**The Office of Problem Gambling Services (OPGS) brings together a variety of community partners, community members, and advocacy groups to participate in annual Stakeholder Listening Sessions (SLSs). These sessions are held in the casino host communities of Everett and Springfield. The goals of the SLSs are:**

* To engage the community to promote health and racial equity.
* To gain input on the continued development of programs and services regarding problem gambling.

**Office of Problem Gambling Services**

**Massachusetts Department of Public Health**

Office of Problem Gambling Services

 **2021 STAKEHOLDER LISTENING SESSIONS**



The Massachusetts Department of Public Health’s Office of Problem Gambling Services (OPGS) serves to ensure a comprehensive and integrated public health response to problem gambling that uses data to inform initiatives, engage communities, and ensure cultural intelligence and humility.

The OPGS has worked with over 1,200 community members through its community engagement strategies. These include regional planning processes, community health worker needs assessments, and stakeholder listening sessions.

For more information on the Office of Problem Gambling Services, please visit: [mass.gov/opgs](http://mass.gov/opgs)



**ENGAGEMENT**

Stakeholders provide input on a variety of topics: populations disproportionately impacted by problem gambling, service delivery regarding problem gambling, and community-level interventions.



**EVALUATION**

The perspectives shared by the stakeholders are compiled by the OPGS and later shared in the form of a memo and a report.



**ACTION**

Stakeholder input is then used to inform the OPGS’ programs and services to address problem gambling in Massachusetts.

 **Why Community Engagement?**

Community engagement is “the process of working collaboratively with and through groups of people affiliated by geographic proximity, special interest, or similar situations to address issues affecting the well-being of those people.” The Massachusetts Department of Public Health promotes the health and well-being of all residents by ensuring access to high-quality public health and healthcare services, and by focusing on prevention, wellness, and health equity for all people.



**Two Virtual Stakeholder Listening Sessions**

One in Everett & One in Springfield

**85 people representing 39 distinct community, government, and service organizations**

**2021**

Stakeholder Listening Sessions

**Two Overarching Questions Discussed**

1) In your life, neighborhood, and community, what is working to address problem gambling and gambling related issues?

2) What cultural and/or community approaches would you recommend the DPH Office of Problem Gambling Services apply to 2021 initiatives?

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To read the full report, please visit: [mass.gov/opgs](https://mass.gov/opgs)

“They’ve put in innovative care teams at the health centers...[a social worker, or nurse] ask people about food insecurity, housing, transportation…and then they try and merge it with the medical record data and provide support…I think [it] would be helpful [to get] CHWs trained…specifically around gambling.”

“I notice in lots of people in the community, when they go to gamble, they have a problem, the first person they're going to talk to is their family member, and then the next person is the church people, or community-based organization case worker.”

“There are culturally specific community-based organizations that are already doing this work, that have the institutional knowledge, that have the infrastructure. They know how to train and vet the right staff to come in per language, per ethnicity …that's where the investment should go, is into those organizations that already have the expertise and already have the connection to the community.”

* Ensure culturally and linguistically appropriate services are made available and provided by trusted community members.
* Provide financial literacy training in affected communities or partner with organizations that do so.
* Utilize hiring practices that focus on providing jobs to diverse community members to build organizations that reflect the communities served.

On Equity and Language Justice

* Cultivate relationships with, and invest in, community-based organizations who are currently engaged in problem gambling related work.
* Continue to create programming for youth and families to educate themselves and their communities on the underlying causes of problem gambling.
* Partner with faith-based organizations and utilize the “train the trainer” model to expand capacity across community groups.
* Build trust with communities that have been historically and systematically exploited by public health research and initiatives.
* Partner with organizations providing COVID aid to disseminate problem gambling materials and resources.
* Combine problem gambling prevention with proxy services such as behavioral health, domestic violence, and food security.

On Service Delivery Coordination

On Lessons Learned from COVID-19

 **What we heard from stakeholders**

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* Continue, disseminate, and replicate current evaluation methodology utilized by the Ambassador Project throughout other OPGS and DPH programming as it encourages the participation of all staff within the program.
* Incorporate cultural tools and resources indigenous to the community in the development of information and program materials.