



Iowa Problem Gambling Services SFY 2021 Annual Report

Summary of IDPH Activities

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June 2022**



Acknowledgement

Suggested Citation:

Iowa Department of Public Health/Bureau of Substance Abuse/*Iowa Problem Gambling Services Annual Report – SFY 2021*. Des Moines: Iowa Dept. of Public Health, 2021.

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Funding: IDPH receives an appropriation from the State General Fund and the Sports Wagering Tax Receipt Fund for the provision of problem gambling services.

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Executive Summary

This annual report provides an overview of the problem gambling services provided during SFY 2021, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as information on gambling and gaming in Iowa, gambling prevalence rates, and the utilization and outcomes of the program's funded services.

Beginning in January 2019, problem gambling prevention and treatment services are offered through the Substance Use and Problem Gambling Services Integrated Provider Network (IPN). The IPN is a statewide, community-based, resiliency- and recovery-oriented continuum of care for substance use and problem gambling services.

- **Networking:** IPN providers continued to strengthen community relationships with local referral sources. The goal was to increase awareness of the ways to identify and refer Iowans to available problem gambling prevention and treatment services.
- **Quality Improvement:** National studies indicate up to 30% of individuals with a substance use disorder may also have a gambling disorder. Due to this, the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) worked with IPN providers to identify and implement best practices in identifying and serving Iowans who have a problem with their gambling. This included screening all patients who sought substance use disorder treatment for problem gambling; and development of an integrated substance use disorder and problem gambling treatment data system to remove the burden of dual entry in two data systems during a single treatment episode.

State Fiscal Year 2021 **Key Accomplishments and Activities**

Upon the declaration of the Statewide Emergency for COVID-19, IDPH worked with IPN providers to ensure the safety of staff, and enhancing telehealth efforts to ensure Iowans were able to access problem gambling prevention and treatment services. The following occurred in SFY21:

- 1,762 Iowans received problem gambling prevention services.
- 167 Iowans received problem gambling crisis, intervention, treatment and recovery support services.
 - This is about 1% of the estimated 18,504 adult Iowans meeting criteria for a gambling disorder ([Gambling Attitudes and Behaviors: A 2018 Survey of Adult Iowans](#)).
 - While this is greater than the national average of 0.25% (*2016 National Survey of Problem Gambling Services*), it suggests there is a large gap between the number of Iowans who would benefit from problem gambling treatment services and the number who receive those services.
- 1,411 contacts (phone, text, chat) to Your Life Iowa (includes 1-800-BETS OFF calls) on problem gambling were responded to, providing over 1,100 referrals for assistance (651 in state, 451 out of state).
- Over 16,000 Iowans visited the gambling pages at yourlifeiowa.org/gambling. 15,093 were first time visitors. Your Life Iowa is the integrated platform for phone, text and social media resources for gambling, alcohol, drug and suicide concerns, and is the new home of 1-800-BETS OFF and 1800BETSOFF.org, as of October 2017. Help is available at Your Life Iowa 24/7 at 855-581-8111 or at [Your Life Iowa.org](http://YourLifeIowa.org).

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- Launch of the [Be #1 at Getting Help](#) campaign to reduce the stigma around seeking help for gambling problems.
- In SFY 2021, the Department provided 47 hours of collaborative training events to further the level of competency of problem gambling professionals in Iowa.
 - Stacked Deck prevention training (April)
 - The Journey Forward: Gaining New Knowledge for the Prevention and Treatment of Problem Gambling Webinar Series (February and March)
 - Problem Gambling Services: Lunch and Learn Webinar Series (April through June).
- Published three Responsible Gaming Toolkits ([Casino](#), [Lottery](#), and [Social/Charitable Gaming](#)) to assist to support IPN prevention providers in population-level health efforts.



Glossary

1-800-BETS OFF: Helpline and website devoted to raising awareness of problem gambling and providing assistance to those Iowans who are being negatively impacted by their gambling and related behaviors, and their affected loved ones.

Gambling: The act or practice of risking the loss of something of value upon the outcome of chance or future contingent event not under his/her control in an attempt to gain something of greater value.

Gambling Disorder: Persistent and recurrent problematic gambling behavior leading to clinically significant impairment or distress (see Table 1).

Iowa Problem Gambling Services (IPGS): The IDPH program that receives funds for provision of problem gambling services from the State General Fund as part of the Addiction Services appropriation. The IPGS is organized within IDPH in the Division of Behavioral Health Bureau of Substance Abuse. Problem gambling services are provided through the Integrated Provider Network (IPN).

Problem Gambling: 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. If unchecked, can lead to a Gambling Disorder.

Substance Use and Problem Gambling Services Integrated Provider Network (IPN): The IPN is a statewide community-based, resiliency- and recovery-oriented system of care for substance use and problem gambling services. The IPN launched in January 2019 as a result of a competitive RFP process.

Your Life Iowa: The 24/7 integrated resource for free and confidential help and information for alcohol, drugs, gambling, mental health (adult/youth) and suicide concerns. Information and assistance are available through the telephone helpline at 855-581-8111, online at YourLifelowa.org, through text at 855-895-8398, and through mobile/internet friendly online chat and social media messaging (@YourLifelowa).

List of Acronyms

IDPH.....	Iowa Department of Public Health
IPGS.....	Iowa Problem Gambling Services
IPN.....	Substance Use and Problem Gambling Services Integrated Provider Network
IRGC.....	Iowa Racing and Gaming Commission
IYS.....	Iowa Youth Survey
RFP.....	Request for Proposal
SFY.....	State Fiscal Year
UNI-CSBR.....	University of Northern Iowa – Center for Social and Behavioral Research
YLI.....	Your Life Iowa

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Gambling and Gaming in Iowa

During SFY 2021, Iowans seeking to gamble could choose from 19 casinos licensed by the Iowa Racing and Gaming Commission (IRGC): four tribal casinos; approximately 2,400 lottery outlets; over 2,000 licensed social and charitable gambling options, amusement concession and bingo games; and over 5,000 registered amusement devices. In addition, Iowans have access to a broad range of social media and smartphone gambling-like games and applications.

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 individual, their family or loved ones, employer or community. The following table lists the signs and symptoms which can help determine if an individual should seek help for gambling behaviors. Meeting four or more criteria indicates a gambling disorder; meeting one to three criteria could mean a gambling problem is developing.

Gambling Disorder – Diagnostic Criteria ¹
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.

Table 1: Gambling Disorder - Diagnostic Criteria (DSM-5)

Overview of Services

Gambling disorder is a serious public health issue demanding a comprehensive solution involving not only federal programs, but also efforts on the part of states, counties, cities, communities, families, civic groups, the gambling industry, the nonprofit sector, professions such as medicine, law and finance, and other organizations.

Since 1986, the Iowa Department of Public Health has responded to this need, funding problem gambling prevention, intervention, treatment and recovery support services. Beginning in January 2019,

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

these services are provided through the Substance Use and Problem Gambling Services Integrated Provider Network (IPN) and are guided through a public health approach that considers the biological, behavioral, economic and cultural determinants that influence gambling and health. This approach incorporates a balance of health promotion, prevention, early intervention, treatment, recovery support efforts, and research/evaluation 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.

IDPH contracts with IPN providers to implement problem gambling prevention, treatment and recovery support services statewide. Problem gambling treatment programs must be licensed by IDPH and are selected for contracting through a competitive request for proposals process.

Problem gambling services include:

- **Helpline Referral and Education** through the Your Life Iowa and 1-800-BETS OFF website (yourlifeiowa.org/gambling), with telephone (855-581-8111) and text (855-895-8398) options.
- **Prevention Services** are based on the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF). This five-step planning model allows prevention providers to make data driven decisions that impact problem gambling at the local level.
- **Counseling** for problem gamblers and those affected by the gambling of a family member. This includes telehealth options for eligible persons with barriers to accessing certain face-to-face treatment services.
- **Recovery Support Services** providing important supportive services like transportation assistance and recovery peer coaching 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.

Iowa Problem Gambling Services - Utilization

State Fiscal Year	# of Prevention Hours	# of Patients Treated	# of Gambling Contacts to 1-800-BETS OFF	Traffic to 1800BETSOFF.org
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
2018	8,108	759	² 4,993	³ 17,805
2019	4,766	488 ⁴	⁵ 4,602	33,802
2020	2,390	182	1,511	59,672
2021	1,566	167	1,411	41,640

Table 2: Iowa Problem Gambling Services - Utilization

Gambling Prevalence in Iowa

In SFY 2019, IDPH funded the [Gambling Attitudes and Behaviors: A 2018 Survey of Adult Iowans](#) by the University of Northern Iowa Center for Social and Behavioral Research (UNI-CSBR). The purpose of the survey, a follow-up to similar 2011, 2013 and 2015 reports, was to collect data from adult Iowans about:

- Types and frequency of gambling activities;
- Prevalence of problem gambling; and
- Awareness and opinions of publicly-funded gambling treatment services.

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: The 2018 prevalence rates of gambling among adult Iowans were: 90.2% lifetime (ever), 73.8% during the past 12 months and 45.8% during the past 30 days. The rate of gambling behavior in the past 12 months in 2018 was higher than 2015, but comparable to 2013 (73.8% vs. 77.8%). It is estimated that almost 1.7 million adult Iowans gambled during the past 12 months.
- At-risk problem gambling prevalence among adult Iowans: 13.6% of adult Iowans (315,141) reported experiencing at least one symptom associated with problem gambling during the past 12 months. This was slightly higher than 2015 (12.6%). Of these at-risk Iowans, about 5% reported they were currently having gambling problems.

² Problem gambling calls to Your Life Iowa, the 24/7 integrated hub for free and confidential help and information for alcohol, drugs, gambling and suicide, launched in July 2018.

³ Number of sessions to the Gambling landing page for 1-800-BETS OFF (YourLifeIowa.org/gambling), which launched October 2017

⁴ 475 patients received a treatment service reported in I-SMART. 13 patients received integrated SUD and Problem gambling services reported to the Central Data Repository (CDR).

⁵ Problem gambling calls to Your Life Iowa, the 24/7 integrated hub for free and confidential help and information for alcohol, drugs, gambling and suicide, launched in July 2018.

- Gambling activities in the past 12 months: The most common gambling activities in the state were lottery (47%) and raffle tickets (42%), followed by scratch tickets and pull tabs (34%), slot machines (21%), and card games with friends or others (not at casinos, 14%).
- Impact of problem gambling on others: The negative physical, emotional and financial consequences of problem gambling can affect family, friends, coworkers and others.
 - About 1 in 4 adult Iowans (26.7%) said they know a person whose gambling may be causing problems (financial, physical and emotional). This is 618,250 Iowans.
 - About 1 in 5 adult Iowans (22%) reported being negatively affected by others' gambling behaviors. This is 504,744 Iowans.

In SFY 2021, the UNI-CSBR conducted a feasibility study and provided recommendations for a *Substance Use and Problem Gambling Attitudes and Behaviors of Adult Iowans* study in the fall of 2021. This was the first ever combined survey to assess the attitudes and behaviors related to problem gambling and substance use of adult Iowans. The initial draft was made available in April 2022, with the final report completed in June 2022.

The SFY 2020 UNI-CSBR [*Factors Associated with Youth Substance Use, Suicide, and Gambling: Findings from the Iowa Youth Survey, 2016 and 2018*](#) report reviewed the 2016 and 2018 Iowa Youth Survey gambling question results and the gambling behaviors of Iowa's youth (grades sixth, eighth and 11th). Both 2016 and 2018 revealed that about 1 in 5 youth respondents (about 21%) had gambled in the past 12 months. Gambling behaviors (like substance use) increased by grade, with the biggest change from sixth to eighth grade, with only a slight increase from eighth grade to 11th grade. Additionally, the most relevant factors related to youth gambling were: doing exciting things even if they are dangerous, ability to say no to wrong or dangerous things, and substance use such as alcohol and tobacco use. Youth gambling behaviors tend to be higher among youth who engage in substance use and/or report their mental health is not favorable.

Highlights:

- Eighth grade students were 71% more likely to have gambled in the past 12 months compared to sixth graders, and 57% more likely to have signs of a gambling problem.
- 11th graders were about 53% more likely to have gambled in the past 12 months compared to sixth graders, and 37% more likely to have signs of a gambling problem.
- Females were 71% less likely to have gambled in the past 12 months than males, and 70% less likely to have signs of a gambling problem.
- Students who reported they had drunk alcohol were 56% more likely to have gambled in the past 12 months than those who reported not drinking alcohol.

Additionally, in SFY 2021, the UNI-CSBR was contracted to conduct in the fall of 2021 the next Iowa Youth Survey. The initial statewide report was made available in March 2022, with all final reports available in May 2022.

Treatment Effectiveness

IDPH contracts with UNI-CSBR to monitor and analyze problem gambling treatment outcomes. The *2021 Iowa Gambling Treatment Outcome System* report outcomes are consistent with the previous years'

reports (e.g. treatment reduces the gambling behaviors and improves the psychosocial indicators over time). Highlights:

- 69% were admitted within 7 or fewer days of their initial request for treatment.
- Patients admitted within 7 or less days had an average of 8.2 services compared to 3.3 among those who waited 8 or more days for admission.
- Patients who were discharged from care reported a reduction in average days gambled in the past 30 days from 7 to 1, as well as a reduction in all psychosocial indicators.

Prevention and Education First

Problem gambling prevention services raise awareness about the risks and responsibilities of gambling. Primary prevention approaches are rooted in prevention science and theory with foundational efforts based on the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF). Prevention efforts also encompasses the six prevention strategies identified by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Substance Abuse Prevention which include: community-based process, environmental, information dissemination, education, alternatives, and problem identification and referral. Examples include:

- Health promotion campaigns to encourage Iowans to evaluate their gambling behavior and seek help if they or someone they know have a problem. Includes collaborative health promotion activities with the Iowa Lottery and Iowa Gaming Association.
 - Problem Gambling Awareness Month – each March
 - Responsible Gaming Education Week – each August
- Educating employers about the cost of problem gambling to their businesses ([Gambling in the Work Place Tool Kit](#)).
- Partnering with state-regulated casinos to train employees, and educate and inform patrons ([Responsible Gaming Toolkits](#))
- Partnering with the Iowa Lottery to inform players that help is available for problem gambling.
- School-based prevention efforts for youth ([IPGS prevention page](#)).
- Educating the problem gambling treatment and prevention workforce on regional, statewide, and national trends and best practices to improve service delivery and outcomes.

The effectiveness of IDPH education and prevention efforts can be seen in the following data from the [Gambling Attitudes and Behaviors: A 2018 Survey of Adult Iowans](#).

- Almost 9 in 10 Iowans (88%) are aware of the 1-800-BETS OFF helpline. 54% (compared to 41% in 2015) were aware of the 1800BETSOFF.org (now part of the Your Life Iowa website at [yourlifeiowa.org/gambling](#)).
- 95% of Iowans said it was important to have public funding to educate adults about the risks of gambling.

Funding

IDPH receives an appropriation from the State General Fund for addiction services that includes funding for problem gambling services and \$300,000 from the Sports Wagering Tax Receipt Fund.

Iowa Problem Gambling Services - Expenditures

Activity	2022 (Budget)	2021 (Actual)	2020 (Actual)	2019 (Actual)
Treatment Services	1,520,00	761,464	549,845	409,502
Prevention Services	782,999	767,492	692,875	697,026
Recovery Support Services	0	0	0	0
Your Life Iowa Helpline/Website	206,250	206,654	248,244	245,438
Surveillance (BRFSS)/Outcome Monitoring	50,121	160,400	160,400	163,078
Health Promotion	15,000	455,228	740,861	822,004
Training/Professional Development	62,000	28,117	43,093	32,937
Data Reporting System	40,394	284,486	138,082	85,442
IDPH Administration Costs	315,350	261,596	248,366	305,161
TOTAL	2,992,114	2,925,437	2,821,766	2,760,588

Table 3: IGPS Expenditures 2019-2021

SFY 2021 Problem Gambling Services Expenses

- Treatment Services (26%)
- Prevention Services (26.2%)
- 1-800-BETS OFF Helpline/Website (7.1%)
- Surveillance/Outcome Monitoring (5.5%)
- Health Promotion (15.6%)
- Training/Professional Development (1%)
- Data Reporting System (9.7%)
- IDPH Administration Costs (8.9%)

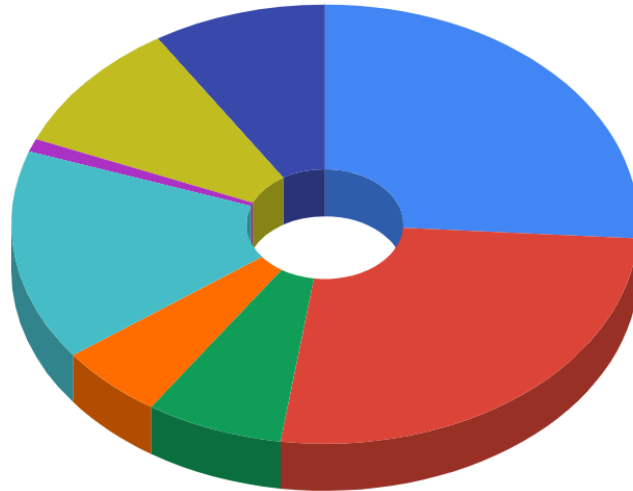


Table 4: SFY 2021 IPGS Expenses

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