

The Nebraskans We Serve

Nebraskans Receiving Treatment for a
Gambling Problem

July 1, 2017 to November 30, 2020

Nebraska Gamblers Assistance Program



Introduction

When the Commission on Problem Gambling started its direction of the Nebraska Gamblers Assistance Program (GAP) in 2013, it was interested in knowing more about the Nebraskans served by the program in order to improve service to the entire state.

The commission has accumulated two kinds of data. Clients are asked to describe their experiences with gambling and the problems they developed as a result. Clients are also asked to describe their lives growing up as compared to their lives today.

The Nebraskans who seek help from GAP counselors describe their experiences with different forms of gambling. Some started gambling as young as age 10. Others have borrowed an average of \$34,000 to gamble.

While these facts are critical to understanding the problems our clients face, we also believe it is important to understand what their lives were like growing up. In other words, we want to understand the whole person.

As a result of understanding our clients better, we see better how a gambling problem can happen to anyone.

Comparing Life Growing Up to Life Today for Nebraskans Receiving GAP Services (sample size: 521)

Financial Status From Childhood to Adulthood
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 86% of problem gamblers report reduced economic status from upper income status to middle-income or low-income over time. ▪ 54% of problem gamblers report reduced economic status from middle-income to low-income status over time. ▪ 64% of low-income problem gamblers report unchanged economic status over time.

Parental Supervision From Childhood to Adulthood
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 54% of clients unsupervised by parents growing up report they moderately or highly supervise their children today.

**Number of Friends
From Childhood to Adulthood**

- 29% of clients who had many friends growing up report few or no friends today.

**Friends Who Got into Trouble
From Childhood to Adulthood**

- 62% of clients who had friends who got into trouble growing up report they still have friends who get into trouble.

**Alcohol use
From Childhood to Adulthood**

- 43% of problem gamblers who did not drink while living with their parents are currently drinking (high, moderate or low amounts).

**Tobacco use
From Childhood to Adulthood**

- 74% of problem gamblers who smoked while living with their parents are currently still smoking (high, moderate or low amounts).

**Drug use
From Childhood to Adulthood**

- 47% of problem gamblers who used drugs while living with their parents are currently still using drugs (high, moderate or low amounts).

**Sense of Wellbeing
From Childhood to Adulthood**

- 39% of problem gamblers who felt “great” while living with their parents also feel great currently.
- 38% of problem gamblers who felt “good” while living with their parents also feel good currently.

**Temperament
From Childhood to Adulthood**

- 34% of problem gamblers who had an “even” temperament while living with their parents now have a “changeable” temperament, and 22% of problem gamblers who had a “changeable” temperament now have an “even” temperament.

**Mood
From Childhood to Adulthood**

- 49% of problem gamblers who felt “good” while living with their parents also feel good currently.

**Decision Making
From Childhood to Adulthood**

- 33% of problem gamblers who made decisions rationally while living with their parents, now make decisions “emotionally”.

Main findings

The Nebraska Gamblers Assistance Program (GAP) started in the early 1990s when Nebraska approved the lottery. Since that time, GAP has paid for confidential counseling with certified problem gambling counselors for thousands of Nebraskans and their families who suffer a gambling addiction.

The Nebraska Gamblers Assistance Program, directed by the nine-member Commission on Problem Gambling since 2013, concentrates its efforts on reducing the negative impacts of gambling addiction through **treatment** and **prevention**. Services are offered at no charge.

Main Findings July 1, 2017 to November 30, 2020:

- Six percent of Nebraskans report attempting suicide before seeking treatment for gambling addiction
- Thirty percent of Nebraskans report considering suicide before seeking treatment for gambling addiction
- Total gambling debt: \$11.8 million (\$34.5K per client)
- Sixty-four percent of clients who manifest severe gambling behaviors decreased their symptoms after counseling commenced
- Nearly one-fourth of clients (24%) who started gambling at 18 years old and younger report that parents influenced them to start gambling

Outcomes

Both treatment and prevention programs collect information from Nebraska clients at intake, during counseling, at discharge, and by

measuring interaction with the program's website. This data measures the effectiveness of the GAP.

Treatment Outcomes

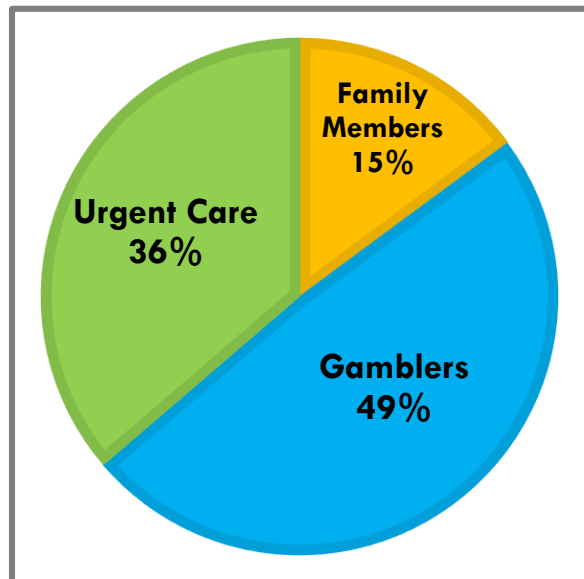
Individuals receiving counseling help

A total of **1,205** individuals received counseling services during July 1, 2017 to November 30, 2020.

These individuals included:

- New problem gamblers admitted: **497**
- New family members admitted: **151**
- New urgent care (two visits): **369**
- Clients carried over from FY June 30, 2017: **188**

FIGURE 1: NEW ADMISSIONS JULY 1, 2017 TO NOVEMBER 30, 2020

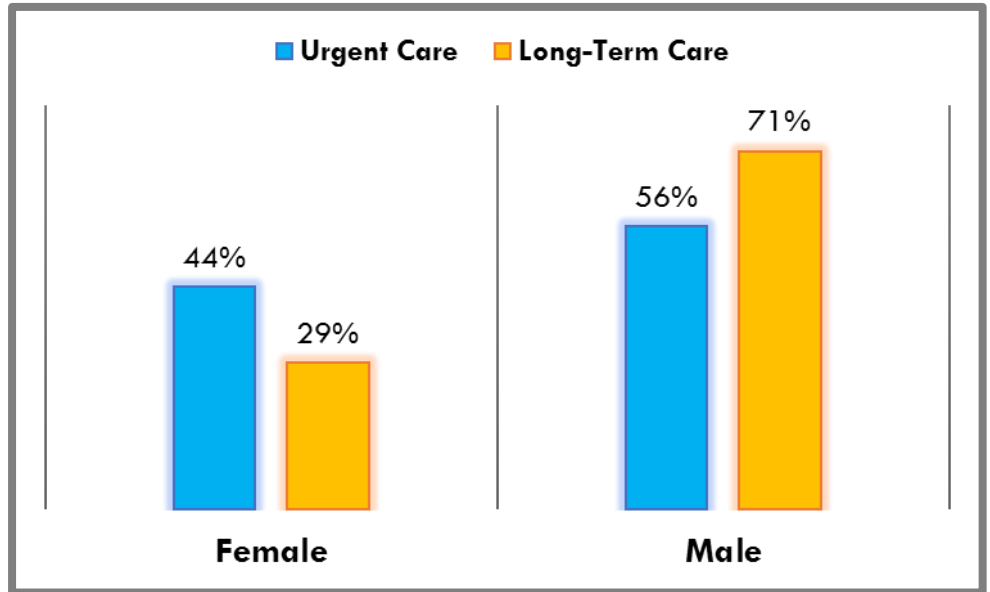


43% of **urgent care** visits resulted in a new admission to long-term counseling

Gender

- 56% of clients (problem gamblers) in urgent care were males and
- 71% of clients (problem gamblers) receiving counseling services at long-term care were males

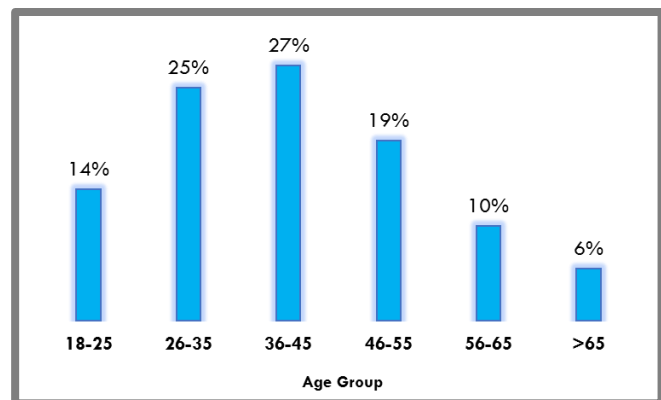
FIGURE 2: GENDER DIFFERENCES (PROBLEM GAMBLERS) IN URGENT CARE VS. AT LONG-TERM CARE



Age at Time of Admission

- **41:** Average age of problem gamblers at time of admission
- Female clients are an average 7 years older than male clients at long-term care (46 vs. 39 years of age, respectively)
- **44%** of problem gamblers are millennials (born 1981-1996)

Figure 3: Age at Time of Admission

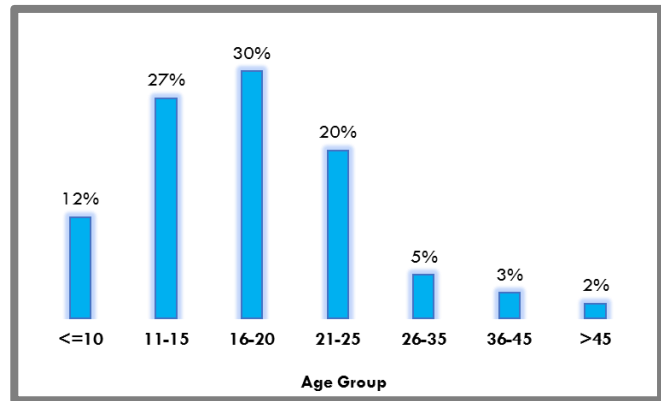


Min. age: 18 - Max. age: 85

Age First Gambled

- **18.3:** Average age first gambled
- **60%** were 18 years old or younger

FIGURE 4: AGE FIRST GAMBLED



Min. age: 6 - Max. age: 70

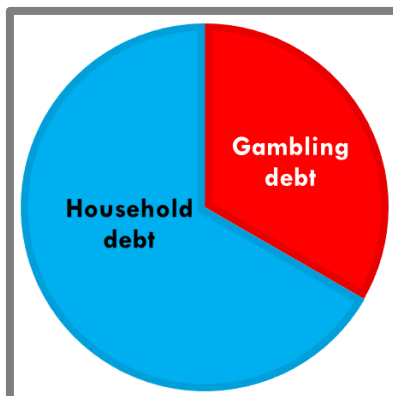
Total Gambling Debt

343 clients (problem gamblers) report gambling debt totaling:

\$ 11,845,919

- For an average of **\$34,536** each

FIGURE 5: DEBT RELATED TO GAMBLING



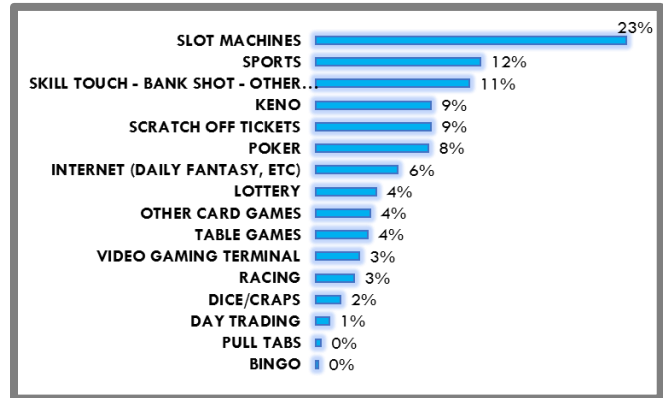
- Gambling debt represents **33%** of household debt

- Gambling debt among male clients was \$2,300 higher when compared to female clients (\$25K vs. \$22.7K, respectively)

Most Frequent Gambling Activity in the 12 Months Before Starting Counseling

- The most common gambling activity selected by problem gamblers is slot machines (23%), followed by sports (12%)

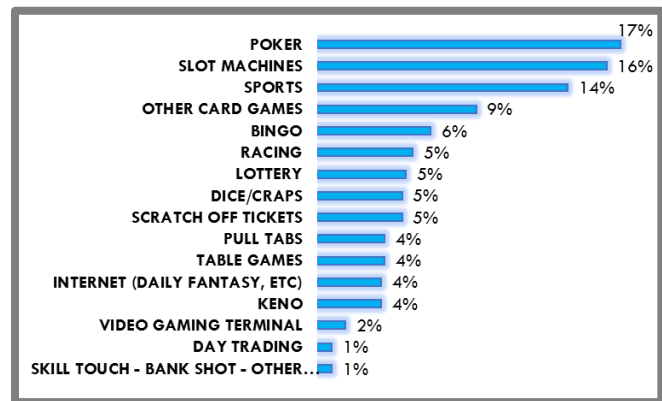
FIGURE 6: MOST FREQUENT GAMBLING ACTIVITY



First Gambling Activity

- The first gambling activity selected by problem gamblers is poker (17%), followed by slot machines (16%)

FIGURE 7: FIRST GAMBLING ACTIVITY



Access To Counseling Services

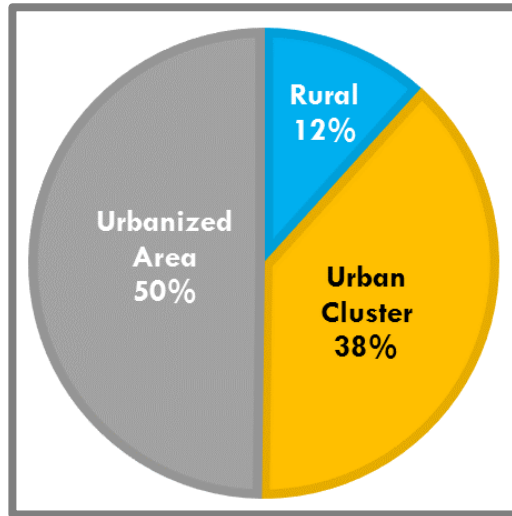
94%

of clients say it's important that there is no charge for gambling counseling services

Location of Nebraskans Receiving Help

- Half of clients who received GAP services during FY2019-2020 are located in urbanized areas (i.e., Omaha and Lincoln metro areas), 38% are located in urban clusters (middle size communities), and 12% are from rural areas

FIGURE 8: PROBLEM GAMBLER'S LOCATION BY TYPE OF COMMUNITY

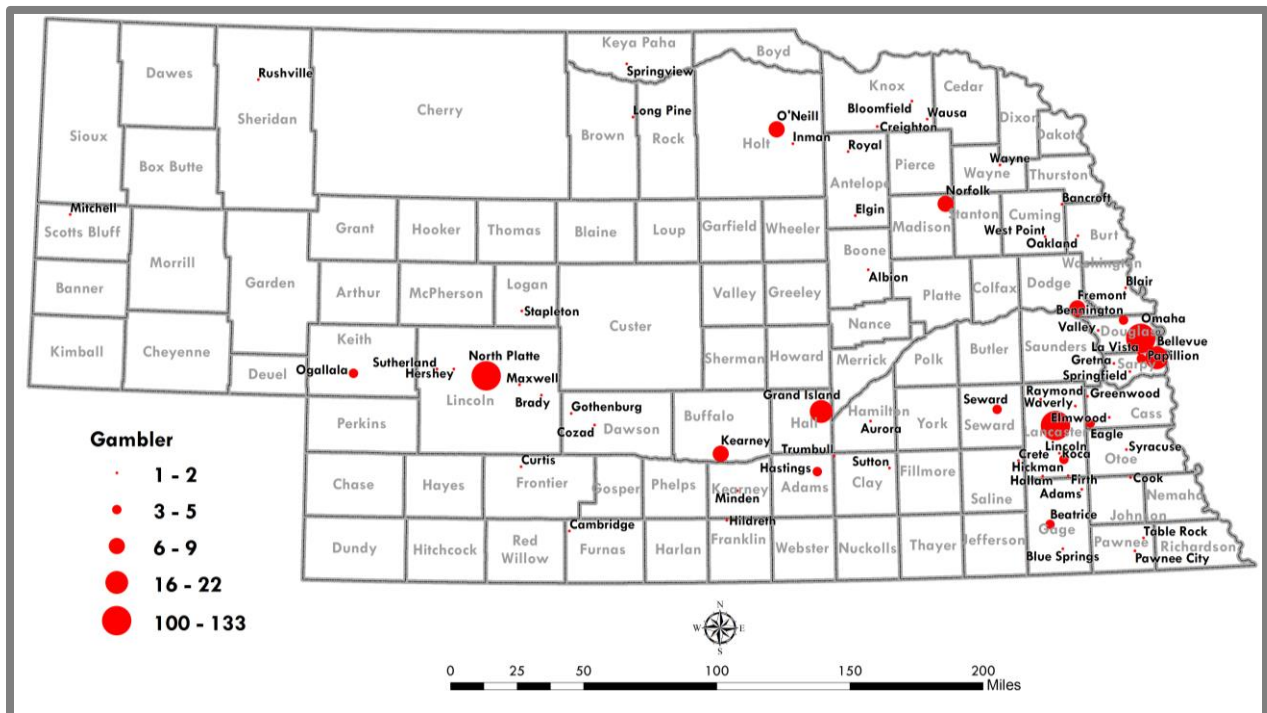


Urbanized Areas: 50,000 or more people
Urban Clusters: At least 2,500 and less than 50,000 people
Rural: Any population, housing, or territory outside urban areas

Location of New Clients by City

- Problem gamblers came from 70 cities, representing 44 counties across Nebraska
- 95% of clients are located within 25 miles from a GAP counselor

FIGURE 9: LOCATION OF PROBLEM GAMBLERS

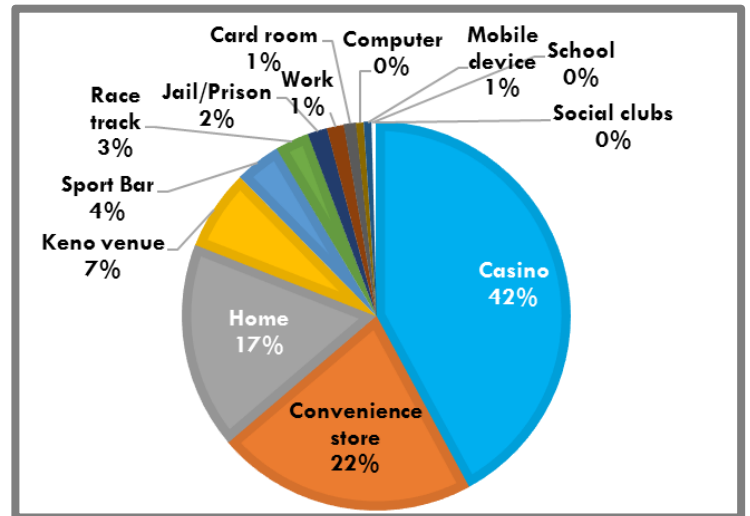


Gambling Location

- Four out of 10 clients (42%) gambled in casinos, followed by convenience store (22%)

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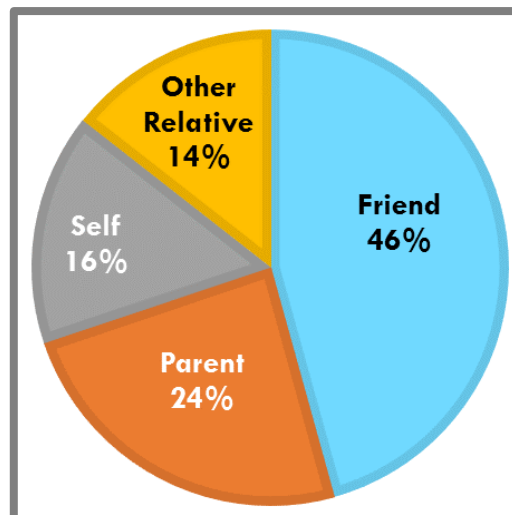
FIGURE 10: PRIMARY GAMBLING LOCATION



People Who Influenced to Gamble

- Nearly half of problem gamblers (46%) who started gambling at 18 years of age and younger were influenced by a “friend”, followed by “parent” (24%), “self” (16%), and then by “other relative” (14%).

Figure 11: People who First influenced Problem Gambler 18 Years Old and Younger to Start Gambling



85%

of clients who manifested severe gambling behaviors decreased their symptoms after being treated by a GAP counselor

Client Main Outcomes During Treatment and at Discharge

- **83%** of Nebraskans who got help from a trained GAP counselor report being helped within six sessions
- **88%** of Nebraskans report reducing their gambling
- **73%** of Nebraskans report reducing their gambling debt
- **82%** of Nebraskans report better outlook compared to when they started counseling
- **66%** report positive progress toward goal for gambling
- **67%** of Nebraskans report better relationships with family members today compared to when they started counseling

- **92%** of family members feel that counseling met their needs
- **76%** of family members feel very motivated to continue with counseling
- **69%** of family members have decreased emotional distress
- **86%** of family members report better outlook compared to when they started counseling
- **72%** of family members report better relationships with problem gambler compared to when they started counseling

THE NEBRASKANS WE SERVE

Our Mission

THE MISSION OF THE NEBRASKA GAMBLERS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (GAP) IS TO COUNTER THE NEGATIVE IMPACT OF GAMBLING ADDICTION WITH EFFECTIVE, EVIDENCE-BASED PREVENTION AND COUNSELING SERVICES FOR NEBRASKANS AND THEIR FAMILIES.

Our Goals

- DEVELOP GUIDELINES AND STANDARDS FOR THE OPERATION OF THE GAMBLERS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
- DIRECT DISTRIBUTION AND DISBURSEMENT OF MONEY IN THE COMPULSIVE GAMBLERS ASSISTANCE FUND (CGAF)
- DEVELOP STANDARDS TO:
 - TRAIN AND CERTIFY PROBLEM GAMBLING COUNSELORS
 - EVALUATE AND APPROVE COUNSELOR APPLICATIONS
 - GATHER AND ANALYZE DATA ABOUT GAMBLING ADDICTION AND REPORT TO THE PUBLIC, GOVERNOR AND LEGISLATURE
 - OVERSEE AND AUTHORIZE THE USE OF FUNDS FOR COUNSELING, EDUCATION AND PREVENTION REGARDING PROBLEM GAMBLING
- ENGAGE IN OTHER ACTIVITIES IT FINDS NECESSARY TO CARRY OUT THE DUTIES DEFINED BY THE NEBRASKA LEGISLATURE

Commissioners

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OMAHA

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SPENCE COUNSELING – OMAHA

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