



WISCONSIN COUNCIL
ON PROBLEM GAMBLING

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AWARENESS ANNUAL
REPORT
2025

Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling Fact Sheet

The WCPG provides education and awareness on the issues of problem gambling while maintaining strict neutrality on legalized gambling.

Approximately 333,000 Wisconsin residents have a gambling problem.

Calls to the Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling's 24-hour Helpline have increased 334% since 1996.

The 24-hour Helpline received 14,911 calls in 2025.

The average debt of callers contacting the Helpline is \$19,269.

The average age of female gamblers calling the Helpline is 49 years. Male caller's average age is 34.

Seniors and adolescents are at high risk of becoming addicted to gambling.

Gambling-related embezzlements continue to rise in Wisconsin.

WCPG is one of 35 National Council on Problem Gambling affiliates located in Washington, D.C.

65% of problem gamblers commit crimes to finance their gambling.

Six to twenty percent of adolescents develop gambling problems.

The WCPG provides a statewide Public Awareness Campaign, including billboards, bus ads, several hundred media contacts each year, an annual conference, training programs for treatment providers, a resource library, signage in casinos, high school programming, the development and distribution of posters, brochures, and educational booklets, and social media, including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, and Instagram.

Suicide rates are 20 times higher among problem gamblers compared to non-gamblers.

People who have other addictions are at a higher risk of becoming addicted to gambling.

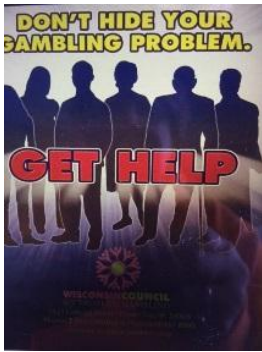
The Council is the only organization in Wisconsin dedicated to assisting thousands of problem gamblers.

The Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling 2024 Year in Review

The year 2025 was the 28th year of our Problem Gambling Public Awareness Campaign. It was our 32nd year in operation and the 29th year of the 24-hour Helpline. The Council continued to see tremendous growth during the past year.

The Public Awareness Campaign contains six different project areas used to enhance the awareness of Problem Gambling. These areas include the 24-hour Helpline, High School Educational Curriculum, Statewide Compulsive Gambling Awareness Conference, our Public Relations Media Awareness Campaign, and the Training of Human Service Professionals.

24 Hour Helpline



Helpline received 14,911 contacts in 2025 with the highest month of calls being January with 1,654 contacts. We continue to receive many hits to our website annually. We received 21,869 web hits in 2025. The highest month was September with 9,211 hits. The average debt number of callers to the Helpline was \$19,269. However, many people refuse to divulge this information and are confused about their indebtedness. Area code 414 received the most calls. During the year 2025, 845 referrals were made, and 17 packets of information were sent. The majority of callers prefer to use the website to obtain their information instead of having a packet sent. The chat line received 88 chats, and the text line received 39 texts.

Outreach Program

The WCPG provides an Outreach Program. This program provides educational sessions to high school students around the state. The goal of the program is to provide education and awareness on gambling disorders. Students learn the definitions of gambling, the risks associated with gambling, the warning signs, and how to get help for themselves or others. Due to staffing shortage the Outreach program did not hold any presentations.

Statewide Compulsive Gambling Conference

The WCPG hosted its 26th Annual Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling Statewide Conference on March 20-21, 2025, at Stoney Creek Hotel & Conference Center in Onalaska, Wisconsin. Sixty seven people attended the two-day conference.

Training Human Service Professionals



The WCPG hosted a 6-hour Intro training, six 90-minute Webinars, a 4-hour Ethics training, and one 60-hour training program divided into four 15-hour sessions in 2025. Seventy-nine training units were provided through our training sessions. We offered a total of 12 training courses with 121 attendees during 2025.

We continue to develop a list of all persons/agencies within the state of Wisconsin qualified to provide training, education, treatment, or public information at various levels, for use by such groups as Employee Assistance Programs, human resource personnel, AODA personnel, school counselors, treatment providers and civic and church groups.

Public Relations/Media Campaign

As part of the media awareness campaign, the following has been accomplished or continues:

- Planning, development, and implementation of the public awareness campaign-- phase twenty-four.
- WCPG continues to develop a list within the State of Wisconsin with persons/agencies qualified to provide training, education, treatment, or public information at various levels on the issue of compulsive gambling.
- Continued distribution of six different posters.
- WCPG continued its Social Media presence through Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, YouTube, LinkedIn, and Twitter.
- Media interviews as requested.
- More than 75 media contacts, including newspapers, radio, and television.
- Press releases regarding the WCPG effort were distributed.
- Continued distributing the updated version of “Is Gambling Affecting Your Life”. (Approximately 191,000 have been distributed)
- Exterior bus signage continues in several cities throughout Wisconsin.
- Bathroom ads in Wisconsin Casinos.
- Exhibits at a variety of conferences and programs throughout the state.
- Tokens, magnets, pens, pencils, note clips, back scratchers, etc., are being distributed in a variety of ways throughout Wisconsin. These public awareness “tools” are an excellent opportunity to get the 800-Helpline number out to thousands of people. People will pick up a pen, which has the 800 number on it, more likely than they would pick up a pamphlet.
- Continued partnership with the Wisconsin Lottery.
- Increased materials in our resource library.
- Continues distribution of WCPG brochures, including “special population” brochures.
- Continues distribution of membership brochure.
- Continues development of a data collection process for a book of experts.
- Reached an estimated 39,000 people through contacts at exhibits, workshops, and conferences.
- WCPG continues to speak to a variety of groups, EAP, social service departments, counselors, people working with the elderly, Dept. of Corrections, etc. to provide education and awareness on gambling addiction.
- WCPG continues to distribute our quarterly newsletter to over 5,500 people.
- A workplace brochure continues to be distributed to generate more awareness in the workplace environment.
- A legislative newsletter is distributed quarterly to all Legislators in Wisconsin.
- A brochure geared towards parents continues to be distributed.
- Planning session with the Board of Directors to assess public awareness program.



Recovery Program

WCPG has started a Recovery Outreach program. The committee continues to define its goals and begin outreach to recovery programs and other resources.

Potawatomi Hotel and Casino Sponsorship

Through the Potawatomi Hotel and Casino Sponsorship, we were able to provide Phase I through Phase IV in the Milwaukee area. The Potawatomi funding also helps with the operation of the 24-hour Helpline and Conference 2025 sponsorship.

WCPG had a very challenging and productive 2025. We will continue to move forward in all our endeavors, and we look forward to continuing and expanding our programs in the year 2026.

*Highlights of Compulsive Gambling Public Awareness and Education Campaign**
September 1, 1998 - December 31, 2025

Since September 1998 when the Public Awareness Campaign began, the Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling has been able to provide the following to Wisconsin residents:

24-hour Helpline:

- Answered 335,218 calls from the 24-hour Helpline from September 1, 1998, to December 31, 2024. (1998 Fourth Quarter-1,686 calls; 1999- 4,742 calls; 2000-5,052 calls; 2001-5,195 calls; 2002-7,550 calls; 2003-8,322calls; 2004-9,407 calls; 2005-10,049 calls; 2006-9,206 calls; 2007-9,341 calls; 2008-12,946 calls; 2009-14,604 calls; 2010-14,380 calls; 2011-13,528 calls; 2012-14,464 calls; 2013-13,945 calls; 2014-14,731 calls; 2015-14,690 calls; 2016-13,081 calls; 2017-12,674 calls; 2018-13,869 calls; 2019-12,283 calls; 2020-16,779 calls; 2021-22,201calls; 2022-15,192 calls; 2023- 15,520 calls; 2024-14,870 calls; 2025-14,911 calls). Continued to increase Helpline services from initial development provided by funding from the Cornerstone Foundation and the Oneida Tribe.
- Developed and implemented WCPG website; received 156,975 hits.
- Calls to the Helpline have continued to increase each year since the Public Awareness Campaign began.
- There have been 34,654 referrals since September 1998.
- As a result of the Public Awareness Campaign, we have been able to send 9,958 packets of information to compulsive gamblers, their families and friends.
- Answered calls from the chat line through wi-problemgamblers.org.
- Answered calls on the text line number at 850-888-4673.
- Ads on yellowbook.com

Media Awareness Campaign:

- Developed fourteen awareness posters and distributed 185,000 of these throughout the state.
- Provided 5400-5600 newspaper, radio and television interviews throughout the state.
- Developed, printed, and distributed 194,000 booklets, “Is Gambling Affecting Your Life?”
- Bus signage was developed for the outside of buses for cities throughout Wisconsin including: Milwaukee, Racine, Kenosha, Madison, Green Bay, Eau Claire, Superior, Wausau, Appleton, Stevens Point, Janesville, Beloit, La Crosse, Manitowoc and Sheboygan.
- Pump toppers for “Gas Pump” advertising were developed and implemented. Pump toppers were placed in locations throughout the state where bus signage was not available.

- Took part in Wisconsin Public Television’s “Teen Connection” program on two different occasions.
- Three-30 second public service announcements were distributed to television stations throughout the state.
- Yearly news conferences in the five main media markets in the state.
- Developed and made accessible a “resource” library.
- Developed and distributed over 250,000 brochures, “What is Compulsive Gambling?”
- Initiated billboard signage at several locations throughout the state.
- Developed and implemented signage in bathroom stalls at eleven casinos and other locations throughout the state.
- Developed and implemented bus shelter signage in Milwaukee.
- Developed and implemented signage in bathrooms in Green Bay and Appleton at restaurants and bars.

- Distributed magnets, tokens, computer dusters, fortune cookies, magnifiers, magnetic picture frames, letter openers, pens/highlighters, oven sticks, mirrors, post-it notes, note clips, whistle keychains, pencils and sharpeners, piggy banks, backscratchers, calendars, and index cards, etc. as public awareness “tools”.
- Distributed an informational letter to all the judges and district attorneys throughout the state on Problem Gambling.
- Developed and maintained relationships throughout the state with various groups including Aging Groups, School Personnel, Corrections Officers, District Attorneys, Public Defenders, Social Workers, Counselors, Hmong Population, Employee Assistance Programs, Tribes and Casinos.
- Provided two radio spots during Green Bay Packers pre-season games.
- Published a ½ page ad in the Green Bay Packers yearbook.
- Formed and continue a partnership with the State Lottery to provide additional access to our 800 number. The lottery provided radio ads and newspaper ads in 2008-2025.
- Published and distributed annually public awareness informational booklet.
- Provided Public Awareness to approximately 218,000 people through speaking engagements and exhibits (1998-2025).
- Article and ads published in Teaching Today and senior newspapers throughout the state.
- In-kind ads were placed in Aging and Disability Resource Center’s newsletter, Senior Scene and Rock County Council on Aging, Senior Review.
- Increased our social media presence through Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, and YouTube.

High School Educational Curriculum:

- Updated and printed 500 educational curriculums targeted at middle and high school students.
- Sent 3,500 informational letters to all middle and high school principals and superintendents in the state.
- Sent 500+ curriculums to schools throughout the state at their request.
- Assisted schools with presentations when requested.
- Developed and sent a follow-up survey to assist in continued distribution of the curriculum.
- Updating current curriculum to include updated research and trends in 2015.
- Hired part time Outreach Coordinator to work with schools.
- Outreach programs 400 students during 2025.
- Developed and Implemented a 40 minute video to be used in classrooms when in person presentations were not available.

Training of Human Service Professionals:

- Developed and implemented a training program for therapists, counseling agencies, and others, including basic, advanced and specialized training.
- Continue to update Phase program as needed in 2025.
- Developed and printed training manual. Update and revise as required.
- Developed program to “train the trainers” throughout the state.
- Developed and maintain a master list of persons/agencies within the state of Wisconsin who are qualified to provide training, education, treatment or public information, at various levels, for use by such groups as EAP programs, human resource personnel, AODA personnel, school counselors, treatment providers and civic and church groups.
- From September 1, 1998, to December 31, 2025, we provided 4,175 Units of training.

- Provided training to tribal, gaming, Physician’s Assistance conference, EAP, Dept. of Correction employees and others.

Statewide Conference:

- Planned and implemented twenty-six annual statewide conferences on the issue of problem gambling. Planning continues for the 27th conference.
- Increased attendance from 77 at the 1999 conference to 156 in 2009. Over 3,027 people have attended the Annual Conference from 1999 through 2025.
- Hosted national experts in the field to provide keynotes and workshops.
- Hosted the 2012 National Conference on Problem Gambling in Milwaukee. Over 400 people attended.

Mini-Grants for Community Based Activities:

- Provided mini-grants that will enable individuals or agencies to provide specific public awareness, educational, informational, and various activities on compulsive gambling at smaller levels within their communities. This will enhance the Statewide Public Awareness program.
- Developed the grant process, requirements, and application.
- Awarded twenty-seven mini grants to enhance the WCPG Public Awareness Program. These grants were used to inform adolescents and their educators on the issue of compulsive gambling. Ads were published in senior citizen newspapers/newsletters, and informational placemats were provided to nutrition sites and other events for senior citizens. Ads and articles ran in the “School News” paper throughout the state. Billboards, radio ads, and printed materials were developed through a grant in Northern Wisconsin. The awareness campaign was developed at a local university along with a survey on college-age gambling. A mini-grant at a local university allowed students to create awareness videos on problem gambling disorders.

Needs Assessment Survey:

- WCPG conducted a statewide needs assessment on the addiction of problem gambling. The purpose of this survey was to assess what areas of research are most needed in Wisconsin regarding problem gambling.

Strategic Plan:

- During the summer of 2018 the WCPG did a one-day strategic planning session to give the Council direction for the next two to three years.

Research:

- Conducted initial meetings and reviewed information for potential research projects.

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