

RCW 41.05.750 Problem gambling and gambling disorder treatment program. (1) A program for (a) year-round integrated problem gambling prevention efforts that include community engagement and the treatment of problem gambling and gambling disorder; and (b) the support, certification, and training of professionals in the identification and treatment of problem gambling and gambling disorder is established within the authority. The department of health may license or certify behavioral health agencies for problem gambling treatment. The authority may contract for any services provided under the program. The authority shall conduct a program evaluation, including tracking program participation and evaluating outcomes.

(2) To receive treatment under subsection (1) of this section, a person must:

(a) Need treatment for problem gambling or gambling disorder, or be impacted by a loved one experiencing problem gambling or gambling disorder;

(b) Be identified by the authority as being most amenable to and likely to benefit from treatment; and

(c) Be unable to afford treatment.

(3) Treatment under this section is available only to the extent of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available to the authority for this purpose. The authority may solicit and accept for use any gift of money or property made by will or otherwise, and any grant of money, services, or property from the federal government, any tribal government, the state, or any political subdivision thereof or any private source, and do all things necessary to cooperate with the federal government or any of its agencies or any tribal government in making an application for any grant.

(4) (a) The authority shall establish and facilitate an ongoing advisory committee that will hold quarterly meetings to:

(i) Track progress of recommendations from the 2022 legislative problem gambling task force final report;

(ii) Provide advice and feedback on the state problem gambling program upon request by the authority; and

(iii) Discuss emerging issues related to problem gambling and identify possible strategies for improvement.

(b) The advisory committee membership must include, at a minimum, at least one representative from each of the following:

(i) The Washington state gambling commission;

(ii) The Washington state lottery commission;

(iii) The Washington state horse racing commission;

(iv) The Washington state health care authority;

(v) The tribal gaming industry;

(vi) An established business primarily engaged in the selling of food or drink for consumption on the premises and that offers punchboards, pull-tabs, and social card games as a commercial stimulant;

(vii) The gambling counselor certification committee;

(viii) A nonprofit problem gambling organization; and

(ix) The recovery community including at least one member with lived experience of problem gambling. [2023 c 284 § 2; 2018 c 201 § 2004; 2010 c 171 § 1; 2005 c 369 § 2; 2002 c 349 § 4. Formerly RCW 43.20A.890, 67.70.350.]

Findings—Intent—2023 c 284: "(1) The legislature finds that:

(a) The costs to society of problem gambling and gambling disorder include family disintegration, criminal activity, and financial insolvencies;

(b) Individuals experiencing problem gambling and gambling disorder are at significantly increased risks for other co-occurring disorders, including substance use disorder and mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, or other behavioral health concerns;

(c) Residents of Washington may participate in a variety of legal gaming activities such as the state-run lottery, tribal gaming by federally recognized Indian tribes, certain fund-raisers offered by bona fide charitable and nonprofit organizations, and punchboards, pull-tabs, and social card games approved as a commercial stimulant at established businesses primarily engaged in the selling of food or drink for consumption on the premises;

(d) A 2021 prevalence study found that among all adults, 1.5 percent are at a moderate-to-severe risk for developing a gambling disorder, and among adults who gamble, 3.5 percent are at a moderate-to-severe risk of a gambling disorder; and

(e) The 2022 problem gambling task force final report, delivered to the legislature in December 2022, determined there are critical gaps in providing state-funded comprehensive problem gambling services to Washington residents, including:

(i) Prevention efforts not coordinated with other behavioral health and substance abuse prevention initiatives;

(ii) Problem gambling treatment coverage is not available across the state; and

(iii) No state-supported residential treatment services are available in Washington state.

(2) The legislature intends to provide long-term, dedicated funding for prevention, public awareness efforts, and education regarding problem gambling disorder, clinical training, workforce development, and accessible treatment services for individuals impacted by problem gambling or gambling disorders as well as after-care support." [2023 c 284 § 1.]

Effective date—2023 c 284: "This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect July 1, 2023." [2023 c 284 § 8.]

Findings—Intent—Effective date—2018 c 201: See notes following RCW 41.05.018.

Findings—Intent—2005 c 369: "(1) The legislature finds that:

(a) The costs to society of problem and pathological gambling include family disintegration, criminal activity, and financial insolvencies;

(b) Problem and pathological gamblers suffer a higher incidence of addictive disorders such as alcohol and substance abuse;

(c) Residents of Washington have the opportunity to participate in a variety of legal gambling activities operated by the state, by federally recognized tribes, and by private businesses and nonprofit organizations; and

(d) A 1999 study found that five percent of adult Washington residents and eight percent of adolescents could be classified as

problem gamblers during their lifetimes, and that more than one percent of adults have been afflicted with pathological gambling.

(2) The legislature intends to provide long-term, dedicated funding for public awareness and education regarding problem and pathological gambling, training in its identification and treatment, and treatment services for problem and pathological gamblers and, as clinically appropriate, members of their families." [2005 c 369 § 1.]

Severability—2005 c 369: "If any provision of this act or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the act or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected." [2005 c 369 § 10.]

Effective date—2005 c 369: "This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect July 1, 2005." [2005 c 369 § 11.]