

**THE NEBRASKA COMMISSION ON PROBLEM GAMBLING
GAMBLERS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

**ANNUAL REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR
AND THE LEGISLATURE
FISCAL YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2026**

Gamblers Assistance Program

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INTRODUCTION

Section 9-1004(7) of Nebraska Revised Statutes requires the director of the Gamblers Assistance Program to file an annual report with the Governor and the Clerk of the Legislature. This report provides details of the administration of the Program and the distribution of funds from the Gamblers Assistance Fund.

The Legislature has given the Nebraska Commission on Problem Gambling responsibility for a range of activities. Program funds are to be used "primarily for counseling and treatment services for problem gamblers and their families who are residents of Nebraska." The Commission is to develop a process for evaluation and approval of contracts with treatment providers and other services vendors; develop standards for training and certification of counselors; review and use evaluation data; use funds for education regarding problem gambling and prevention of problem gambling; and create and implement outreach and education programs.

During the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2017, the Commission engaged in activities in all of these areas. This report summarizes the finances of the Program and describes the various activities with which the Commission has been engaged.

THE NEBRASKA COMMISSION ON PROBLEM GAMBLING

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I. GAMBLERS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FINANCES

The Gamblers Assistance Program receives funding from several state sources, none of which comes from income, sales or property taxes. The Program's expenditures are paid out of the Gamblers Assistance Fund.

The sources of revenue for the Gamblers Assistance Fund are:

- Profits generated by the Nebraska Lottery, based on requirements in the Constitution.
- A share of the advertising budget in the Lottery operations cash fund, based on requirements in statute.
- A share of casino gaming tax.
- A share of Mechanical Amusement Cash Device tax.

The following summaries are derived from the contents of monthly financial reports prepared by the accounting staff of the Department of Administrative Services.

Gamblers Assistance Program Financial Performance 07/01/25-06/30/26

Total Program Revenue:	3,378,982
Total Program Expenditures:	2,855,519
Net:	523,463

Expenditures Paid From the Fund

Salaries and Benefits	191,537
Other Operations	488,791
Counseling services	<u>2,175,191</u>
Total	2,855,519

Gamblers Assistance Cash Fund Balance

Balance July 1, 2025:	395,439
Balance June 30, 2026:	918,902
Net Gamblers Assistance Fund Change:	523,463

II. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES DURING THE PERIOD

JULY 1, 2025-JUNE 30, 2026

1. Commission Meetings

The Commission met four times to consider issues in the operations of the program. These meetings included reviews of the financial status of the Program, consideration of new and renewed contracts with therapists and other vendors, development of new program activities, and development of the budget for the biennium starting July 1, 2027. Meeting notices and minutes of the meetings were posted to the state events calendar, the website maintained by the Program.

2. Therapist Contracts

The Commission performs its obligation to provide treatment services to Nebraskans dealing with the effects of disordered gambling by entering into contracts with therapists. During this fiscal year, the Commission had 29 therapist contracts with agencies and individual therapists located in 14 communities. Payments to therapists are based on fee-for-services rendered.

Number of Nebraskans seeking therapy for gambling problems continues to increase. Average number of counselor/client interactions per month increased by

The Commission continued to contract for a statewide telephone helpline, staffed around the clock by a licensed and certified therapist.

3. Website

The Program upgraded the official State of Nebraska website for viewers to use as the primary path to find help with problem gambling in Nebraska. It is located on the state home page at problemgambling.nebraska.gov. Visitors can find therapy locations near them, public information about the program elements, current understanding of gambling disorders, and public and professional resources. The website also serves as a primary notification board for meetings and events for the Nebraska Commission on Problem Gambling.

4. Problem Gambling Prevention, Education and Awareness Messages

By statute, five percent of the advertising budget of the Nebraska Lottery is to be dedicated to presentation of messages and information to the public about problem gambling. The Commission has entered into an agreement with the Lottery Division of the Department of Revenue that calls for preparation of an annual advertising plan. The plan accounts for previous year expenditures and projects coming year activities. For the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2026, this allocation was \$350,000.

III. PROGRAM DATA

Gambler Assistance Program counselors admit clients into therapy if they satisfy the diagnostic criteria for Disordered Gambler specified in the American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual 5th ed.* When a new client is admitted for therapy, information is gathered for analysis. This information is analyzed under strict procedures that protect confidentiality. The resulting data gives the Commission insight into the characteristics of Nebraskans who seek help for gambling problems. Experience shows that only a small proportion of troubled gamblers will seek this kind of help, and then only when they are overwhelmed by their problems.

811 new clients received therapy in the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2026. All together program counselors interacted with over 1,000 Nebraskans during the year. This is a large enough sample of the population of Nebraskans struggling with gambling addiction to support the conclusions shown in the attached report by the Program's data analyst.

One noteworthy point: 39% of new clients admitted to long-term therapy developed gambling problems while playing the games on the Mechanical Amusement Cash Devices. Proceeds from the new gaming tax on these devices provided 4.2% of the revenue to support Gamblers Assistance.

For the Commission

David Geier, Director

Nebraska Gamblers Assistance Program