

2024 STAKEHOLDER LISTENING SESSIONS

This two-page brief summarizes insights from the 2024 Listening Sessions to examine emerging trends in gambling behaviors and their associated societal impacts. This year, youth gambling emerged as a critical theme, highlighting the need for innovative, inclusive, and community-driven strategies to mitigate harm and promote health equity.

This report condenses the 2024 Listening Sessions Report into headline findings and recommendations, using the OPGS Data-to-Action (D2A) lens.

KEY FINDINGS AND EMERGING THEMES

1

Cultural Normalization of Youth Gambling: Early exposure to gambling through family and community practices can normalize gambling behaviors. Forms of gambling, such as dice games and scratch tickets, are perceived as routine social norms at early ages.

"I was young as six years old...watching family members buying tickets...scratching tickets...playing the lottery and winning numbers. And that had a big influence on them later in their life...they didn't quite see it as gambling in the same way they see [the] casino." SLS Participant

2

Gaming as a Gateway to Gambling: Youth engagement in video games introduces similar gambling mechanics like loot boxes, which offer randomized rewards for in-game purchases, and skin betting, where players wager virtual items with real-world value. These features blur the line between gaming and gambling, fostering early gambling habits.

"A lot of people are into video games...they're taking the skins or loot boxes they earn or purchase and then going off-site to place wagers...They're using those items as their bets." CLS Participant

3

Accessibility: Although age restrictions technically exist, gambling opportunities woven into digital platforms, websites, social media, and online games are easily bypassed. These gambling-like features are often veiled within other online activities, facing fewer regulatory measures and increasing young people's ease of access.

"For young people...it's with phones, with PlayStation games. They can access countless betting opportunities in real time...it's happening on a much larger scale than we think." SLS Participant

4

Socioeconomic Drivers: For some youth, gambling is a way to support their family's financial needs.

"Some students see it as a legitimate source of income for their families...they're strategic about their wagers so it can help with bills or groceries. They see it as real income." CLS participant

5

Need for Data and Culturally Specific Research: A recognized gap exists in data among youth including gambling differences by age, race, gender, and socioeconomic status, limiting the understanding of which groups are disproportionately most affected by gambling.

"[We] really wanted to see more disaggregated data...so [we] could inform strategies specific to certain communities or groups." SLS Participant

PARTICIPANT RECOMMENDATIONS

Enhance Prevention & Education. Update school and community curricula to distinguish gaming from gambling; train peer ambassadors; integrate financial literacy.

Develop Culturally Relevant, Family-Centered Approaches. Co-design with communities; recognize youth as cultural liaisons and caregivers; partner with cultural and faith institutions and schools.

Leverage Technology & Analytics. Use privacy-protecting digital analytics and social-media monitoring to identify emerging risks and inform rapid responses.

Broaden & Diversify Data Collection. Track online betting, fantasy sports, loot boxes, and social-media gambling among youth; disaggregate data to target interventions.

Strengthen Access Controls with Platforms. Partner with platforms to improve age and ID verification; address prepaid and gift-card and shared-account loopholes.

Lift Up Youth Storytelling. Use youth-led storytelling to surface lived experience and guide program design and evaluation.

CONCLUSION

The 2024 Listening Sessions emphasized the critical role of cultural, social, and economic factors in youth gambling behaviors. Stakeholders are urged to implement innovative, inclusive, and community-driven strategies to mitigate harm and advance health equity.