checks until more than a year later because of an appeal. Two class members appealed because they opposed payouts for named plaintiffs and attorneys in the case, the latter of which came out to \$97.5 million. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit upheld the Facebook settlement in March.

The Google settlement resolves a group of lawsuits filed by those five plaintiffs, the first of which was filed in 2016 in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois.

The Illinois Biometric Information Privacy Act is considered one of the strictest such laws in the country, in part because it allows private citizens to sue companies for allegedly breaking the law. Since its passage in 2008, the law has sparked hundreds of lawsuits.

Illinois residents who use Snapchat have until Nov. 5 to submit claims in a biometric privacy case settled by the app's parent company, Snap Inc., last month. The company reached a \$35 million settlement over allegations its lenses and filters violated state law.

Snap did not admit wrongdoing in the [settlement](#) and maintains its technology does not violate Illinois law. A spokesperson said last month the [company](#) had rolled out in-app consent for lenses and filters in Illinois "out of an abundance of caution."

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