

A photograph of three young men sitting together in a gym, laughing and talking. The man on the left is wearing a dark blue hoodie, the man in the middle is wearing a black hoodie, and the man on the right is wearing a grey t-shirt and holding a white water bottle. They are all smiling and looking at each other. The background shows a bright gym with windows.

Prevention in Action: The Human Impact of the RIGF

**The Responsible Internet
Gambling Fund Report**

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At the Responsible Gambling Council (RGC), our vision is a world where gambling never comes at a human cost. As Ontario's internet gambling and sports betting market continues to evolve, the need for robust, evidence-informed harm prevention has never been more critical.

Through the Responsible Internet Gambling Fund (RIGF), RGC is driving essential harm prevention efforts to support the well-being of people and communities across Ontario. By translating these resources into targeted prevention education and community capacity building, we are establishing strong safeguards today to help individuals and communities avoid the longer-term social and health impacts associated with gambling harms.

Prevention is not a one-time event; it is a continuous commitment. We remain dedicated to a sustainable, safer gambling space where the well-being of people and communities is always the measure of success.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Sarah McCarthy'.

Sarah McCarthy CEO,
Responsible Gambling Council



40+ Years of Prevention Leadership

The Responsible Gambling Council is leading the way in gambling harm prevention and minimization across Ontario, Canada and globally. As an independent and respected non-profit organization with more than 40 years of experience, we're committed to promoting safer gambling culture and practices through a 360-degree approach and evidence-based action.

All RGC programs are designed to be people-centric because we believe gambling should never come at a human cost.



**Independent,
non-profit
organization**

40+ years research and
knowledge mobilization,
prevention education,
accreditation, training and
policy guidance

Provide
evidence-informed
insights on RG,
globally

360 approach We work with all stakeholders, including
regulators, operators, treatment providers,
community agencies, schools, leagues, players,
and families to prevent problem gambling and reduce risk



RGC Prevention Education Ontario Funding

Problem Gambling Prevention Fund

2001 to present

Youth Program

Young Adult Program

Community Outreach & Ethno Cultural

Established to address risks associated with **land-based gambling**; Direct service prevention programming. Highly segmented to address prevention needs across a diverse range of populations.

Established in response to Ontario's Slots at Racetracks Program

Responsible Internet Gambling Fund

2024 to present

Multi-channel media prevention education

Capacity Building and Training

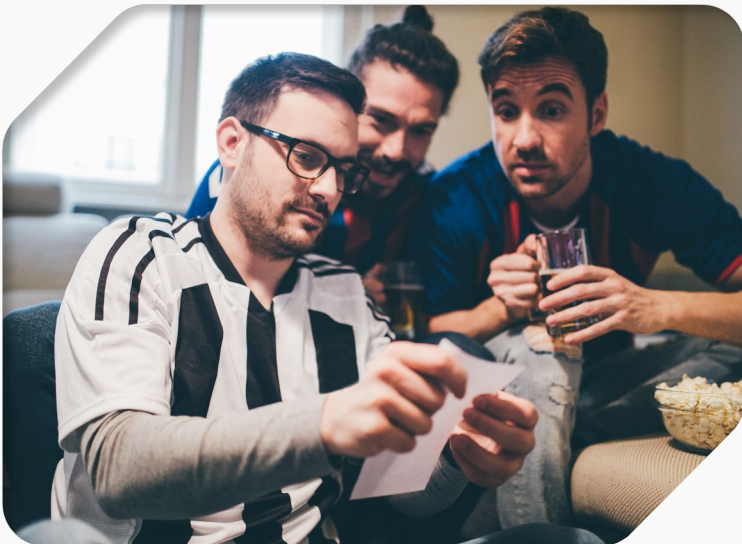
Community Outreach

Prevention education and capacity building to address risks associated with online gambling and sports betting. Programming designed to reach the younger online gambling and sports betting population and those at risk.

Established in response to Ontario's expansion of the regulated market.

Insight Generation and Knowledge Mobilization

The unique risks of online gambling call for an expanded layer of protection



Risk Factors

The risk factors associated with online gambling are unique and different than with land-based casinos.

These include:

- **24/7 access across multiple devices**
- **Accelerated speed of play**
- **Isolation factor**
- **Alcohol and substance use**

Who is Most at Risk:

- **Male, young adult**
- **Single, higher level of education**
- **Employed**
- **High income (higher household income than Canadian average)**
- **South Asian, Indigenous and East Asian populations have an increased risk with sports betting and other forms of gambling**

Gainsbury et al. (2015) How risky is Internet Gambling? A comparison of Subgroups of Internet Gamblers Based on Problem Gambling Status. In *New Media Soc.*, 17: 861-879

Provost (2022); Diamantakos (2021); Cooper, Olfert, & Marmurek (2022); Humphreys, Brad, Perez, & Levi (2012)

RIGF Impact to Date

This report summarizes the programs and activities implemented since the establishment of the RIGF in 2024.



RIGF Impact at a Glance

Awareness Media



50.8M Reached with The Randoms PSA messaging via MLSE Games

121M Reached with safer play messaging during Super Bowl LIX + 1.14M reached during Stanley Cup Playoffs



5773 Visits to RGC's problem gambling support & self-assessment tools due to Always On PG Search Campaign



1800+ Individuals reached through in-person activations at South Asian places of worship and faith-based cultural events

1.49M Individuals reached through Caribbean Vibrations TV, media, and activations at Caribbean Vibrations Festival

Education & Training



28 schools and organizations accessed the Beyond the Game training module
• 100% of pilot facilitators recommend this program



Encourage parents to model positive gambling behaviours; encourage healthy decisions in children engaging in gambling; and destigmatize help seeking for those experiencing gambling harms.

Tools & Resources



Cost2Play Calculator

- Raises Awareness of Gambling Costs
- Encourages Behavioral Reflection
- Promotes Safer Play

Prevention Education:

Driving Impact
Directly via Players



Awareness Media: Low + Moderate Risk

Ongoing PSA: The Randoms

Multi-media public service announcement promoting responsible gambling among sports bettors and iGaming players. Designed for young adults (ages 19-35) and adapted to also connect with identified high-risk groups like South Asian, Chinese, and Black communities. In Market: March 2025 – ongoing.

Reach:

National Broadcast Coverage:

Aired across CTV, Global, CityTV, CBC and other CDN networks

50.8M Reached

through MLSE Partnership (Leafs, Raptors, Argos and TFC games)

23.8M

Ad views on Digital Platforms

like theScore, TikTok, YouTube, Twitch, Pelmorex

Impact:

Providing critical balance to pervasive gambling marketing by promoting informed, responsible choices.

Focus groups with culturally representative participants show the Randoms PSA and its variants are:

- 1) An engaging and effective way to reinforce messaging around the risks involved in gambling
- 2) A de-stigmatizing invitation to reflect on the influence of chance and the risk involved in sports better and iGaming

Participants reported intentions to share this message with others

Watch Video



Looking ahead: While the industry continues to play a significant role in media advertising, it is essential to balance promotion with increasing awareness of potential risks. Future PSAs will prioritize educating parents and caregivers about the dangers of underage gambling and ensuring youth digital safety.

PSA 2026: Young Adult Intervention

Multi-media public service announcement promoting risk identification and support among high-risk young adult players.

This campaign targets males aged 19–24, a younger audience than previous PSA outreach, to address the accelerating normalization of gambling and its impacts. Widespread adoption within this cohort is evident in households, communities, campuses, and rising calls to helplines/ treatment agencies across the province. Launches April 2, 2026

Planned Reach:

Social Media:

Instagram, TikTok, LinkedIn, Twitch, YouTube, Netflix, Spotify, etc.

Targeted websites

National Broadcast coverage

Impact:

Concept testing with online gamblers and non-players suggests the new PSA will be:

- **distinctive,**
- **emotionally engaging,** and
- **highly informative.**

Watch Video



Looking ahead: The number of young individuals affected by gambling continues to rise. We intend to broaden our educational outreach regarding harm reduction tools, including self-exclusion programs, behavior modification applications, and community-supported treatment services.

Awareness Media: Low + Moderate Risk

Partnerships with MLSE & Senators

Collaborating with major sports franchises to deliver responsible play messaging during live games and interactive fan experiences.

Designed to balance in-game operator messaging during times of high gambling activity before and after games. In Market: October 2024- ongoing.



MLSE Games

Home	Away
316M Broadcast Impressions	285M Broadcast Impressions
35.2M Total Home Viewership	15.6M Total Home Viewership
\$1.85M in Media Value	\$2.3M in Media Value

Senators Partnership

Delivering in-game RG messaging through key placements: digital boards, in-arena activations, and social channels.

This approach ensures safer play messages are visible when gambling activity is high.

In Market: January 2026 – ongoing.



Looking ahead: Sports betting is becoming more widely accepted as an integral element of sports culture and fan engagement. RGC plans to broaden its collaborations with additional professional and junior sports clubs and leagues to maintain a unified message throughout all sports.

Awareness Media: Low + Moderate Risk

Big Game Strategy

Survey. Predict. Protect.**Using public betting intentions data to guide safer play during major sport events.**

The Big Game Strategy leverages major sporting events to raise awareness of gambling risk and amplify safer play messaging, delivering a strong ROI through earned media and organic reach. It prioritizes targeting populations at higher risk of sports betting related harms, such as young adults and identified ethnocultural communities, while engaging the general population. In Market: January – June 2025.

**1.14M****Estimated Reach****20****additional media pickups****\$33K**

in Media Value

121M**Estimated Reach****312****additional media pickups****\$1.6M**

in Media Value



Looking ahead: Sports betting typically surges during major sporting events. We are committed to maintaining a balanced narrative around prominent sports betting occasions, such as the Super Bowl, FIFA World Cup, and March Madness, by sharing information that promotes responsible and safer betting practices.

Awareness Media: Ethno-Cultural

Inclusive Partnerships: Ethnocultural Community Engagement

Partnering with community organizations and stakeholders to raise awareness about gambling harms and encourage safer play in targeted ethnocultural populations.



These are collaborative initiatives that involve a combined approach including culturally responsive television and media campaigns, community engagement activities, and educational content. In Market: January 2024-ongoing.

Caribbean Communities

In partnership with Caribbean Vibrations TV, delivered culturally relevant awareness programming

In-person Community activations at Caribbean Vibrations Festival at Toronto Harbourfront

1.49M Reached
through TV, media, and activations

1800+ Reached
through in-person activations at South Asian places of worship and faith-based cultural events

South Asian Communities

In collaboration with SOCH Mental Health, delivered a co-designed awareness project targeting the South Asian community.

- **Train the Trainer model:** recruited from within the community, building capacity, to implement engagement activities
- Content was translated and delivered in **4 languages**



Looking ahead: Certain ethno-cultural groups face an increased risk of harm. We plan to strengthen our collaboration with community organizations serving these at risk populations to provide impactful education and resources.

Always On: PG Campaign

This campaign connects people actively searching on Google to problem gambling support and self-assessment tools when they need them most. Behavior change is a process. The

Transtheoretical Model highlights that timing matters (Prochaska & DiClemente, 1983) and our campaign delivers accurate information that support their progression through the stages of readiness to make a change. In Market: November 2025-ongoing.

A safety net that's always there for people reaching out for support.

Reach

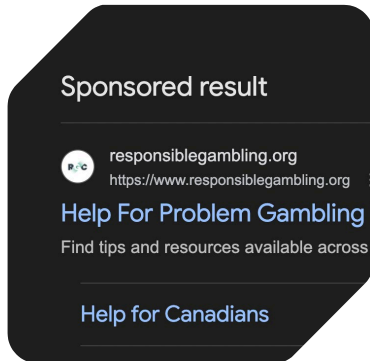
5,773 clicks in Jan 2025 – Dec 2026 alone:

- 778 clicks on Supports for PG
- 128 clicks on Self-Assessment tool

Exceedingly high engagement:

10% clicks per individual who sees the ad

Highly engaged users: individuals remain on this page 2.5x longer than the site average



Impact

Reaches people at critical moments by appearing when they actively search for help, ensuring immediate access to support.

Shortens the path from search to assistance, directing high-intent individuals to self-assessment tools and resources in real time.



Looking ahead: As long as there is a chance that someone is experiencing gambling harm, this strategy will continue to remain essential. We will ensure the latest and most relevant information and tools continue to be immediately accessible to those who are seeking support.

Digital Tools like Cost2Play

A tool to help players objectively reflect on their gambling spending habits. The use of digital tools is a recognized approach to delivering effective prevention education to players. Cost2Play is the first in a suite of digital tools to address risks across the player spectrum. Launched: August 2025



Raises Awareness of Gambling Costs:

Calculates long-term gambling costs by bet size, play time, and game type, helping players understand the true financial impact.



Encourages Behavioral Reflection:

Research shows personalized spending feedback motivates players to rethink habits and reduce risky play (e.g., Wohl et al., 2017).



Promotes Safer Play:

Supports responsible gambling by reinforcing that gambling is entertainment with a cost, not a way to make money.



Expanding Cost2Play to iGaming and sports betting will equip players with a clear view of the real cost of play in these high-risk segments. By offering transparent, easy-to-use tools, we support people who gamble online or sports bet to make informed decisions and reduce risk.



Looking ahead: Informed decision-making remains a fundamental component of prevention. We plan to expand Cost2Play to encompass additional types of betting and gaming, while also tailoring it to meet the needs of diverse ethno-cultural communities. Additionally, we will launch new digital tools designed to assist players at every level across the player continuum.

Prevention Education & Capacity Building:

Driving Impact Indirectly
(via non-players)



Awareness Media: Parents & People of Authority

Educating Parents & Caregivers

A digital education campaign – with support from the OPP – that uses social media to drive to a website that informs parents about the dangers of underage gambling. This campaign draws on insights from the 2023-24 RGC Youth Research Project (voices of parents/caregivers and adults in authority) and OPP experiences investigating fraudulent gambling involving underage youth. In Market: January – ongoing.



40%

of youth who have gambled reported their parents approve of their gambling.

"Sometimes my dad makes bets... and I get to pick a team or horse that I think is going to win... using his money. It still kinda feels like I have something on the line because I made the decision of what to put the money on. I probably first did this when eight."

Wren (14-15 years old)



The campaign aims to:

- Increase parent knowledge of gambling risks and signs of gambling harms in underage youth
- Increase the number of parents having conversations about gambling harms with their child(ren)
- Increase in number of parents discouraging early gambling participation with their child(ren)
- Increase in parents' knowledge of supports and helping options



Ultimately, the campaign strives to:

Encourage parents to model positive gambling behaviours; encourage healthy decisions in children engaging in gambling; and destigmatize help seeking for those experiencing gambling harms.



Looking ahead: Continued education and outreach efforts targeting parents and caregivers will remain crucial in the coming years as youth continue to be a priority focus for RGC.

Beyond the Game

A secondary prevention program targeting high school athletes.

This interactive coach-led training module educates student-athletes on gambling harms, impacts, and practical harm-prevention strategies with access to resources. In Market: December 2025 – ongoing.



Program Outcomes (Short-term):

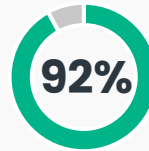
1. Increase student understanding of the risks involved in gambling.
2. Increase student understanding the impacts of gambling.
3. Increase student knowledge of actionable harm prevention strategies.
4. Increase student knowledge of available supports and resources.

Program Impact (Long-term):

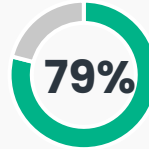
1. Delay the start of gambling
2. Encourage future healthy decisions if engaging in gambling
3. Destigmatize help-seeking for those experiencing gambling harms

Strong Momentum with 28 organizations and schools accessing the training since December 2025

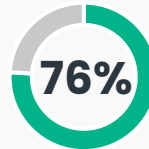
Pilot Results: Pilot delivered across 6 schools in Ontario



of students gained knowledge on accessing help



of students are somewhat or very likely to support a friend to get help



of students plan to apply the risk assessment strategies learned

100% of pilot facilitators recommend this program



Looking ahead: Educators have expressed a need for more student and teacher training. We will build out additional training modules and formats and expand reach of impact.

Purposeful Needs Assessments

Engaging with communities, community organizations, and other stakeholders within and beyond the sector to integrate diverse perspectives and shape our harm-prevention strategies.

Regional Roundtables

These are facilitated sessions among partners fostering collaboration, sharing evidence-based practices, and gathering regional insights and recommendations to inform prevention strategy and programming. They strengthen our local networks and build capacity to implement sustainable harm-prevention initiatives.

- **Over 66+ participants representing organizations across:** Mental Health and Treatment; Post-Secondary Education and Campus; First Nations Communities; Settlement; Public Health
- **Hosted 5 events:** Barrie, Sault Ste. Marie (2026); GTA, Ottawa, Southwestern Ontario (2025).
- 100% of attendees reported interest in taking action on problem gambling in their community after the 2026 events.

Needs Insight Survey

We gathered input from non-profit, government, Healthcare, and public health organizations adjacent to our sector about their current capacity, awareness, and support needs in addressing gambling-related harms.

- **25 Ontario based organizations:** Mental Health and Addictions; Social Services; Food Security; Housing; Counselling; Indigenous and Cultural Support; Newcomer Services; Older Adult Support
- **Organizations are open and willing but lack resources, training, and culturally relevant materials to address issues**
- In response, we are developing and providing:



Ready-to-share Informational Resources (e.g., brochures, one-pager fact sheets, digital resources for organizations to distribute to their communities containing key RG info)



Co-design and develop a Capacity-Building Session with and for organizations



Looking ahead: Engage partners across other regions, ensuring equitable engagement across the province; Develop and provide Informational Resources, Co-design and develop a Capacity-Building Session with and for organizations.

Advancing the RIGF: Priorities for Prevention



Enhanced youth protection efforts



Underage gambling prevention education campaigns targeted at youth, parents and people of influence



Expand programming for high school students (training, educational events and programming)

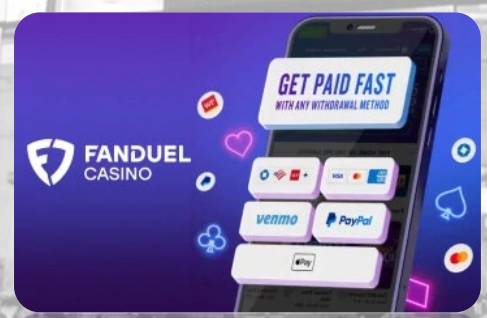
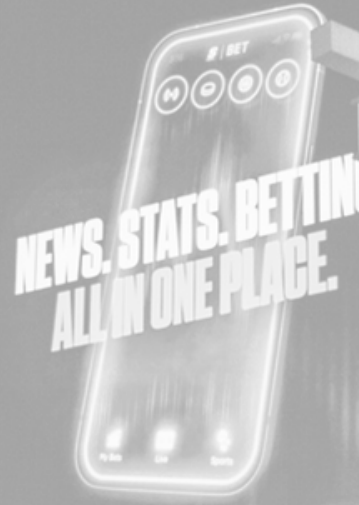


Expand training for teachers, coaches and people of influence



Provide a counterbalance to operator advertising

- Deliver multi-channel media campaigns (broadcaster, search, digital) across high-risk populations including racialized communities
- Expand presence at sporting events and through partnerships with sports leagues



Ensure support services are within reach for Ontarians

- Continue to provide education on the risks associated with gambling harm and guide those impacted to ConnexOntario and other local support services.
- Connect users to evidence-based behaviour change supports, including digital tools and apps.



The background of the slide is a collage of 18 grayscale portraits of diverse individuals of various ages and ethnicities, arranged in a grid-like pattern. The portraits are semi-transparent and overlap slightly.

Continue to empower communities through education and resources

Develop training programs to support agencies interacting with high-risk populations

Treatment provider resources, including gambling 101 education, digital tools, information and shareable resources

Community and Post-Secondary Workshops and Education

References

- Prochaska, J. O., & DiClemente, C. C. (1983). Stages and processes of self-change of smoking: Toward an integrative model of change. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 51(3), 390–395. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-006X.51.3.390>
- Wohl, M. J. A., Davis, C. G., & Hollingshead, S. J. (2017). How much have you won or lost? Personalized behavioral feedback about gambling expenditures regulates play. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 70, 437–445. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2017.01.025>.



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