

### DISCLAIMER

The Pennsylvania Department of Revenue has prepared this overview on Pennsylvania's Local Option Small Games of Chance Act, 1988 P.L. 1262, No. 156, as amended, for use by the general public. This overview is for informational purposes only. Nothing contained herein should be considered legal advice. Any person or entity with legal questions regarding the Local Option Small Games of Chance Act should review the provisions of the Act for guidance and consult private legal counsel.

### INTRODUCTION

The Pennsylvania Crimes Code provides that all forms of gambling are illegal unless the Pennsylvania Legislature specifically authorizes the gambling activity by statute.

Gambling exists when there is a payment of consideration or a fee or something of value for the opportunity for a prize or reward, the winner of which is determined by chance. Effectively, the three elements are: (1) consideration, (2) chance, and (3) prize or reward.

Currently, the only authorized and legal forms of gambling in Pennsylvania are:

- Those gambling activities conducted pursuant to the Race Horse Industry Reform Act.
- Pennsylvania Lottery (including Powerball and Mega Millions).
- Bingo conducted pursuant to the Bingo Law.
- Those gambling activities conducted pursuant to the Pennsylvania Race Horse Development and Gaming Act (Slots and Table Games).
- Those gambling activities conducted pursuant to the Local Option Small Games of Chance Act.
- Those gambling activities conducted pursuant to the Sport Raffle Charities Act (SRCA).

This overview is focused on the requirements of the Local Option Small Games of Chance Act.

The Pennsylvania Local Option Small Games of Chance Act was passed in 1988 and has been amended several times since its enactment.

The small games of chance law authorizes certain non-profit organizations, known as eligible organizations (including club licensees), and for-profit taverns to conduct small games of chance.

### TYPES OF GAMES

#### LICENSED ELIGIBLE ORGANIZATIONS

Licensed eligible organizations are authorized to conduct the following games of chance:

- Pull-tab games.
- Punchboards.
- Raffles (including special permit raffles).
- Daily drawings.
- Weekly drawings.
- Fifty-fifty (50/50) drawings.
- Race Night Games.
- Pools.

#### Tavern Gaming Licensee

Tavern gaming licensees are authorized to conduct the following types of games, known as "tavern games":

- Pull-tab games.
- Tavern raffles, which are limited to once a month and must designate at least half of net revenue from the raffle to a designated charity.
- Tavern daily drawings.

### TYPES OF LICENSES

#### Eligible Organization Licenses

There are two types of licenses available to eligible organizations: A regular license and a monthly license. An eligible organization may conduct all forms of games of chance under either license type.

- **Regular License:** A regular license is an annual license, and the term runs for a calendar year from the date of issuance. The fee for an annual license is \$125.
- **Monthly License:** A monthly license is valid for 30 consecutive days from the date of issuance. The fee for a monthly license is \$25.
- **Special Raffle Permits:** Special raffle permits are available to regular and monthly licensees. The special raffle permit authorizes a holder to conduct a raffle that exceeds the normal prize limits applicable to games of chance. As a general rule, a licensed eligible organization may obtain up to 10 special raffle permits. Total prizes awarded under all special raffle permits may not exceed \$150,000. Volunteer fire, ambulance, rescue, or conservation organizations

may obtain up to 12 special raffle permits and award up to \$250,000 in prizes.

### **Tavern Gaming Licenses**

There is only one type of license available to a tavern: a tavern gaming license. Taverns that obtain a tavern gaming license from the Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board (PLCB) are authorized to offer pull-tab games, tavern raffles, and tavern daily drawings.

The tavern gaming license is an annual license issued and renewed by the PLCB. For additional information about the tavern gaming licensing process, visit [lcb.pa.gov](http://lcb.pa.gov).

## **ADMINISTRATION AND ENFORCEMENT**

Small games of chance law is administered and enforced by several different government entities: licensing authorities, the Department of Revenue, the PLCB, the Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board (PGCB), and law enforcement officials.

### **Licensing Authorities**

The licensing authorities for club licensees and eligible organizations seeking to offer small games of chance are the county treasurers in each of Pennsylvania's 67 counties. Where there is no county treasurer, such as in a home-rule county or city of the first class, the licensing authority is the designee of the governing body. The licensing authority is responsible for licensing eligible organizations to conduct games of chance in the commonwealth and for issuing special raffle permits. For tavern gaming, the PLCB is the licensing authority.

### **Department of Revenue**

The department is charged with several responsibilities under small games of chance law, as follows:

- Registration of games of chance manufacturers.
- Reviewing and approving pull-tab games and punchboards for use in the commonwealth.
- Licensing of distributors to sell pull-tabs, punchboards, and race night games for use in the commonwealth.
- Receipt and retention of games of chance reports from clubs.
- Random audits of 5 percent of club licensees every two years.
- Administration of the state and host municipality tavern games taxes.
- Limited regulatory authority related to manufacturer registration, distributor licensing, games of chance, and games of chance records and reports.

### **PLCB**

The PLCB is responsible for licensing taverns to conduct tavern games in the commonwealth, and it may also impose penalties for tavern licensees' violation of small games of chance law, including suspension or revocation of tavern gaming licenses.

### **PGCB**

The PGCB's Bureau of Investigations and Enforcement is responsible for conducting background investigations of each tavern game license applicant.

### **Law enforcement officials**

Commonwealth law enforcement officials – including local police, state police, the Bureau of Liquor Control Enforcement, local district attorneys, and the Attorney General – are responsible for overseeing the operation of games of chance and for bringing civil and criminal charges against organizations and individuals for violations of the law.

## **SALE/PURCHASE OF GAMES OF CHANCE**

Pull-tab games, punchboards, and race night games for use in the commonwealth may only be produced by manufacturers registered with the Department of Revenue. Distributors may only purchase small games of chance from registered manufacturers, and taverns and eligible organizations licensed to sell small games of chance must purchase them from distributors licensed by the Department of Revenue. Listings of small games of chance manufacturers and distributors are available at [revenue.pa.gov/sgoc](http://revenue.pa.gov/sgoc).

Tickets and other products used to play other types of games of chance do not have to be purchased from a registered manufacturer or licensed distributor. Only licensed eligible organizations, including club licensees, and tavern gaming licensees may purchase and operate games of chance in the commonwealth.

## **ELIGIBLE ORGANIZATIONS**

An **eligible organization** is one of the following types of entities: a charitable, religious, fraternal or veterans' organization; a club, civic, and service association; or an affiliated non-profit organization of a major league sports team. An eligible organization must be in existence and fulfilling its purpose for one year in order to be eligible for a games of chance license.

An **auxiliary group** of an eligible organization is not an eligible organization and is not eligible for its own small games of chance license. However, an auxiliary group may conduct games of chance using the license of its parent eligible organization so long as the auxiliary group is listed on the eligible organization's license application. All games of chance conducted by the auxiliary group are considered as if they were conducted by the eligible organization.

A **club licensee** is a specific type of eligible organization. Any organization that is an 'exempt organization' under the Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c) or 527, which is licensed to sell liquor under Section 404 of the Pennsylvania Liquor Code, is a 'club'. If it obtains a games of chance license from the county treasurer, it is a 'club licensee' for small games of chance purposes. Club licensees, unlike other licensed eligible organizations that can only use games of chance proceeds for public interest purposes, can use

some games of chance proceeds for operating expenses. Annual reporting requirements apply for club licensees.

## TAVERNS

A tavern eligible for a tavern gaming license is defined as a hotel, restaurant, privately owned public golf course, brew pub, or microbrewery with a valid license to sell alcohol under the Liquor Code and which is located in a municipality that allows small games of chance.

The following are not eligible for tavern gaming licenses: eating place retail dispenser (“E”) licensees; limited wineries (“LK”); limited distilleries (“AL”); any tavern located in a municipality that has not authorized small games of chance; a grocery store, including a restaurant with an interior connection to a grocery store; a restaurant where the sale of liquid fuels or oil is conducted; a hotel or restaurant located in a casino; a business on the grounds of a public venue facility where a major league sports team or racing facility conducts games or races; any liquor license held in safekeeping; any liquor license declared to be a nuisance under Section 611 of the Liquor Code; and any liquor license under objection by the PLCB as a nuisance bar.

The PLCB issues tavern gaming licenses. For additional information about the tavern gaming licensing process, visit [lcb.pa.gov](http://lcb.pa.gov).

## PRIZE LIMITS

### Eligible Organizations/Club Licensees

The following **prize limits** apply:

- A prize for a single chance in any game may not exceed \$2,000.
- An eligible organization is limited to awarding \$35,000 in prizes during an operating week (seven consecutive, reoccurring operating or non-operating days).
- No more than \$15,000 may be awarded in raffles during a calendar month.

Limited **exceptions** to the prize limits exist:

- **Raffles conducted under a special permit:** Licensed eligible organizations can apply to the county treasurer for special permits. Raffles conducted under a special permit are not subject to the general prize limitations above. Licensed eligible organizations are eligible to receive up to 10 special permits and may award up to \$150,000 from all special permit raffles. Volunteer fire, ambulance, rescue or conservation organizations that are not club licensees are eligible for up to 12 special permits and may award up to \$250,000 from all special permit raffles.
- **Daily and weekly drawing carryovers:** Amounts paid out in a carryover daily drawing or a weekly drawing are not subject to the general prize limits. A carryover occurs when there is no winner in the prior daily or weekly drawing and the prize from such drawing is

carried over to be included as a prize in the next daily or weekly drawing.

- **100 percent payout drawings:** When a daily or weekly drawing is conducted to award 100 percent of the gross revenue from the game, then the prize does not count against the \$35,000 weekly prize limit.

### Tavern Gaming Licensees

All tavern games are subject to the following prize limits:

- A prize for a single chance in any tavern game may not exceed \$2,000.
- A tavern gaming licensee may not award more than \$35,000 in prizes during an operating week (seven consecutive, reoccurring operating or non-operating days).

There are no exceptions to the prize limits for tavern games.

## USE OF PROCEEDS OR NET REVENUE

### Eligible Organizations’/Club Licensees’ Use of Proceeds

Generally, all games of chance **proceeds**, except for proceeds from major league sports drawings, are to be used for public interest purposes. An eligible organization that has as its primary purpose the promotion of a public interest purpose may use small games of chance proceeds to carry out that purpose. “Public interest purpose” is defined as one or more of the following:

- The activities and operations of a nonprofit benevolent, religious, educational, philanthropic, humane, scientific, patriotic, social welfare, social advocacy, public health, public safety, emergency response, environmental, or civic objective [sic].
- Initiating, performing, or fostering worthy public works or enabling or furthering the erection or maintenance of public structures.
- Lessening the burdens borne by government or voluntarily supporting, augmenting, or supplementing services which government would normally render to the people.
- Improving, expanding, maintaining, or repairing real property owned or leased by an eligible organization and relating operational expenses used for purposes specified in bullet points (1), (2), and (3).
- Nonprofit youth sports activities.
- Activities relating to the provision of volunteer fire, ambulance, or rescue services.
- Activities conducted by a veterans organization, whether or not the veterans organization holds a club license. Activities under this paragraph may include:
  - Scholarships.
  - Services to economically or socially support veterans.
  - Activities to honor veterans.

- Other activities that qualify under bullet points (1), (2), (3), (4), (5), and (6).

The term does not include the erection or acquisition of any real property, unless the property will be used exclusively for one or more of the purposes specified in this definition. Games of chance proceeds may also be used to purchase games of chance and to pay for eligible organization license fees related to game of chance license applications.

In addition to public interest purposes, a club licensee may use up to 40 percent of its games of chance proceeds per calendar year for expenses of the club licensee. Any proceeds not used for expenses must be used for public interest purposes. So a club licensee must use, at a minimum, 60 percent of its proceeds for public interest purposes. If, however, a club licensee has games of chance proceeds of \$40,000 or less during a calendar, then in the following calendar year the club licensee may use the first \$20,000 of its proceeds for expenses of the club licensee in addition to the 40 percent. The \$20,000 is deducted before calculating the 60/40 split.<sup>1</sup>

All games of chance proceeds obtained by a club licensee must be expended within a year after the calendar year they were obtained,<sup>2</sup> with one exception. A club licensee may set aside some or all of its allotted proceeds that are allocated to pay for expenses, if such proceeds are to be used for a substantial public interest purchase or project. A club licensee is required to notify the department that it is retaining the proceeds for the project. See “Non-Tax Reporting Requirements” for additional information.

An eligible organization with proceeds in excess of \$40,000 is required to keep all small games of chance proceeds in a bank account separate from all other organization funds or accounts.

### **Tavern Gaming Licensees’ Use of Net Revenue**

The revenue from tavern games is considered business income of the tavern gaming licensee and may be used by the tavern licensee for any legal purpose subject to the following:

- Tavern raffles: At least 50 percent of net revenue from tavern raffles must be donated to a designated charity within seven days of the tavern raffle. The remaining 50 percent of net revenue is then subject to the state and host municipality tavern games taxes.
- State tavern games tax: 60 percent of net revenue from tavern games must be transmitted to the Department of Revenue as a state tax.
- Host municipality tax: 5 percent of net revenue from tavern games must be transmitted to the Department of Revenue as a local tax for the host municipality where the tavern gaming licensee is located.

A tavern gaming licensee is required to keep all net revenue from tavern games in a bank account separate from all other organization funds or accounts.

## **TAVERN GAMES TAXES**

A state tavern games tax and a local host municipality tavern games tax are imposed on the net revenue of all tavern games. The state tax is 60 percent, and the host municipality tax is 5 percent of net revenue from tavern games.

### **Tax on Pull-Tab Games**

Pull-tab games must be purchased from licensed distributors. Taverns pay state and local tavern games taxes at the time the pull-tab game is purchased from the distributor. The distributor is responsible for collecting the taxes and remitting them to the department.

For purposes of calculating the tax due, net revenue is the net/ideal profit from the pull-tab game as indicated by the manufacturer on the pull-tab game flare.

**Example:** A pull-tab game with a 1,000 pulls at \$1 per pull and a 70 percent payout has a net/ideal profit of \$300:  $(1,000 \times \$1) - \$700$  in prizes = \$300. The 60 percent state tavern games tax collectable at the time the pull-tab game is purchased from the distributor is \$180  $(\$300 \times 0.6)$ . The 5 percent host municipality tavern games tax collectable at the time the pull-tab game is purchased from the distributor is \$15  $(\$300 \times 0.05)$ .

Pull-tab games purchased by for-profit taverns are also subject to sales tax, which is 6 percent of the cost of the pull-tabs before tavern games tax is imposed (additional 1 percent local sales tax in Allegheny County and 2 percent local sales tax in Philadelphia). Sales tax is also collected from the tavern and remitted to the department by the distributor.

### **Tax on Other Tavern Games**

Tavern raffles and tavern daily drawings do not have to be purchased from licensed distributors. Therefore, the state and local taxes on these games are paid by the tavern gaming licensee.

For purposes of calculating tax due, net revenue is the difference between the gross revenue collected from the sale of chances in the game less the cost of prizes awarded in the game and the cost to purchase the game.

**Example 1:** A tavern sells 500 daily drawing tickets for \$1 each for a prize of 50 percent of ticket sales. Cost of the game is \$5 for a roll of tickets. Net revenue is \$245:  $\$500 - \$250$  prize - \$5. Tavern tax is imposed on \$245: state tax of \$147 (60 percent of \$245) and municipality tax of \$12.25 (5 percent of \$245).

**Example 2:** A tavern sells \$1 tickets for a daily drawing prize equaling 100 percent of ticket sales. In such case, there is no net revenue and therefore no tavern tax due.

**Example 3:** A tavern gaming licensee runs a tavern raffle with 50 percent of the revenue to benefit the local food bank. 1,000 tickets are sold for \$1 each over a course of the month for total gross revenue of \$1,000. One winner receives a prize of \$400. The raffle ticket printing costs



total \$10. Therefore, the remaining revenue is \$590: \$1,000 – \$400 – \$10. \$295 (50 percent of the remaining \$590) is given to the food bank as a charitable donation. The state and local tax is imposed on the other \$295: state tax of \$177 (60 percent of \$295) and host municipality tax of \$14.75 (5 percent of \$295).

### **Tax Payment and Reporting Requirements**

**Licensed distributors** must file tavern games tax returns and remit tax on a monthly basis. Returns and tax for each month are due on the 20<sup>th</sup> of the following month.

**Tavern gaming licensees** must file tavern gaming tax returns and remit tax on a quarterly basis. Returns and tax for each calendar quarter are due on the 20th of the month following the close of each calendar quarter: April 20, July 20, October 20, and January 20.

Tavern tax returns must be filed electronically at [revenue.pa.gov/sgoc](http://revenue.pa.gov/sgoc).

### **OTHER REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

Under federal law, games of chance winnings payments must be reported via W-2G when the amount paid is \$600 or more and at least 300 times the amount of the wager. The original W-2G is to be presented to the winner, a copy of each W-2G must be provided to the Department of Revenue and the IRS, and the tavern should keep a copy of each W-2G for its records (see “Record-Keeping Requirements”).

Additional information and W-2G forms are available at [irs.gov/forms-pubs/about-form-w-2-g](http://irs.gov/forms-pubs/about-form-w-2-g).

### **Club Licensees**

All club licensees with proceeds in excess of \$20,000 in a calendar year are required to submit annual reports to the Department of Revenue by Feb. 1, for the preceding calendar year.

Annual report filing information will be accessible at [revenue.pa.gov/sgoc](http://revenue.pa.gov/sgoc) when available.

Club licensees’ annual reports will require the following information:

- Proceeds received by the club licensee from each game of chance conducted, itemized by week.
- Amount of prizes paid from all games of chance, itemized by week.
- Other costs incurred related to the conduct of games of chance.
- Verification and itemization of amounts distributed for public interest.

A club licensee that retains games of chance proceeds for a substantial public interest purchase or project is required to give notice of the retention to the Department of Revenue via the club licensee’s annual report.

### **Tavern Gaming Licensees**

All tavern gaming licensees must submit an annual report to the PLCB and the Department of Revenue by Jan. 20, for the previous calendar year.

Annual report filing information will be accessible at [revenue.pa.gov/sgoc](http://revenue.pa.gov/sgoc) and the Liquor Control Board will provide resources to facilitate proper record-keeping for taverns at [revenue.pa.gov/tavern-gaming](http://revenue.pa.gov/tavern-gaming).

Tavern gaming licensees’ annual reports will require the following information:

- For **pull-tab games**: number of W-2Gs, gross winnings reported from W2-Gs, total gross revenue, total payable prizes, total net revenue, state/municipality tavern tax.
- For **tavern daily drawings & tavern raffles**: type of game, number of W-2Gs, gross winnings reported from W2-Gs, total gross revenue, total prizes paid, total net revenue, total amount donated (raffles), and state/municipality tavern gaming tax.

### **RECORD-KEEPING REQUIREMENTS**

#### **Licensed Eligible Organizations and Club Licensees:**

A licensed eligible organization is required to keep records related to games of chance activity sufficient to demonstrate the organization’s compliance with the law upon inspection or audit. A licensed eligible organization must retain its records for at least two years. A club licensee must maintain its records for at least five years.

Records must include the following:

- All sales invoices.
- Gross receipts from the conduct of each game of chance.
- The cost of each game of chance and other expenses related to the conduct of each game of chance.
- The total of prizes paid out for each game of chance and the cost or fair market value of each prize.
- The proceeds from the conduct of each game of chance.
- Totals for items enumerated in items 2 through 5 above for each operating day, operating week, calendar month, calendar year, and licensed term.
- Details as to how proceeds from games of chance were used or disbursed by the eligible organization.
- A record of any prize for which the licensed eligible organization is required to make a W-2G report to the IRS.
- A list of winners’ names and addresses for prizes in excess of \$600.
- For merchandise prizes, the licensed eligible organization is required to obtain a sales invoice showing the purchase price of the prize, or if the prize was donated to the licensed eligible organization, a

written statement from the donor indicating the fair market value of the prize.

A licensed eligible organization must also maintain records relating to the printing or purchase of materials to be used for raffles and daily and weekly drawings. Records should include an invoice or receipt from the place of purchase that shows the cost and number or amount of the materials purchased.

### **Tavern Gaming Licensees**

Record-keeping requirements for tavern gaming licensees may be found at [revenue.pa.gov/tavern-gaming](http://revenue.pa.gov/tavern-gaming). Taverns are advised to keep records similar to those identified above in order to facilitate tax filing and other reporting requirements, as well as to demonstrate compliance with small games of chance law. Additionally, the Department of Revenue will provide a spreadsheet to facilitate proper record-keeping for taverns at [revenue.pa.gov/sgoc](http://revenue.pa.gov/sgoc).

## **GAMES REGULATED BY THE DEPARTMENT**

The Department of Revenue regulates pull-tab games and punchboards sold for use in the commonwealth. All pull-tab games and punchboards must be pre-approved by the Department of Revenue before being offered for sale and use in the commonwealth. Although manufacturers and distributors of race night games must be registered and/or licensed with the Department of Revenue, race night games do not have to be pre-approved before being offered for sale or use in the commonwealth.

### **Pull-tab Game and Punchboard Definitions and Requirements**

- A *pull-tab game* is a deal of pull-tabs and its corresponding flare.
- A *pull-tab* is a game piece in a pull-tab game made completely of paper or paper products with concealed numbers or symbols that must be exposed by the player to reveal pre-determined winning numbers or symbols.
- A *punchboard* is a board, placard or other device comprised of receptacles, usually laid out in a grid or column pattern, containing a deal of hidden punches and its corresponding flare.
- A *punch* is a crimped strip of paper that is enclosed in a punchboard receptacle that contains pre-determined winning or losing numbers or symbols.
- A *deal* is a set of pull-tabs or punches.
- A *flare* is a card, graphic, illustration, or other document that identifies the rules for the game, the prize structure, payout percentages, and winning and losing numbers or symbols.

A **pull-tab game** must comply with the following:

- At least 65 percent of the maximum potential gross receipts from the sale of pull-tabs must be payable as prizes.

- A prize on an individual pull-tab may not exceed \$2,000.
- An individual pull-tab deal may not contain more than 4,000 individual pull-tabs.
- The flare advertising prizes available from the pull-tab deal must be made by the manufacturer and may only be altered by the eligible organization to indicate that merchandise of equivalent value will substitute for a cash prize.
- Only one flare may be displayed for each deal and must be placed on the face or on the top of the dispenser used to dispense pull-tabs.
- The flare must display the winning numbers or symbols for all prizes in the amount of \$5 or more, the manufacturer's name or logo and the cost per play.
- The pull-tab game must be manufactured by a registered manufacturer, approved by the Department of Revenue for use in the commonwealth and purchased from a licensed distributor.

A **punchboard** must comply with the following:

- At least 60 percent of the maximum potential gross receipts from the sale of punches in a punchboard must be payable as prizes.
- A prize on an individual punch may not exceed \$2,000.
- The flare advertising prizes available from the operation of the punch board must be made by the manufacturer and may only be altered by the eligible organization to indicate that merchandise of equivalent value will substitute for a cash prize.
- Only one flare may be displayed and must be on the face or on top of the punchboard.
- The flare must display the winning numbers or symbols for all prizes in the amount of \$5 or more, the manufacturer's name or logo, and the cost per play.
- The punchboard must be manufactured by a registered manufacturer, approved by the Department of Revenue for use in the commonwealth and purchased from a licensed distributor.