

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED BINGO QUESTIONS**

1. Who can I call or contact at GBI about Bingo issues or questions?

John L. Whitaker	GBI Headquarters
Special Agent in Charge	3121 Panthersville Road
GBI Office of Privacy and Compliance	Decatur, Georgia 30034
P. O. Box 370808	
Decatur, Georgia 30037-0808	
404-270-8525 - Secretary	
404-270-8223 – Direct	
404-270-8521 – Fax	
<a href="mailto:john.whitaker@gbi.ga.gov">john.whitaker@gbi.ga.gov</a>	

2. How can I get Bingo forms or copies of the GBI Bingo Rules and Regulations?

Copies of the current versions of bingo related forms, rules, and other related documents are now available on the GBI's website <http://gbi.georgia.gov>.

Click your mouse on Services, and then click on BINGO, and then on Forms and Regulations

3. What is the GAPS fingerprint programs?

In 2009, the State of Georgia began using the Georgia Applicant Processing System or GAPS to process fingerprints and background checks on individuals that applied for certain positions and jobs within Georgia – to include Bingo Workers and Officers within Bingo Licensed Organization. The GAPS program is administered by Cogent Systems, which is a security specialist corporation.

Bingo Workers and Officers now must be fingerprinted at a GAPS location instead of going to their local law enforcement agencies to be fingerprinted. With this change, fingerprint cards no longer must be submitted to GBI on each applicant, the prints are submitted by the GAPS/Cogent Systems process.

Information and computer links to the GAPS/cogent Systems process can be located at the GBI's website. Bingo applicants must register on line with Cogent Systems at <http://www.ga.cogentid.com/index.htm> before they go to be fingerprinted.

Cogent Systems is a private corporation and is not a part of the GBI. Any questions or concerns should be addressed to them at [gahelp@cogentsystems.com](mailto:gahelp@cogentsystems.com) or at 1-888-439-2512.

4. What are ORI/OAC number and verification numbers?

These are numbers that are used on the Applicant Registration form for GAPS/Cogent Systems. The numbers tell GAPS/Cogent Systems who can see the results of their fingerprint/background check on the applicants.

Some Bingo organizations have obtained their own ORI/OAC numbers and verification numbers and will use them on the registration form. Those organizations must check the box at the bottom of the page that is adjacent to the final question “**Does another agency make the fitness determination?**” Clicking your mouse on that box will cause another box to open. “GBI – Bingo” should be selected – the verification code will then be automatically selected and the rest of the application should be reviewed for completion and transmittal.

If you do not have an individual ORI/OAC number and verification number, a universal number can be used:

<b>ORI/OAC:</b>	<b>GAGBI00G2</b>
<b>Verification:</b>	<b>GBI00G2</b>

**\* Please note that the codes contain an “I” not a one (1) and zeros (0) not “O’s”.**

5. How do Bingo Workers and Officers get approved by GBI?

- A. The GBI must receive a GAPS/Cogent Systems background check report on each applicant.
- B. The Bingo organization should send a cover letter with each Bingo applicant’s completed Personal History and Background Form and photograph that clearly states what services are needed. The letter should provide a contact telephone number for the organization’s Bingo Manager or Coordinator.
- C. The GBI must receive a completed Personal History and Background Form on each applicant. **Completing the GAPS/Cogent Systems Applicant Registration form on-line does not replace the Personal History and Background Form. If the GAPS/Cogent Systems employee takes the completed Personal History and Background Form from the applicant – THEY DO NOT FORWARD IT TO THE GBI BINGO UNIT – They are not GBI employees.**
- D. The GBI must receive a photograph of each applicant. This must be a recent photograph and not a Xerox copy of the applicant’s driver’s license.
- E. The GBI will query each applicant against its Criminal Intelligence Database and will then evaluate each applicant against the standards published in the GBI Bingo Rules and Regulations - 92-2-.13 (B) Licensing Qualifications:

“any paid employees, officers, or members who have substantial control over the organization or Bingo operation who have been convicted of, pled nolo contendere to, or pled guilty to any felony or any other crime involving moral turpitude whose conviction became final 15 or more years prior to submission of the application; or who have been convicted of, pled nolo contendere to, or pled guilty to any misdemeanor other than

traffic offenses, whose conviction became final five (5) or more years prior to submission of the application; or if ten (10) or more years have passed subsequent to the expiration of the sentence in the event said individual has been pardoned by the State Board of Pardons and Paroles”.

The GBI Bingo Unit will notify the organization if the applicant has been approved or denied to be a Bingo Worker or Officer. If the applicant is denied – the reasons for the denial will be expressed in writing within the notification.

The GBI Bingo Unit will first attempt to contact the worker/officer candidate if there are questions or problems with their application process or fingerprints. The Unit may be unable to contact the applicant if they do not provide their mailing address or contact telephone number on the GAPS on-line registration form or if they do not submit a GBI Personal History and Background Form.

If the applicant is fingerprinted and the Personal History and Background Form and photograph are all completed and sent to the GBI at the same approximate time – the evaluation process can be completed within approximately ten (10) work days.

6. How do I get approved to work at more than one Bingo organization?

Applicants can be approved to work at more than one organization, especially those that have more than one Bingo License, when they submit their original Personal History and Background Form. The form should clearly indicate all Bingo organizations where they want to be approved to work. The cover letter from the organization should clearly state which organizations or licenses the applicant wants to be associated with.

If the applicant has previously been approved by the GBI to be a Bingo Worker or Officer, the Bingo Manager or Coordinator should submit a cover letter and a completed Personal History and Background Form for the individual. The form should clearly indicate which organization the applicant wants to now work with (Question 2 on the form). The form should also identify the name and location of the Bingo organization where the applicant is currently an approved worker or officer (Question 15 at the bottom of page 1 of the form).

- The previously approved applicant does not have to be fingerprinted again.
- A photograph of the previously approved applicant is not required.

7. Do all Officers of a Bingo licensed organization have to be approved by the GBI Bingo Unit in the same manner as Bingo Workers?

Yes.

8. Have the GBI Bingo Rules and Regulations had any significant changes recently?

No – the last changes to the Bingo Rules and Regulations were adopted and published in 2003. A copy of those rules can be located on the GBI website as previously described.

The only exception is that fingerprint cards no longer have to be sent to the GBI for new applicants.

9. Have the various requirements to maintain a Georgia Bingo License changed recently?

No – to maintain your Bingo license, an organization must:

- A. Be a non-profit organization, per the United States Internal Revenue Service (IRS).
- B. Renew your Bingo license yearly (they all expire at midnight on December 31 each year). Bingo license renewal applications must be postmarked by October 31 each year.
- C. Pay the \$100 renewal fee by money order or cashier's check.
- D. Submit a completed Bingo Annual Report each year on or before April 15 of each year.
- E. The Annual Report must be signed by a Certified Public Accountant (CPA). Compliance is mandatory even if the organization does not actively operate Bingo during the year.
- F. Submit a Bingo Compliance Report within fifteen (15) days after yearly elections or after changes in organizational board members that may occur during the year. Compliance is mandatory even if the organization does not actively operate Bingo during the year.

**Failure to comply with any of these required actions may result in suspension of an active Bingo license or denial to renew a previously approved license.**

10. Can we operate video poker machines during bingo?

No – in Georgia video poker machines are illegal – especially:

- A. If the machines operate like a traditional slot machine.
- B. If the machines operate with images that resemble traditional playing cards.
- C. If your organization pays out cash to video game winners

Rule of thumb – if you remotely consider the device to be a gambling machine do not risk your Bingo license and potential felony commercial gambling charges. Contact your local District Attorney for clarification of prosecutorial guidelines to avoid criminal charges.

**Recommendations for Bingo Operations:**

1. The Bingo Manager or Coordinator (whatever the organizational title) should manage the game and all bingo related activities for the organization.

- They should be the most knowledgeable person within the organization about the published GBI Bingo Rules and Regulations.
- If they do not know the answer, they should contact the GBI Bingo Unit for answers.
- They should be training members and workers as needed.
- They should be the primary contact between the organization and the GBI Bingo Unit.

2. Bingo Worker and Officer Applicants should coordinate with the Bingo Manager during the approval process.

- Receipts for GAPS/Cogent Systems fingerprint activities should be maintained by the Bingo Manager.
- Completed Personal History and Background Forms (and photographs) for applicants should be turned over to the Bingo Manager for review, copying, and transmittal to the GBI.
- The Bingo Manager should be available to either enter the applicant's information into the GAPS/Cogent Systems registration system or be ready to assist the applicant in completing the application registration process.
- The GAPS/Cogent Systems Applicant Registration Form does not require that the applicant's home address and contact telephone number be included, however, it may be the only way to contact the applicant if there is a problem with the fingerprint report – the report does not indicate which organization the applicant is associated with.

Delayed approvals for Workers and Officers are most often related to organizations allowing the applicant to submit their own applications rather than the Bingo Manager submitting the various documents for them and the organization.

3. The results from a GAPS/Cogent Systems fingerprint check are only good for 30 days. The results of the fingerprint review will expire after that and the applicant will have to be fingerprinted again – and will have to pay for the service again.
4. The GBI Bingo Unit is not automatically notified when the result of a GAPS/Cogent Systems report becomes available. We strive to print the reports as they are generated. GAPS/Cogent Systems results that are over three months old (date of report) will not be used in the approval process – submit the completed Personal History and Background Form and the applicant's photograph in a timely manner when the applicant is fingerprinted.
5. The GBI Bingo Unit will maintain incomplete approval forms and documents for only three (3) months. If the process is not completed within three months after the first documents are received by the GBI, the records will be destroyed. Where possible, the bingo organization will be notified by the Unit that the approval review has been suspended and that the documents have been destroyed.

/jlw  
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