



CHARITABLE GAMING

What You Need to Know



Is your organization thinking of conducting a raffle, bazaar or BINGO event?
Along with raising money, this can be a team-builder for your members and a great idea for increasing awareness of an organization. But along with the fun, it is important to know that these games are all regulated by Connecticut State Statutes and must be properly permitted within the town they will be conducted.
You MUST have a permit prior to printing and selling tickets/chances for your fundraising event.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Q: Is my organization required to obtain a permit before conducting a raffle, bazaar or BINGO event?

A: YES. It is illegal to conduct any charitable/fundraising gaming events without the proper permit or registration. This includes parent-teacher and religious organizations. If you are conducting the event in Simsbury, you must obtain the permit through the Records Division of the Simsbury Police Department. Even "small" raffles with one prize must have a permit if chances/tickets are sold for it. You may not sell tickets nor conduct any part of the game of chance fundraising until you receive your permit.

Q: How do I know if my organization qualifies to apply for a permit to conduct a raffle, bazaar or BINGO event?

A: The organization must be a charitable, civic, educational, fraternal, veterans or religious organization, volunteer fire department or grange that has been officially organized and recognized for at least two (2) years before permit application. Also eligible are political parties and a municipality acting through a committee designated to celebrate the Town's centennial, bicentennial, or any other centennial celebration.

Q: I want to personally raise money for a specific person or family.

Can I legally conduct a raffle to do so?

A: NO. Individuals may not legally raise funds through gaming (raffles, etc.), no matter how well intended. You must be registered as a public charity or be sponsored by a public charity, and obtain a permit, in order to conduct charitable gaming. The funds raised must support the organization's mission.

Q: May cash be given as a prize?

A: Generally, no. There are a few exceptions that allow cash prizes (e.g., most duck race and golf ball-drop raffles, blower ball game bazaar, 50/50 bazaar). Churches, volunteer fire companies and veterans organizations have additional exceptions.

Q: May alcohol be given as a prize?

A: No.

Q: Can we hire an outside company/person to run the event for us?

A: No, this is not allowed by state statute. Only active qualified, bona fide adult members of the applicant organization may promote and run the event. People 16 and above may generally sell tickets.

Q: What can happen if my organization conducts a charitable gaming event without obtaining the required permit or registration?

A: Per state statute P.A. 17-231 §17, persons shall be fined not more than one thousand dollars or imprisoned not more than one year or be both fined and imprisoned for violations. Violations may be referred to the office of the state's attorney for investigation and action. Additionally, a permit may be revoked and your organization will be ineligible to obtain a permit for three (3) years.

Q: May we conduct a "Las Vegas Night" event and/or use a prize wheel, AKA money wheel?

A: NO. Las Vegas Night events and money/prize wheels have not been legal since January 7, 2003. You may not make your own equipment nor use existing equipment.

Q: Are auctions and free door prizes (no ticket purchase) regulated the same way?

A: No, they do not fall under "gaming."

Q: What is the time frame for obtaining a permit?

A: Submit your application thirty (30) days, or more, prior to the date you wish to sell tickets/have event. Submit to the Records Division. Most permits will be finalized in fewer than thirty days. However, there are busy fundraising seasons and we receive multiple applications at once. Thorough review and investigation are done for each application. *We reserve the right to increase the lead time should it become necessary. Check our website.*

CONTACT THE RECORDS DIVISION OF THE SIMSBURY POLICE DEPARTMENT WITH QUESTIONS:

In-person: Police Dept., lower level of Town Hall at 933 Hopmeadow Street, Simsbury CT 06070

Telephone: 860-658-3125 Hours: Monday-Friday, 7:00 AM – 3:00 PM (except holidays)

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