

Maryland Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling

Grant Opportunity

FY2027

Special Populations Grants for Those At-Risk of Problem Gambling

Deadline: September 18, 2026

OVERVIEW:

The Maryland Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling (the Center) is implementing the Special Populations Grants for Those At-Risk of Problem Gambling Prevention Grant Program for the State of Maryland. A special population is a population that has been shown either through National or Maryland data to be at greater risk of gambling problems. A list of special populations at risk of problem gambling is below. The Program is funded through the Center with funding from the Maryland Department of Health Behavioral Health Administration (BHA).

The Center will be offering limited grant opportunities to community organizations serving populations at-risk of problem gambling in FY 2027. The goal is to fund 30 community organizations. Each grant will be between \$3,000-\$10,000, depending on the reach of the organization and the number of prevention strategies proposed. Grant funding will be available when the Center's finalized contract is received from BHA and all funds are expended.

GRANT PROGRAM GOALS:

There are three main goals of the Special Populations Grants for Those At-Risk of Problem Gambling Prevention Grant Program. The first goal is to educate community organizations and the populations they serve on the risks associated with gambling, how problem gambling can be prevented, and the resources for problem gambling help in the State of Maryland. Maryland community organizations become empowered to become leaders in the problem gambling prevention field. The second goal is for community organizations to integrate problem gambling prevention into their work with substance misuse prevention, mental health promotion, and public health promotion for underserved and at-risk populations. This will provide sustainability for problem gambling prevention strategies in Maryland. The final goal of the Special Populations Grants is to have a wider reach to promote public health among Maryland's communities across the State, especially as it relates to problem gambling. With limited funding and resources, working through community organizations that know their communities and have established networks is more efficient for problem gambling prevention.

It is expected that grantees promote materials and messaging, either developed by the Center or by the community organization, relevant to the population served. All materials developed by grantees should follow the Center's Public Awareness Policy.

GRANT DESCRIPTION:

Grantees will be provided with technical assistance and support for their prevention programming when awarded a grant. This includes staff training, collaboration on webinars, and/or printed or electronic materials free of charge. Promotional items with the 1-800-GAMBLER Helpline number are provided free of charge for distribution at community events.

Research both Nationally and in Maryland show the following populations are at greater risk of gambling problems:

- Youth (middle school, high school)
- Young adults (college age)
- Males
- African Americans
- Hispanics
- Asians
- Native Americans
- Those at risk of suicide
- Those with poor health
- Veterans and active military
- Those who are less educated
- Those who are low income
- Those who use drugs or are in treatment or recovery from substance misuse
- Those with mental health disorders
- Those involved in domestic violence or child maltreatment
- Those who are incarcerated or involved with the criminal justice system (youth and/or adults)
- Those with brain injuries
- Those who engage in mobile sports betting

For FY2027, priority populations are rural populations, persons of color, older adults, and those with mental health and/or addiction disorders. In addition, student led and youth serving organizations and peer support networks at colleges and universities are encouraged to apply.

Schools and community organizations representing the entire state, local jurisdictions, or the participants/contacts of a single community organization providing direct services may apply. If a community organization providing direct services applies, prevention strategies should also include reaching beyond those receiving the direct services such as promotion on social media of prevention strategies, reaching parents or others who support those receiving the direct services, and/or other community organizations that collaborate with the organization, so as large a reach as possible can be achieved.

Community Organizations will be implementing strategies according to the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA)'s Seven Strategies for Effective Community Change. For more information, visit <https://aodpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/seven-strategies-for-community-change.pdf> or <https://www.cadca.org/>

The Seven Strategies for Community Change are: providing information, enhancing skills, providing support, enhancing access/reducing barriers, changing consequences, physical design, and modifying/changing policies.

Examples of each of the **Seven Strategies for Community Change** are:

1. Providing Information:

- Dissemination of problem gambling printed materials
- Hosting a presentation on the topic of problem gambling
- Social media posts on problem gambling
- Provide problem gambling information on a website.
- Promote resources for help: Helpline, Gamban, Bet blocker, Gamblers Anonymous, etc.
- Promote March Problem Gambling Awareness Month.
- Promote the Holiday Gift Responsibly Campaign.
- Host a problem gambling screening event.
- Providing information on the risks of gambling.

2. Enhancing Skills:

- Provide training to community leaders, youth leaders, staff, etc. on problem gambling to train others.
- Train community health workers, volunteers, or others who provide resources to the public to recognize signs of problem gambling and resources for help.

3. Provide Support:

- Work through other areas of your organization or other community organizations to support positive activities that promote wellness.
- Work with other areas of your organization or other community organizations to integrate problem gambling prevention into existing programs.
- Integrate problem gambling prevention messaging into training sessions or community events.

4. Enhancing Access/ Reducing Barriers:

- Promote problem gambling prevention tools such as the Helpline, Gamban, and Bet Blocker.

5. Changing Consequences:

- If the organization has connections to schools or enforcement agencies, encouraging the use of the 1-800-GAMBLER helpline for someone in need of gambling help to receive services versus ignoring the problem or other punishments.

6. Physical Design:

- Conduct an environmental scan in the community to assess signage promoting gambling.

- Promote permanent signage with problem gambling prevention messaging and resources for help.

7. Modifying/Changing Policies:

- Testify on behalf of a problem gambling prevention bill.

Other prevention strategies recommended by the grantee may also be implemented, if included in the grantee Letter of Agreement.

Grantees may also conduct polls or survey their community. The Center's goal is to develop a community survey that can be used to measure gambling behaviors in Maryland, but this may take a few years before it is ready for implementation.

In the application, grantees will include information on how education will be provided on the risks of gambling, how community outreach will be conducted, and how the grantee plans to use culturally relevant messaging. Grantees will be asked to conduct one listening session.

Grantees will be required to conduct short pre/post-test outcome surveys at the beginning and end of the grant period. The pre/posttest will be provided to grantees for their use around the time Letter of Agreements are signed. A QR code linked to Survey Monkey will be used to collect data. All grantees will collect pre/post tests using the same QR code. One number on each outcome measure will be provided to BHA.

The grantee will provide the following outcome measures to the Center through biannual surveys:

- Basic demographic information of those served: age, gender, race.
- Percentage of people who gambled last year and number of people who experienced problem gambling.
- Percentage of people who know someone who gambled in the last year and number of people who know someone who experienced a gambling problem.
- Percentage of people who have seen messaging about problem gambling either in print or electronic in the community.
- Percentage of people who have seen any social media messaging about problem gambling.
- Percentage of people who have seen/attended programming related to problem gambling such as an exhibit table or presentation.
- Percentage of people who have heard of the 1-800-GAMBLER helpline.
- Percentage of people who have heard of online resources for problem gambling such as Bet Blocker and Gamban.
- Percentage of people who feel comfortable telling a friend to get help for a gambling problem.

Output/process evaluation measures including numbers of people reached will be included in biannual reports. Report templates will be provided by the Center.

Grantees will be provided an advanced training on data collection, program evaluation, and sustainability planning.

RESEARCH:

Maryland Gambling and Problem Gambling Facts from the 2024 Prevalence Study¹:

- 89.8% of Maryland adults have gambled in their lifetime.
- The most common forms of gambling are lottery, casino, and Electronic Gaming Machines (EGMs), commonly known as pokies or slot machines.
- Those that gamble are more likely to use tobacco products and alcohol compared to non-gamblers.
- According to the Statewide Gambling Prevalence in Maryland, 5.7% of Maryland adults 18 and over are disordered gamblers in 2024 (2024 Prevalence Study), compared to 4% in 2022 (2022 Prevalence Study).
- Some minority populations were more likely to be disordered gamblers; Maryland adult African Americans (10.6%) and Hispanics/Latinx, compared to Whites (3.6%).
- Nearly 2 out of 5 (around 40%) of Marylanders who bet on sports in the past year exhibited either disordered gambling or at-risk gambling behavior in their lifetime, which was more than double the proportions seen for previous sports gamblers.

GRANT APPLICATION CRITERIA:

To Be Eligible to Apply:

1. Must be a school or community organization in Maryland.

The Application Must Include:

1. Information on the community organization's contact, including name, phone number, mailing address, and email address.
2. A description of the community organization that will implement the grant.
3. Description of the population served by the community organization.
4. Selection of at least three prevention strategies.

Grantees Must Agree to:

1. Meet with the Prevention Manager and/or Prevention Coordinator to discuss grant deliverables.
2. Must track grant activities and submit reports to the Center in June 2027 and January 2028.
3. Submit copies of all original work to the Center.
4. Use the Public Awareness Policy on the Use of Gambling Imagery.
5. Take at least two of the Centers webinars or trainings during the fiscal year.
6. Participate in an in-person training during FY2027.
7. Participate on mandatory Technical Assistance calls with the Center throughout the fiscal year.
8. Attend the Annual Maryland Problem Gambling Conference in June, if available.

When selected for funding, the community organization will meet with Center staff to refine the prevention strategies. The letter of agreement will be drafted and then approved for language by the community organization and the Center. Once approved, the letter of agreement will be

signed by both parties. When the letter of agreement is signed, the community organization can begin to work on the prevention strategies. Each community organization must propose at least three prevention strategies in their grant application. Others can be added based on the initial meeting with the community organization and the Center. Prevention strategies must be completed by December 31, 2027.

One payment will be dispersed by April or May of 2027, after the Letter of Agreement has been signed by all parties and a W-9, direct deposit (ACH) and invoice forms have been submitted by the community organization.

GRANT APPLICATION PROCESS AND CONTACT INFORMATION:

An optional, virtual pre-application workshop will be held **Thursday, August 20, 2026, at 12pm**. Please email Brina Olunkwa, bolunkwa@som.umaryland.edu, to register.

<https://umaryland.zoom.us/meeting/register/Tk51afAVOf-EAd3N5DUeKw>

Grant applications will be accepted through this link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/YSPZXGD>

Grant applications will be accepted until September 18, 2026, or until all funding is allocated for fiscal year 2027. Applicants are encouraged to apply early as applications may be evaluated on a rolling basis.

Grant timeline:

Grant submission: June 1, 2026-September 18, 2026

Pre-application workshop: August 20, 2026, 1 pm

Grant Review: September 21, 2026-October 23, 2026

Notify grantees of award: October 27, 2026

Please contact **Brina Olunkwa, Prevention Coordinator by email bolunkwa@som.umaryland.edu or phone 667-214-2120 at the Maryland Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling**, if you have any questions.

References

¹Brown, J. P. (2025). Statewide Gambling Prevalence in Maryland: 2024. MD COEP Gambling. <https://www.mdproblemgambling.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/2024-MD-Gambling-Report.pdf>



Funded by: