Status of the Responsible Gaming Program

Published: 12.19.2024

VERMONT

Contact Information

From:

Wendy Knight, Commissioner
Department of Liquor and Lottery

Emily Hawes, Commissioner
Agency of Human Services, Department of Mental Health

To receive this information in an alternative format or for other accessibility requests, please contact: Joshua Sumner, at Joshua.Sumner@Vermont.gov, or Clare Neal, at Clare.Neal@Vermont.gov.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary

Vermont launched legal Online Sports Wagering in January 2024 following the passage of Act 63 in 2023. Upon passage of Act 63 in July 2023, the Department of Liquor and Lottery (DLL) issued a request for proposal (RFP), and received and reviewed bids. DLL selected three sports wagering operators — DraftKings, Fanatics, and FanDuel — who are under contract with DLL to offer their online sports wagering platforms in Vermont.

From the inception of the legalized sports wagering market in Vermont on January 11, 2024, through the end of FY24 on June 30, 2024, the total Vermont Revenue Share from the legalized sports wagering market was $3.5 million, closely aligning with the state's initial projections. The revenue share is projected to gradually increase year over year as the Vermont market continues to mature.

The state's Responsible Gaming Program is funded from the Sports Wagering Enterprise Fund and the Vermont Lottery Fund. For FY24, the Vermont Lottery Fund allocated $250k for responsible gaming and entered into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Department of Mental Health (DMH) to establish and manage. In FY25, the Responsible Gaming Program receives $250k from the Sports Wagering Fund and $250k from the Vermont Lottery Fund, for a total allocation of $500k.

The partnership between DLL and DMH has proven to be highly effective in proactively addressing problem gambling in Vermont. The collaboration between DLL and DMH has led to the successful monitoring of problem gambling trends through the utilization of tools such as the Problem Gambling Helpline, the Vermont Gambling Help website, and the Voluntary Self-Exclusion Portal. DMH also has plans to continue to assess trends related to problem gambling via a Problem Gambling Prevalence Study in FY26.

In conclusion, Vermont established a regulatory framework to promote responsible gaming effectively via collaboration between DLL, DMH, the sports wagering operators, and other key parties. The state is well positioned to continue to offer a well-regulated and responsible sports wagering platform.

Legislative Language

In accordance with [Act 63 (2023)](), the Departments are submitting this single, comprehensive report to the legislature to meet the following requirement:

> *(c) Problem gambling report. Annually on or before January 15, the Department [of Liquor and Lottery], in consultation with the Department of Mental Health, shall submit to the General Assembly a report on the impact of sports wagering on problem gambling in Vermont, including an analysis of demographic populations that are disproportionately impacted by problem gambling. The Department may require the operators to pay for the costs associated with preparing and submitting the report.*

Monitoring Problem Gambling Trends in Vermont

Problem Gambling Helpline

In FY24, the Department of Mental Health (DMH) worked with the National Problem Gambling Helpline, the Massachusetts Council on Gaming and Health (MACGH), and the Problem Gambling Provider Network to improve overall accessibility for Vermonters seeking support and resources for problem gambling concerns. In January 2024 MACGH took over management of Vermont-based calls from the National Problem Gambling Helpline. Trained peer Helpline Specialists answer calls 24/7, 365 days of the year and have access to the Problem Gambling Provider Network information to support callers in connecting with appropriate treatment resources.

Official Helpline data begins in February 2024, following a test-phase. The chart below provides call volume per month for problem gambling help, as well as additional calls to the Helpline. The Helpline received 13 calls for help in February and 15 calls in March, followed by 5 calls in April, 10 calls in May and 3 calls in June. Additional calls to the Helpline, either hangups or calls seeking the Vermont Lottery office, are often opportunities for peer specialists to provide a warm introduction to responsible gaming and problem gambling supports.

Type of Call	February 2024	March 2024	April 2024	May 2024	June 2024
Calls for Problem Gambling Help	13	15	5	10	3
Additional calls to the Helpline (Hangups and calls seeking Vermont Lottery)	56	45	45	49	46

During specific sporting seasons, such as March for college basketball and

the college football and professional football seasons, call volume is expected to increase, whereas, low call volume is expected during the late spring and early summer. DMH will monitor trends of call volume to determine if it deviates from expected patterns and adjust support strategies as needed.

Vermont Gambling Help Website

In June 2024, DMH partnered with MACGH to launch VtGamblingHelp.org, a comprehensive website for Vermonters affected by problem gambling. The site provides resources for individuals and families, as well as treatment providers seeking to better assist those in need.

A key component of VtGamblingHelp.org is the LiveChat feature, which connects users directly with Vermont Helpline Specialists from the1-800-GAMBLER service through web-based or phone-based text chatting. By offering multiple ways Vermonters can access support, DMH ensures Vermonters can choose the method that best fits their needs, whether by phone or chat.

DMH will be monitoring the total chats per quarter, in addition to general chat topics and will be able to report on this information in FY25 and subsequent FYs. This monitoring will help evaluate the effectiveness of the LiveChat feature and guide future iterations and improvements.

Voluntary Self-Exclusion Program

In partnership with the Agency of Digital Services (ADS), DLL created and administers Vermont's Voluntary Self-Exclusion (VSE) Program, which is regarded as a national gold standard for self-exclusion programs due to its accessibility and the therapeutic nature of care. This program serves as a critical resource for players seeking to manage their gambling behaviors by voluntarily restricting their ability to wager on online sportsbooks within Vermont for a period of 1, 3, or 5 years, or for their lifetime, offering flexibility tailored to their current needs and long-term recovery goals.

The VSE program functions through a secure process, by sharing participant's information exclusively with the three licensed operators, who ensure that these players are not eligible to wager on any of their platforms. Also, the operators are prohibited from targeting these individuals with any promotions or direct marketing, thereby creating a protective buffer against potential unwanted triggers. Furthermore, if players self-exclude in other jurisdictions, the operators will also exclude them on their platforms in Vermont.

The therapeutic value of Vermont's VSE Program is grounded in its flexibility and empowering approach, which emphasizes personal agency while providing a concrete mechanism for intervention. It serves not only as a preventative tool but can also be a bridge to additional support services, allowing individuals to take proactive steps toward addressing problem gambling.

Program Metrics

In FY24, seven (7) players signed up to the Voluntary Self-Exclusion Program. The breakdown of the terms that individuals utilized for voluntary self-exclusion was as follows:

- 1-year: 1 individual
- 5- years: 2 individuals
- Lifetime: 4 individuals

The VSE Program will continue to be administered and monitored by DLL. The tracking of how many individuals utilize this tool will provide DLL with a greater understanding of problem gambling in Vermont and demonstrates commitment to fostering a responsible gaming environment.

Operator Roles in Responsible Gaming

Annually, each operator is required to submit a responsible gaming plan to DLL that includes information related to the posting of materials related to problem gambling, and the resources that are made available to players, house-imposed player limits, and self-exclusion programs. Each operator has provided responsible gaming plans that prioritize player harm reduction. Each operator has policies and practices to combat problem gambling and promote responsible gaming. Within their platforms, all operators have links to responsible gaming and problem gambling resources that include phone numbers, and website links to resources such as Gamblers Anonymous, VtGamblingHelp.org, the National Council on Problem Gambling, and DLL's VSE program.

In addition to Vermont's VSE Program, each operator has its own range of Responsible Gaming (RG) tools they offer to players, including the opportunity for each player to opt-in to deposit limits, wager limits, wager size limits, time limits, and timeouts. The RG tools allow players to continue to enjoy legalized sports wagering and recreationally place wagers in a responsible manner by imposing limits on themselves as a check against any problem gambling behaviors.

Data from the sports wagering operators reflect that players took advantage of those RG tools. For the first six months of legalized online sports wagering, the aggregated data from the operators shows the following tools were used, in addition to what age the users were, and if they were attributed to being a Vermont resident or an out-of-state player based on Know Your Customer (KYC) information:

FY24 Aggregated

Age of User	Deposit Limit	Time Limit	Wager Size Limit	Wager/Spend Limit	Timeout	Total
21-25	2,206	119	321	472	98	3,216
26-35	4,130	249	761	962	332	6,434
36-45	1,412	81	312	364	139	2,308
46-55	699	72	285	288	53	1,397
56+	390	80	143	226	21	860

FY24 Aggregated						
Residence of User	Deposit Limit	Time Limit	Wager Size Limit	Wager/Spend Limit	Timeout	Total
In-State	1,180	83	239	374	85	1,961
Out of State	7,657	518	1,583	1,938	558	12,254
% of aggregated players using the tool	4%	0%	1%	1%	0%	6%

Note: RG Tool usage is based on acceptance of VT Terms and Conditions, meaning that once VT Terms and Conditions are accepted, the individual is tracked until they disable the tool(s) they are using (this means that the user may be counted, even if they are not active in VT after the acceptance of Terms and Conditions). Additionally, the data was provided by Operators on a per month basis, meaning that individuals will also be counted more than once if they utilize RG tools in more than one month (January to June). The aggregated number of players for FY24 was 232,884. Most players elect to utilize more than one operator, and opt-in to RG tools on more than one sportsbook, effectively counting one individual multiple times in this data.

The sports wagering operators have demonstrated a commitment to collaborating with DLL and DMH in our collective responsible gaming and problem gambling initiatives. In September of 2024, the operators partnered with DLL, DMH, and MACGH to promote Responsible Gaming Education Month (RGEM). This successful collaboration was marked by a collective effort by all parties to promote and spread awareness of RGEM via posts on social media platforms, press releases, and RGEM-related quizzes developed by MACGH.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Vermont's approach to overseeing a responsible and well-regulated sports wagering environment is proving to be successful. The collaboration between DLL and DMH continues to be successful and beneficial to Vermont. This collaboration aligns the regulatory oversight with mental health considerations to create a responsible and well-regulated sports wagering environment within the State.

The partnerships and collaborations that both DLL and DMH have with other parties, such as the sports wagering operators and MACGH, continue to be beneficial and essential to the goals of the State. These partnerships will continue to play a role in making Vermont a responsible and effective sports wagering environment that is set to continue to grow in the future.

In summary, the implementation and continued administration of the programs listed within this report demonstrate Vermont's commitment to provide accessible and expert support services. Vermont's proactive approach to responsible gaming is evident and works to support the players and parties in this evolving and growing industry within Vermont.