



Testimony of the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation

**Connecticut General Assembly
General Law Committee
Informational Forum on Gaming
January 27, 2025**

Wuyeekeesuk Neetôpawak (Good day friends).

My name is Rodney Butler and I am the Chairman of the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation. I am pleased to be joined today by Anika Howard, President and CEO of Wondr Nation, Mashantucket's online gaming entertainment company; Bryan Hayes, Senior Vice President of Gaming Operations for Foxwoods Resort Casino; David Prestwood, who represents our i-gaming and sports betting partner, DraftKings; Jody Cummings, General Counsel of the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation; and Jared Baumgart, Senior Legal Counsel of the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation.

We appreciate the opportunity to be before the General Law Committee, and to see many friends with whom we have developed strong working relationships over the years. We look forward to our joint pursuit of legislative initiatives that will further strengthen the thriving partnership in gaming built by the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation and the State of Connecticut over a history spanning more than three decades.

As gaming is a new area of jurisdiction for this Committee and some of you may be encountering this subject matter in depth for the first time, I would like to invite you all to Mashantucket, whenever convenient, to see the Foxwoods Resort Casino, and perhaps more importantly, visit our community, experience the Pequot culture and history, tour the world's largest Native American museum, and see firsthand our thriving Tribal Nation supported by our gaming operations and other economic initiatives.

I would also like to offer sincere thanks to the Public Safety Committee, which has worked diligently with us over the years to evaluate a range of gaming-related initiatives that have come before the General Assembly. We have many good friends on that committee, and are deeply appreciative of the work we've done together. The results have tremendously benefited not only our Tribal Nation and its citizens, but

also our neighboring towns and their residents, and this entire state.

I am also grateful for the important work of the Connecticut Department of Consumer Protection. Our tribal gaming regulator, the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Gaming Commission, has developed a strong working relationship with DCP over the years in the implementation of on-reservation gaming under the Mashantucket Pequot gaming procedures. That partnership served the tribal nations and state well as we coordinated to roll out i-gaming and mobile sports betting across tribal lands and the entire state three-and-a-half years ago. We greatly appreciate DCP's ongoing and regular engagement with our regulators and legal counsel in a spirit of respectful, government-to-government collaboration.

Since the last gaming informational forum in 2023, Foxwoods has continued to thrive. We are less than a month away from celebrating our 33-year anniversary. During that history, we have welcomed nearly half-a-billion guests to Mashantucket and employed more than 73,000 team members. In that time, Mashantucket Pequot gaming revenues have resulted in \$4.8 billion in contributions to the State of Connecticut, and combined, the Tribes have paid the State over \$9.4 billion in slot contributions along with sports wagering and i-gaming taxes. Our past economic impact studies show that Mashantucket's operations have more than a \$1 billion impact annually on the Connecticut economy. And in our gaming history, total infrastructure investment at Mashantucket exceeds \$3 billion, with third party investments and capital expenditures on top of that.

Foxwoods has undergone a number of exciting renovations in the last couple of years, with new gaming, restaurant, and entertainment venues and offerings for guests. The property is being featured for two seasons of the hit culinary competition Hell's Kitchen that is broadcast nationally on the Fox network. The show has provided a tremendous opportunity to feature Mashantucket and our Foxwoods offerings, and also put a spotlight on the many attractions of southeast Connecticut for a national audience.

Adjacent to Foxwoods, we are on the cusp of the opening of Great Wolf Lodge at Mashantucket this May. The property will feature a 550-room hotel, 91,000 square foot water park, and 60,000 square foot family entertainment center with amenities like a ropes course, miniature golf, arcade, and restaurants. This will be a fantastic addition to Mashantucket and the State of Connecticut that we believe will attract families far and wide. The 27-month construction phase for the Mashantucket lodge has already impacted the Connecticut economy significantly. The Great Wolf project has resulted in more than \$200M in construction spend and is led by Connecticut-based general contractor Turner Construction. The project has created over 2,300 construction jobs, with a significant portion of the site workers being Connecticut residents. Once operational and stabilized, the Great Wolf property is expected to support 600 full and part time jobs directly at the lodge, and nearly 900 jobs in total once visitor spending and multiplier effects are considered. It is anticipated that 500,000 people will visit the Mashantucket lodge annually. For similarly-sized projects elsewhere, Great Wolf has estimated that lodge operations would result in more than \$80M of augmented annual economic activity. We have every reason to believe the Mashantucket property will exceed that measure.

Brick-and-mortar operations at Foxwoods, along with our online operations across the state through Mashantucket's Wondr Nation in partnership with DraftKings have remained strong, and also translated into significant economic benefit for the state and towns.

- Currently, we have more than 4,500 team members and employees of our tenants and vendors located on the Foxwoods campus.
- In 2024, Mashantucket provided more than \$92M in slot contribution to the State; \$8.7M in online sports wagering taxes; and \$40M in i-gaming taxes.
- Mashantucket's gross gaming revenues (GGR) for our i-gaming and mobile sports betting operations in 2024 exceeded \$365M, a 35% increase over our 2023 online performance. And both tribes combined for nearly \$694M in online GGR in 2024, providing over \$91M to the State in tax revenue from online activity alone.
- Separately, the Connecticut Lottery's retail and online sports wagering activity has resulted in a combined GGR of over \$67M for the State since inception. In addition, the deal struck with the Tribes in 2015 for the State to operate Keno has led to the state receiving an additional \$117M in Keno income since it launched in 2018 – all because of our partnership.

Our online and brick-and-mortar gaming operations continue to prioritize responsible gaming initiatives. As we've testified previously – player education and protection are top priorities. We want players to have fun and gamble responsibly.

- Within the DraftKings Foxwoods app, responsible gaming messages are prominently displayed and players can easily access the Responsible Gaming Center, allowing them to set player limits, establish a cooling-off period, or self-exclude.
- Beyond those efforts, we support the Connecticut Council on Problem Gaming and the Bettor Choice Treatment Centers, including Connecticut Renaissance, United Community & Family Services, Wheeler Clinic, MMCA Inc., DHMAS Problem Gambling Services, and the International Center for Responsible Gaming. In Fall 2023, we were proud to support the UConn School of Medicine with a two-year grant for research into the best responsible gaming practices to help support non-problem play. We look forward to building on this work in the year ahead.
- In addition to our support for responsible gaming initiatives, we have reinvested tens of millions over the years in communities across the state through charitable giving. In 2024 alone, those contributions exceeded \$2 million to organizations like the United Way, Connecticut Science Center, Mystic Aquarium, BSL Education Foundation, Hope for New Haven, ImmaCare, Inc., and the Asian Pacific American Coalition of Connecticut, among many others.

We remain excited about what lies ahead for Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation and its gaming initiatives. As the numbers show, tribal gaming in Connecticut has resulted in great benefit not only for the Tribal Nations, but also for the state and towns. According to the 2024 Gemini Research study commissioned by DMHAS, legalized gaming has increased economic activity and employment, decreased illegal gaming, and has important recreational value. Our sovereign status, and the government-to-government partnership we've forged with the state have been critical to those results. It is also a great reminder of how thriving tribal economies can benefit neighboring jurisdictions. As such, we remain passionate about seeing the General Assembly pass legislation that reinforces an understanding of our

rights as a sovereign nation and eliminates the threat of dual taxation on our trust lands. Addressing that harm opens the door to greater economic growth in Indian country here in Connecticut from which the state, the towns, and Tribal Nations will benefit.

We look forward to our work on all of these matters with the General Law Committee, the full General Assembly, as well as Governor Lamont and his administration.

Kutaputush (thank you).



**General Law Committee
Informational Forum on Gaming
January 27, 2025**

Good afternoon Co-Chairs Maroney and Lemar, Vice Chairs Fonfara and Turco, Ranking Members Cicarella and Rutigliano, and other distinguished members of the General Law Committee. My name is Frank Suarez, and I am the President and CEO of the Connecticut Lottery Corporation (CLC). I appreciate this opportunity to provide remarks today.

I joined CLC in August. Although I have had an opportunity to meet with some of you, I would like to start by introducing myself. I have always been in revenue generating roles. With more than 22 years of consistently driving revenue growth and 17 of those years in progressive leadership positions. During my more than 10 years in the lottery industry, I've had the opportunity to serve as the Executive Director of the Office of Lottery and Gaming for the District of Columbia, overseeing all operations and administrative functions as both an operator of lottery and sports betting, and as a regulator of gaming for the District. Prior to DC, I ran marketing, product development and iLottery functions for one of the best performing and fastest growing lotteries in the world at the North Carolina Education Lottery, serving as the Deputy Executive Director of Brand Management and Communications. While there, I also led the creation of the nation's first lottery focused, problem gambling prevention program called Play Smart. In addition to my time as a public servant, I have also been fortunate enough to have had the opportunity to learn from some of the most successful global consumer marketing companies in the world. It is this combined experience that drives my determination to ensure that the CLC is consistently growing revenue for the state while maintaining focus on the player experience and responsible gambling.

As an operator of both lottery and sports betting, CLC's mission is to "raise revenue in an entrepreneurial manner for the State of Connecticut, consistent with the highest standards of good public and social responsibility, by offering products to our players that are fun and entertaining, and by ensuring the public's trust through integrity and honesty." CLC is the state's business and it continues to have a significant economic impact on the state. Since the Lottery's inception in 1972, CLC has generated more than \$38.7 billion in ticket sales and transferred more than \$11.8 billion in net profits to the state's General Fund. Players have won \$23.3 billion in prizes and our network of retailers has earned approximately \$2 billion in commissions from the sale of lottery games and sports betting in their locations.

In Fiscal Year 2024, CLC achieved sales of \$1.7 billion, which were down \$22.1 million or 1.3% compared to Fiscal Year 2023. This was primarily impacted by decreases in our Scratch tickets, down \$11.0 million, and key draw games like Keno and daily numbers games, which were down a combined \$21.6 million in sales. CLC is committed to increasing revenue to the state through both sales growth and expense management. As you can see in the attached chart, in Fiscal Year

2024, the largest expense for CLC is prizes, which is the product we sell and why our players play. Prizes were 67.6% of sales or \$1.14 billion. Our network of 2,800 retailers—primarily small businesses located across the state—earned \$85.3 million in commissions, which is 5.1% of sales. Operating expenses, such as gaming system, overhead and administrative expenses, accounted for 3.9% or \$64.8 million. I want to commend the CLC staff on their ability to maintain operating expenses at such a low number. 3.9% is lower than what is typically seen in lotteries across the country and is nearly unprecedented for an operation of our size and scope. Remaining expenses were \$3.9 million for DCP’s regulatory oversight and then Chronic Gamblers funding of \$3.3 million. This resulted in General Fund transfers totaling \$387 million, which was \$17.1 million (4.3%) less than Fiscal Year 2023.

CLC devotes significant resources to upholding the highest standards of game integrity and player safety. I have personally reviewed CLC’s standard testing procedures and am confident that the processes for testing are rigorous and sound. Our players and retailers should feel assured that the CLC gaming system is operating effectively. Since its launch, the new gaming system has successfully processed more than 605 million transactions and paid out more than \$1.3 billion in prizes.

There have been several key developments since CLC last appeared before the legislature. We launched our new iLottery platform on June 10th, enabling players to enjoy their favorite draw games, including Keno, through this convenient platform. With the launch, Connecticut became the 11th state to offer online Lottery sales. It is important to note that our iLottery offerings are different from most states, including the recently legalized iLottery capabilities of our border state of Massachusetts. CLC is not authorized to offer any interactive games online, also known as e-instants, which are by far the largest revenue generating iLottery games. As of December 31, 2024, iLottery has successfully obtained 35,000 registered players, while generating about \$5 million in revenue since launch.

Following the opening of a new Fanatics sportsbook at Total Mortgage Arena in Bridgeport in March, we are pleased to announce the state’s 11th retail sportsbook recently opened at Sportech’s Winners location in Norwalk. As we come to the end of our first full football season with our partners Fanatics, we are experiencing significant growth in overall sales. Sports betting handle year-to-date totals \$213 million, up 62.1% compared to Fiscal Year 2024 (as of December 31, 2024).

I would like to emphasize that our goal is to responsibly raise revenue for the state, as player health is a key priority for CLC. We are committed to growing revenue in a socially responsible way. To that end, we continue to meet regularly with the statewide Responsible Gambling Partnership, consisting of the CT Council on Problem Gambling, the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, and industry stakeholders. Further, CLC contributes \$3.3 million annually to the state’s Chronic Gamblers Rehabilitation Fund to support prevention and treatment programs across the state. CLC is also currently in the process of renewing its responsible gaming certification from the World Lottery Association with a goal of level 4 recertification, the highest level attainable for Responsible Gaming in the world. The recertification is a testament to CLC’s commitment to responsible gaming and sustainable practices, and our dedication to continuous improvement in these areas. We also recently completed our “Give a Toy, Not a Ticket” holiday

campaign. Just finishing its 11th year, this program enables us to promote the responsible gambling message that lottery tickets are not suitable gifts for children.

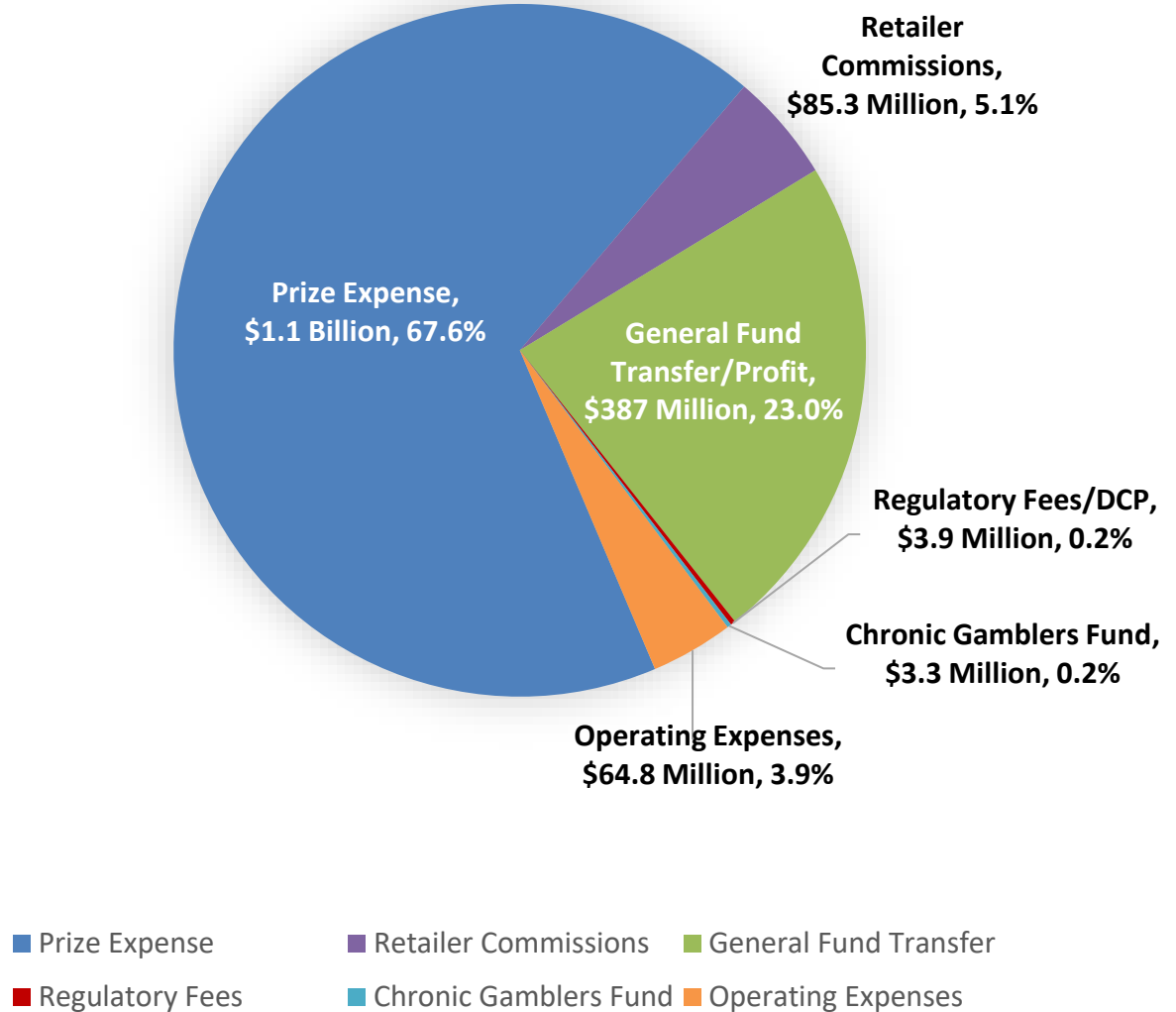
CLC has also partnered with Credit Unions Building Financial Independence (CUBFI), to launch 'Wise Winnings,' a first-of-its-kind financial literacy campaign for lottery winners. This program offers no-cost, certified financial counseling to help winners manage their windfall responsibly. It's part of the Lottery's broader responsible gambling initiatives, which include educational campaigns, problem gambling support, and training programs.

In Fiscal Year 2024, CLC returned \$387 million to support the valuable services and programs funded by the state's General Fund including public health, libraries, public safety, education and more. Looking ahead, it is our goal to raise increased revenue for the State of Connecticut to continue funding the many programs which rely on these monies, while also ensuring player safety and satisfaction in a responsible manner.

In closing, I would like to thank you for your time and the opportunity to share our comments. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Fiscal Year 2024 Income and Expenses

FY2024 - \$1.7 Billion in Sales





General Law Committee – Informational Forum on Gaming

Comments from Sportech Venues Inc

Monday, January 27, 2025

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak before you today. My name is Mike Burris, and I am the Sports Betting Manager for Sportech, the operator of nine retail locations across Connecticut. We deliver both Pari-Mutuel and Sports Betting services under the Bobby V's and Winners Off Track Betting (OTB) brands. Our sports betting operations are conducted under an agreement with the Connecticut Lottery Corporation (CLC), with whom we have a strong progressive relationship, through their sports betting license.

Sportech has proudly operated in Connecticut for many decades, and since the launch of sports betting in 2021, we have been the major retail sports betting operator for the CLC. Headquartered in New Haven, we employ approximately 250 team members locally, supporting both our retail locations and our broader operations.

Internationally, our group processed for a range of licensed clients, c.\$12 billion annually in bets across 40 states and 30 countries. In the UK, we previously operated the single largest pool betting site, The Football Pools, which engaged an average of 10 million players weekly at its peak. Our senior management team has over 40 years of experience in licensed sports betting.

As many of you know, our business does not benefit from the revenue streams provided by slots, online casinos, or lottery products. Instead, we are entirely focused on offering Connecticut residents a safe, legal, and regulated way to bet on sporting events, from major events like the Super Bowl and March Madness to the Kentucky Derby, and every event in between. This is what we do: we provide a regulated and responsible environment for sports betting in Connecticut.

Overview of Retail Sports Betting Operations

Retail sports betting allows consumers to place wagers on a variety of sporting events at licensed, physical locations such as the two casinos and dedicated sports books across the state. These sports books are regulated by the Department of Consumer Protection (DCP) and operate under the Connecticut Lottery Corporation's sports betting rules. Each bet is made in person, ensuring transparency and regulatory compliance.

We take pride in offering a range of sporting events for wagering, including professional sports, approved collegiate events, and horse racing, with strict adherence to the state's legal framework.

Retail Sports Betting as the CLC's Partner

In 2024, our nine retail units handled \$180 million in customer bets, split evenly between sports betting and Pari-Mutuel wagering. We are fully licensed and regulated by the DCP and have worked closely with the Connecticut Council on Problem Gambling to ensure responsible gambling practices across our operations.

We have made significant investments in enhancing our facilities, including \$12 million upgrades in recent years and this year, we have improved our Stamford and Norwalk locations, with plans to remodel New Haven, Hartford, and Windsor Locks venues in the coming months. Sports betting remains core with our consumer offering, and we are uniquely positioned to continue serving Connecticut residents. Our venues offer more than just betting; they provide a gathering space where sports fans can enjoy live game day experiences, particularly at our premier Bobby V's locations.

Economic Contribution and Job Creation

As you are aware, regulated gambling is a significant driver of Connecticut's economy. It creates thousands of jobs in sectors such as hospitality, technology, marketing, and customer service. These are sustainable, high-quality jobs that contribute to the prosperity of local communities.

The tax revenue generated by legal gambling also plays a crucial role in funding public services—such as education, healthcare, infrastructure, and problem gambling prevention programs—ensuring the well-being of our state's residents.

Consumer Protection and Regulation

The state's regulatory framework provides a clear mechanism for protecting consumers. With strict rules on age verification, transparent betting practices, and protections against fraud, we ensure that all our operations are held to the highest standards, something that illegal operators cannot provide.

Additionally, the state's framework allows us to tackle problem gambling proactively. Through tools such as self-exclusion programs, limits on spending, and easy access to support services, we protect vulnerable individuals and offer assistance to those who need it. These efforts help minimize the social costs often associated with gambling.

Combating Illegal Gambling and Ensuring Fairness

A challenge the sector continues to face is the continued presence of illegal gambling operators. These operators contribute nothing to the state's economy, expose consumers to higher risks, and avoid the protections and regulations that licensed operators provide. It is crucial that the state takes strong action to deter illegal operators, pursue those who continue to operate against state laws and ensure that Connecticut residents only have access to legal, regulated options.

Social Responsibility and Regulation

The future of gambling in our state must continue to prioritize social responsibility. While gambling offers noted economic benefits, we must remain committed to ensuring that it is carefully regulated, with responsible gambling practices always at the forefront. This includes enforcing strict advertising guidelines to protect vulnerable populations, offering robust support systems for those affected by problem gambling, and ensuring age restrictions are properly implemented.

Conclusion: A Balanced and Responsible Approach

In conclusion, continuing to regulate gambling in Connecticut provides substantial benefits to the state's economy, job creation, and tax revenue. However, the state must remain vigilant in enforcing laws to deter illegal operators and ensure that existing safeguards are maintained to protect consumers and mitigate social risks.

I urge this committee to recognize the positive impact that the well-regulated gambling industry has on our state and to support the continued growth of legal gambling in Connecticut. By doing so, we can continue to offer a safe, transparent, and responsible environment for sports betting while benefiting from the economic and social advantages it provides.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Mike Burris

Sports Betting Manager, Sportech

Mike.burris@sportech.net

Notes

Sportech Venues, Connecticut

Bobby V's :
Stamford & Windsor Locks

Winners :
Sports Haven (New Haven), Hartford, Milford, New Britain, Waterbury, Manchester & Norwalk

Sportech Venues Inc
Sports Haven, 600 Long Wharf Dr, New Haven, CT 06511

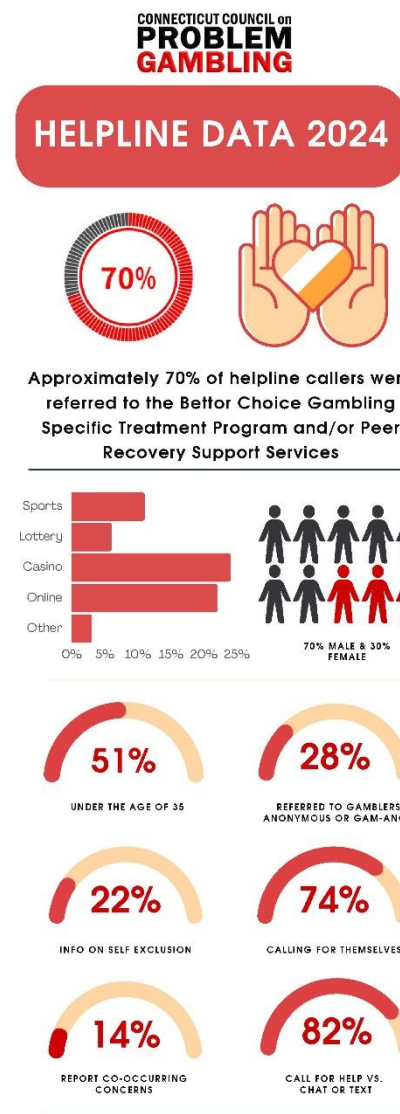
CONNECTICUT COUNCIL on **PROBLEM GAMBLING**

Informational Forum on Gaming

The Connecticut Council on Problem Gambling (CCPG) is a nonprofit agency that does not advocate for or against gambling. We are committed to advocate for, educate about, and provide connection to services on behalf of all Connecticut citizens impacted by gambling related harm.

CCPG provides Connecticut's **24/7 Problem Gambling Helpline** - offering support, resources and referrals through phone, chat and text. (888) 789-7777 or ccpg.org/chat. Since the launch of online gambling in October of 2021, our Helpline has seen **an increase of over 150%**. Last year, 70% of our callers were male, with 50% under the age of 35.

Responsible Play the CT Way's website, responsibleplayct.org, and its logo have been integral to promoting responsible gambling practices across Connecticut. This collaborative effort, involving the Connecticut Council on Problem Gambling (CCPG), the Connecticut Lottery Corporation, Mohegan Sun, Foxwoods, Sportech, and the Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS), has been prominently featured in campaigns designed to educate the public about safer gambling behaviors.



www.ccpq.org
January 1, 2024 - December 31, 2024

**PROBLEM
GAMBLING
HELPLINE**
1-888-789-7777

Program Highlights

The College Campus Gambling Prevention Initiative, funded by DMHAS, was launched in response to the rising prevalence of gambling among Connecticut's undergraduate population with frequent engagement in fantasy sports, sports betting, and internet gambling. To combat gambling-related harms, CCPG partnered with institutions of higher learning and implemented initiatives to educate students, raise awareness, improve campus policies, and host events like screenings and resource tables. Efforts included staff and student training on warning signs and resources, with targeted support for high-risk groups such as Athletes, Greek Life, Residence Life, and LGBTQIA+ communities.

The Clinical Training Series, a partnership between CCPG, DMHAS, and the CT Clearinghouse, with the goal to train and assist in certifying behavioral health professionals to treat those with Gambling Disorder and grow the field. It included virtual training sessions covering topics such as gambling as a cooccurring disorder, screening and assessment, gender differences, cultural humility, counseling interventions, ethics, harm reduction, convergence of gambling and gaming, recovery supports, and financial management.

The Multicultural Problem Gambling Prevention Program, funded by DMHAS, selected 5 community organizations in Connecticut that support communities and target populations that are at higher risk for experiencing gambling related harm to design and promote culturally adapted activities that help inform our efforts to understand the culturally based motivation to gamble. Selected activities will also increase protective factors within communities to decrease the harm associated with gambling, while also increasing access to translated materials and resources. Special populations that this initiative is supporting are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), Asian American and Pacific Islanders (AAPI), Veterans and active military, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, and more (LGBTQIA+) and Latinx/Latine communities.