

Obama Museum Costs More to Get Into Than Any Other Presidential Library

The Obama Presidential Center Museum will charge adults \$30 for admission when it opens in Chicago on June 19, making it the priciest presidential library in American history, according to a Wall Street Journal report published Friday.

The \$30 ticket is 59% higher than the average entry price for all presidential libraries since John F. Kennedy, the Journal found. The Nixon library, previously the most expensive, runs \$29. Other comparison prices: \$26 for George W. Bush, \$25 for Ronald Reagan, \$24 for John F. Kennedy, \$16 for Lyndon Johnson, \$14 for Gerald Ford, \$12 for Bill Clinton, and \$12 for George H.W. Bush.

Illinois residents get a slight discount at \$26 for adults and \$15 for children, but they must bring proof of residency. "Show proof of residency at the Museum with a valid photo ID, Illinois driver's license, state ID, or city-issued ID," the foundation's ticket page states. The requirement drew immediate ridicule from critics who noted that Democrats have spent years aggressively fighting similar ID requirements for voting.



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The admission cost is only one of several records set by the project. The presidential center, which sprawls across 19 acres on Chicago's South Side, cost over \$850 million to build. The original estimate was \$300 million. For context, George W. Bush's entire presidential library came in around \$500 million.

The museum is also the longest delayed presidential library on record. Obama left office on January 20, 2017. The center opens 3,427 days later. The previous record holder was George H.W. Bush at 1,751 days.

“Our campus is free and open to the public, with the exception of the four floors of the museum,” Emily Bittner, a foundation spokeswoman, told the Journal. “We offer tremendous new amenities that no other presidential center provides, like an NBA-regulation-size basketball court, two-level playground, recording studio, classroom spaces and more than two dozen newly commissioned pieces of public art.”

Former President Joe Biden has not yet secured significant funding for his own presidential center. Planning has already begun for President Donald Trump’s library, which is set to be built on the Miami waterfront.

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