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MAKE YOUR CHARITABLE
GAMES MORE SUCCESSFUL

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Marketing and
best-practices toolkit

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SECTION **1**
**HOW TO USE
THIS TOOLKIT**

This toolkit is yours to use and the tips and ideas that follow are yours to consider, ignore or embrace. Not every idea in this toolkit will be right for you. Feel free to pick and choose what seems most relevant and useful to your organization.

In this booklet we've gathered tips and best practices from some of Colorado's leading charitable gaming managers. Inside you'll find ways to motivate staff, market your occasions, bring more excitement and variety to your gaming events, keep regular players happy and attract new players.

If you're just beginning to run a charitable gaming operation, this guide will help you get off to a strong start. If you've been at this for a while and are looking for a few ideas to give your charitable games a boost, then you've come to the right place.

We realize you're busy and are volunteering your time. That's why we have divided this toolkit into short sections for quick reference. Enjoy, and best wishes for great success in your efforts to raise money for your organization.

If you have any questions about this toolkit, or would like to offer suggestions of your own, please contact us at 303-869-4910 and licensing@coloradosos.gov



SECTION

2

BEST PRACTICES FOR BINGO GAMES AND PULL-TABS

HELPFUL TIPS FROM THE FIELD

This section includes suggestions on what types of bingo practices, pull-tabs and payout strategies are working well for leading charitable gaming operations in Colorado. For promotional ideas and more, see the Marketing section of this toolkit.

TIP #1: GIVE PLAYERS MORE CHANCES TO WIN (INCLUDING RAFFLES AND DOOR PRIZES)

Mixing things up holds people's interest and keeps them engaged. For instance, you can add excitement to an occasion by holding a raffle for 3 closed envelopes, each containing a different cash amount. Much like the three curtains in the game show "Let's Make a Deal", this plays to people's natural curiosity and desire for surprise. (Although the exact amount of money within each envelope can remain a secret, you are required to disclose the total cash amount in the three envelopes.)

Door prizes, where no purchase is required, are also an excellent way to create more excitement during an occasion. For door prizes and raffles, give players a chance to receive or purchase tickets soon after they enter and at different points throughout the occasion. Keep in mind that you must open door prizes to anyone who would like to participate, regardless of whether or not they buy bingo cards or pull-tabs.

TRENDS TO KNOW Many charitable gaming operations in Colorado

- Are increasing the number of double-action games, often committing an entire session to double action
- Draw more players over time by having smaller but more frequent must-go progressive jackpots (for instance, \$5,000 - \$8,000)
- Charge admission fees to their occasions. When they do, they'll often charge higher admission fees (around \$10) and lower pack prices (\$1 per pack).
- Go with fewer games and bigger payouts per game
- Create bigger crowds by offering \$1,199 progressive jackpots
- Generate more revenue with event games, which are described in Tip #2 in this section

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HELPFUL TIPS FROM THE FIELD

TIP #2: TRY EVENT GAMES, AND TRY SELLING MULTIPLE EVENT GAMES ON SPECIAL OCCASIONS

Without exception, successful managers report that event games help generate more revenue. An event game is a pull-tab that you can play by itself, but then also play again as part of a game-within-the-larger-bingo-game for another chance to win money.

On special occasions (such as when there's a must-go or you're holding a themed event around a holiday or sporting event) sell 5 or more event games in the course of one bingo occasion.

TIP #3: USE FLOOR SELLERS TO PROMOTE EVENT GAMES

Event games and progressive jackpots are popular with regulars and new players alike. And all players are more likely to participate in event games if you make it easy for them to buy pull-tabs. Other games managers suggest assigning a dedicated volunteer to those players who actively purchase event games and specials during the occasion. You might consider these players your 'big spenders'.

TIP #4: OFFER FACE-TO-FACE EXPLANATIONS

For new and inexperienced players it's also recommended that volunteers offer face-to-face explanations about game details and pull-tab opportunities. Do you remember your first bingo night? For starting players, it can all be pretty confusing.

TIP #5: OFFER DISCOUNTED PACK PRICES VIA COMBO PACKAGES, ESPECIALLY WITH ELECTRONIC MACHINES

In addition to delivering better value for each player, this also tends to help you sell more of the profitable progressive and double-action faces.

HELPFUL TIPS FROM THE FIELD

TIP #6: PURCHASE 'LAST SALE' PULL-TABS

Last sale pull-tabs are a special kind of pull-tab deal produced by manufacturers that allow players to win a cash prize by purchasing all of the remaining tickets in an open deal of pull-tabs. Last sales reduce the chance that sales of a particular pull-tab deal will dwindle over time, which stunts the cash flow and profits associated with that game. Rapid turnover of pull-tab games is a key factor in pull-tab success.

TIP #7: OFFER PULL-TABS THAT ARE PRICED AROUND \$1. OFFER AT MOST ONLY ONE 25-CENT PULL-TAB.

It takes a big stack of quarters to generate much revenue. \$1 is an amount that keeps players purchasing pull-tabs and participating in game events—and that puts you in a position to raise money.

TIP #8: PUT CUSTOMERS FIRST

A game night is a special occasion not unlike going out to dinner or the movies. Your volunteers can make an event more successful simply by smiling, engaging with new and established players, frequently walking the floor, and offering to help.

TIP #9: EMPHASIZE THE SOCIAL SIDE

Many bingo and charitable gaming players across Colorado report that they play because they're looking for new friends and acquaintances. For instance, players have said they turn to gaming because their spouses have passed away; their grandchildren live elsewhere or have grown older; or they are new to Colorado.

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WHAT'S THAT WORD MEAN AGAIN? OR COMMON TERMS DEFINED

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Double action	Two numbers in a single bingo square, which gives players double the chance of covering a square.
Event game	An event game is a pull-tab that you open once to play, but then can play again during a bingo occasion for another chance to win.
Last sale	A special kind of pull-tab deal that allows players to win a cash prize by purchasing all of the remaining tickets in an open deal of pull-tabs. Deals must be designated by the manufacturer as "last sale."
Must-go	When a progressive jackpot has to be paid out at a given occasion.
Progressive bingo	A bingo jackpot that keeps getting larger until it's won or the must-go jackpot size is reached.
Pickle	Another word for a pull-tab.
Pull-tabs	A card with perforated sides, which players pull off to see instantly whether they've won.

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SECTION

3

IDEAS FOR IMPROVING OPERATIONS AND THE PERFORMANCE OF VOLUNTEERS

Organizing and motivating a staff of volunteers is challenging. The most successful games managers develop a dependable core of tight-knit volunteers who enjoy socializing and feel a vested interest in helping gaming occasions go well.

Last-minute questions and stressful moments are inevitable. Whose turn is it? Who might become a solid staffer if you can get them to come once? Who's sick? Who can step up as a replacement? Whatever your organization, you should lean on your mission or cause to motivate and attract volunteers.

TRENDS TO KNOW

Many charitable gaming operations in Colorado

- Say player relations and customer service are keys to success
- Stress the importance of running a professional and fair game
- Emphasize the value of getting to know regular players and suggest calling them by their first names (this makes a big impression on players)
- Underscore the need to show your appreciation to volunteers and players by thanking them and inviting them to return
- Make sure to schedule volunteers in advance

HELPFUL TIPS FROM THE FIELD

TIP #1: DEVELOP A GO-TO GROUP OF CORE VOLUNTEERS

It's true in most organizations and places of work. A small cast of people leads and motivates everyone around them to perform at a higher level. Several games managers report that a small group of regular volunteers tend to feed off and drive each other to go above and beyond. They relax and have more fun. Their ease with each other becomes contagious during the game.

TIP #2: LET FRIENDS WORK TOGETHER

There's a legitimate concern that volunteers who are also friends will talk with each other instead of players. While this can happen, volunteers who are friends are more likely to create a more congenial atmosphere in the hall.

TIP #3: INVOLVE VOLUNTEERS IN YOUR GOALS

Be transparent with volunteers about your revenue desires and projections, and the vital importance of strong charitable gaming revenue to the goals of the sponsoring organization. Invite them to help you set goals, and then talk with them about how to work the gaming floor to increase spending by players.

HELPFUL TIPS FROM THE FIELD

TIP #4: MAKE IT MANDATORY

In cases where volunteers are reluctant, your organization may want to consider a mandatory commitment. If you do go this route, make sure you understand and comply with Bingo/Raffle Rule 2.2, which contains a few requirements and restrictions for mandatory volunteer commitments.

TIP #5: BEND THE EARS OF HALL OWNERS AND SUPPLIERS

Games managers with the most profitable operations see hall owners as partners—and with good reason. Most hall owners will share their firsthand experiences of what tactics and promotions work well for other gaming licensees.

Game suppliers are also an excellent source of information. They can tell you what trends are growing and working across Colorado. Please keep in mind that hall owners and suppliers are limited by Colorado law in their interaction with nonprofit licensees. If you have any questions about their involvement or the guidance they are providing you, please don't hesitate to contact the Secretary of State's Office.

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SECTION 4 PROMOTING AND MARKETING YOUR GAMES

Gaming licensees across Colorado are looking for easy-to-implement ideas to bring in more players. The following section is divided into promotional ideas designed to bring in people for a specific event and marketing ideas to help attract new players and retain current ones. For additional marketing tips from both the private and nonprofit sectors, look ahead to the section entitled *More new ideas to try*.

TRENDS TO KNOW Many charitable gaming operations in Colorado

- Post notices of their games and progressive jackpot amounts in the Bingo Bugle, on their own website, on hall websites, and inside halls on flyers
- Are finding success with stunt games or side games, including balloon, treasure chest and last man standing (see the *Terms Defined* section for definitions)
- Try using social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook to publicize occasions
- Are reaching out to frequent players via text message or email

PROMOTIONAL TIPS FROM THE FIELD

TIP #1: OFFER DOOR PRIZES AT EVERY OCCASION

These can even be small or quirky gifts. Some examples include gift cards, car vacuums, cell phone accessories, DVDs and t-shirts. The idea is to keep people in suspense and having fun.

TIP #2: OFFER SMALL INSTANT GIVEAWAYS

One of the most popular examples is a \$25 grocery store gift card.

TIP #3: ADVERTISE YOUR MISSION/CAUSE WHEN IT'S APPROPRIATE

In an earlier section of this toolkit, we talked about motivating volunteers by reminding them of your cause. When your cause is appropriate to the players you're trying to reach, you should certainly consider also making your cause part of your message—both before and during your gaming occasion.

Organizations that use gaming proceeds to benefit children or animals are the most likely to talk about the activities, needs and objectives of their members. For instance, a youth marching band or sports team might share the latest news that relates to the proceeds generated—competition results, trips taken, organizational achievements, etc. It's important to note, however, that mentioning the gross amount of money raised is often considered to be inappropriate.

WHAT'S THAT WORD MEAN AGAIN? OR COMMON TERMS DEFINED

- Balloon** A game in which people buy one of a number of balloons with sealed envelopes, some with prizes.
- Last man standing** The person with the worst bingo card wins. As numbers are called, people who have that number on their card sit. The last person standing wins.
- Treasure chest** Like the balloon game, people buy a ticket for a chance to open one of a number of treasure chests, each one having a different prize amount.



TIPS FOR MARKETING TO NEW PLAYERS

TIP #1: SEEK ONE-OFF ADVERTISING OPPORTUNITIES

Little league games, other local sports tournaments, craft fairs and farmers markets are good places to advertise your games to potential new players - even travelers that might just be in town for that event and looking for entertainment. When possible, look for something that naturally relates to the cause you're supporting. A basketball tournament, for instance, would be a good place for organizations supporting youth activities to reach potential players.

TIP #2: ALWAYS SPREAD THE WORD ABOUT YOUR ORGANIZATION'S PUBLICATIONS AND EVENTS

It's surprising how often hard-working and dedicated games managers forget to market their occasions on their own websites, newsletters, business cards, offices and events. Everything that's yours (also known as owned media) is a place to spread the message about bingo. (For examples, see the *Template Samples* section.)

TIP #3: INVITE GROUPS

Use flyers to reach out to book clubs, social clubs, business groups, ethnic groups, and any club that can bring a number of people to your games. Post tear-off flyers in places where people are likely to congregate. (For an example of a flyer format, see the *Template Samples* section.)

TIPS FOR MARKETING TO FREQUENT PLAYERS

TIP #1: PROVIDE FREQUENT UPDATES

Keep regular players informed about upcoming events and promotions. Ask volunteers to talk to regulars and hand out flyers.

TIP #2: ASK FOR CONTACT INFORMATION

Ask regular players for their email addresses to send them updates and news. This is called permission or opt-in marketing and is an effective way of building a base of loyal players.

TIP #3: ASK IF THEY'RE WILLING TO RECEIVE TEXTS

What excites leading games managers about texting is that it makes it possible to send "text blasts" to promote jackpot news, significant door prizes, theme nights, and even promotions that happen during a gaming occasion.

TIP #4: USE GIVEAWAYS TO INCREASE THE POPULARITY OF SPECIFIC OCCASIONS

Free giveaways are enormously effective at professional sporting events. On some occasions, show your appreciation for players by advertising and then offering free giveaways.

TIP #5: SHOW YOUR APPRECIATION WITH DISCOUNTS

Any discount has to be available to the general public, but discounts will be most appreciated by regular players. (An example might be "Every Wednesday get 3 for 2 pricing.")

SECTION **5**
**WHEN AND HOW
 TO USE COUPONS**

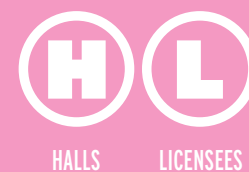
Coupons are a great way to bring in players for a gaming occasion and to motivate them to spend more on food, drink, bingo cards and packs. But you'll want to make sure you're following state law as to who can use a coupon for charitable gaming and when. The chart at right offers a handy guide to help you remember. Here are the basics:

- Both game licensees and hall owners can offer coupons for concessions
- Both game licensees and hall owners can offer coupons for bingo supplies such as daubers (but only if these supplies are offered by the hall)
- Hall owners but not licensees can offer coupons for bingo cards and sheets (although hall owners must reimburse licensees for the cost)
- Purchased coupons (such as Groupons) are not allowed
- Coupons for pull-tabs are not allowed

What might a coupon offer? You might offer dollars off or a 10% discount on concessions or daubers. Hall owners can also propose similar discounts on bingo cards, packs and sheets, though they must reimburse the licensee for the discounted amount. (Many experienced games managers suggest negotiating with hall owners to offer coupons for bingo cards and sheets.)

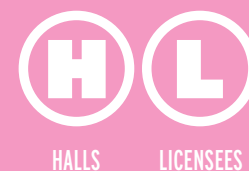
**WHEN AND HOW
 TO USE COUPONS**

The chart below makes it easy to remember when, where and whether you can use coupons.



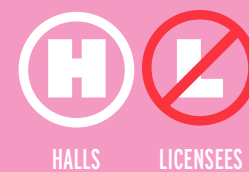
COUPONS FOR CONCESSIONS?

Halls and Licensees can offer coupons for concessions. If playing in a hall, the licensee can pay the hall back for the amount of the concession or establish an agreement with the hall for the coupon.



COUPONS FOR BINGO SUPPLIES (E.G. DAUBERS, ETC.)?

Halls and Licensees may offer coupons for bingo supplies if the supplies are sold by the hall.



FREE COUPONS FOR BINGO CARDS AND SHEETS?

A hall must reimburse the licensee for the discounted amount on the coupon. Additionally, reimbursement must occur at the time of "sale" of the card/pack by the licensee. (Rule 4.1.5)



PURCHASED COUPONS (E.G. GROUPON, ETC.)?

Halls and Licensees are prohibited from selling coupons or vouchers for bingo cards, sheets, raffle tickets, or admission. (Rules 4.1.1(a)(2), 4.1.4, and 4.1.5(b))



COUPONS FOR PULL-TABS?

The structure and pricing of pull-tabs are set by the manufacturer/supplier and licensees must conduct the games according to this set structure. (Rule 5.1.1)

SECTION 6

MORE IDEAS TO TRY

MORE IDEAS TO TRY

The tips and best practices throughout this toolkit represent wisdom collected over years (and rounds of trial and error) from experienced charitable operations in Colorado. Of course there are many other marketing and promotional ideas to consider. We've consulted with Colorado marketing companies and have compiled a short list of ideas that are easy and inexpensive to implement.

NETWORK

Even businesses with big marketing budgets consider networking to be one of their best sources of new customers. While you don't have to hold to the advice of "never lunching alone", you can use your charitable activities as a reason to look to your personal relationships, make more connections - and encourage your volunteers to do the same. If you're comfortable using the Internet, set up a LinkedIn account to build and grow your network.

LOOK FOR CROSS-PROMOTION OPPORTUNITIES

Ask small businesses to post notice of your gaming occasions. In return, you can offer to let them post information about their business during your gaming occasion.

ISSUE A PRESS RELEASE

For \$99 PRweb.com will take a short announcement you write and distribute it to journalists, news sites and web search engines. When you have a gaming occasion that is a natural news story (say, for instance, a high school music program raising money to travel) you might consider trying PRweb.com and deciding whether it can be an additional marketing tool for your organization in the future. You can read more at <http://service.prweb.com/how-it-works/>

INVITE FEEDBACK

You don't have to guess what players want. Just ask them. A great way to deepen your relationship with players is to ask them to fill out a short survey. Invite them to tell you what they enjoy, don't like, and might like to see more often.

BUILD A SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE

There are free online tutorials to help you set up Facebook and Google Plus pages in just a few minutes. While not all and perhaps few players will be heavy social media users, social networking sites can help you find and attract new audiences. Other than the limited time you spend setting up your Facebook and Google Plus profiles, basic social media efforts don't cost anything. And if people are searching for charities or charitable gaming, you want them to be able to find yours. Think of it this way: social networking sites provide another way to serve customers and to start a one-to-one conversation with current and potential players. Here are links to get started. If you search YouTube, you will also find dozens of free tutorial videos to help you set up your page.

HOW TO SET UP A LINKEDIN PAGE

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/home>

HOW TO SET UP A GOOGLE PLUS ACCOUNT

<https://plus.google.com/pages/create>

HOW TO SET UP A FACEBOOK PAGE

<https://www.facebook.com/business/overview/>

BLOG ABOUT YOUR CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

WordPress.com provides free tools to set up a blogging site, which you can use to generate content and updates about your charitable activities. Your blog site will serve as yet another place where people can learn about the important work your gaming occasions are helping to underwrite.

SEARCH ONLINE FORUMS FOR POTENTIAL PLAYERS

Conduct Google searches on events related to your organization's mission. You'll find whether and where there are online discussion forums frequented by people who are interested in activities related to your cause. These are people whom you should naturally invite to your gaming occasions.

SECTION **7**
**TEMPLATE
 SAMPLES**

How might your poster look? How should you lay out a flyer? To help you get started with marketing and promoting your gaming occasion, here are examples of templates and the kind of messages you might use. Feel free to take these as inspiration and then customize the message to make it relevant to your organization.

Specific messages will vary depending on variables such as door prizes and must-go progressive jackpots. Think of the most compelling reason people should attend your gaming occasion and then lead with that reason.



Poster

Elements to consider when creating good marketing materials

Attractive headline

Reference to charity and charitable cause

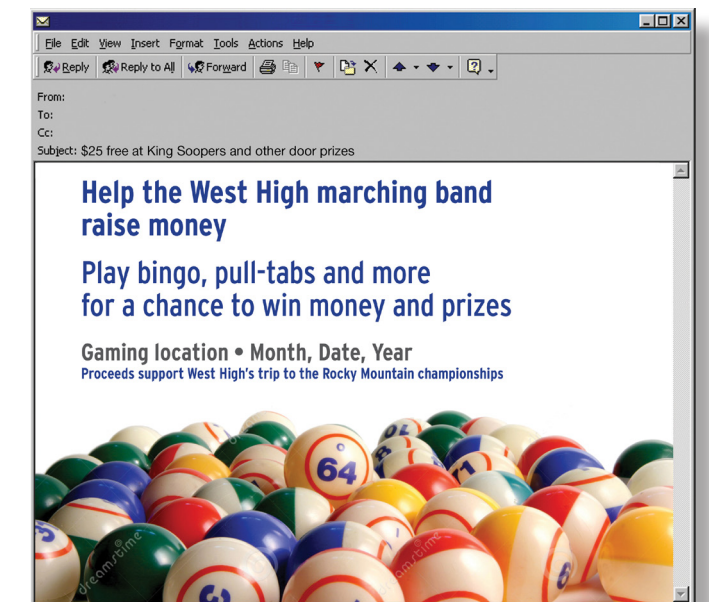
Location and date/time

**TEMPLATE
 SAMPLES**

Flyer



Email



TEMPLATE SAMPLES

THANK YOU

Postcard



Coupon



The Colorado Secretary of State's Office provides free online training for bingo and raffles games managers, although actual certification costs \$20. Simply type the following address in your Internet browser and then go to the first link entitled Bingo and Raffles Games Manager Training. https://www.sos.state.co.us/pubs/info_center/training.html

SOS Bingo/Raffle Home Page: For information and resources from the Secretary of State's Bingo/Raffle Program, go to https://www.coloradosos.gov/pubs/bingo_raffles/bingoHome.html?menuheaders=1

Consultation Services: Our office provides one-on-one support for preparing new and renewal license applications. You can sign up for the service using the web-based form at https://www.coloradosos.gov/pubs/bingo_raffles/consult.html

Bingo/Raffle Newsletter: The Bingo/Raffle Newsletter is a quarterly publication that includes brief articles on upcoming events, changes to rules and regulations, industry financial trends, and other topics of interest. This Internet address will take you to archived issues of the newsletter. https://www.coloradosos.gov/pubs/bingo_raffles/newsletter.html

FAQs: Find answers to frequently asked questions about everything from coupons to prizes to electronic bingo aids. https://www.coloradosos.gov/pubs/bingo_raffles/bingoFAQ.html

Success Stories: Our office collects and publishes success stories from licensees throughout the state. You can access these stories to get new ideas for their own games. Or, submit your own stories. https://www.coloradosos.gov/pubs/bingo_raffles/success.html

Bingo/Raffle Law Book: For a PDF file that contains all charitable gaming regulations in the Colorado Constitution, statutes and rules, go to https://www.coloradosos.gov/pubs/bingo_raffles/files/GMLAW.pdf

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