FLORIDA COUNCIL ON COMPULSIVE GAMBLING
888-ADMIT-IT

24-HOUR PROBLEM GAMBLING HELPLINE ANNUAL REPORT (July 1, 2018 - June 30, 2019)

July 15, 2019

Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling, Inc.
121 East 1st Street
Sanford, FL 32771
24-Hour HelpLine: 888-ADMIT-IT
Office: 407-865-6200

24-Hour Problem Gambling HelpLine Annual Report – July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2019

Background and HelpLine Information

This report includes data from HelpLine contacts received from July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019. Contacts are received via the 24-hour Helpline (1-888-ADMIT-IT), the FCCG website (www.gamblinghelp.org), the agency's e-mail address (fccg@gamblinghelp.org), 24-hour live chat, and texting features. The HelpLine is staffed 24-hours per day to give supportive intervention and information to individuals who are adversely affected by a gambling problem. These individuals include gamblers, spouses/significant others, children, relatives, friends, co-workers, and anyone else seeking resources and information regarding a gambling problem.

The FCCG also supplies help, information, and training to state agencies, community organizations, treatment professionals, law enforcement officials, legal authorities, students and others who are interested in becoming educated and aware of the problems associated with problem gambling. The FCCG's programs and services offered are based on the needs of the individual or entity contacting the Council for assistance.

All agency personnel respond to contacts throughout the day ranging from help and information to business contacts. The HelpLine is forwarded to the after-hour's staff at close of business each day. The after-hour's operation ensures that callers can receive help and resources any time during the night, weekends, and on holidays.

The HelpLine is equipped with multiple telephone lines so callers do not have to wait for assistance. Each person in the agency and on the after-hour's staff are trained to handle all contacts. The FCCG includes bilingual staff members that handle the majority of Spanish speaking callers, and the HelpLine is equipped with a translation service for all other languages. Resources are provided on demand and in a variety of methods, including via email if necessary (i.e. in case the person is driving and cannot write down information), and texting resources through the text interface.

Staff Training

All agency personnel are trained on site to handle ongoing enhancement of HelpLine services and information resources. Training includes extensive education of the agency's programs and services offered, knowledge of resources available, and the ability to explain the benefits of such resources to contacts. Training also includes education on problem gambling utilizing documentaries and docudramas, onsite training by outside partners and senior FCCG faculty, and case studies of suicide, family neglect and violence. The training process is ongoing throughout the tenure of employment. Additionally, on a continuous basis throughout the year, staff receive updated information on resource changes or additions to the vast FCCG resource database.

HelpLine Manual

Printed HelpLine resource directories are supplied to all staff members to be used in special circumstances (i.e. bad weather, power outages, computer problems, etc.), to ensure minimal interruption in services provided. Each directory has the resources segregated by keyword (e.g. treatment providers, Gamblers Anonymous, legal aid, etc.) and listed by county for quick reference.

HelpLine Data Entry

The HelpLine database is an integral tool in the HelpLine process which allows for the collection of data and related information on all contacts. This data is then utilized to assist specialists in properly identifying resources based on the specific needs of each contact. This information also illustrates trends of problem gambling among Floridians, areas of the state in need of additional problem gambling resources, outcome from outreach and prevention efforts, and data to identify special populations that may require additional programs and services (i.e. older adults, suicidal callers, location specific data, etc.). New resources and information are added to the database throughout the year and resources are routinely updated (i.e. treatment provider changes or new meeting locations or times).

HelpLine Data Analysis

The iCarol HelpLine database form, created by the FCCG, contains information on each contact entered by FCCG HelpLine Specialists, categorized by contact type and then merged into general files (e.g. total contacts, those seeking help and information, and those seeking help only). Given the sensitive nature of many questions, callers frequently refuse to provide responses to specific questions. This results in significant variability in the number of responses to topics discussed and illustrated throughout this report. It is also important to note that all information collected is self-reported.

Annual Call Data

- During this past fiscal year (July 1st 2018 to June 30th 2019), the agency received 10,713 contacts of which 5,754 were requesting help and/or information.

Table 1
Total Contacts

Period	All Contacts	Help & Info Contacts
July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2019	**10,713**	**5,754**

Call Origin by Region and County

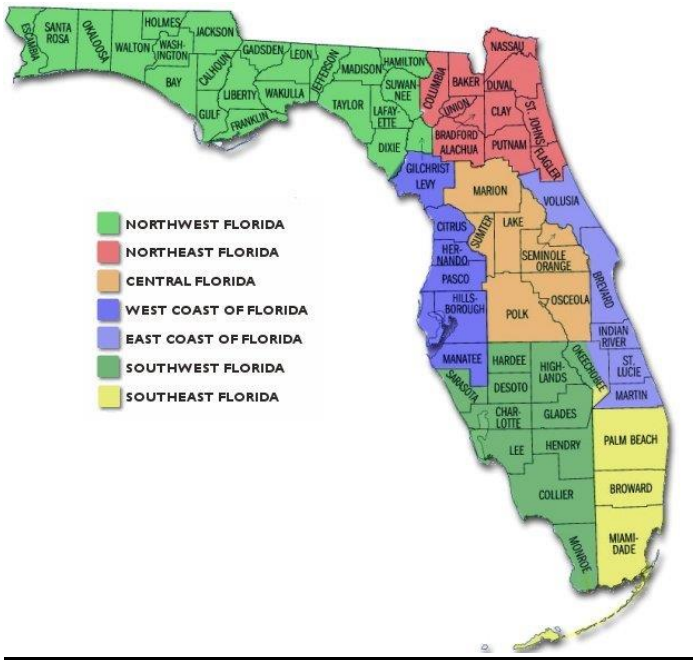
- Based on 5,541 help and information contacts who identified their County of origin, the data revealed that South Florida accounted for fifty-four percent (54%) of the contacts. Table 2 provides a breakdown by region.

Table 2
County Origin of Contact Grouped by Region

Florida Regions	2018-2019
Northwest Florida	228 (4%)
Northeast Florida	339 (6%)
Central Florida	1,047 (19%)
West Coast Florida	654 (12%)
East Coast Florida	280 (5%)
Southwest Florida	284 (5%)
Southeast Florida	2,709 (49%)
Total	**5,541 (100%)**

Note: Not all respondents provided their county of residence.

Florida Map by County



Northwest: Bay, Calhoun, Dixie, Escambia, Franklin, Gadsden, Gilchrist, Gulf, Hamilton, Holmes, Jackson, Jefferson, Lafayette, Leon, Liberty, Madison, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa, Suwannee, Taylor, Wakulla, Walton, Washington
Northeast: Alachua, Baker, Bradford, Clay, Columbia, Duval, Flagler, Nassau, Putnam, St. John's, Union
Central: Lake, Marion, Orange, Osceola, Polk, Seminole, Sumter
West Coast: Citrus, Levy, Hernando, Hillsborough, Manatee, Pasco, Pinellas
East Coast: Brevard, Indian River, Martin, St. Lucie, Volusia
Southwest: Charlotte, Collier, Desoto, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Highlands, Lee, Monroe, Okeechobee, Sarasota
Southeast: Broward, Miami-Dade, Palm Beach

- Overall, contact to the HelpLine for help or information related to a gambling problem, was made by individuals from fifty-one (51) counties across the state during the 2018-2019 fiscal period. Broward (21%) and Miami- Dade (20%) residents were responsible for placing the most help & information contacts to the HelpLine. Other counties where significant contacts originated were Palm Beach (8%), Seminole (8%), Orange (7%), and Hillsborough (6%) (See Table 3).

Table 3
Contacts by County for Help & Information
July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2019

County	Total	County	Total
Alachua	36 (1%)	Lake	51 (1%)
Baker	0 (0%)	Lee	127 (2%)
Bay	10 (<1%)	Leon	82 (1%)
Bradford	0 (0%)	Levy	0 (0%)
Brevard	102 (2%)	Liberty	2 (<1%)
Broward	1176 (21%)	Madison	0 (0%)
Calhoun	0 (0%)	Manatee	54 (1%)
Charlotte	19 (<1%)	Marion	21 (<1%)
Citrus	18 (<1%)	Martin	26 (<1%)
Clay	17 (<1%)	Monroe	10 (<1%)
Collier	47 (1%)	Nassau	18 (<1%)
Columbia	4 (<1%)	Okaloosa	35 (1%)
Dade	1091 (20%)	Okeechobee	4 (<1%)
De Soto	1 (<1%)	Orange	406 (7%)
Dixie	0 (0%)	Osceola	42 (1%)
Duval	219 (4%)	Palm Beach	442 (8%)
Escambia	50 (1%)	Pasco	51 (1%)
Flagler	8 (<1%)	Pinellas	182 (3%)
Franklin	0 (0%)	Polk	77 (1%)
Gadsden	2 (<1%)	Putnam	4 (<1%)
Gilchrist	0 (0%)	Santa Rosa	4 (<1%)
Glades	0 (0%)	Sarasota	40 (1%)
Gulf	0 (0%)	Seminole	444 (8%)
Hamilton	3 (<1%)	St. Johns	33 (1%)
Hardee	0 (0%)	St. Lucie	39 (1%)
Hendry	18 (<1%)	Sumter	6 (<1%)
Hernando	16 (<1%)	Suwannee	2 (<1%)
Highlands	18 (<1%)	Taylor	0 (0%)
Hillsborough	333 (6%)	Union	0 (0%)
Holmes	9 (<1%)	Volusia	75 (1%)
Indian River	38 (1%)	Wakulla	7 (<1%)
Jackson	0 (0%)	Walton	18 (<1%)
Jefferson	4 (<1%)	Washington	0 (0%)
Lafayette	0 (0%)	**TOTAL**	**5,541**

Monthly Totals

- The monthly totals for help and information contacts to the 888-ADMIT-IT HelpLine during fiscal year 2018/2019, are provided in Table 4. The HelpLine received an average of 480 help and information contacts each month during this fiscal year. The busiest month for callers was January (707) (post-Christmas when the bills arrive). If one compares the number of calls for the first three quarters of the fiscal year, there was a significant increase in number of calls during the period July, 2018-March, 2019.

Table 4
Contacts by Month

Period	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	TOTAL
18-19	483	681	593	582	504	392	707	614	521	240	232	205	**5,754**

CONTACT DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION- The following data is based upon 2,173 Help contacts received throughout the fiscal year. It is important to note that not every contact provides responses or supplies information to all questions asked. As such, the numbers for each of the analyses differs.

Contacts Gender, Age and Relationship to the Gambler

- Data revealed that 51% of those contacting the 888-ADMIT-IT HelpLine during the 2018-2019 fiscal year were male, while 49% were female. Of the 1,470 contacts that provided their age, 33% of the callers were older adults, aged 55 and over (a slight increase from 2018-2019). The percentage of older adults reaching out for themselves or someone they know illustrates the importance and success of the FCCG outreach activities geared towards the senior population, as well as the necessity of such supports.

Table 5
Contacts Age

Age	Total (N=1,470)
Under 18	0 (0%)
18 – 20	12 (1%)
21 – 25	60 (4%)
26 – 30	154 (10%)
31 – 40	312 (21%)
41 – 49	258 (18%)
50 – 54	183 (12%)
55 – 60	204 (14%)
61 – 64	112 (8%)
65+	175 (12%)
TOTAL	**1,470 (100%)**

- Data on the most common relationships of the person reaching out for help revealed that 73% of the contacts were made by the gambler, 20% were from family members, and 3% of contacts were from friends. In addition to the spouse/cohabitants of the gambler (9%), the remaining 11% of family members that contacted the 888-ADMIT-IT HelpLine during 2018/2019 fiscal year, consisted of parents (40%), children (34%), siblings (15%), grandchildren (2%), and grandparents (1%). Nine percent (9%) of other family members seeking help this year consisted of aunt/uncle, niece/nephew, cousin, stepchildren, and in-laws. Additional individuals making contact with the HelpLine regarding a gambling problem this year, included educators, employers, medical professionals, treatment providers, gaming industry employees, law enforcement, and legal professionals.

Precipitating Event Leading to Call for Help or Information

- The top reason reported for making contact with the HelpLine during the 2018/2019 fiscal year, was relationship problems, as stated by 33%. This was followed by treatment/referral info (19%), substantial loss (17%), difficulty paying bills (8%), and overextended debt (6%). Of additional significance this year are individuals who contacted the HelpLine for help or information regarding casino self-exclusions (5%), assistance with legal problems (1%), and a smaller percentage concerned with serious issues such as suicidal thoughts and attempts (N=14), job loss (N=8), and homelessness (N=7). It is extremely important to note that the precipitating event data looks at the **predominant** reason prompting the contact that day to the HelpLine. This in no way negates the fact that most problem gamblers have a host of issues related to their gambling disorder. Please see chart below for specifics.

Table 6
Precipitating Event for Making Contact

Precipitating Event	Total (N=2,106)
Relationship Problems	705 (33%)
Treatment/Referral Info	401 (19%)
Substantial Loss	361 (17%)
Difficulty Paying Bills	165 (8%)
Overextended Debt	133 (6%)
GA Referral	126 (6%)
Self-Exclusion	99 (5%)
Relapse	54 (3%)
Lawyer/Court Ordered/Legal Problems	22 (1%)
Suicidal Ideation/Attempt	14 (1%)
Work Related Difficulties	9 (<1%)
Job loss	8 (<1%)
Homeless	7 (<1%)
School Related Difficulties	2 (<1%)

GAMBLER DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

The following information is derived from HelpLine contacts (this data includes gamblers, their partners, husbands/wives, children, parents, grandparents and employer calls concerning a problem gambler). Given the sensitive nature of some of the questions, problem gamblers frequently refused to answer specific questions. Similarly, family members and other loved ones often do not know the extent of the gambler's behaviors or debts. As a result, the number of valid responses differs based upon the question.

Gamblers Gender and Age

- In all, 2,056 contacts identified the gender of the gambler this year, revealing that 62% of problem gamblers were male and 38% were female.

- Among the 1,638 contacts that specified the gambler's age and gender, 37% of the gamblers were between the ages of 31 and 49, and 34% were older adults (55+), which reflects a 6% increase from this same population last year. Of additional significance this year is that help for a gambling problem was sought for five (5) gamblers under the legal age to gamble of 18, indicating the ongoing need for youth specific problem gambling outreach and prevention efforts for this population. The table below illustrates the gambler's age group by gender.

Table 7
Gambler's Age by Gender

Age	Female N=620		Male N=1,018		Total (N=1,638)	
Under 18	1	<1%	4	<1%	5	<1%
18 – 20	0	0%	15	1%	15	1%
21 – 25	7	1%	62	6%	69	4%
26 – 30	37	6%	157	15%	194	12%
31 – 40	62	10%	248	24%	310	19%
41 – 49	129	21%	170	17%	299	18%
50 – 54	88	14%	108	11%	196	12%
55 – 60	132	21%	89	9%	221	13%
61 – 64	47	8%	63	6%	110	7%
65+	117	19%	102	10%	219	13%
Total	**620**	**100%**	**1,018**	**100%**	**1,638**	**100%**

Gamblers Ethnicity

- Information on the ethnic background of the gambler this year, revealed that Caucasians accounted for 49% of the gamblers, Latino/Hispanics represented 24%, and 21% were Black/African American (see Table 8).

Table 8
Ethnicity of Gambler

Ethnicity	Total (N = 1,389)
Asian	42 (3%)
Black/African American	287 (21%)
Caucasian	680 (49%)
Latino/Hispanic	337 (24%)
Middle Eastern	19 (1%)
Mixed Race	20 (1%)
Native American	3 (0%)
Other	1 (<1%)
Total	**1,389 (100%)**

*Other ethnic groups included Algerians, Brazilians, Caribbean's, Columbians, Cubans, Indians, Jamaicans and Pacific Islanders but were infrequent.

Gamblers Military Experience

- Based on 1,091 help contacts that provided information, ninety-four (11%) stated the gambler was either active military (1%), retired military (4%), or had past military (6%) experience. As research has shown that the military is a high-risk population more vulnerable to developing a gambling addiction, the FCCG has developed population specific programs for military personnel, their families (15 individuals noted a family member, either husband, wife or partner, was in active service), and military treatment professionals.

Gamblers Religion

- Nine hundred and fifteen (915) contacts identified the gamblers religious preference, which is important information due to the FCCG's ability to offer more faith based self-help groups, such as Celebrate Recovery, in appropriate instances. Please see chart below for specifics.

Table 9
Religion of Gambler

Religion	Total (N = 915)
Baptist	52 (6%)
Catholic	164 (18%)
Christian	246 (27%)
Muslim/Islam	7 (1%)
Judaism	49 (5%)
Protestant	2 (<1%)
None	373 (41%)
Other	22 (2%)
Total	**915 (100%)**

Relationship Status of the Gambler and Children of Minor Age Living at Home with the Gambler

- Data on the relationship status of the gambler revealed that 42% were married, 26% were never married/single, 18% were divorced or separated; and 11% were cohabitating. When assisting problem gamblers, it is important to provide resources that can help family members and their children. The wide-reaching impact of a gambling addiction is not limited only to the gambler and support is frequently necessary for the entire family.

Table 10
Relationship Status of Gambler

Relationship Status	Total (N = 1,600)
Cohabitating	169 (11%)
Divorced	225 (14%)
Married	670 (42%)
Never Married/Single	412 (26%)
Separated	59 (4%)
Widowed	51 (3%)
Refused	14 (1%)
Total	**1,600 (100%)**

- Children under the age of 18 were found to be present in 29% of the gamblers' households. It is important that HelpLine Specialists gather this information so additional supports (e.g., social services and other community resources), where necessary, can be provided if the children are in need or if they are being neglected.

Age of Gambling Onset and when it Became a Problem

- This year, the data on the age at which gambling began and when it became a problem revealed that 36% of problem gamblers starting gambling before the age of 25, and 10% began prior to reaching the legal gambling age of 18. More than one-third (34%) reported that the onset of gambling-related problems began before age 30.

- This year, HelpLine data also revealed that the age of gambling onset and when it became a problem is happening later in life, with ninety-four gamblers (6%) reporting gambling for the first time after the age of 60, and one hundred and fifty-four gamblers (10%) reporting developing a gambling problem, also later in life after age 60. This represents a 100% increase from last year's data, where 3% of gamblers reported starting to gamble after age 60. Further, a 40% increase was noted among those who reported developing gambling problems for the first time in their 60s or later.

Table 11
Age Gambling Started and Became a Problem

Age	Age Started Gambling (N = 1,495)		Age Became Problem (N = 1,510)	
Under 18	154	10%	51	3%
18 – 20	188	13%	103	7%
21 – 25	200	13%	181	12%
26 – 30	165	11%	179	12%
31 – 40	289	19%	310	21%
41 – 49	229	15%	271	18%
50 – 54	99	7%	148	10%
55 – 60	77	5%	113	7%
61 - 64	36	2%	61	4%
65+	58	4%	93	6%
Total	**1,495**	**100%**	**1,510**	**100%**

Primary Gambling Problem and Secondary Problem

- The primary gambling problems most often cited were slot machines (43%), cards/table games (25%), and lottery games (11%). Lottery games (41%) were the most frequently cited secondary problem for those engaged in one or more gambling types. See Tables 12 & 13 for specific responses.

Table 12
Primary Gambling Problem

Primary Problem	Total (N = 1,773)	%
Arcade Games/VLTs/EGMs	76	4%
Bingo/Keno	2	<1%
Cards/Table Games	445	25%
Dice	1	<1%
Dog Racing	11	1%
Horse Racing	25	1%
Lottery	187	11%
Online Gambling	84	5%
Slot Machines	771	43%
Sports Betting	61	3%
Stock Market/Business Risks/Commodities	32	2%
Sweepstakes	3	<1%
Video Games	16	1%
Didn't know/Refused	59	3%

*Percentage totals may exceed100% as multiple answers are permitted

Table 13
Secondary Gambling Problem

Secondary Problem	Total* (N = 662)	%
Arcade Games/VLTs/EGMs	33	5%
Bingo/Keno	20	3%
Cards/Table Games	221	33%
Dice	15	2%
Dog Racing	9	1%
Horse Racing	27	4%
Lottery	276	42%
Online Gambling	35	5%
Slot Machines	113	17%
Sports Betting	41	6%
Stock Market/Business Risks/Commodities	16	2%
Sweepstakes	2	<1%
Video Games	3	<1%
Didn't know/Refused	0	0%

*Percentage totals may exceed100% as multiple answers are permitted

- When reviewing 2018/2019 HelpLine data on preferred games within different primary gambling problem types, scratch-off tickets were preferred over other lottery games by 86% of lottery gamblers, online sports betting caused the most difficulty (52%) for online problem gamblers, and poker was the game of choice for 49% of gamblers having gambling related difficulties primarily due to cards/table games.

Primary Gambling Problem by Gender

- The primary activity associated with gambling problems (Table 14) by gender differences, revealed significant variances between genders. Female problem gamblers preferred slot machines (68%), lottery games (9%), and electronic gaming machines, such as arcade games and video lottery terminals (9%), and did not report any gambling activity or related problems (N=0), on racing or sports. Male problem gamblers preferred cards/table games (36%), slot machines (28%), lottery games (11%), and sports betting (6%), and did not report any gambling activity or related problems (N=0), on sweepstakes, bingo or keno.

Table 14
Primary Gambling Problem by Gender

Primary Gambling Problem	Females (N = 676)		Males (N = 1,079)	
Arcade Games/VLTs/EGMs	63	9%	19	2%
Bingo/Keno	2	<1%	0	0%
Cards/Table Games	55	8%	386	36%
Dice	0	0%	1	<1%
Dog Racing	0	0%	11	1%
Horse Racing	0	0%	25	2%
Lottery	64	9%	122	11%
Online Gambling	10	1%	72	7%
Slot Machines	457	68%	301	28%
Sports Betting	0	0%	61	6%
Stock Market/Business Risks/Commodities	5	1%	27	3%
Sweepstakes	3	<1%	0	0%
Video Games	4	1%	11	1%
Didn't Know/Refused	13	2%	43	4%
Totals	**676**	**100%**	**1079**	**100%**

Primary Gambling Location

- Data on the gamblers' preferred gambling venue revealed 56% preferred gambling at land-based casinos (includes both in-state as well as out-of-state casinos), 13% at racino's (slot-licensed pari-mutuel facilities in Broward or Miami-Dade Counties), and 11% cited convenience stores as their primary gambling location. See Table 15 for specifics.

Table 15
Primary Gambling Location

Location	Total (N = 1,714)
Bars/Club	15 (1%)
Bingo Hall	4 (<1%)
Bookies	2 (<1%)
Convenience Store	184 (11%)
Day/Floating Casino	5 (<1%)
Home/Friend's Home	149 (9%)
Internet Sweepstakes Centers	96 (6%)
Jai-Alai/Racetrack (No Slots)	83 (5%)
Land-based Casino	883 (52%)
Out of State Casinos	60 (4%)
Racino	219 (13%)
Work	3 (<1%)
Didn't Know	11(1%)
Total	**1,714 (100%)**

FINANCIAL AND EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF THE GAMBLER

Income of Gambler and Money Lost Due to Gambling

- The average reported household income of the gambler this year was $45,478, with 32% reporting the gambler earning less than $25,000 annually, and 9% reporting income of less than $2,500 per year (many indicated they were unemployed or retired). The reported income of problem gamblers is presented in Table 16.

Table 16
Income of the Gambler

Income	Total (N=1,330)	%
Up to $2,499	123	9%
$2,500- $4,999	2	<1%
$5,000- $9,999	38	3%
$10,000- $14,999	43	3%
$15,000- $24,999	130	10%
$25,000- $34,999	153	12%
$35,000- $44,999	124	9%
$45,000- $59,999	158	12%
$60,000- $89,999	161	12%
$90,000- $124,999	56	4%
$125,000- $149,999	16	1%
$150,000- $174,999	26	2%
Over $175,000	16	1%
Does not know	120	9%
Refused	164	12%

Amount of Gambling Losses and Debt Owed:

- The average amount of lifetime gambling losses was reported at $174,552 during the 2018/2019 fiscal year. During this same period, twenty-one percent (21%) reported gambling losses of more than $150,000 (N=304), which is seven times more than the number of problem gamblers with reported income of $150,000 or more (N=42).

- The average gambling debt of the gambler reported was $29,274. More than one in five (22%), reported gambling related debts of $25,000 or greater, with 5% stating the gambling debts exceeded $150,000. Given accumulated debts by gamblers, it is often difficult to isolate to whom gamblers owe money. Most often they borrow money from family members and friends, extend credit card debt, acquire loans from bank/credit unions and loan companies, many are overdue on rent and utilities, some borrow from bookies while others report owing the IRS back taxes. This year there was a three percent (3%) increase in gambling related credit card debt, with 57% citing credit cards as their primary creditor. Forty percent (40%) reported owing family members, and one-third (33%) owed money to friends due to gambling problems. Please see Table 17 for specifics.

Table 17
To Whom the Debt is Owed

To Whom Debt Owed	(N=1,013)	
Bank/Credit Union	261	26%
Bookie	48	5%
Casino	31	3%
Credit Card	578	57%
Employer	31	3%
Family	410	40%
Friends	330	33%
IRS	55	5%
Loan Company	322	32%
Rent/Mortgage	178	18%
Utilities	209	21%

- As we have seen an increase this year in gambling related debts, it is not surprising to also find that 15% reported enacting bankruptcy at least once as a result of the gambling problem, and 9% stated bankruptcy had been filed more than one time. Further indicative of the financial consequences of problem gambling, 5% of gamblers seeking help this year advised they were homeless as a result of gambling. See Tables 21 and 22 in subsequent sections for specifics.

Employment Status of Gambler

- Data regarding the employment status of the gambler reveals that while 56% were full time employees, more than one in five (21%) were unemployed, disabled, or collecting workers compensation benefits. Of those employed, 41% reported having problems at work as a result of their gambling. As illustrated previously in Table 11, there were more older adults seeking help for a gambling problem through the 888-ADMIT-IT HelpLine this year, explaining the 2% increase in retired gamblers (9% in 2018/2019), from last year. Of retirees, 68% reported their gambling problem intensified after the onset of retirement. Please see Table 18 for specifics.

Table 18
Employment Status

Type of Employment	Total (N = 1,562)	
Full-Time	874	56%
Unemployed	222	14%
Retired	177	11%
Disabled/Workers-Comp.	104	7%
Part-Time	76	5%
Retired Plus Job	32	2%
Full-Time More Than One Job	33	2%
Part-Time More Than One Job	18	1%
Student	13	1%
Homemaker	7	<1%
Student - Plus Job	6	<1%
Total	**1,562**	**100%**

Gamblers' Occupation

- Gamblers are engaged in a wide variety of occupations. The most frequently cited occupation for employed gamblers was within the service industry/retail services/sales (31%). Following that, business owner (14%) and laborer (11%) were the next most commonly reported occupation of the gambler during the 2018/2019 fiscal year. See Table 19 for occupational specifics.

Table 19
Gamblers Occupation

Occupation	Total (N = 975)	
Accounting	26	3%
Banking/Stock Market	6	1%
Business Owner	135	14%
Clerical	2	<1%
Education/Teacher	56	6%
Gaming Industry	14	1%
Laborer	103	11%
Law Enforcement	4	<1%
Legal Professional	10	1%
Manager/Supervisor	64	7%
Medical/Healthcare Professional	74	8%
Mental Health Professional	9	1%
Military	8	1%
Retail Services/Service Industry/Sales	307	31%
Real Estate	16	2%
Secretarial/Assistant	42	4%
Skilled	76	8%
State/Government	23	2%
TOTAL	**975**	**100%**

Illegal Acts, Types and Actions

- Illegal acts were reportedly committed by 29% of the gamblers to help finance their gambling addiction. An additional 11% either didn't know or refused to respond whether the gambler committed illegal acts due to gambling. The most common illegal acts reported were fraud (66%) (bad checks, forgery, etc.), larceny/theft (35%), and embezzlement (13%). It should be noted once again, that this is all self-reported data, indicating it is likely understated. A large percentage of gamblers reported committing multiple illegal acts to finance their gambling habit, and in many cases, loved ones rarely knew the extent of the gamblers' behaviors.

Table 20
Illegal Acts Committed by Gambler

Illegal Acts	Total (N = 429)	
Embezzlement	56	13%
Fraud (bad checks, forgery, etc.)	284	66%
Larceny/Theft	149	35%
Prostitution	6	1%
Selling Drugs	11	3%
*Other	43	10%
Total	**549**	**128%**

*Other encompasses bookmaking, illegal gambling activities, tax fraud, trespass on casino property after self-exclusion, and violence.
*Multiple responses permitted

Legal Consequences Faced

- Problem gamblers are often faced with multiple legal consequences and challenges resulting from their gambling addiction. Overall this year, 21% reported experiencing legal problems, including both civil and criminal actions as a result of the gambling problem. The types of legal consequences faced are presented in Table 21.

Table 21
Legal Consequences Faced

Legal Consequences	Total (N = 261)	
Arrest and Jail/Prison	37	14%
Arrest and Jail/Prison and Probation	20	8%
Civil Suits	38	15%
Foreclosure/Eviction	64	25%
Vehicle Repossession	40	15%
Divorce	39	15%
Bankruptcy	91	35%

*Multiple responses permitted.

EMOTIONAL, DOMESTIC, AND OTHER RELATED DIFFICULTIES CAUSED BY GAMBLING

Emotional & Domestic Problems Caused by Gambling

- Difficulties faced by problem gamblers and their loved ones are not limited to financial and legal troubles, and often include emotional and domestic problems as well. Seventy-five percent (75%) reported family conflict, and more than one in five (23%), reported suicidal thoughts or attempts as a result of their gambling addiction. Other mental health challenges involved anxiety (67%), depression (62%) and family neglect (56%). Table 22 illustrates specifics.

Table 22
Gamblers Difficulties

Type of Difficulty	Respondents	
Anxiety	1,022 of 1,535	67%
Depression	963 of 1,543	62%
Suicidal Ideations/Attempts	308 of 1,353	23%
Family Conflict	1,174 of 1,569	75%
Family Neglect	827of 1,470	56%
Family Violence	55 of 1,265	4%
Problems at School	11 of 142	8%
Problems at Work	443 of 1,089	41%
Difficulty Paying Household Bills	1,090 of 1,590	69%
Gambled Away Savings, Equity, Retirement	1,070 of 1,557	69%
Sold or Pawned Assets	635 of 1,490	43%
Homeless	25 of 601	4%

- Individuals suffering from mental illness, neurological and brain disorders may be susceptible to development of compulsive gambling behaviors resulting from medication. Certain medications, including Mirapex, Requip, and Abilify, have been linked to causing compulsive behaviors. Disorders such as Parkinson's Disease, Restless Leg Syndrome, Multiple Sclerosis, and Schizophrenia are treated using dopamine agonists, which include these types of medications. FCCG HelpLine Specialists inquire about such illnesses and/or medications, and encourage callers responding affirmatively to inform their prescribing doctor of their gambling problem, so if necessary, medications may be changed or adjusted. Of the 13% that responded affirmatively to suffering from a neurological or brain disorder, 38% identified as being Bi-Polar, 16% stated they suffered from Restless Leg Syndrome, 8% reported the gambler as Schizophrenic, 5% with Parkinson's Disease, and the remaining 2% of this year's problem gamblers were reported as having Multiple Sclerosis or Dementia (1% each).

Loved One's Emotional & Domestic Problems Experienced

- Loved ones are equally affected by the gambling addiction, and often need as much support as the gambler. When asked, 96% of loved ones said there was family conflict present, and 87% reported depression due to the presence of a gambling problem in their lives.

Table 23
Loved One's Reported Difficulties

Type of Difficulty Experienced by Loved One's	Respondents	
Loved One's Anxiety	220 of 252	87%
Loved One's Depression	102 of 191	53%
Family Conflict - Loved One's	372 of 387	96%
Family Neglect - Loved One's	51 of 141	36%
Loved One's Problems at Work	17 of 72	24%

Gamblers with Alcohol/Substance Abuse Problems and Family History

- Due to the high rate of co-occurring disorders among problem gamblers, the FCCG attempts to assess if the gambler is currently having, or has had problems in the past, with alcohol and/or substance abuse. Based on 1,332 respondents, 367, or 27% of the gamblers, were reported as having a past or present substance abuse problem (alcohol, drugs or both).

- Data on family history showed that 40% of the gamblers came from a family that had a history of gambling problems, and 31% stated that alcohol and/or substance abuse was a problem within the family.

- The rate of relapse with gambling addiction is high, so it is not surprising that 54 contacts to the HelpLine during the 2018-2019 fiscal year identified relapse as the primary reason for seeking help at the time of the contact. Of those reporting that the gambler had sought help at a previous time in their lives (N=703), fifty-seven percent (57%) reported that they had attended self-help groups, and thirty-one percent (31%) had previously sought counseling supports from a mental health professional for difficulties associated with the gambling problem.

Gamblers with Other Addictions

- Of the 241 respondents reporting additional behavioral or substance abuse problems (other than alcohol or drugs), 83% said that the gambler has an addiction to nicotine, 6% overeat, 5% overspend or shop too much, causing more financial difficulties, and 5% stated the gambler suffers from a sex addiction.

How Contacts Learned of the HelpLine

- How individuals reported hearing about the 888-ADMIT-IT HelpLine and services offered is an important step in how the FCCG tracks the success of its advertising and outreach campaigns. The most frequently cited methods included online through Internet searches, at gambling venues, on billboards, and through family members.

Table 24
How Contacts Learned About the HelpLine

How Heard	Total (N = 1,377)	
Billboard	103	7%
Bus	11	1%
Community Organization	3	<1%
Convenience Store	1	<1%
EAP/Employer	2	<1%
Family	102	7%
Friend	49	4%
GA/Gam-Anon	60	4%
Gambling Facility	304	22%
Healthcare Provider	22	2%
Information/Crisis Line	13	1%
Internet Ad	25	2%
Internet Search	537	39%
Lottery Point of Purchase	29	2%
NCPG Affiliate	21	2%
Newspaper/Magazine	1	<1%
School	1	<1%
Social Media	1	<1%
Radio - Internet Based	3	<1%
Radio – Traditional	26	2%
Taxi	4	<1%
Television	8	1%
Treatment Provider	51	4%
Total	**1,377**	**100%**

Actions Recommended to Callers

- Based on callers input, data and experiences, the FCCG staff provides appropriate resources to assist given individual circumstances, needs and requests. Multiple supports and services are available to callers, ranging from private counseling and self-help group referrals, to peer connect, legal aid and financial counseling programs. Table 25 illustrates the multitude of resources that were provided to 1,791 contacts during the 2018-2019 fiscal year.

Table 25
Actions Recommended to Caller

Action(s) Recommended	N = 1,791	
Alternative Support Groups	19	1%
Celebrate Recovery	228	13%
Counseling	1,756	98%
Crisis Line	141	8%
FCCG Budget Tool Printable Version	187	10%
FCCG Budget Tool Digital Fillable Version	163	9%
FCCG Website	391	22%
Financial Services	197	11%
GA/Gam-Anon	1,773	99%
Legal Assistance	57	3%
Literature	1,098	61%
Mental Health Services	17	1%
NCPG Affiliate	27	2%
Peer Connect	1,032	58%
Self-Exclusion	921	51%
Social Services	31	2%
Everi Step Program	210	12%
Veterans Affairs Clinics	4	<1%
Web Blockers	141	8%
*Other	48	3%

*Other includes resources such as Gov't hotlines or non-gambling related resources.

Caller Satisfaction with HelpLine Call

- The FCCG HelpLine is dedicated to providing a multitude of service to callers while providing an empathetic and understanding approach to problem gamblers and their families. When asked if the call was helpful, the vast majority indicated it was very helpful. Of the1,312 respondents answering this question, 97% indicated the call was helpful, 1% didn't know at the time (e.g., "I'm not sure yet"), 2% failed to give a response, and less than 1% (6 individuals) indicated it was not helpful. (It should be noted that it can take problem gamblers some time to assimilate the information and recognize the importance of the information provided). Some of the comments by callers are particularly noteworthy:

"Glad I took this step"
"I feel much better after this call"
"You gave me much more than I ever expected"
"Extremely grateful there was someone to talk to"
"I feel a lot better after talking to you"
"I want to start doing what I need to do"
"I can now breathe"
"Thank you so much. You've been great"
"Wow, I can't believe how much help there is"
"Thank you so much for all the help"
"I want my wife to reach out to you"
"Now I can't hide from this anymore"
"Bless you, bless you"

Summary

- The FCCG's 888-ADMIT-IT HelpLine continues to be a vital resource for all Floridians concerned about or interested in problem gambling and gambling disorders. The FCCG continually incorporates information from data collected through the HelpLine and supplied by contacts to assist in further program development and additional services. Comparing previous year reports reveals significant trends and changes in the landscape of Florida's gambling environment and associated problem gambling impacts.

  Some of the most notable statistics from this year's data revealed the following:

  - While a higher percentage of older adults reported first beginning to gamble or developing a gambling problem later in life this year (6% and 10%, respectively), help for a gambling problem was also sought for five (5) gamblers under the legal age to gamble of 18, indicating the ongoing need for youth and senior specific problem gambling outreach and prevention efforts.

  - A few problem gamblers reported difficulty gambling on video games. As the growth of e-Sports continues this trend will be closely monitored.

  - As the HelpLine experienced a reported increase in gambling related debts this year, 15% reported enacting bankruptcy at least once as a result of the gambling problem, and 9% stated bankruptcy had been filed more than one time. Further indicative of the financial consequences of problem gambling, 5% of gamblers seeking help this year advised they were homeless as a result of their gambling.

  - Not surprisingly given the large debts, a large percentage reported to have difficulty paying household bills (69%), have gambled and lost their savings (69%) and sold or pawned possessions (43%).

  - The percentage of callers reporting that problem gamblers had gambling related civil suits more than doubled this year (15% up from 7% last year), while reported divorce, foreclosures and vehicle repossessions as a result of the gambling problem decreased somewhat in 2018/2019.

  - Family conflict (75%) and family neglect (56%) were common, with a smaller percentage reporting family violence (4%). Difficulties at work were also of concern and were reported by 41% of callers.

  - From a mental health perspective, a large percentage of problem gamblers are experiencing anxiety (67%), depression (62%) and suicidal thoughts (23%). These mental health issues also extend to family members and loved ones.

  - Ninety-eight percent (98%) of contacts were willing to receive problem gambling specific counseling resources this year, representing a 24% increase from one year ago.

  - The most frequently cited methods contacts learned about the HelpLine this year was online (39%), at gambling facilities (22%) and through billboard advertising (7%).

  - The number of contacts to the HelpLine concerning self-exclusion increased from 1% to 5% this year. Self-exclusion programs represents one of the more positive harm reduction strategies employed at casinos.

  - The vast majority of callers indicated that the information received was very helpful. Ninety-seven (97%) reported that the call was informative and helpful while 1% were uncertain (it frequently takes time before problem gamblers can assimilate the information and recommendations provided), 2% failed to provide a response, less than 1% (6 individuals) indicated that it was not helpful.

The FCCG will continue to work closely with individuals, their loved ones, and others experiencing gambling-related problems, while maintaining expanded efforts to help train professionals in the field and raising awareness among others who service the disordered gambling population. The HelpLine provides a first step for many problem gamblers, their families and friends, to gain a better understanding of this disorder and learn of available resources. As is evidenced by responses provided from those reaching out for help through the 888-ADMIT-IT HelpLine, it represents a new beginning, a place where their concerns and issues are understood, where help is available, and where hope for an improved life is given, to problem gamblers, their families and their loved ones.