



FACT SHEET
Iowa Gambling Treatment Program
 November 2017

Gambling and Gaming in Iowa

Iowans seeking to gamble can choose from 19 casinos licensed by the Iowa Racing and Gaming Commission, three tribal casinos, 2,400 lottery outlets, and over 2,700 licensed social, charitable and amusement games. In addition, Iowans have access to a broad range of social media and smartphone gambling-like games and applications, as well as an expanding number of internet-based and other illegal gaming.

Problem Gambling Defined

For most people, gambling is recreational; however, for some people, gambling leads to serious problems. Problem gambling means participation in any form of gambling activity that creates one or more negative consequences to the gambler, their family or loved ones, employer or community. The adjacent table lists signs and symptoms that can help determine if an individual should seek help for gambling behaviors.

Gambling Disorder – Diagnostic Criteria¹	
1.	Needs to gamble with increasing amounts of money in order to achieve the desired excitement.
2.	Is restless or irritable when attempting to cut down or stop gambling.
3.	Has made repeated unsuccessful efforts to control, cut back or stop gambling.
4.	Is often preoccupied with gambling (e.g., having persistent thoughts of reliving past gambling experiences, handicapping or planning the next venture, thinking of ways to get money with which to gamble).
5.	Often gambles when feeling distressed (e.g., helpless, guilty, anxious, depressed).
6.	After losing money gambling, often returns another day to get even (“chasing one’s losses”).
7.	Lies to conceal the extent of involvement with gambling.
8.	Has jeopardized or lost a significant relationship, job, or educational or career opportunity because of gambling.
9.	Relies on others to provide money to relieve financial situations caused by gambling.

Overview of Services

Services funded through the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) Problem Gambling Program are guided by a public health approach that considers the biological, behavioral, economic and cultural determinants that influence gambling and health. This approach incorporates a balance of outreach, education, prevention, treatment and recovery support efforts that work together to minimize the potential negative impacts of gambling on individuals, families and communities, and recognizes gambling’s availability, cultural and social acceptance, as well as monetary appeal.

Gambling Prevalence in Iowa

In SFY 2016, IDPH funded the [Gambling Attitudes and Behaviors: A 2015 Survey of Adult Iowans](#) by the University of Northern Iowa Center for Social and Behavioral Research (UNI-CSBR). The survey was completed by a random sample of 1,825 adult Iowans, weighted to reflect the Iowa adult population. The survey provided the following information:

- **Gambling rates among adult Iowans:** 87.6 percent lifetime (ever), 68.1 percent during the past 12 months, and 39.1 percent during the past 30 days. It is estimated that almost 1.6 million adult Iowans gambled during the past 12 months.
- **Problem gambling prevalence among adult Iowans:** 12.6 percent of adult Iowans reported experiencing at least one symptom associated with problem gambling during the past 12 months. More than 1 in 5 (22.6 percent) Iowans reported that they know a person with financial, physical, or emotional problems caused by gambling.

In SFY 2017, IDPH funded the [Iowa Youth Survey 2016: Problem Gambling Report](#) by the Iowa Consortium for Substance Abuse Research and Evaluation (University of Iowa). The report, which is a follow-up to the 2012 and 2014 reports,

¹ American Psychiatric Association: Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition. Arlington, VA, American Psychiatric Association, 2013.

addresses five questions on youth gambling behaviors using 2016 Iowa Youth Survey (IYS) data gathered from more than 84,000 sixth, eighth and 11th graders:

- Who gambles among sixth, eighth, and 11th graders in Iowa? 25 percent of all students reported gambling at least once and males were more than two times more likely to demonstrate lifetime gambling than females (35.9 percent vs. 13.8 percent).
- What are the significant types of gambling among youth? 14.1 percent reported playing cards with friends or family for money/possessions, followed by sports (10.7 percent), skill games (9.8 percent) and video games (8.1 percent).

Problem Gambling Treatment and Prevention

IDPH contracts with 11 local agencies to provide problem gambling prevention, treatment and recovery support services in 11 service regions that together encompass all 99 Iowa counties. Funded problem gambling services include:

- **Counseling** for problem gamblers and those affected by the gambling of a family member. This includes e-therapy (phone, secure web-based portals and video-conferencing), which is available for eligible persons with barriers to accessing face-to-face treatment services.
- **Prevention Services** providing information and education on the risks and responsibilities of gambling and assistance for individuals at increased risk of problem gambling.
- **Helpline referral and education** through 1-800-BETS OFF helpline and website which have been integrated into the new Your Life Iowa helpline and website (yourlifeiowa.org/gambling), and offers online chat as well as a new text option.
- **Recovery Support Services** providing helpful supportive services like transportation assistance for persons receiving problem gambling counseling.
- **Training and professional development** for counselors providing treatment for problem gambling and common co-occurring conditions like substance use and mental health disorders.

Problem Gambling Services – Utilization				
State Fiscal Year	# of Prevention Hours	# of Clients Treated	1-800-BETS OFF Help Line calls	1800BETS OFF.org visits
2007	5,963	1,146	3,613	-
2008	4,814	940	3,820	-
2009	5,816	905	3,435	-
2010	9,077	948	3,942	-
2011	7,435	789	3,695	6,156
2012	6,602	728	4,029	13,599
2013	7,682	678	4,122	14,353
2014	7,710	602	5,417	11,208
2015	8,781	888	6,311	9,524
2016	9,282	697	5,792	9,689
2017	7,458	590	5,771	18,140

Treatment Effectiveness

IDPH contracts with UNI-CSBR to monitor and analyze problem gambling treatment outcomes. The [IGTO: 2015 Report](#) found significant improvements for persons who received state-funded treatment. Highlights:

- Clients who received four or more services within the first 30 days after admission were more likely to complete their treatment plan compared to those who did not.
- Clients who received e-therapy were more likely to complete their treatment plan than were those who did not.
- Clients who received one or more Recovery Support Services (RSS) were more likely to complete treatment compared to those who did not.
- 92 percent reported fewer signs and symptoms of problem gambling at discharge.

Problem Gambling Services Budget	
Activity	2018 Budget
Treatment Services	776,315
Prevention Services	904,118
Recovery Support Services	76,778
Your Life Iowa Integrated Helpline/Website	152,337
Surveillance (BRFSS)/Outcome Monitoring	163,400
Health Promotion	200,012
Training/Professional Development	38,360
Data Reporting System	75,108
IDPH Administration Costs	305,686
TOTAL	2,692,114

For more information on the IDPH Office of Problem Gambling Treatment and Prevention, contact Eric Preuss at eric.preuss@idph.iowa.gov or (515) 281-8802.