



OLR RESEARCH REPORT

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CHARITABLE GAMING FOR SCHOOL FUNDRAISING

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You asked what types of charitable games an educational organization may hold for fundraising.

SUMMARY

Educational organizations may promote, operate, or sponsor bingo, bazaars, and raffles, subject to state law and Department of Consumer Protection (DCP) gaming regulations. They may also sell sealed tickets at bingo games and bazaars and in conjunction with social events they conduct or sponsor. Sealed tickets are cards with tabs that, when pulled, reveal images, symbols, or numbers that entitle the holder to a prize if they match a designated winning combination.

Organizations wishing to promote or conduct any of these charitable gaming activities should contact DCP for more details about qualifications and help in obtaining the requisite permits. Additional information on the laws and regulations is available at:

<http://www.ct.gov/dcp/cwp/view.asp?a=4107&q=483094>.

BINGO

The law allows educational organizations to conduct bingo in towns that have voted to approve bingo (CGS § [7-169\(d\)](#)).

An educational organization promoting or conducting bingo must get a DCP permit, which determines the number of events, frequency, and prize limits. As a prerequisite, the organization must register with DCP and get a DCP identification number (CGS § 7-169a). It must have been organized for at least two years before applying for the permit (CGS § [7-169\(d\)](#)).

Only a sponsoring organization's qualified members may promote and operate bingo. But DCP may allow qualified members of other registered organizations to help (CGS § 7-169). The organization may award cash, merchandize, lottery tickets, or personal property as prizes and must keep accurate records of receipts and disbursements available for DCP inspection. It must also file financial returns, and pay a regulation fee of 5% of the gross receipts, less prizes, from the bingo session.

The law has special provisions allowing parent teacher associations or organizations to operate bingo without a permit (CGS § [7-169e](#)). They may operate without a permit if they (1) annually register with DCP and pay an annual \$80 registration fee, (2) obtain a DCP identification number, (3) charge not more than \$1 admission fee, (4) have individual prizes of cash or merchandise that do not exceed \$50, and (5) only have active members volunteer to assist in operating the games. These organizations must keep accurate records, which must be available for DCP inspection.

Operating without a permit or in violation of the laws or regulations carries a penalty of up to \$200, imprisonment of up to 60 days, or both (CGS § [7-169\(k\)\(5\)](#)).

BAZAARS AND RAFFLES

The law allows educational organizations to conduct, operate, or sponsor bazaars and raffles, provided they get a local permit, in any town that has adopted the Bazaars and Raffles Act. A "bazaar" is any place a sponsoring organization maintains for disposing of merchandise awards by means of chance. A "raffle" is an arrangement for raising money by the sale of tickets, as determined by chance after the sale, entitling the holders to prizes (CGS § [7-170](#)).

DCP regulations allow sponsoring organizations to conduct the following games of chance at bazaars: knock-a-block games, dime pitches onto a flat surface, jar ticket games, straw games, lollipop games, duck pond games, fifty-fifty games, and other games DCP approves (Conn. Agencies Regs. 7-185-10b). By law, they may also conduct golf

ball drop, cow-chip, teacup, and duck- and frog-race raffles (CGS § [7-185a](#)).

To get the requisite permit, an organization must have been organized in good faith and actively functioning as a nonprofit organization within the municipality that is to issue the permit for at least six months before applying. The permit determines raffle frequency, deadlines, and prize limits. Only a sponsoring organization's qualified members may volunteer to promote and operate bazaars and raffles, and the organization must designate in its permit application three members who will be in charge. People under age 18 may not promote, conduct, or work at bazaars or raffles; and people under age 16 may not sell raffle tickets or promote ticket sales (CGS § [7-172](#)).

Organizations may award merchandise, tangible personal property, tickets (including lottery tickets), coupons, or gift certificates as prizes. Cash prizes may be awarded for (1) blower ball games (up to \$50) and (2) golf drop, duck- and frog-race, or traditional raffles (CGS §§ [7-177](#) and [7-177a](#)). After the events, organizations must submit financial reports either to DCP or the police chief of the town that issued the permit, depending on the type of permit (CGS § [7-182](#)).

Anyone who violates the bazaar and raffle laws or regulations or operates without the requisite permit is subject to a fine of up to \$1,000, imprisonment of up to one year, or both (CGS § [7-186](#)).

SEALED TICKETS

Any organization wanting to sell sealed tickets must get a DCP permit (CGS § [7-169h\(b\)](#)). The law allows educational organizations to sell sealed tickets in conjunction with social functions or events that they sponsor (CGS § [7-169h\(h\)\(4\)](#)). Organizations may buy sealed tickets from DCP-registered distributors or from DCP (if available) (CGS § [7-169h\(i\)](#)).

Sealed tickets may only be sold, offered for sale, displayed, or open to public view only (1) during bazaar or bingo games, (2) on the organization's premise, or (3) in connection with a sponsored social function. People under the age of 18 may not buy sealed tickets (CGS § [7-169h\(k\)](#)).

DCP may impose a civil penalty of up to \$500 for violations (CGS § [7-169h\(n\)\(3\)](#)).

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