

Virginians spend about 1 billion annually on gambling, generating 600 million in revenue for the state. Current proposals for gambling expansion are expected to add another 260 million in revenue.

As gambling expands in Virginia, it is crucial to consider the potential increase in gambling addiction and fund programs that prevent and treat problem gambling.

Funding should be allocated for:

- Prevention programs to help reduce the number of Virginians impacted by problem gambling
- Media campaigns to promote public awareness about the symptoms, risk factors, and resources for help for problem gambling
- Training for mental health professionals on how to assess and treat problem gamblers and their loved ones
- Funds to help pay for treatment for problem gamblers and/or their loved ones

virginia council on problem gambling



vacpg.org



Virginia Council on Problem Gambling Mission

The Virginia Council on Problem Gambling (VACPG) aims to increase public awareness of problem gambling, ensure the widespread availability of treatment for problem gamblers and their families, and to encourage research and programs for prevention and education.

The VACPG is an affiliate of the National Council on Problem Gambling. Its representatives serve on the NCPG Board of Directors, the Affiliates Committee, and many other NCPG committees

We maintain a neutral stance on gambling

Citations:

Marotta, J., Hynes, J., Rugle, L., Whyte, K., Scanlan, K., Sheldrup, J., & Dukart, J. (2017). *2016 Survey of Problem Gambling Services in the United States*. Boston MA: Association of Problem Gambling Service Administrators.

Virginia Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission: *Gaming in the Commonwealth*. 2019

Helpline data from the Virginia Council on Problem Gambling (2019)
Provided by First Choice Services

ANNUAL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

President:
Carolyn E. Hawley, Ph.D., CRC

Calendar Year 2019

As gambling is expanded, an estimated 5-10% of adults in Virginia may experience a gambling problem

Problem gambling is positively correlated with depression, suicide, divorce, financial problems including bankruptcy, and crime.

The Virginia Council on Problem Gambling was formed in 2014. Purposes of the council include:

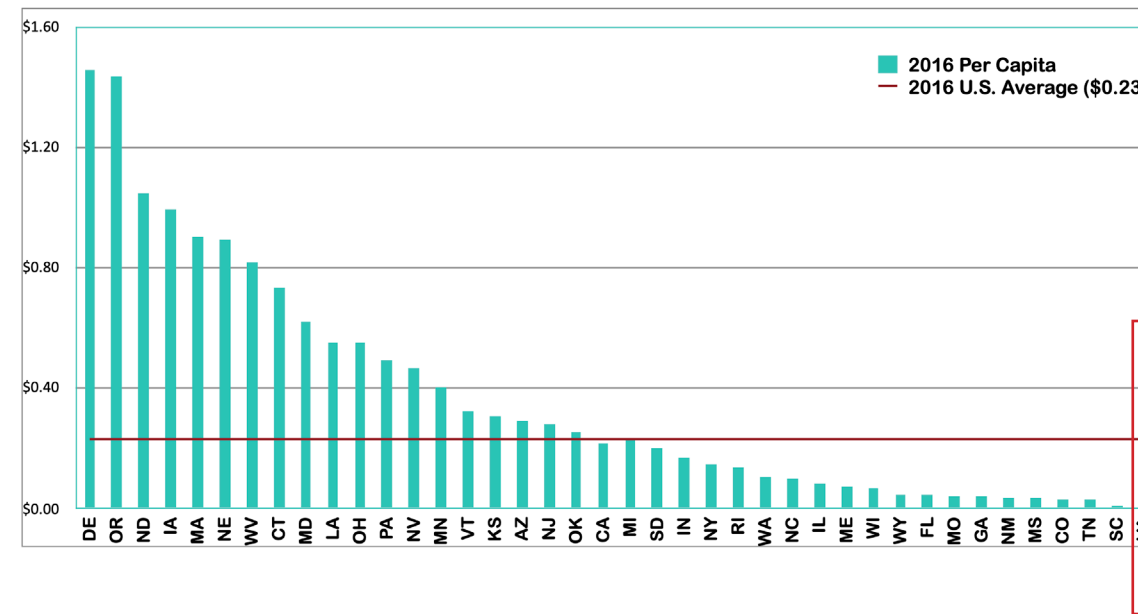
- Answering calls made from Virginians to the Virginia Problem Gambling Helpline (1-888-532-3500), the 1-800-GAMBLER helpline, and the National Problem Gambling Helpline (1-800-522-4700). The helpline connects callers with available gambling treatment programs and resources.
- Conducting training for clinicians interested in providing problem gambling treatment services for individuals and their families.
- Delivering public awareness presentations to community members and a variety of interested groups to include: colleges and universities, gaming industry, health and social services, financial services, and others.
- Working with the gambling industry to provide responsible gaming practices.

Last year, the Virginia Problem Gambling Helpline received 989 calls. Of those, 311 were from Virginia residents seeking help with problem gambling. Other calls were typically from residents of other states or those trying to reach the Virginia Lottery or a casino. Of those, 230 were mailed or emailed educational literature on problem gambling, 219 were referred to Gamblers Anonymous, and 194 were referred to a counselor.

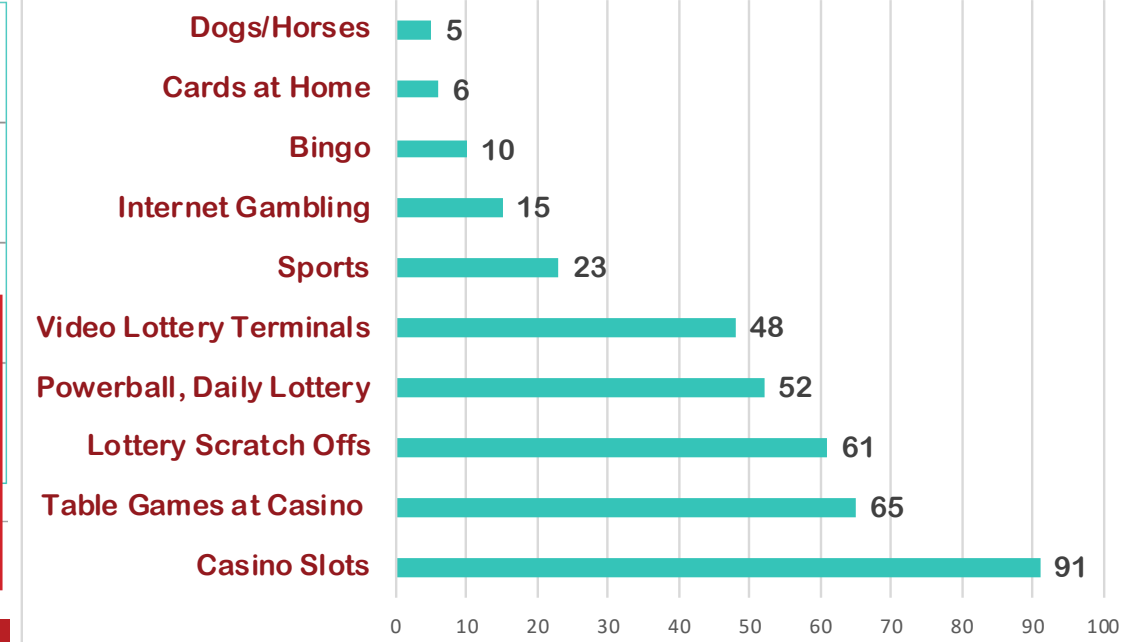
The number of these intakes have more than doubled since 2018. Also, the number of callers citing slot machines or video poker machines as their primary type of gambling has risen 183%, and the number who cite casino style table games has risen 75%.

Note that due to lack of funding, public awareness campaigns, outreach, and training have been minimal. There are only two outpatient counselors in Virginia who are trained in treating problem gamblers, and there is not a designated treatment fund. This means that few people are aware of the resources to help problem gamblers, and even when they call, helpline callers rarely receive counseling.

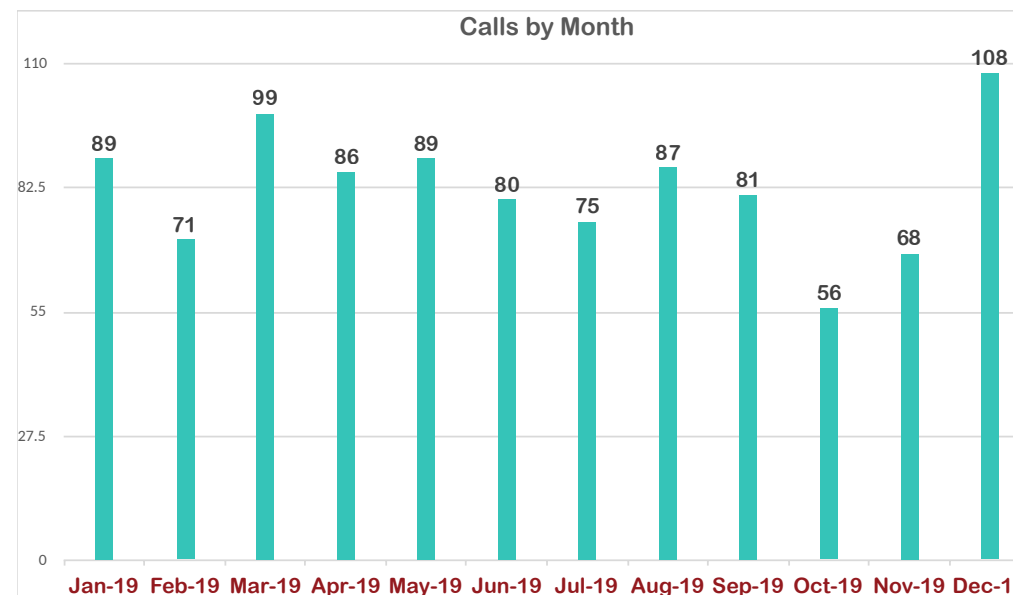
2016 Per Capita Allocation by U.S. States on Problem Gambling Services



Type of Gambling Cited by Caller

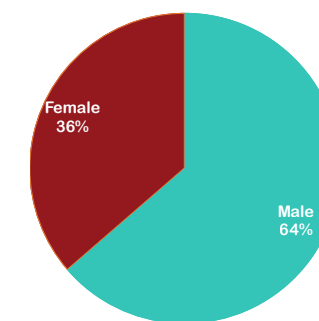


2019 Call Data Virginia Council on Problem Gambling

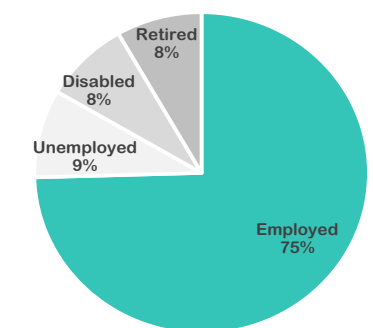


The primary way callers learned about the helpline was through the phone number on the back of lottery tickets, the Virginia Council on Problem Gambling website, the VA Lottery website, and lottery retail locations.

Gender of Caller



Employment status of caller



Financial problems experienced by callers, in order of most frequently cited:

Spent All Extra \$	188
Late on Bills	130
Borrowed From Friends/Family	93
Spent Savings	91
Credit Card Debt	66
Sold/Pawned Property	45
Stole Money	12
Bad Checks	7
Bankruptcy	7
Borrowed Against House	7
Canceled Insurance	1

In the U.S., substance use disorders are about 3.8 times more common than gambling disorders, while public funding for substance abuse treatment is about 334 times greater than public funding for all problem gambling services (\$24.4 billion versus \$73.0 million, respectively).