

## Maryland Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling

# Grant Opportunity

**July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024**

## **Youth and Young Adult Gambling Awareness and Prevention**

**Deadline September 22, 2023**

### **OVERVIEW:**

The Maryland Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling (the Center) is implementing a youth and young adult underage and problem gambling prevention program for the State of Maryland. The target population age for the grant is 11 to 25 years old. The Program is funded through the Center from funding from the Maryland Department of Health Behavioral Health Administration (BHA).

The Center will be offering limited grant opportunities to schools and colleges, Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) chapters, school substance misuse prevention clubs, school mental health promotion clubs, school wellness clubs, or other school leadership groups/clubs to be implemented during the 2023-2024 school year. Community organization youth and young adult groups will be considered for grants, but due to a greater number of students reached through schools and colleges, school and college groups and clubs are preferred. Each grant will be for \$1,000 to complete three peer to peer led prevention strategies or implement the 3 session Maryland Smart Choices curriculum.

### **GRANT PROGRAM GOALS:**

Research shows the younger someone starts gambling, the more likely he/she will be at risk for developing a gambling problem. For many youth and young adults, gambling has become a part of life, betting on sports, playing dice or card games, and even gambling online. Gambling opportunities are everywhere. For those that are young, gambling can be viewed as a way to make money. They may believe if they play long enough, they will be sure to win.

The main objective of this grant opportunity is to educate and/or empower youth and young adults to be knowledgeable of the risks of gambling and become advocates for change by raising awareness not only about the risks of underage gambling and problem gambling but also by informing others about existing resources.

There are two options for youth grant implementation:

1. Peer Led Prevention Strategies:

One goal of underage and problem gambling prevention grants is peer led prevention strategies that encourage youth and young adult leaders to educate their peers on the risks of underage and problem gambling. In addition, youth and young adult strategies should educate peers on how gambling can become an addiction and how it relates to mental health and substance misuse problems. In addition, emphasis on positive coping strategies when under stress should be a key component of prevention strategies. Since many of our youth and young adults first access gambling through video games, the gateway of gaming to gambling can be part of the prevention strategy. The Prevention Manager will work with the school or community organization to work with the youth leaders to identify three prevention strategies for implementation

2. Maryland Smart Choices Curriculum Implementation:

The Maryland Smart Choices Curriculum is a 45-60 minute, 3 session program designed to provide middle through high school students with the basic facts about gambling and the risks, especially for youth. The curriculum includes interactive activities, a decision-making model, coping skills, real-life practical examples, and resources for help. Schools and community organizations that implement Maryland Smart Choices can receive a grant to pay for program supplies and incentives for participation. The curriculum will be provided to the school or community organization at no cost by the Center.

**RESEARCH:**

Youth and young adult gambling facts:

- Youth report first gambling experience between 9-11 years old (Felsher, et al., 2010)
- 33% of Maryland high school students reported gambling in their lifetime. Of all the students surveyed, 10% reported problems due to gambling (Maryland Safe and Secure Schools Survey, 2014)
- Many youth who reported gambling also reported use of substances such as alcohol, cigarettes, marijuana, and/or non-medical prescription drug use (Maryland Safe and Secure Schools Survey, 2014)
- Those who gamble by age 12, are 4 times more likely to become problem gamblers (Felsher, et al., 2010)
- Males and minority populations are at greater risk of problem gambling (Maryland Safe and Secure Schools Survey, 2014 and Felsher, et al., 2010)
- 15% of Maryland high school students reported gambling in the last year (Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2021)
- 60% of college students at a Maryland university reported gambling in the last year (Caldeira et al., 2017)
- College students involved in Greek life and/or athletics were more likely to gamble (Caldeira et al., 2017)

- College students who gambled frequently were more likely to drink alcohol, use marijuana, use tobacco, and/or use other drugs (Caldeira, et al., 2017)

**GRANT APPLICATION CRITERIA:**

**To Be Eligible to Apply:**

1. Must be a school, community organization, SADD Chapter, school/college mental health promotion club, wellness club, school/college leadership club, peer to peer education group, or community youth or young adult group located in the State of Maryland. School or college clubs are preferred but community clubs will be considered.
2. Must demonstrate an active interest in integrating gambling awareness and problem gambling prevention and outreach within their current scope of work.
3. Must designate a dedicated team (determined by the student club) to this grant project. This team will work collaboratively with the Center and complete one (1) hour of gambling/problem gambling awareness training.
4. Designated members of the team (number determined by the student club) will participate at the Center's 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Maryland Conference on Problem Gambling in June, 2024. Youth and young adults may be able to present their final projects at the conference.
5. Must track Grant activities and submit a final activity report to the Center on or before July 15, 2024.

**SAMPLE PREVENTION STRATEGIES TO CONSIDER WHEN APPLYING:**

Applicants may choose to implement the Maryland Smart Choices curriculum only, or if they choose peer led prevention strategies, three strategies must be selected.

Grant prevention strategies will be developed by the student members of the club and must be approved by the Center before work is started. Grant prevention strategies are encouraged to be creative and applicable to the club and area demographic. At least three (3) activities must be completed by June 30, 2024. This is a list of prevention strategies that have been completed by clubs in the past. These can be used again, or students can create their own ideas.

1. Producing short videos.
2. Scripting and delivering public service announcements via online or through media collaboration by the club to communicate the risks of gambling and signs of problem gambling among youth and/or young adults.
3. Creating gambling awareness and prevention themed artwork to be used in printed publications for youth, young adults, parents, and the community.
4. Holding forums (type of forum as designed by the Club) to educate youth, young adults, parents, educators, and/or the community on gambling awareness and problem gambling prevention.
5. Presentations on underage and problem gambling prevention to other groups of youth or young adults, including middle school youth.
6. Creating verbal or visual aids to use at school with underage and/or problem gambling prevention messages such as loudspeaker announcements, hallway monitors, banners at sporting events, and/or school or college newsletters or e-mail lists.

7. Create an educational game for youth or young adults related to underage and/or problem gambling such as Kahoot or Jeopardy.
8. Host a poster contest for youth or young adults around the topic of underage or problem gambling.
9. Exhibit underage and/or problem gambling information at school or college events or in the cafeteria during lunch period. Exhibit at a local community event or health fair.
10. Ideas suggested by students may be accepted.

**GRANT APPLICATION PROCESS AND CONTACT INFORMATION:**

**Grant applications will be accepted through this link:**

**<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MVR7CRW>**

Contact information and selection of either (1) the Maryland Smart Choices Program or (2) three suggested prevention strategies must be included in the application. Funding will be available until all funding is expended.

Please contact **Heather Eshleman, Prevention Manager by email:**

**[heshleman@som.umaryland.edu](mailto:heshleman@som.umaryland.edu) or phone 667-214-2120, Maryland Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling, if you have any questions.**

A Letter of Agreement must be signed by the school or college advisor committing to the agreed upon activities. Funding will be received after the prevention strategies are completed. The signed letter of agreement must be in place by December 30, 2023.

Funded by:

