

Charitable Gambling FAQs

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Q: Do I need to fill out an application to host a charity “poker night” fundraiser?

A: Yes. Both nonprofit organizations and gambling equipment/service suppliers are required to register with the Bureau annually.

Q: Are there registration fees?

A: Yes. Annual registration fees for nonprofit organizations and gambling equipment/service suppliers are \$100 each.

Q: Where can I find the form to host a “poker night” fundraiser?

A: The forms for nonprofit organizations and gambling equipment/service suppliers can be found on our Forms page, or by clicking <http://ag.ca.gov/gambling/forms.php>.

Q: Will I get something back from the Bureau of Gambling Control letting me know if or when my registration is approved?

A: Yes. Once registration is approved, a certificate will be issued. If a registration has not been approved, the contact person listed on the form will be notified via telephone so that any discrepancies can be resolved on a timely basis.

Q: What is the processing time frame for the application once submitted to the Bureau of Gambling Control?

A: One business week. Once registration is approved, a certificate is issued. If the nonprofit organization or gambling equipment/service supplier is not in compliance with local or state laws, approval or denial may take longer.

Q: What are “controlled games?”

A: “Controlled games” as identified in California Penal Code section 337j, subdivision (e), paragraph (1), to include poker, pai gow “and any other game played with cards or tiles, or both, and approved by the Department of Justice” as well as “any game of chance” played for something of value, unless such game is otherwise prohibited by statute or local ordinance. For a list of controlled games approved by the Department of Justice, see the [BGC Standard Game List](#).

Q: Do I need local law enforcement approval?

A: Yes. Check with the law enforcement agency that is in the jurisdiction where the fundraiser will be taking place. For example, if the nonprofit organization is having the fundraiser in within the city limits, contact the local Police Department. If the fundraiser is in the county, check with the Sheriff’s Office.

Q: I heard that nonprofit organizations could host 4 fundraisers per year, is this true?

A: No. AB 839 prohibits nonprofit organizations from conducting more than one fundraiser using controlled games per any one calendar year. Any one facility is permitted to rent, lease, or donate the facility for charity “poker night” fundraisers no more than four times per any one calendar year but it has to be for four different registered nonprofit organizations.

Q: Do I have to use a gambling equipment/service supplier who is registered with the Bureau of Gambling Control?

A: Yes. All gambling equipment/service suppliers doing business in California are required to register annually. Nonprofit organizations may choose a supplier who has not yet registered with the Bureau as long as that supplier registers prior to the fundraiser.

Q: If gambling equipment/services are donated, does the donator(s) have to register with the Bureau of Gambling Control? Or, if I as an affiliate of the nonprofit organization own my own equipment, do I need to register?

A: No. Suppliers who donate equipment do not need to register. Individuals affiliated with the nonprofit organization do not have to register as suppliers if they own their own equipment and donate it to the nonprofit organization.

Q: As a supplier of gambling equipment/services, what games may I offer?

A: The Bureau of Gambling Control only registers suppliers that provide “controlled games” to registered nonprofit organizations as a fundraising mechanism. For a list of controlled games approved by the Department of Justice, see the [BGC Standard Game List](#).