

State Problem Gambling Program

Overview

The State Problem Gambling Program provides free problem gambling treatment services for individuals and their loved ones who meet eligibility requirements.

Services are provided through reimbursement contracts that the Washington State Health Care Authority (HCA) holds with approximately 15 Certified Gambling Counselors and Department of Health (DOH)-certified problem gambling treatment agencies.

Eligibility requirements

To be eligible for treatment services, individuals must be:

- Resident of WA (client and/or family)
- Assessed and would benefit from treatment¹
- Unable to pay for treatment services
- Not enrolled in Apple Health (Medicaid)

Note: Apple Health recipients can receive problem gambling treatment services through the Medicaid program.

Program details

Accessing services

Clients access problem gambling services in several ways. These organizations help guide individuals to appropriate treatment services and options:

- [Problem Gambling Helpline](#) 1-800-547-6133
- [State Problem Gambling Program](#)
- [Evergreen Council on Problem Gambling](#)
- [Apple Health \(Medicaid\)](#) through Managed Care Organizations and direct referrals by clinicians

Utilization: SFY 2025

PG Program (non-Medicaid)

¹ Gambling assessments must be administered by a Certified Gambling Counselor (CGC) or CGC in-training, per WAC (246-341-1200).

Client cases

- 264 Client cases
- 117 clients were newly assessed, with an 82% admittance rate:
 - 95 admitted to outpatient treatment
 - 22 did not enter treatment
- 180 clients received treatment only
- Average cost per client case was \$2,833 (excluding assessment-only cases)

Treatment services²

In total, the State Problem Gambling Program reimbursed contracted treatment providers for 5,855 separate services:³

- 120 assessments
- 4849 individual/conjoint/family sessions
- 470 group sessions
- 416 case management sessions

Percentage comparisons: SFY 2025 and SFY 2024

- Expended 13.6% more for clinical treatment
- Served 9% more clients
- Average amount spent per client was 9% higher⁴
- Assessments increased 7%
- Admittance rate decreased 3%
- Individual/conjoint sessions decreased 9.3%
- Group sessions increased 77.3%
- Case management decreased by 10%

Additional services provided

- Funded enhanced/partial scholarships for Certified Gambling training topics, as well as scholarships for clinical providers in related fields, Prevention Professionals, Peers, and others
- Funded/provided outreach, and educational activities focused on youth, young adults, and populations at increased risk.
- Ongoing facilitation and coordination of the Disordered Gambling Advisory Workgroup

³ Excludes reimbursements for clinical supervision

⁴ Excludes assessment-only clients

(DGAW) and the Problem Gambling Prevention Workgroup (PGPW)

Budget for SFY 26

The budget for SFY 2025 through SFY 2027 is \$3.29 million.

As of July 1, 2025, spending authority increased by 35.4% (\$860,000) as compared with 2023-2025.

2025-2027 Budget categories:⁵

- 47% for problem gambling treatment services
- 18% for administration & research
- 36.5% for prevention, training, and outreach

Upcoming projects: 2026

In 2026, the Program is launching three pilot projects with evaluation by the University of Washington. These projects focus on:

- Grants to integrate problem gambling into current prevention work (5-10 community-based organizations)
- Financial counseling for individuals in treatment for problem gambling/Gambling Disorder (DSM-5)
- Prevention media campaign focused on Youth and Young Adults (via social media and online platforms primarily)

Additionally, the Program will:

- Continue to collaborate with the Evergreen Council on Problem Gambling on the expansion of the problem gambling treatment provider workforce (regionally, additional languages, providing services to communities known to be at an increased risk)
- Support training about problem gambling for Certified Peer Specialists and other peers
- Fund community education and awareness activities and clinical problem gambling trainings for clinicians serving communities at higher risk

Authority

Revised Code of Washington 43.20A.890, and Washington Administrative Codes 246-341-1200. Problem gambling program established by RCW 41.05.750; problem gambling account established by RCW 41.05.751. WAC 182-100-0100 defines the scope of the State Problem Gambling Program under the Health Care Authority, Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery.

Partners

- WA State Gambling Commission
- WA Indian Gaming Association
- State Lottery & Horse Racing Commissions
- Evergreen Council on Problem Gambling
- Behavioral Health Advisory Council/DBHR
- The Recovery Café (Seattle) & reSTART Life
- National Council on Problem Gambling

For more information

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⁵ Represents additional funding in all categories due to overall increase in total funding.