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

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

virginia council on problem gambling

vacpg

888.532.3500

Annual Report and Recommendations

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

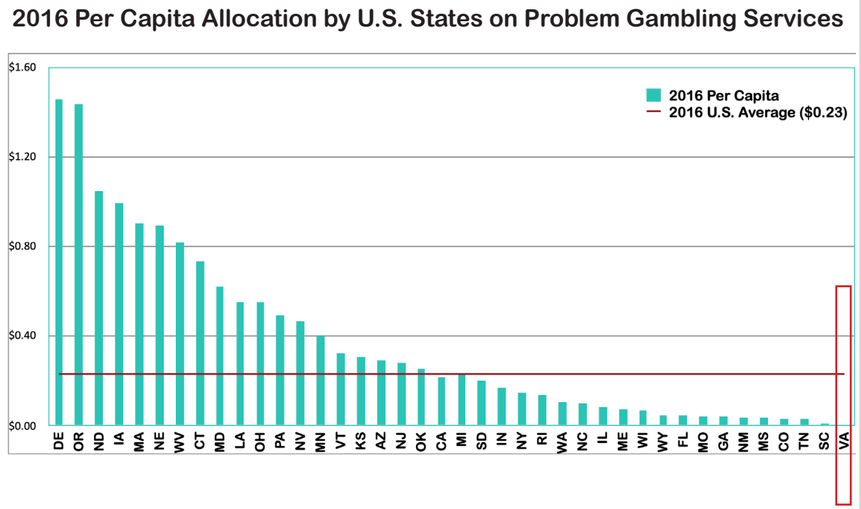
Calendar Year 2019

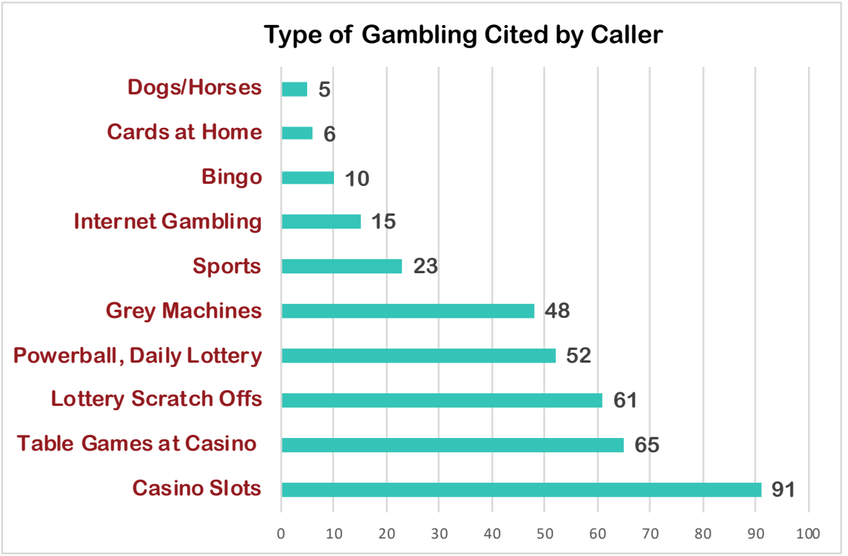
Last year, the Virginia Problem Gambling Helpline received 989 calls. Of those, 311 were from Virginia residents seeking help with problem gambling. Other calls were from help seekers from other states or those trying to reach the Virginia Lottery or a casino. Of those, 230 were provided educational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

- The number of intakes has more than doubled since 2018.
- The number of callers citing slot machines or grey machines as their primary type of gambling has risen 183%.
- The number who cite casino style table games has risen 75%.

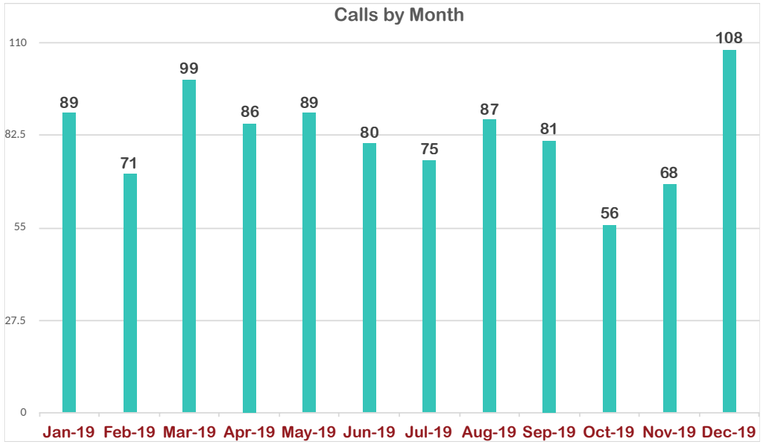
Note that due to a lack of state funding, problem gambling public awareness campaigns, outreach, and clinician training have been minimal. There are a limited number of out-patient counselors in Virginia who are trained to treat problem gamblers, and there is not a designated treatment fund. This means that few people are aware of the resources to help problem gamblers, and even when they call, helpline callers rarely receive treatment.

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).†

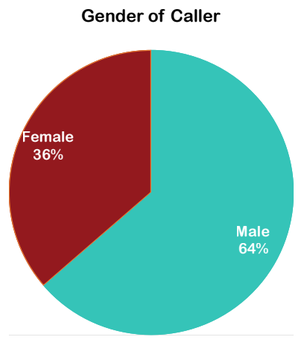


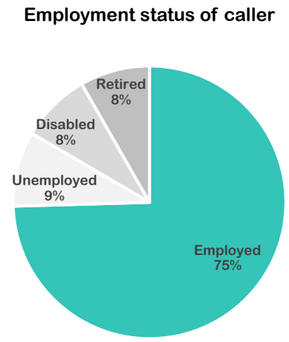


2019 Call Data
Virginia Council on Problem Gambling



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 Virginia Lottery website, and lottery retail locations.





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