



Office of the District Attorney of Lancaster County
Lancaster, Pennsylvania

LOCAL OPTION SMALL GAMES OF CHANCE ACT – PROCEDURE FOR APPLYING FOR LICENSE

Procedure for Applying for a Local Option Small Games of Chance License

General Information:

The Pennsylvania Crimes Code provides that all forms of gambling are illegal unless the Pennsylvania Legislature specifically authorizes the activity. The elements of gambling are: 1) the payment of a consideration or fee, 2) for the chance to win a prize, 3) the winner of which is determined by chance. If these three elements are present the activity is “gambling” and is illegal unless legislatively sanctioned.

The Local Option Small Games of Chance Act (the Act) 1988 P.L. 1262, No. 156, as amended permits only those forms of gambling specifically sanctioned by the Act conducted by certain non-profit organizations known as “eligible organizations”. The Act declares that it is the policy of the General Assembly that all phases of licensing, operation and regulation of small games of chance be strictly controlled, and that all laws and regulations with respect thereto as well as all gambling laws should be strictly construed and rigidly enforced. Further, the General Assembly recognizes the possibility of association between commercial gambling and organized crime, and wishes to discourage commercialization of small games of chance, prevent participation by organized crime and prevent the diversion of funds from the purposes authorized by the Act.

Eligible organizations may only be licensed and games played in those municipalities that by voter referendum have approved the sale/playing of of small games of chance and issuance of licenses to conduct small games of chance within their municipality. A list of municipalities that have approved the issuance of small games of chance licenses as well as those that have not is available for viewing or downloading from this site.

There are limitations on prizes, how proceeds may be used, specific regulations as to locations where games are played, how games are played, how games are advertised and other rules and regulations that licensees must be familiar with. Licensees should become familiar with the Local Option Small Games of Chance Act, and review the Small Games of Chance Summary prepared by the Pennsylvania Department of Revenue. Both documents can be viewed or downloaded from this site.

Application for Initial Regular License:

An application for a **Local Option Small Games of Chance License** along with instructions is available from the Lancaster County Treasurer's Office, or it can be downloaded from this site. The application must be completed in its entirety, notarized and must then be taken to the **Lancaster County Treasurer's Office located in Suite 122 of the Lancaster County Government Center, 150 North Queen Street, Lancaster, PA 17603**, along with the documentation listed on page 2 of the application. The application and the accompanying documentation will be reviewed for compliance with the Act. If in compliance the Treasurer's Office will issue the license upon payment of the license fee of \$125.00. All licenses are issued by and fees paid to the Lancaster County Treasurer.

Be certain to review the instructions on Page 2 of the application in their entirety and include **ALL** the listed required documentation with the application.

Renewal of Regular License:

Eligible organizations seeking to renew their Local Option Small Games of Chance License must complete an application as they did in applying for their initial license. The documentation required for an initial license need not be provided, unless, there has been a change in any of the documentation i.e. bylaws have been amended, there has been a change in tax exempt status etc.

The application must be completed in its entirety, notarized and must then be taken to the **Lancaster County Treasurer's Office located in Suite 122 of the Lancaster County Government Center, 150 North Queen Street, Lancaster, PA 17603**. If in compliance the Treasurer's Office will issue the license upon payment of the license fee of \$125.00. All licenses are issued by and fees paid to the Lancaster County Treasurer.

Monthly License:

An eligible organization that does not wish to apply for a regular (yearly) license may apply for a monthly license that permits gaming for 30 consecutive days. The fee for a Monthly License is \$25.00. At the end of the 30 days, an eligible organization can apply for another Monthly License. The application process is the same as for a regular (yearly) license.

Special Raffle Permit:

A Special Raffle Permit is needed for each raffle with a cash prize or a prize value in excess of \$1,000.00. Only the holder of a Regular License is eligible to apply for and be granted a Special Permit. Each licensee is permitted to apply for and be granted no more than ten (10) Special Permits in a license year, except a volunteer fire, ambulance or rescue organization (that is not a club) may apply for and be granted no more than twelve (12) Special Permits per license year.

An application for a **Special Raffle Permit** is available from the Lancaster County Treasurer's Office, or it can be downloaded from this site. A Special Permit need not be notarized. Application for a Special Permit is made to the Lancaster County Treasurer's Office. The fee for a Special Raffle Permit is \$25.00.