



# 1♥800♦GAMBLER

The Problem Gamblers Help Network of West Virginia

— SFY —  
2019 —

## ANNUAL REPORT

//

STATE FISCAL YEAR  
JULY 2018 - JUNE 2019





# Staff

Jennifer Davis-Walton, MA, ICGC-II, Program Director

Lata Menon, MSW, LSW, Clinical Liaison

Lisa Lewis, MSW, LGSW, Program Coordinator

Maricel Bernardo, MSM-HCA, Program Coordinator

Sheila Moran, MSW, LSW, ICGC, Director of Marketing

Jeremy Smith, MA, Outreach Coordinator

Adam Sypolt, Media Coordinator

Kay Goff, Office Manager

Gambling addiction continues to be a serious problem for many in West Virginia. According to the National Council on Problem Gambling, one in 50 West Virginians may have a gambling problem. Wallet Hub recently named WV the 6th “most gambling-addicted” state, largely due to the amount of gambling availability and sales per capita. WV authorizes five casinos that include slot machines, horse and dog racing, and table games. Also available in WV are lottery tickets, Bingo, tip tickets, KENO, and over 1200 video poker parlors statewide. This year, WV expanded gambling by allowing sports betting at each of the state’s five casinos, as well as on mobile apps.

Our program offers comprehensive care for problem gamblers and their loved ones. Our 1-800-GAMBLER helpline and chat services are available 24/7. The line is staffed with Master’s level clinicians. All callers are offered crisis counseling, educational mailings, referrals, and follow-up. They are referred for an in-person appointment with one of our 70+ specially trained clinicians. We pay for the initial consultation, as well as subsequent sessions for those who have no payment source. We offer at least one “Retreat Weekend” per year, which brings together problem gamblers and their loved ones for a weekend of treatment, education, fellowship, and recovery support. Our program coordinators follow up frequently with callers, often forming a bond with them. Our proudest moments come when we are invited to a Gamblers Anonymous pinning ceremony, celebrating long-term recovery.

# Helpline Data

We staff our telephone line and chat services 24/7. This year, 737 people contacted us for help. All are offered immediate crisis counseling, support group referral, self-help literature, and an appointment with one of our network counselors.

The number of people contacting us for help via chat has steadily risen, and this year, 436 initial contacts were made in this manner.

The following statistical data represents those callers who were willing to complete an intake and give us clinical and demographic information:

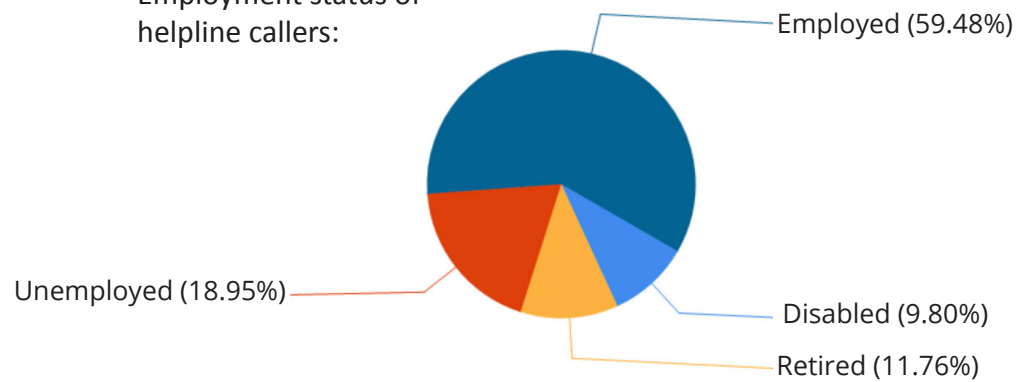
While 76% of the time the problem gambler was the one contacting us for help, we often get calls from spouses and other concerned family members.

While many people associate problem gambling with men,

our calls were equally divided between males and females.

We get calls from West Virginians of all ages, but the most common age range is 46-55.

Employment status of  
helpline callers:



Most frequently cited  
symptoms of helpline  
callers, in order of  
most to least:

Increasing amounts of money gambled  
Repeated unsuccessful efforts to control, cut back, or stop gambling  
Chasing losses  
Borrowed money  
Preoccupied with gambling  
Lies about gambling  
Gambled when feeling distressed  
Restless or irritable when attempting to cut down or stop gambling  
Lost job, relationship etc., due to gambling

Most common types of financial problems  
experienced by helpline callers, in order of  
most to least:

Spent all extra money  
Late on bills  
Borrowed from friends/family  
Spent savings  
Credit card debt  
Sold/pawned property  
Bad checks  
Borrowed against house  
Stole money  
Bankruptcy  
Canceled insurance

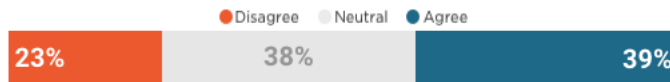
Most frequent types of gambling cited by  
helpline callers, in order of most to least:

Slot machines at casino  
Video lottery terminals  
Table games at casino (craps, poker, etc.)  
Other lottery (daily numbers, Powerball, etc.)  
Lottery scratch offs  
Sports  
Bingo  
Cards at home or with friends  
Dogs/horses  
Internet gambling-non sports  
Tip tickets

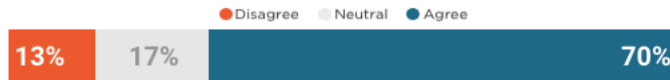
# National Data

This year, the National Council on Problem Gambling did a state-by-state study on gambling habits and attitudes. Here is some of what they found in WV:

Services to treat compulsive gambling are available in my community



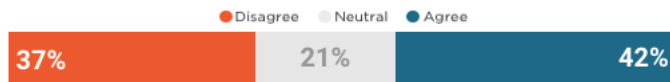
The gambling industry should do more to help people with a gambling addiction



The government should do more to help people with a gambling addiction



If someone close to me had a gambling problem, I would know where to get them help



Retrieved from: <https://www.ncpgsurvey.org/west-virginia/?fbclid=IwAR176gmLrIKSzMPrUZBhyV7j3rLZxrlGHI1R-eYtgpnI05HZJ06h4Cfytk8>

# Marketing and Outreach

One of our major media campaigns involved airing a commercial on sports betting. The spot was entirely produced in-house. It aired during college and professional football and basketball games.



We partnered with West Virginia University's athletic program to reach out to college students and those attending WVU sporting events. Information on our program was also printed in the WVU Football and WVU Men's Basketball Fan Guides.



We partnered with local Charleston radio station WTSQ. In addition to airing promotional spots on our program, they invited us on the air live each week to talk about our program.



We conducted a digital ad campaign to reach problem gamblers. We used targeted mobile marketing to reach those who need us most. Using geofence technology, we sent mobile advertisements to people who visited casinos and video gambling establishments. We also provided information on our program to those in the state who were looking for information online about problem gambling, or who were visiting online gambling sites.

**Our combined digital ads resulted in 964,020 views/impressions and 4,845 clicks**



### **Website**

We had 15,600 unique users on our website this year. We work hard on optimizing our online presence and are proud that we are at the top of search results for West Virginians looking for help with a gambling problem. Website users can chat online live 24/7 with us, search for treatment resources in their area, and view self-help material.

Highlighted on our website is an interactive Lie/Bet Questionnaire, which is a two-question screening tool for pathological gambling. The questions were selected from the DSM-5 criteria for pathological gambling because they were identified as the best predictors of pathological gambling. Answering “Yes” to either question indicates a possible problem and need for further assessment. Six hundred fifty people used the screening tool, and 612 answered “Yes” to at least one question.

We also list all nine DSM symptoms as a separate interactive quiz. Six hundred twenty-two people took this quiz to evaluate how many symptoms they had. Almost every visitor endorsed at least one symptom.

### **Social Media**

In addition to our website, we also have a very active social media presence that helps to educate and promote the services we provide. We reached 252,920 people on Facebook. Our posts engaged with 3,673 people, including likes, link clicks, comments, and shares. On Twitter, we reached 76,457 people and earned 780 organic engagements, including replies, retweets, and link clicks. We also post and engage on Instagram.



## Earned Media and Outreach

Last year, our marketing team was able to secure over 60 television and news stories and present at 120 events.



We have a network of 70+ treatment providers who not only provide counseling to helpline callers but also assist in outreach efforts. Here, Virginia Shelhammer of Wheeling exhibits for the program at a conference on homelessness.



Sheila Moran, Marketing Director, at the annual West Virginia National Association of Social Workers conference – one of the hundreds we attended.



Program Director Jennifer Davis-Walton staffing an exhibit at the WVU Addiction Training Institute.



Each holiday season, we work to raise awareness about youth gambling. We ask that parents NOT buy their children lottery tickets, poker tables, etc...as gifts.

## March is National Problem Gambling Awareness Month

This month is always a busy one for us! We had a significant increase in helpline calls during March, largely due to the outreach activity staff and network counselors did. We participated in over 75 events during March. These included displays at casinos, lunch and learn events for mental health centers, screening at health centers, press releases, television interviews, presentations to staff at hospitals, social security offices, colleges, DHHR offices, Veteran's Administration centers, mailings to social service groups, and much more.

## Treatment

We had 737 calls/chats this year (not including hang ups, wrong numbers, casino and pranks). All of those callers who asked for help with problem gambling, either for themselves or a loved one, were offered multiple services. Callers are assessed for suicidal ideation and other mental health issues and offered immediate crisis counseling. All who met the criteria for problem gambling were offered a free appointment with one of our network counselors. For those with barriers preventing them from traveling, we offered to link them with one of our network counselors via telehealth.

- 223 were referred to GA/GamAnon/ Other support group.
- 78 were referred to PGHN Support Group.
- 100 were mailed resources.
- 75 were emailed resources.
- 83 people attended at least one session with a network counselor.
- We paid for continued treatment for those with no other payor source for 41 people.

## Weekend Retreat

In Spring 2019, we held one of our favorite events, a Weekend Retreat, for problem gamblers and their loved ones. Twenty-nine people from around the state joined us at the John XXIII Pastoral Center in Charleston to seek help. There were 16 sessions covering topics such as fighting the stigma surrounding addiction, how to repair relationships damaged by problem gambling, and how to prevent relapses. There were also support groups and individual counseling sessions. Pictured below are some of our staff members, network counselors and session leaders.



# Follow Ups

We follow up with each caller who allows further contact. Those who do not attend an appointment receive a call a week after their initial call. Those who attend an appointment get a reminder call and receive their first follow-up within 48 hours of their appointment. All callers receive follow-up calls at three months, six months, and one year from their initial call.

## 3 months

### Recovery status:

62% Not gambling  
19% Decreased gambling  
18% Gambling same amount  
<1% Increased gambling

### Ability to handle problems:

70% Better  
30% Same

### How do you feel about yourself:

76% Better  
24% Same

### Reduced debt:

75% Reduced debt  
25% Still in debt

### Relationship with family:

80% Better  
12% Worse  
8% Same

### Job performance:

63% Better  
37% Same

### Recreational activity:

73% Better  
27% Same

## 6 months

### Recovery status:

50% Not gambling  
43% Decreased gambling  
3% Gambling same amount  
3% Increased gambling

### Ability to handle problems:

85% Better  
8% Same  
8% Worse

### How do you feel about yourself:

85% Better  
12% Same  
3% Worse

### Reduced debt:

81% Reduced debt  
19% Still in debt

### Relationship with family:

80% Better  
13% Worse  
7% Same

### Job performance:

82% Better  
18% Same

### Recreational activity:

78% Better  
22% Same

## 1 year

### Recovery status:

67% Not gambling  
28% Decreased gambling  
5% Gambling same amount

### Ability to handle problems:

93% Better  
7% Same

### How do you feel about yourself:

93% Better  
7% Same

### Reduced debt:

90% Reduced debt  
10% Still in debt

### Relationship with family:

86% Better  
14% Same

### Job performance:

100% Better

### Recreational activity:

75% Better  
25% Same



We held a series of events geared toward collegiate student-athletes. We held events at Marshall University, Glenville State University, and Concord University. Over 200 students attended these events. We featured Lesa Densmore, former NCAA student-athlete who overcame a gambling addiction. She talked to the students about why they are at particular risk for developing a gambling problem. She also discussed the strict NCAA rules regarding gambling.



**LESA DENSMORE**  
Nationally Recognized  
Problem Gambling Expert

**APR 4 THU**

**Concord University - Student Ctr. Ball Room**  
7:00pm - 8:30pm

**WV is one of the first states in the country to legalize sports betting. Young adults are at a particularly high risk for developing a gambling addiction.**

Come hear Lesa Densmore, former NCAA Division 1 athlete, tell her story of gambling addiction from an athlete's perspective. Hear about how her struggles with addiction nearly ruined her career, family, and academic future, and the steps she took to get it all back.



Student-athletes answered surveys on gambling, and the results show there is a need for more outreach and education on campuses:

- More than half admitted they did gamble, despite NCAA prohibitions
- Most understood that gambling could become an addiction
- Thirty-three percent (33%) of the students reported they felt that gambling was a “good way to make money”
- About half thought student-athletes should be allowed to bet on the outcomes of sporting events
- Ten percent (10%) reported having a friend who spent too much time or money on gambling
- Very few reported they felt they personally had a gambling problem
- Six percent (6%) said someone had offered them compensation for altering the course of a game they were playing to make good on a bet

# Training



**NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON PROBLEM GAMBLING**  
We attended the 2018 National Conference on Problem Gambling, held in Cleveland, Ohio. Along with our staff, several of our network counselors attended.



This year, we were proud to win the People's Choice Award for this ad campaign:



During the conference, several of our counselors met with our clinical director, Dr. Heather Chapman, to discuss difficult cases.

## Legal Sports Betting Comes to West Virginia

In September, we hosted a Sports and Gambling Summit for our network counselors, athletic directors, and community members. This was prompted by the recent expansion of sports gambling availability, both at WV casinos and on mobile applications. Participants learned about the complexities of sports betting, and how treating sports bettors is different than treating other types of gamblers. They also heard from a former NCAA athlete who discussed how gambling had affected her life.





## Spring Advanced Training

1-800-GAMBLER  
The Problem Gamblers Help Network of West Virginia

Advanced Training 2019

### SCHEDULE

Sunday, May 5

- 1:00-2:00pm Registration
- 2:00-2:30pm Welcome/Introductions-Staff
- 2:30-3:00pm Program News/Updates-Staff
- 3:00-4:00pm Impact of Military and Civilian Trauma in the Development and Maintenance of Gambling Disorder: Implications for Care Management  
Heather Chapman, Ph.D., ICGC-II, BACC
- 4:00-4:45pm Networking Break/Appetizers
- 4:45-6:45pm Clinical Supervision  
Heather Chapman, Ph.D., ICGC-II, BACC

\*\*Dinner on your own

Monday, May 6

- 8:00-9:00am Breakfast
- 9:00-11:00am Video Game Addiction Masterclass for Mental Health Professionals  
Cam Adair, Founder-GameQuitters
- 11:00-11:15am Break
- 11:15-12:15pm Video Game Addiction Masterclass (Continued)
- 12:15-1:15pm Lunch
- 1:15-3:15pm Ethical Dilemmas in Addiction Treatment  
Heather Chapman, Ph.D, ICGC-II, BACC and Russell Philpott, M.Ed., LPC
- 3:15-3:30pm Break
- 3:30-4:30pm Ethics (Continued)
- 4:30-5:00pm Wrap-up/Closing

\*\*Thank you for being with us!\*\*



Each year we honor a "Counselor of the Year." This year, we chose Nancy Wolfe-Dilgard of Morgantown. She has provided excellence in treating problem gamblers and has been active in promoting our program in her community.

Cam Adair was one of our featured presenters at our Advanced Training. Here is one of the news stories that aired on the event:

## Gaming expert says we are not prepared for coming tsunami of social media addiction

by SARAH LIEU Monday, May 6th 2019

Cam Adair, founder of Game Quitters, the world's largest online support community for video game addiction, spoke Monday in Charleston before counselors in the state's Problem Gamblers Help Network.



CHARLESTON, W.Va. (WCHS, WVAH) – An internationally recognized gaming addiction speaker said society is not prepared for the coming tsunami of problems related to video gaming and social media addiction.

Cam Adair, founder of Game Quitters, spoke Monday in Charleston to counselors in the state's Problem Gamblers Help Network.

Adair said studies are showing a link between an increase in anxiety, depression and suicide rates with social media. He said that is because gaming and social media are designed to keep people hooked – even on YouTube.

"YouTube is an optimized algorithm that's designed to keep you spending as much time on it so that they earn as much money through advertising," Adair said. "So, I think we really need to look at how much gamers specifically are spending time on watching other people play video games."

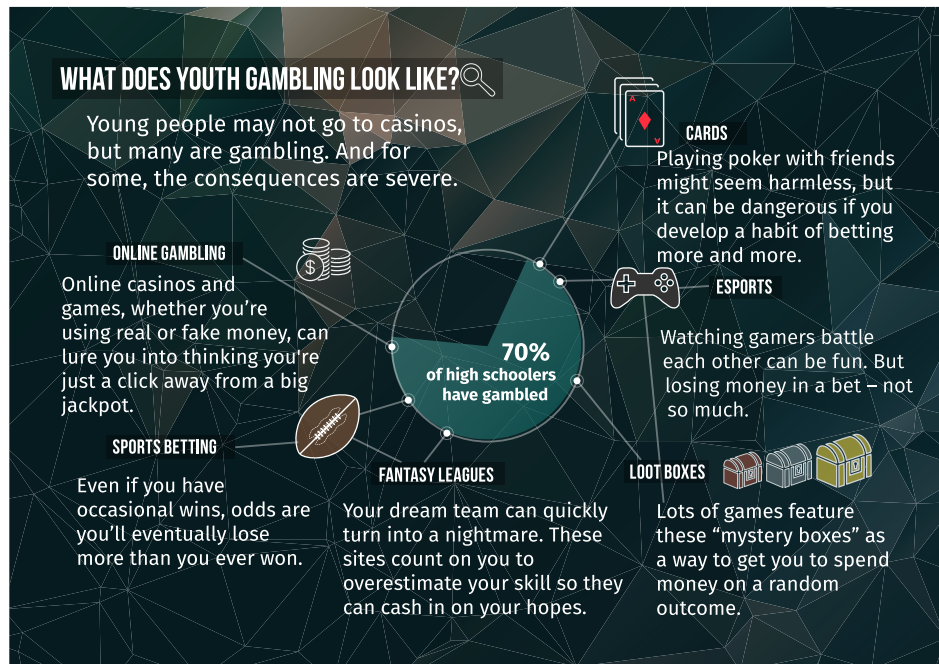
Adair said parents need to start talking with their children and get them more involved in face-to-face activities.

Adair was a video game addict for more than 10 years, starting when he was 11. He played video games in his parents' basement up to 16 hours a day, as a way to escape from bullying in school. But it led instead to depression and thoughts of suicide. That is when he decided to change and created the online support group called Game Quitters. Adair was named one of Canada's top 150 leaders in mental health. His work has been published in Psychiatry Research, Forbes, BBC, the New York Times, CNN and ABC's 20/20.



# Prevention

Another issue this year was the declaration of “Internet Gaming Disorder” as an official diagnosis by the World Health Organization. This disorder shares almost identical symptoms of problem gambling. The popularity of online “social casinos” (e.g., Slotsomania), in addition to the rise of gambling functionality on many games, adds to this concern. For these reasons, much of our work this year centered on prevention activities, particularly geared toward youth. Below is one of the cards we produced to be distributed to youth:



**Young people do gamble, and gambling isn't harmless**

### DID YOU KNOW?

Gambling addiction affects the same part of the brain as drugs?



**1-800-GAMBLER**  
The Problem Gamblers Help Network of West Virginia

**Gambling won't make you rich, but it can cause trouble**

Gambling is illegal for anyone under 18.

You might lose money, and then bet even more to get it back. This can create a gambling problem.

Problem gamblers often end up broke, depressed, and in trouble.

The odds are always against you.

The longer you play, the more you have to lose.

Kids who gamble are 2 to 4 times more likely to develop a gambling problem than adults.

If you're worried you might have a gambling problem, call 1-800-GAMBLER today, or chat with us at 1800Gambler.net.



@1800GAMBLERWV

As part of our prevention grants, several organizations participated in surveying youth on their gambling activity. Middle and high school kids in Greenbrier, Taylor, Putnam, and Taylor counties were surveyed. The results confirmed that gambling, and particularly lack of education about gambling addiction and the odds of play, is a real issue for youth in WV.

**We asked kids about gambling and here are some of their responses:**

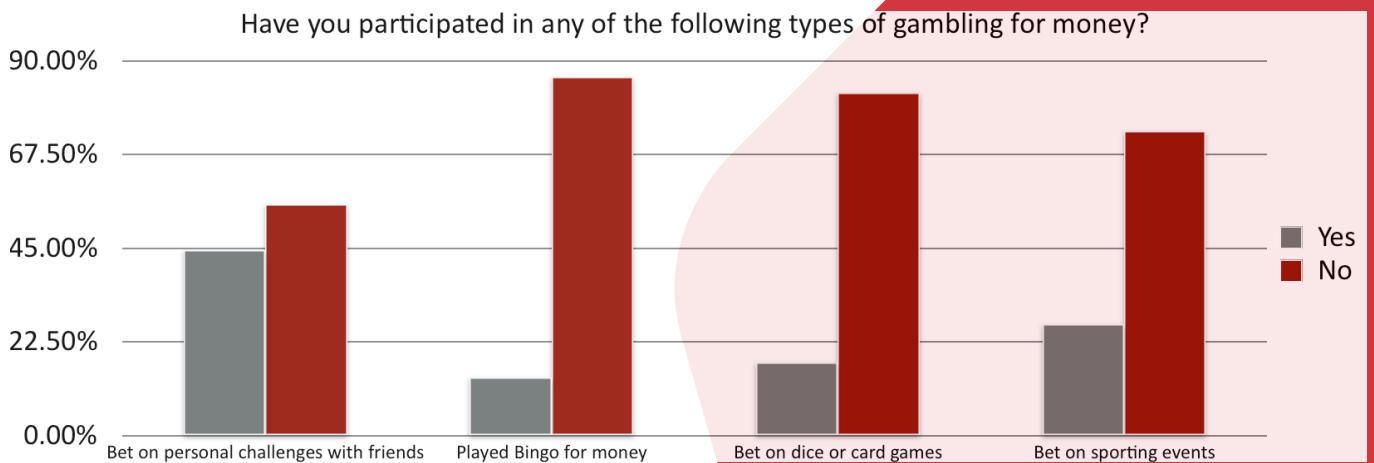
25% think gambling is a good way to make money

48% think gambling addiction is a problem for young people

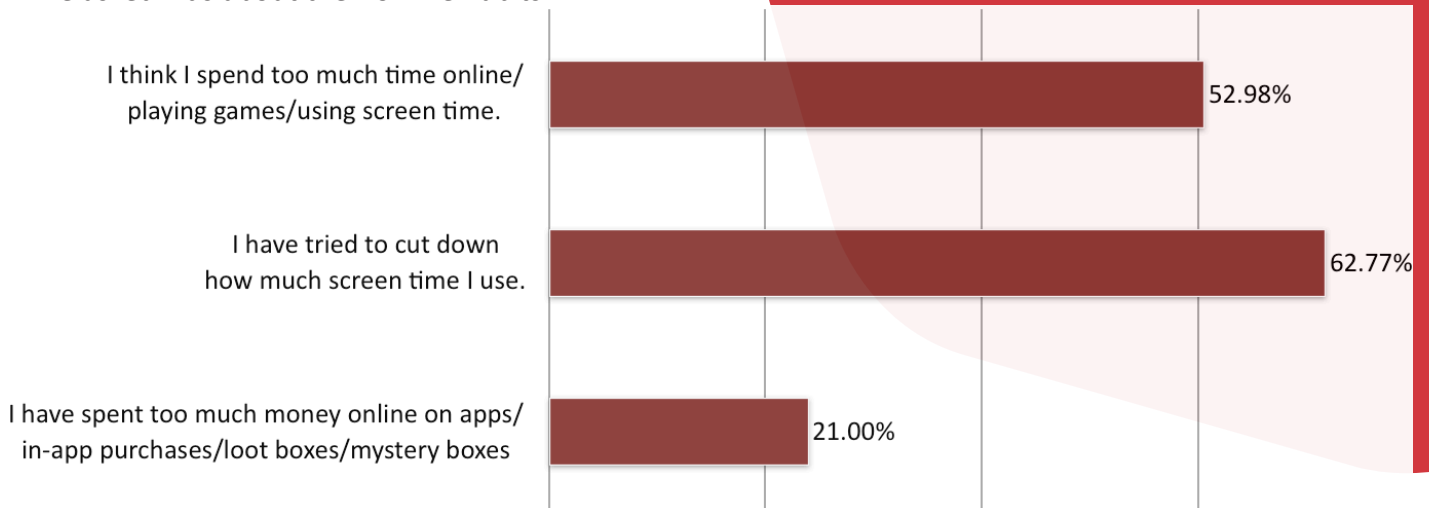
78% agree that gambling can become an addiction

22% said they think they should gamble less

14% said they would like to gamble less but don't know how to stop



**We asked kids about their online habits:**



This year, we funded five organizations with mini-grants up to \$5,000 each to do work with children around the issue of gambling addiction prevention.

# Mini-Grants

## **Fayette, Monroe, Raleigh, Summers (FMRS)**

FMRS worked throughout the school year with a group of 16 high school students taking a special class in research methods. FMRS used the grant to teach the students more about gambling addiction, and each student did a research project throughout the year on various topics related to problem gambling. At the end of April, the students had a large reception where parents, family members, media and community members attended, and each student gave a presentation about their topic.

## **Winfield Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD)**

The Winfield Middle School SADD Chapter worked on various projects throughout the year with their grant funding. The SADD chapter was educated about problem gambling, and they participated in advocacy throughout the school year. They set up exhibits about problem gambling, made announcements during sporting events and participated in school resource fairs. They were able to get a few hundred middle and high school students to complete a survey that asked questions about youth problem gambling behavior. Additionally, they participated in the statewide SADD conference by exhibiting about problem gambling and helping to teach one of the sessions on this topic.

## **Taylor County Family Resource Network (FRN)**

Taylor County FRN was able to incorporate problem gambling advocacy into all of its yearly activities. They hosted a community event once a month and held special classes, presentations and art activities that focused on this. They hosted exhibits many times throughout the year and spoke to students that came to their drop-in center monthly. They also were able to get dozens of middle and high school students to complete the youth survey on problem gambling.

## **Clay County Family Resource Network (FRN)**

The organization is very intertwined with the local school system and was able to reach hundreds of students with problem gambling prevention efforts. They exhibited at many community resource fairs, participated in school-only events and hosted community pool parties with the theme of problem gambling prevention. They were able to get every 9th grader in the county to take part in a youth gambling evidence-based prevention course called "Stacked Deck." Lastly, they were able to get hundreds of middle and high school students to take the problem gambling youth survey.

## **Monroe County Family Resource Network (FRN)**

Monroe County FRN scheduled a training meeting with the county superintendent and all county principals to go over the importance of problem gambling prevention. They also operate the county's largest food pantry and have incorporated problem gambling handouts and advocacy into all of the work they do with pantry customers.

# ORGANIZATION TO OFFER GRANTS TO PREVENT YOUTH GAMBLING

• Jordan Nelson The Register-Herald Jun 6, 2019

The Problem Gamblers Help Network of West Virginia, the group operating the state's 1-800-GAMBLER helpline, is offering grants of up to \$5,000 each to community groups to prevent youth gambling.

A press release stated problem gambling affects thousands of West Virginians, and studies show youth are actually more likely to develop a gambling problem than adults.

"There is significant overlap between gambling disorder and video gaming disorder, which heavily affects teens. A 2018 study

of over 500 West Virginia youth showed that nearly 50 percent gamble, including over 25 percent who gambled on sports," the release stated.

"Over 25 percent agreed with the statement 'Gambling is a good way to make money.' Over 50 percent admitted they spent more than hours per day of screen time, 60 percent said they had tried to cut down on screen time, and 20 percent admitted gambling online."

The release stated unlike with alcohol or drug use, many parents condone and even encourage gambling

behavior.

gambling addiction correlates strongly with mental health issues, including depression and suicide.

Yet, there are very few prevention activities in West Virginia geared towards this issue.

These grants will focus on prevention activities aimed at promoting awareness of the dangers of youth gambling. West Virginia nonprofit organizations who work with youth are eligible.

For more information about this opportunity, email [Jennifer@1stchs.com](mailto:Jennifer@1stchs.com) or call 304-583-4011.



# 1 800 GAMBLER

The Problem Gamblers Help Network of West Virginia



1-800-GAMBLER



Jennifer@1stchs.com



www.1800GAMBLER.net



@1800GamblerWV

# Financials

Ordinary Income/Expense	
Income	
Income	1,371,682.56
Total Income	<u>1,371,682.56</u>
Gross Profit	1,371,682.56
Expense	
Payroll	
Charleston City Fee	1,583.19
Salaries Program	436,352.28
Salary Admin	179,545.86
Taxes	50,542.83
Call Pay Wages	13,545.00
Retirement Expenses	10,249.77
Contract Employment	8.33
Group Benefits	5,272.96
Payroll - Other	490.65
Total Payroll	<u>697,590.87</u>
Website	669.88
Marketing/Media / Outreach	143,316.73
Direct Program Expense	141,686.62
Treatment Services - Direct	79,714.00
Treatment Services - Admin	37,007.98
Insurance Expense	9,860.26
Communication	23,673.71
Equipment	5,974.62
Contracting Expense	45,754.12
Supplies	12,835.13
Travel	10,538.42
Rent	22,317.00
Training	88,510.39
Indirect Costs	61,217.65
Miscellaneous	11,178.54
Total Expense	<u>1,391,845.92</u>
Net Ordinary Income	<u>(20,163.36)</u>
Net Income	<u>(20,163.36)</u>