

Iowa Department of Public Health



Iowa Gambling Treatment Program – Annual Report

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Funding: IDPH receives an appropriation from the State General Fund for problem gambling services.

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Executive Summary

Gambling addiction 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 Gambling Treatment Program (IGTP) in the Iowa Department of Public Health has responded to this need, funding prevention, intervention, treatment, and recovery support services 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.

This annual report provides an overview of IGTP activities during state fiscal year 2018, and includes information on gambling and gaming in Iowa, gambling prevalence rates in Iowa, and the utilization and outcomes of the program's funded services.

State Fiscal Year 2018

Iowa Gambling Treatment Program Key Accomplishments and Activities

- 8,108 hours of problem gambling prevention and education services were provided to Iowans in all 99 counties;
- 759 Iowans received problem gambling crisis, intervention, treatment, and recovery support services;
- 4,900 calls on problem gambling were answered, providing over 500 referrals for assistance;
- The launch of the "Your Life Iowa" integrated help line, website, online chat, text, and social media resource for gambling, alcohol, drug, and suicide concerns, and the new home of 1-800-BETS OFF and 1800BETSOFF.org.
 - Your Life Iowa is available 24/7 at 855-581-8111 or at [Your Life Iowa.org](http://YourLifeIowa.org).
- Published the [Iowa Gambling Treatment Outcomes 2018](#) report with outcomes showing that prevention works, treatment is effective and recovery is possible.

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 Gambling Treatment Program (IGTP): The Iowa Department of Public Health program that receives an appropriation from the State General Fund for provision of problem gambling services. The IGTP is organized within IDPH in the Division of Behavioral Health Bureau of Substance Abuse.

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.

Your Life Iowa: The 24/7 integrated resource for free and confidential help and information for alcohol, drugs, gambling, 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-friendly internet-based online chat and social media messaging.

List of Acronyms

IDPH	Iowa Department of Public Health
IGTP.....	Iowa Gambling Treatment Program
IRGC.....	Iowa Racing and Gaming Commission
IYS.....	Iowa Youth Survey
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

Iowans seeking to gamble can choose from 19 casinos licensed by the Iowa Racing and Gaming Commission (IRGC): four tribal casinos; 2,400 lottery outlets; 2,817 licensed social and charitable gambling options, amusement concession and bingo games; and 5,452 registered amusement devices. 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 (often 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 following table lists signs and symptoms that 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 Criteriaⁱ
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

Services funded through the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) Iowa Gambling Treatment Program (IGTP) 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.

IDPH contracts with local agencies to provide 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** providing information and education on the risks and responsibilities of gambling and assistance for individuals at increased risk of problem gambling.
- **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 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 Gambling Treatment Program Services - Utilization

State Fiscal Year	# of Prevention Hours	# of Clients Treated	# of Gambling Contacts to 1-800-BETS OFF	Traffic to 1800BETSOFF.org
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
2018	8,108	759	ⁱⁱ 4,993	ⁱⁱⁱ 17,805

Table 2: Problem Gambling Services - Utilization

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 purpose of the survey, a follow-up to similar 2011 and 2013 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 2015 prevalence rates of gambling among adult Iowans were: 87.6 percent lifetime (ever), 68.1 percent during the past 12 months, and 39.1 percent during the past 30 days. The rate of gambling behavior in the past 12 months in 2015 was lower than 2013, but comparable to 2011 (68.1 percent vs. 68.9 percent). It is estimated that almost 1.6 million adult Iowans gambled during the past 12 months.

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- At-risk problem gambling prevalence among adult lowans: 12.6 percent of adult lowans (294,222) reported experiencing at least one symptom associated with problem gambling during the past 12 months. Of these at-risk lowans, 6 percent reported they were currently having gambling problems.
- Gambling activities in the past 12 months: The most common gambling activities in the state were lottery (38 percent) and raffle tickets (37 percent), followed by scratch tickets and pull tabs (32 percent), slot machines (24 percent), and card games with friends or others (not at casinos, 14 percent).
- 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 5 adult lowans (22.6 percent) said they know a person whose gambling may be causing problems (financial, physical, emotional).
 - 15.2 percent (355,325) reported being negatively affected by other's gambling behaviors.

For SFY 2019, IDPH has again contracted with UNI-CSBR to complete an update to the 2016 Gambling Attitudes and Behaviors survey of adult lowans. The final report will be available in June 2019.

In SFY 2017, IDPH funded the [Iowa Youth Survey 2016: Problem Gambling Report](#) by the University of Iowa's Iowa Consortium for Substance Abuse Research and Evaluation. The report, which is a follow-up to the 2012 and 2014 reports, addressed 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).
- Where is the highest rate of gambling among youth? The percentage of students who won or lost over \$25 in a day was nearly the same for counties with (4.8 percent) and without (4.4 percent) a casino.
- Is youth gambling related to other factors? Lifetime substance use had a very strong association with lifetime gambling and was most highly associated with alcohol use. Youth who reported gambling reported higher incidence of feelings of worthlessness, depression and thoughts of suicide.
- Have youth gambling outcomes and other gambling related factors changed from 2012 to 2016? For the most part, youth attitudes and behaviors related to gambling were unchanged between 2012 and 2016.

For SFY 2019, IDPH has again contracted with the Iowa Consortium for Substance Abuse Research and Evaluation to complete an update on the Iowa Youth Survey 2016: Problem Gambling Report, using 2018 IYS data. The final report will be available in June 2019.

Treatment Effectiveness

IDPH contracts with UNI-CSBR to monitor and analyze problem gambling treatment outcomes. The [Iowa Gambling Treatment Outcomes 2018](#) report found significant improvements for persons who received state-funded treatment. Highlights:

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- Patients who received four or more services within 30 days from admission were associated with greater length of service and completion of treatment plans.
- Patients who participated in recovery support services and electronic therapy were associated with greater length of service and completed treatment plans.
- Nine in 10 patients who were discharged received four or more treatment services.
- The average time between intake (first contact) and admission continues to be around seven days, with about 1 in 4 patients being admitted the same day of their first contact.
- Patients who received four or more services were 75 percent less likely than those who received three or fewer services to meet criteria for Disordered Gambling six months after discharge.
- Among those who entered treatment having gambled during the past 30 days, the mean number of days gambled decreased from 7.7 days at admission, to 2.1 days 1 month into treatment, to less than one day at discharge.
- At discharge, patients reported significant improvement in several indicators compared to admission.
 - 24 percent reported “dissatisfied with life” compared to 66 percent at admission.
 - 25 percent reported being “late paying bills” compared to 50 percent at admission.

IDPH has again contracted with UNI-CSBR to collect and monitor data in preparation for the Iowa Gambling Treatment Outcomes 2020 report, which will be completed in the Spring of 2021.

Education and Prevention First

Problem gambling education and prevention services inform Iowans about the risks and responsibilities of gambling. This work encompasses the six prevention strategies identified by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration - Center for Substance Abuse Prevention: *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 have a problem. Includes collaborative health promotion activities with the Iowa Lottery and Iowa Gaming Association during:
 - 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 ([Self Exclusion Tool Kit](#)).
- Partnering with the Iowa Lottery to inform players that help is available for problem gambling.
- School-based prevention efforts for high risk youth ([IGTP 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 2015 Survey of Adult Iowans](#):

- About 9 in 10 adult Iowans said they are either slightly (20 percent), moderately (42 percent) or extremely confident (28 percent) that they would recognize the signs of gambling problems.

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- Almost 9 in 10 lowans (88 percent) are aware of the 1-800-BETS OFF helpline; however, only 41 percent were aware of the 1800BETSOFF.org (now part of the Your Life Iowa website at yourlifeiowa.org/gambling).
- 90 percent of lowans said it was important to have public funding to educate adults about the risks of gambling.
- 94 percent admire the courage of people who seek help for a gambling problem.

Funding

IDPH receives an appropriation from the State General Fund for problem gambling services.

Iowa Gambling Treatment Program Services - Expenditures

Activity	2019 Budget	2018 (Actual)	2017 (Actual)	2016 (Actual)
Treatment Services	922,000	517,471	537,971	640,305
Prevention Services	795,720	763,615	886,300	956,104
Recovery Support Services	38,131	35,994	60,419	45,636
Your Life Iowa Helpline/Website	183,000	228,344	211,853	87,580
Surveillance (BRFSS)/Outcome Monitoring	172,678	158,400	158,471	170,580
Health Promotion	125,000	372,085	316,159	375,829
Training/Professional Development	37,500	38,978	67,590	107,383
Data Reporting System	102,268	126,058	158,913	231,196
IDPH Administration Costs	315,817	222,338	247,382	271,697
TOTAL	2,692,114	2,463,283	2,645,058	2,886,310

Table 3: IGTP Expenditures 2016-2018

SFY 2019 IGTP Budget

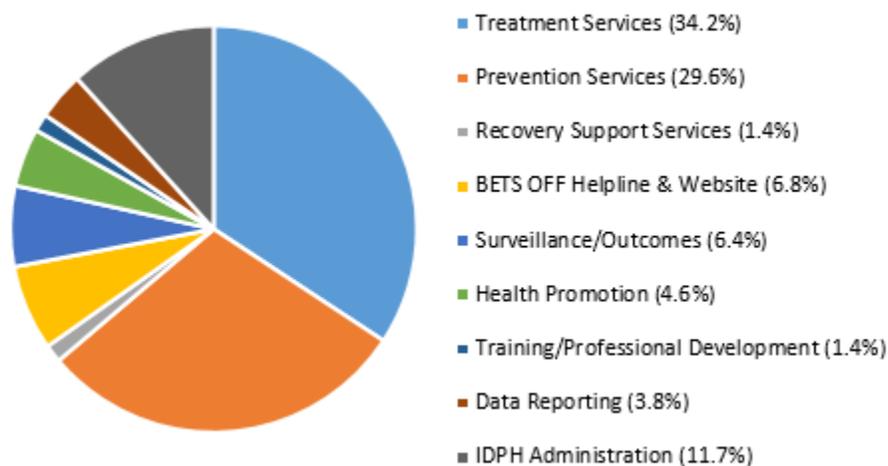


Table 4: SFY 2019 IGTP Budget

IDPH Efforts to Increase Service Accessibility and Efficiency

In SFY 2018, it is estimated that approximately 29,155 adult lowans met criteria for a gambling disorder. Problem gambling treatment services were provided to approximately 3 percent of those lowans. While this is greater than the national average of 0.25 percent^{iv}, it suggests there is a gap between the number

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of Iowans who need services and the number who receive those services. IDPH continues to work with local providers to support an efficient network of care that reaches all Iowans in need.

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

ⁱⁱ 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.

ⁱⁱⁱ Number of sessions to the Gambling landing page (1-800-BETS OFF) on YourLifeIowa.org, which launched October 2017.

^{iv} Marotta, J., Hynes, J., Rugle, L., White, K., Scanlan, K., Sheldrug, J., & Dukart, J. (2017). *2016 National Survey of Problem Gambling Services*. Boston, MA: Association of Problem Gambling Service Administrators.