

| Commission on Problem Gambling |

The Nebraskans We Serve

Nebraskans Receiving Help for a Gambling Problem

Annual Report FY 2024-2025

Nebraska Problem 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 6. Others have borrowed an average of \$40,500 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.

Main findings as reported by our clients

The Nebraska Problem 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 FY 2024-2025:

- Six percent of Nebraskans report attempting suicide before seeking treatment for gambling addiction.
- Twenty-two percent of Nebraskans report considering suicide before seeking treatment for gambling addiction.
- Total gambling debt: \$4.9 million (\$40.2K average per client).
- Eighty-six percent of clients report decreasing their problem gambling behavior after counseling began.
- Twenty-eight percent of clients 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

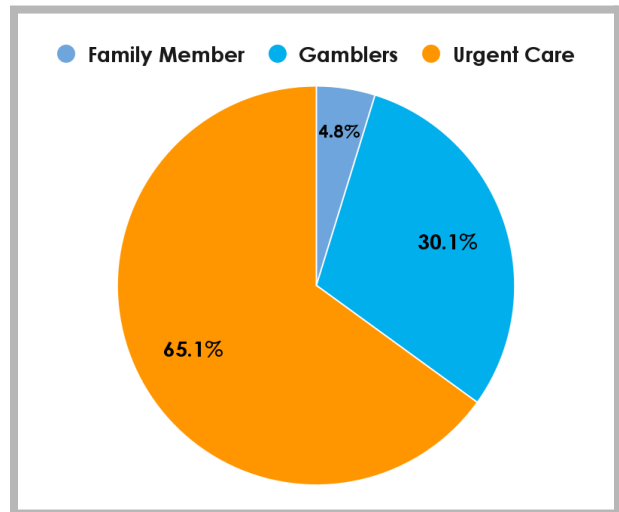
Individuals receiving counseling help

An average of **328** individuals received counseling services monthly during FY 2024- 2025.

These individuals included:

- Problem gamblers admitted: **277**
- Family members admitted: **44**
- Urgent care: **598***
- Total includes **245** carryover clients from June, 2023.
- Grand total for all individuals receiving services: **1,164**.

Figure 1: Admissions FY 2024-2025



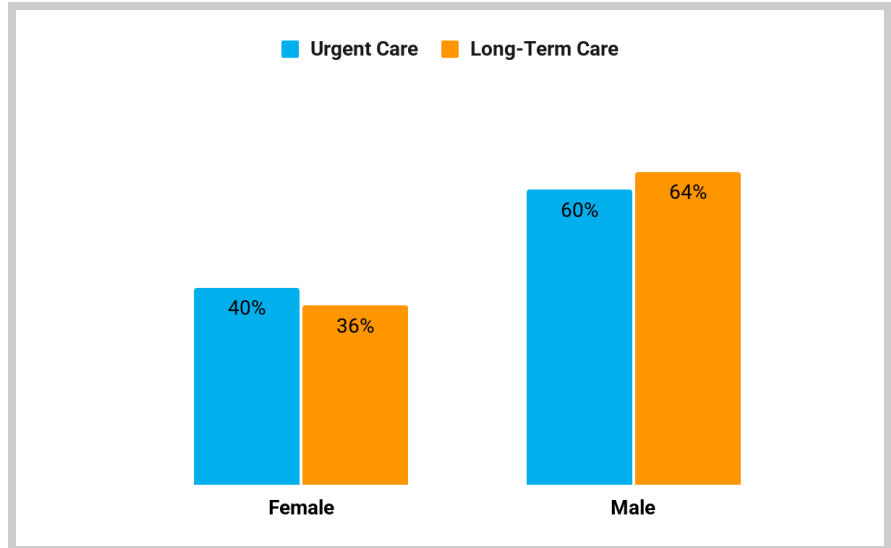
*Nebraskans may receive short-term urgent care with a counselor up to four times every six months with a streamlined admissions process. Counted as unique individuals.

39% of urgent care visits resulted in a new admission to long-term counseling during FY 2024-2025

Gender

Figure 2: Gender Differences (Problem Gamblers) in Urgent Care vs. at Long-Term Care

- 60% of clients (problem gamblers) in urgent care were males
- and
- 64% of clients (problem gamblers) receiving counseling services at long-term care were males

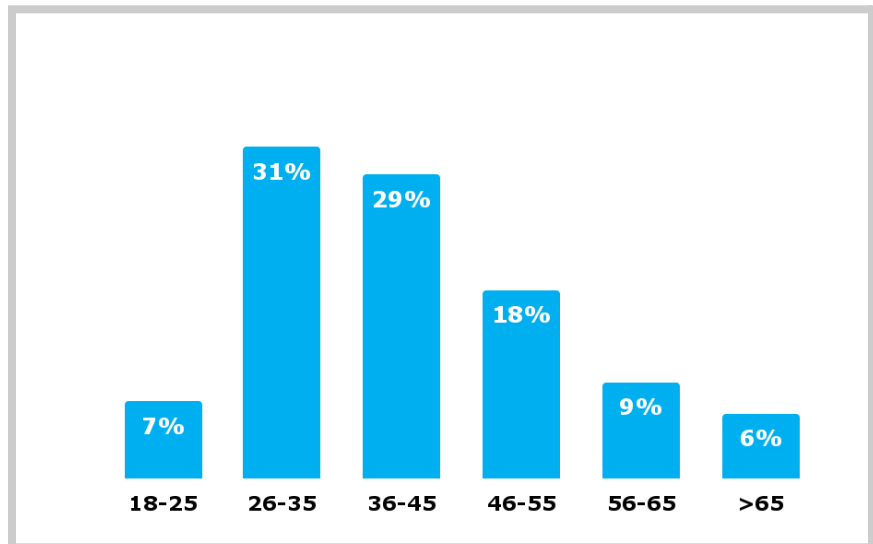


A higher percentage of female clients have received services when compared to two years ago

Age at Time of Admission

Figure 3: Age at Time of Admission

- **41.5:** Average age of all problem gamblers at time of admission
- Female clients are an average 4 years older than male clients at long-term care (44 vs. 40 years of age, respectively)

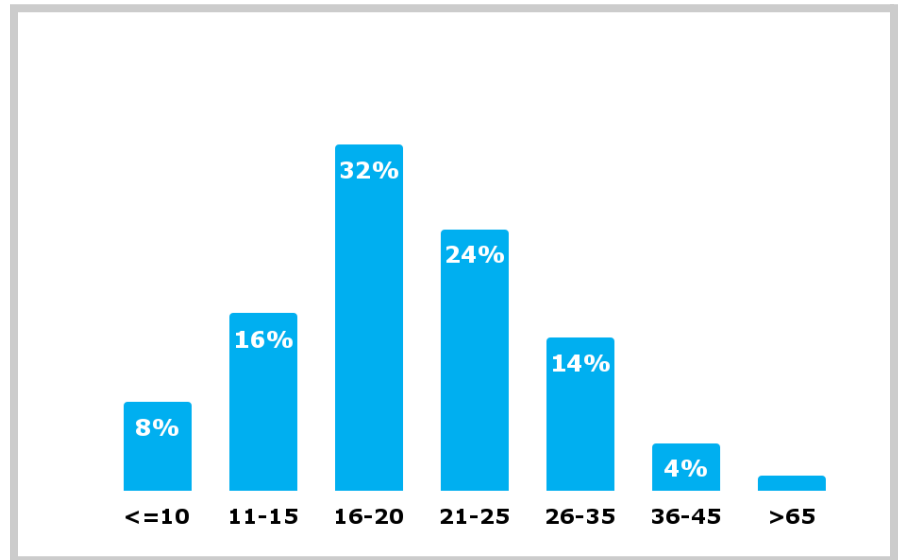


Min. age: 17- Max. age: 81

Age First Gambled

Figure 4: Age First Gambled

- 20.7: Average age first gambled
- 46% were 18 years old or younger
- Male clients are an average 5 years younger than female clients when start gambling (19 vs. 24 years of age, respectively)



Min. age: 6 - Max. age: 59

Most Frequent Gambling Activity in the 12 Months by Gender*

Most frequent gambling activity	Female Gambler	% Female	Most frequent gambling activity	Male Gambler	% Male
SLOT MACHINES	35	41%	CONVENIENCE STORE SLOT MACHINE	47	25%
CONVENIENCE STORE SLOT MACHINE	26	31%	SLOT MACHINES	45	24%
SCRATCH OFF TICKETS	4	5%	SPORTS BETTING	20	11%
VIDEO GAMES	3	4%	POKER	14	7%
KENO	2	2%	SCRATCH OFF TICKETS	11	6%
FANTASY SPORTS	2	2%	VIDEO GAMES	8	4%
BINGO	2	2%	KENO	8	4%
OTHER CARD GAMES	2	2%	OTHER CARD GAMES	6	3%
SPORTS BETTING	1	1%	DICE/CRAPS	6	3%
Unknown	8	9%	FANTASY SPORTS	3	2%
			DAY TRADING	2	1%
			LOTTERY	1	1%
			RACING	1	1%
			Unknown	18	9%
Total	85	100%	Total	190	100%

*The gender of two gamblers was missing.

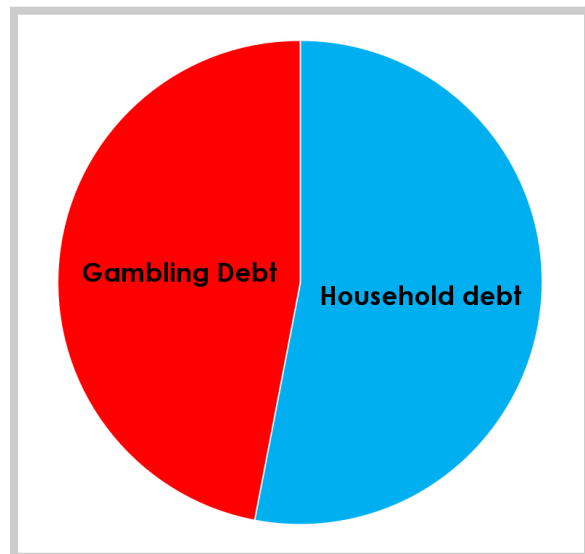
Total Gambling Debt

123 out of 277 clients (problem gamblers) report gambling debt totaling:

\$4,949,860

Figure 5: Debt Related To Gambling

- Gambling debt represents 47% of household debt
- Gambling debt among male clients was on average \$700 higher when compared to female clients (\$40.7K vs. \$40K, respectively)



Access to Counseling Services

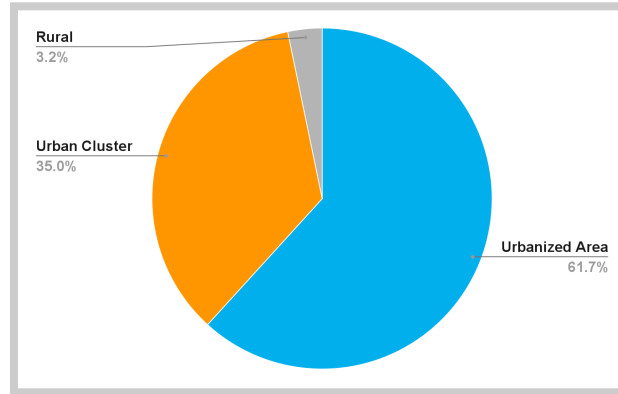
97%

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

Location of Nebraskans Receiving Help

Figure 6: Problem's Gambler's Location by Type of community

61.7% of clients who received GAP services are located in urbanized areas (i.e., Omaha and Lincoln metro areas), 35.0% are located in urban clusters (middle size communities), and 3.2% are from rural areas

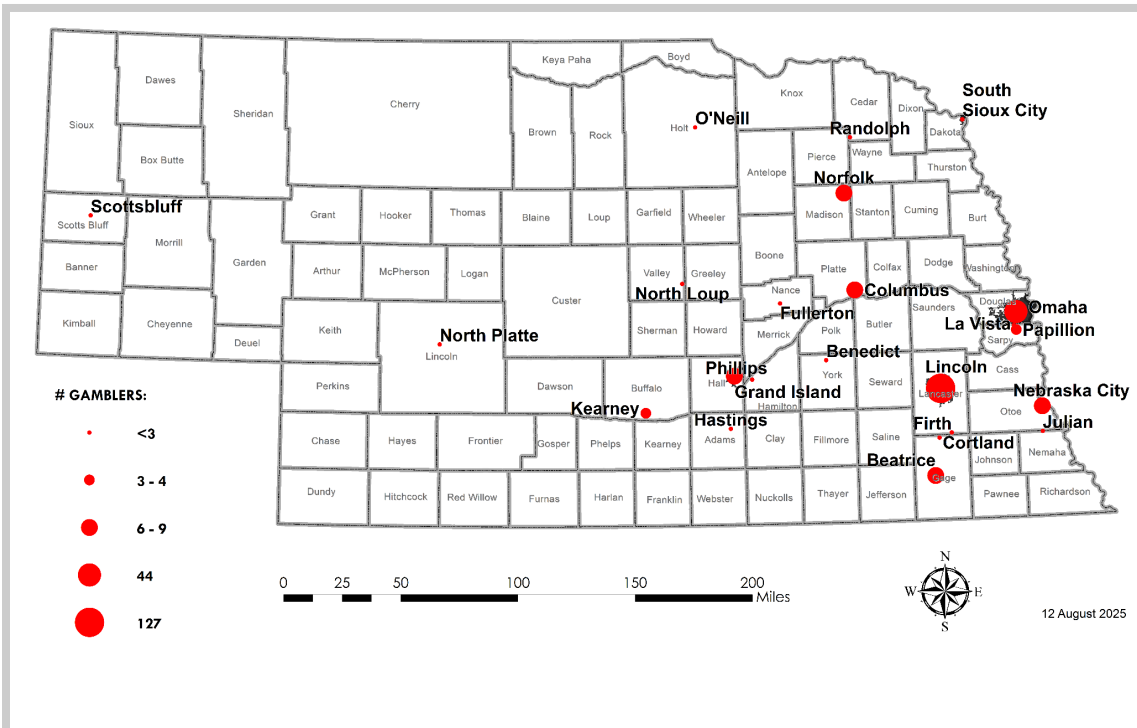


Urbanized Areas: 50,000 or more people
Urban Clusters: At least 2,500 and less than 50,000 people
Rural: Any population, housing, or territory outside urban areas

Location of New Clients by City

Problem gamblers came from **23** cities, representing **19** counties across Nebraska

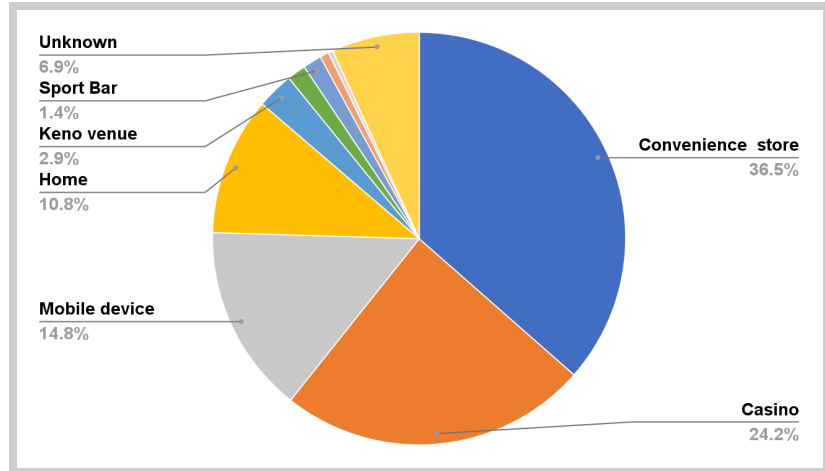
Figure 7: Location of Problem Gamblers



Gambling Location

Figure 8: Primary Gambling Location

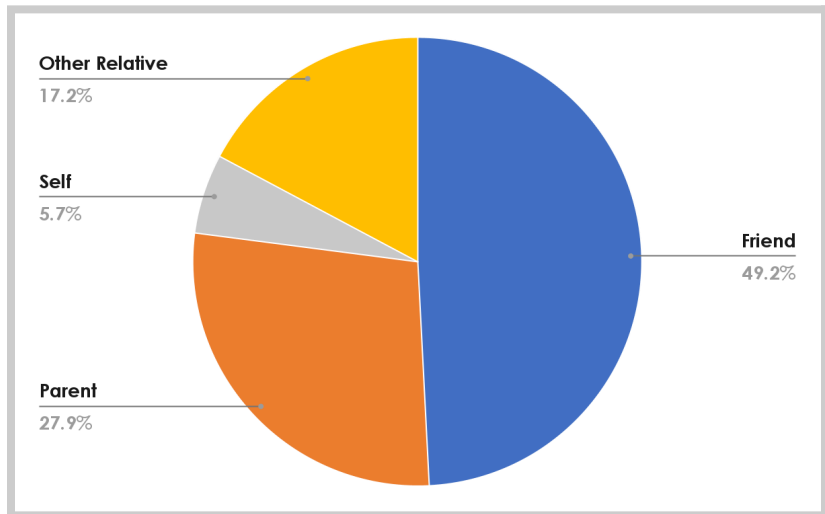
36.5% of clients gambled in convenience stores, followed by casinos (24.2%), and then by mobile device (14.8%)



People Who Influenced to Gamble

Figure 9: People Who First Influenced Problem Gambler 18 Years Old and Younger To Start Gambling

49.2% of gamblers who started gambling at 18 years of age and younger were influenced by a "friend", followed by "parent" (27.9%), "other relative" (17.2%), and then by "self" (5.7%)



86%

of clients report achieving an improvement in their problem gambling behavior after working with a GAP counselor

Client Main Outcomes During Treatment and at Discharge

- **93%** of Nebraskans feel that counseling met their needs
- **81%** of Nebraskans who got help from a trained GAP counselor report being helped within six sessions
- **73%** of Nebraskans report reducing their gambling
- **72%** of Nebraskans report reducing their gambling debt
- **58%** report positive progress toward goal for gambling
- **40%** of Nebraskans report better relationships with friends today compared to when they started counseling

- **95%** of family members feel that counseling met their needs
- **80%** of family members report better outlook compared to when they started counseling
- **70%** of family members have decreased emotional distress
- **59%** of family members report that family member with a problem gambling is better
- **55%** of family members report better relationships with problem gambler compared to when they started counseling

Helpline Outcomes

Figure 10: Helpline Calls By Month

A total of 145 calls to Helpline were received between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025. **Figure 10**

Referrals: 70.6% of referrals are made to NPGAP providers, and the rest of callers receive other type of referrals and resources (e.g. general info, GA meeting list).

Figure 11

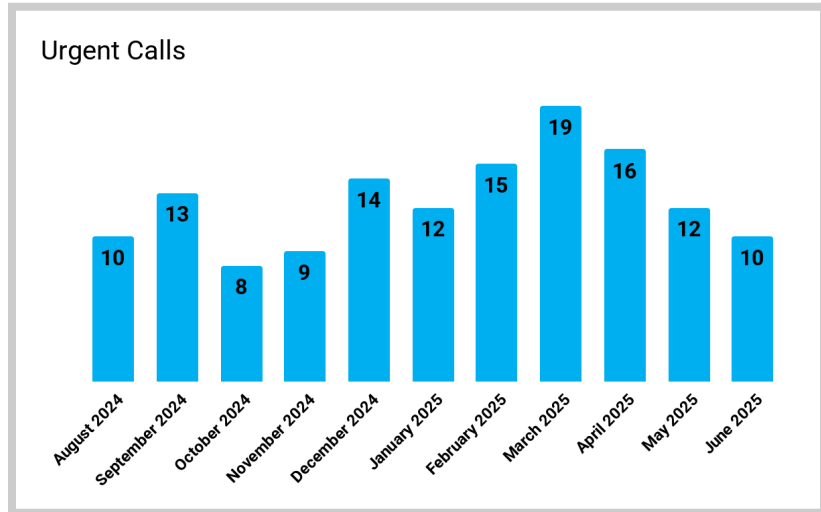


Figure 11: Type of Helpline Referral

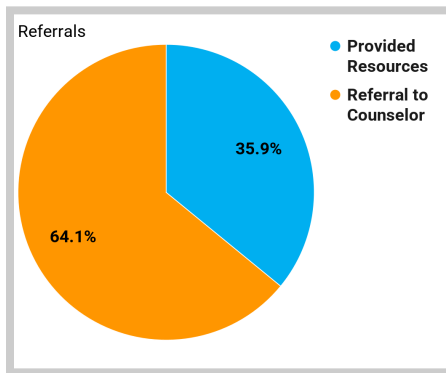


Figure 12: Gender of Helpline Caller

54% of Helpline calls are made by males.

Figure 12

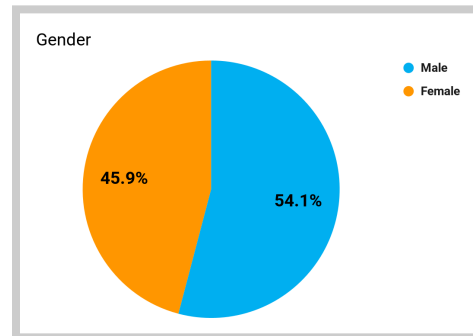
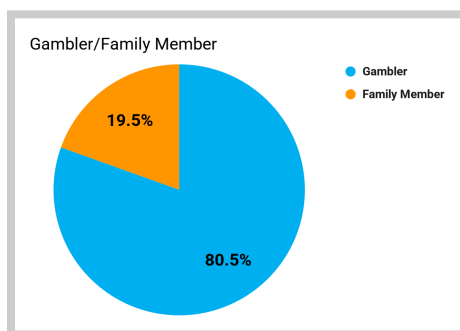


Figure 13: Type of Caller



Helpline Caller's City

65.5% of Helpline callers are from urbanized areas (e.g., Lincoln and Omaha), 25.0% from urban clusters (i.e., Grand Island, Columbus), and 9.5% from rural areas (i.e., Burwell, Stanton).

Figure 14: Helpline Calls By Type of Community

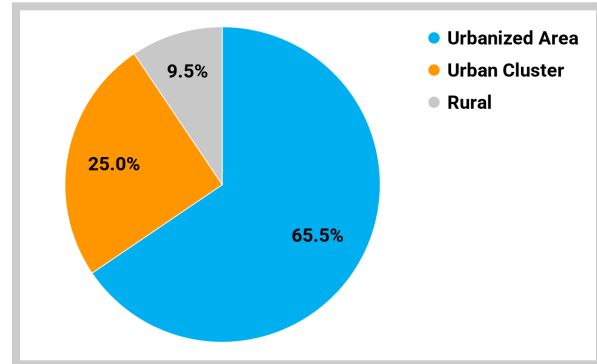
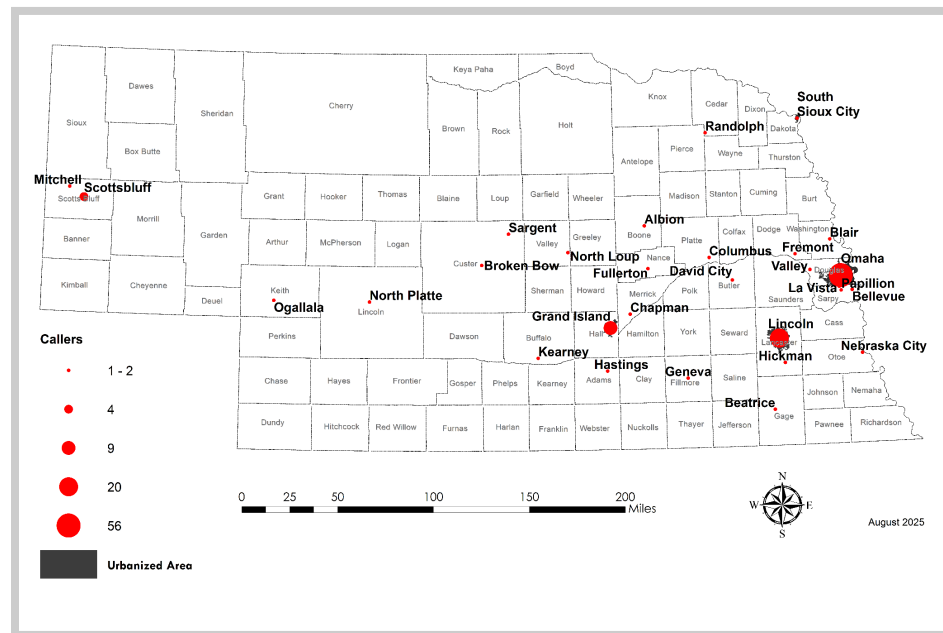


Figure 17: Location of Helpline Calls

Helpline calls were received from 29 different cities across the State. **Figure 17.**



The following opening statements during Helpline calls at intake reflect the severity of problems (family, financial, emotional) that those affected by gambling addiction are facing, and seeking help through NPGAP services:

"I have had a gambling problem for about 5 years now. It started with sports betting, then I found blackjack and slots on an app on my phone. I have accrued about 30k in gambling debt and was able to hide it pretty well until a few weeks ago."

"My sister has a severe gambling problem. She received an inheritance a few years ago and gambled 200k away, then she gambled her son's inheritance away."

"I have significant trauma from witnessing my boyfriend's suicide during an argument. I have tried to work on this in the past while in gambling counseling but was not 'totally' honest about what I was going through."

"I just learned my boyfriend has a gambling problem and am not sure what else to do. I paid him my half of the rent and he told me this morning he gambled it away."

"I need to stop gambling and drinking alcohol. I 'messed up my money and my daughter's money.' I am on disability after having back surgery and use alcohol to cope with the pain and gamble to make more money but lose most of the time."

THE NEBRASKANS WE SERVE

Our Mission

THE MISSION OF THE NEBRASKA PROBLEM GAMBLERS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (NPGAP) 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

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kelly Lambert – Trumbull | <input type="checkbox"/> Susan Lutz – Norfolk | <input type="checkbox"/> Dr. Claudia Moore – Omaha |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Paul Leckband – Norfolk | <input type="checkbox"/> Matt Monheiser – Sidney | <input type="checkbox"/> Dan Volnek – Lincoln |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> Todd Zohner – Stanton |

Counseling Services

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alcohol & Drug Solutions - Lincoln | <input type="checkbox"/> Directions Counseling Center - Beatrice | <input type="checkbox"/> New Hope Counseling - Lincoln |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alternative Avenues & Associates, LLC - Lincoln | <input type="checkbox"/> ESH Counseling - Nebraska City | <input type="checkbox"/> Omaha Trauma Therapy - Omaha |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Andrew Vuorela - Omaha | <input type="checkbox"/> Fillmore County Hospital - Geneva | <input type="checkbox"/> Peace & Power Counseling - Omaha |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art of Advice LLC - Lincoln | <input type="checkbox"/> Family Matters Counseling - North Platte | <input type="checkbox"/> Pine Lake Behavioral Health - Lincoln |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Associates in Counseling & Treatment - Lincoln | <input type="checkbox"/> Fresh Start Therapy - Omaha | <input type="checkbox"/> PMA Counseling - Lincoln |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blue Sky Counseling - Omaha | <input type="checkbox"/> Harmony Health Center - Lincoln and Aurora | <input type="checkbox"/> Resiliency & Recovery LLC - Omaha |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blue Valley Behavioral Health - Wahoo and David City | <input type="checkbox"/> Heartland Counseling Services, Inc. - South Sioux City | <input type="checkbox"/> Restore Rebuild Reconnect Counseling Center - Omaha |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Choices Treatment Center - Lincoln and Columbus | <input type="checkbox"/> Infinite Avenues Counseling - Omaha | <input type="checkbox"/> Ron Felton Addiction Counseling - Lincoln |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Crossroads Resources - Chadron | <input type="checkbox"/> Making Choices Counseling - Kearney and Grand Island | <input type="checkbox"/> Spence Counseling Center - Omaha |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CS Counseling LLC - South Sioux City | <input type="checkbox"/> Michael Sullivan Counseling - Norfolk | <input type="checkbox"/> St. Monica's - Lincoln |

Staff

DAVID GEIER, DIRECTOR

402-471-4450

david.geier@nebraska.gov

JESSICA MACDONALD, MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

402-471-4451

jessica.macdonald@nebraska.gov