

Dept. of Justice: Attorney General Kaul announces \$700 million settlement with Google over Play Store misconduct

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MADISON, Wis. – Attorney General Josh Kaul and a bipartisan group of 52 other attorneys general today announced a \$700 million agreement with Google in their lawsuit about Google’s anticompetitive conduct with the Google Play Store.

“Consumers shouldn’t have to pay extra because of anticompetitive practices,” said Attorney General Josh Kaul. “The Wisconsin Department of Justice will continue working to protect people’s pocketbooks and to ensure that markets are competitive.”

Google will pay \$630 million in restitution, minus costs and fees, to consumers who made purchases on the Google Play Store between August 2016 and September 2023 and were harmed by Google’s anticompetitive practices. People eligible for restitution do not have to submit a claim – they will receive automatic payments through PayPal or Venmo, or they can elect to receive a check or ACH transfer. More details about that process will be forthcoming. The agreement also requires Google to make their business practices more procompetitive in a number of important ways.

The attorneys general alleged that Google unlawfully monopolized the market Android app distribution and in-app payment processing and that Google signed anticompetitive contracts to prevent other app stores from being preloaded on Android devices, bought off key app developers who might have launched rival app stores, and created technological barriers to deter consumers from directly

downloading apps to their devices. The states announced a settlement in principle on September 5, 2023, and today released the finalized terms of that deal.

The settlement requires Google to reform its business practices in the following ways:

- Give all developers the ability to allow users to pay through in-app billing systems other than Google Play Billing for at least five years.
- Allow developers to offer cheaper prices for their apps and in-app products for consumers who use alternative, non-Google billing systems for at least five years.
- Permit developers to steer consumers toward alternative, non-Google billing systems by advertising cheaper prices within their apps themselves for at least five years.
- Not enter contracts that require the Play Store to be the exclusive, pre-loaded app store on a device or home screen for at least five years.
- Allow the installation of third-party apps on Android phones from outside the Google Play Store for at least seven years.
- Revise and reduce the warnings that appear on an Android device if a user attempts to download a third-party app from outside the Google Play Store for at least 5 years.
- Maintain Android system support for third-party app stores, including allowing automatic updates, for four years.
- Not require developers to launch their app catalogs on the Play Store at the same time as they launch on other app stores for at least four years.
- Submit compliance reports to an independent monitor who will ensure that Google is not continuing its anticompetitive conduct for at least 5 years.

A copy of the settlement is available [here](#).

AAG Gwendolyn Lindsay Cooley represents the State of Wisconsin in this matter.