

B.C.'s Responsible Gambling Strategy (2014/15-17/18)

The majority of people play games of chance for fun and entertainment. A small percentage of the population develops gambling habits that are harmful to themselves, their families and/or their work environment. Another small percentage is at moderate risk of developing such problems. Problem gambling has become a larger public issue. Governments and gaming providers continue to take an active role in promoting responsible gambling.

This paper outlines B.C.'s Responsible Gambling Strategy.

1. Responsible Gambling Strategy

In May 2003, the Province of British Columbia introduced its Responsible Gambling Strategy. This strategy engages government, BCLC, Municipalities and the industry service providers to work together in developing a gaming industry that fosters responsible gambling and supports those negatively affected by gambling. The goals, long term objectives and approaches employed in the strategy are as follows:

Goals	Long Term Objectives	Primary Approaches
1. Create public awareness of risks associated with gambling.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase public knowledge of problem gambling issues and program services. ▪ Inform the public about responsible gambling strategies and ways to make healthy choices when gambling. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public awareness and communication. ▪ Education and training. ▪ Responsible gambling strategies.
2. Deliver gambling in a manner that encourages responsible gambling and informed choice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inform gamblers about the risks involved in gambling, setting limits and playing within their means. ▪ Ensure policies promote responsible gambling practices. ▪ Increase awareness by promoting responsible gambling to players. ▪ Improve the skills and knowledge about responsible gambling to Casino staff. ▪ Conduct/support research that informs government, BCLC and the gaming industry on issues and best practices related to problem gambling and responsible gambling. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Policy development. ▪ Research and evaluation. ▪ Industry training. ▪ Information management.
3. Provide effective treatment and support to those impacted by problem gambling.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continuously improve efficiency and effectiveness of providing assistance to individuals experiencing problems with gambling by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Increasing accessibility of services; *evaluating clinical outcomes and providing evidence-based, best practices policies & programs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Treatment services for problem gamblers, and those affected by the gambling of a relative, friend, or colleague.

The collaborative efforts of the Gaming Policy and Enforcement Branch (GPEB), B.C. Lottery Corporation (BCLC), B.C.'s gaming service providers and local governments, will enable further development and implementation of evidence-based policies and programs that encourage healthy gambling practices.

Responsibilities

Gaming Policy and Enforcement Branch

The branch is responsible for the regulation of gambling in B.C., which includes responsibility for legislation, policies, and public interest standards. The branch is responsible for the provision of problem gambling services, responsible gambling initiatives and managing the Province's gambling research agenda. The branch contracts with responsible gambling advisors (also known as GameSense Advisors, or GSAs), prevention specialists and clinical counselors to assist in delivering services.

British Columbia Lottery Corporation

BCLC is responsible for the conduct and management of gaming in the province, which includes retail, internet, and facilities-based responsible gambling programs.

Gaming Service Providers

Gaming service providers must comply with all gaming regulations, responsible gambling standards and advertising standards. They are encouraged to seek opportunities to enhance responsible gambling programs and develop and enhance consumer protection practices in gaming venues.

Host Local Governments

Host local governments are responsible for seeking opportunities to enhance responsible gambling programs and encouraging collaborative work between local services and the Province's contracted problem gambling prevention providers.

Evaluation

The effectiveness of the strategy and plan will be monitored regularly and enhanced as required. In addition, a third party evaluation of appropriate components of the strategy will be completed in order to measure increased understanding and awareness.

Although problem gambling is unique in its presentation and treatment, linkages to other addiction services, family physicians, credit counselling and other support services will be strengthened and maintained.

Responsible gambling experts will be consulted and initiatives will be evaluated on an ongoing basis. This is the fourth three-year plan to be developed under the strategy.

Definitions

Problem Gambling

The term "problem gambling" describes gambling behaviours that compromise, disrupt or damage personal, family or vocational pursuits. Using a variety of support and treatment approaches, can provide solutions to those negatively affected by gambling.

Definitions (continued)

Responsible Gambling

Responsible gambling is a healthy approach to gambling in which adults who choose to gamble are provided the tools and information they need to make informed choices. By combining responsible gambling education, information about the games, and the risks associated with gambling, British Columbians are able to make educated decisions about their play.

Responsible gambling occurs through the collective actions and shared responsibility among a number of stakeholders, including government, gaming operators, regulators, treatment providers, community groups and individual gamblers.