



Department of Mental Health **Problem Gambling Program And Expenditures**

Published:
1.16.2024





Contact Information

From:

Alison Krompf, Deputy Commissioner
Agency of Human Services, Department of Mental Health

**To receive this information in an alternative format or
for other accessibility requests, please contact:**

Jennifer Rowell
Agency of Human Services, Department of Mental Health
Jennifer.Rowell@vermont.gov , 802-241-0090



Table of Contents

Department of Mental Health Problem Gambling Program And Expenditures	1
Contact Information	2
Executive Summary	4
Legislative Language	5
Expenditures for Fiscal Year 2024	6
Factors Contributing to Delayed Budget Utilization	6
Recommendations for Fiscal Year 2025	8



Executive Summary

This report details the Fiscal Year 2024 expenditures for Vermont's Responsible Gaming Program, managed by the Department of Mental Health (DMH). As of December 2023, the program, aimed at establishing and maintaining responsible gaming standards, has an unspent budget of \$250,000.

Factors contributing to the delayed budget utilization are largely due to the availability of funds from the Department of Liquor and Lottery (DLL) to support current activities, use of in-kind staff time to develop an MOU with the Department of Liquor and Lottery and establish our responsible gaming framework, and access to free training for providers through a partnership with the state of NY. Additionally, national resources are established and available to support individuals as we build in state and regional supports based on the developing needs of Vermonters. Despite the budget remaining unspent, the delay does not reflect a lack of activity or commitment to developing a comprehensive and effective program tailored to Vermont's unique needs. Anticipated next steps include contractor selection following the closure of the Request for Proposal in December 2023. Funds will then be allocated to critical program components, such as a state or regional Helpline, local Research and Marketing, and the new Vermont Responsible Gaming Coordinator.

Looking ahead to Fiscal Year 2025, DMH recommends maintaining funding at \$250,000 from the Sports Wagering Enterprise to support the ongoing success and expansion of the Responsible Gaming Program.



Legislative Language

In accordance with [Act 63 \(2023\)](#),

§ 1341a. PROBLEM GAMBLING PROGRAM

(b) On or before January 15 of each year, the Department of Mental Health shall submit to the General Assembly a report detailing the expenditures related to the Problem Gambling Program in the preceding fiscal year and summarizing the programs and activities supported by those expenditures.



Expenditures for Fiscal Year 2024

The budget for the Responsible Gaming Program is designated to establish and maintain the highest standards of responsible gaming supports for Vermonters in need. The program is pivotal in safeguarding the well-being of community members and fostering a secure and responsible gaming environment. The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the expenditures for the Responsible Gaming Program, managed by the Department of Mental Health (DMH), for Fiscal Year 2024. As of the current report, the allocated budget of \$250,000 remains unspent.

Factors Contributing to Delayed Budget Utilization

A. Utilization of DLL Funds:

DMH initiated preliminary activities using funds from the Vermont Lottery to expedite the commencement of the program.

B. Access to National Resources

To ensure access to resources immediately upon the advent of online sports betting, Vermont will utilize the National Gambling Support hotline (1-800-522-4700), and promote existing Gambler's Anonymous [Home](#) and [peer-based support groups](#). National resources are basic and sufficient, therefore allowing Vermont the opportunity to leverage these available supports while we complete the research and stakeholder engagement necessary to build our own responsible gaming program tailored to the specific needs of Vermonters. This will move us from sufficient supports to best practice resources.

C. Collaborative Stakeholder Engagement:

To ensure the program's success, DMH engaged in a comprehensive collaborative process with relevant experts, including providers of addiction supports, gaming industry representatives, and other national groups.

D. Access to Free Training:



DMH was able to establish a partnership with New York State to access free training for clinicians. The Designated Agencies have identified 1-2 champions per agency who are signed up to complete rolling trainings between December 15th and February 15th, which will expand our network of trained providers from three clinicians currently to approximately 15 providers who in total are able to serve each region of the state.

E. Establishment of Partnerships:

DMH and DLL worked collaboratively to establish a shared vision for responsible gaming principles. DLL is focused on the operators, implementing a marketing and education team that will communicate the responsible gaming messages through their channels. DMH is focused on the players, and has been actively working towards establishing partnerships with regional resources specializing in helpline support, best practices for public education and awareness, and peer-based addiction support. This collaborative effort is integral to the program's success, creating a comprehensive set of resources for individuals seeking assistance. Additionally, regional partnerships allow Vermont to leverage existing expertise and resources, cutting costs and creating interstate opportunities for managing problem gambling issues for individuals who may live on the border of other states

Delays in budget expenditure does not signify a lack of commitment to the Responsible Gaming Program. Instead, it underscores DMH's dedication to developing a program that is comprehensive, effective, and tailored to the unique needs of the Vermont community.

DMH has selected a contractor to provide the following services:

- 24/7 Gambling Helpline Services and related data reports, conduct evaluations for most efficacy and customer satisfaction
- Create and launch digital, print, radio, and/or video media campaigns to promote the Helpline and any other responsible gaming and problem gambling services
- Assist with Voluntary Self Exclusion enrollments into the problem gambling program
- Operate a responsible gaming awareness and education website to educate players about safer gambling



- Recruit, build capacity, and maintain records for a statewide team of clinicians that can treat people with gambling-related problems

The engagement of the contractor marks a pivotal step towards the execution of the program. Following the contracting, funds will begin to be drawn down to support these crucial components of the program.

Recommendations for Fiscal Year 2025

As the utilization of the previous fiscal year (FY) expenditures will not be able to inform the future needs, DMH has developed recommendations for the upcoming FY2025 budget.

DMH recommends maintaining funding at the current level, **\$250,000.00**, for the upcoming FY. DMH will also access \$250,000 from the existing Vermont Lottery funding through an MOU with DLL to ensure a comprehensive program that covers gambling problem needs for both sports wagering and Vermont Lottery players. To be used as follows:

Responsible Gaming/Problem Gambling Prog	Proposed Budget	Spent	Status
Research -State Survey on Positive Play Index	\$60,000		Positive Play research cannot be conducted until after sportsbetting begins.
Helpline	\$70,000		VT Gambling Helpline will be functional as of January 11, 2024, with first invoice expected March 31st, 2024
Peer Advisor Program	\$85,000		Included in vendor contract, first invoice expected March 31st, 2024.
Digital and Print Media Campaign	\$160,000		Included in vendor contract, first invoice expected March 31st, 2024.
Technology	\$7,000		
Travel and Training	\$35,000		Currently receiving free training from NY state to kick us off. Future training is estimated to come at a cost for certification.
Admin	\$25,000		
Total	\$442,000		