

# Office of Lottery and Gaming

## Responsible Gambling Plan

### M I S S I O N

To responsibly maximize revenue generation for the District of Columbia through the sale of innovative lottery and sports wagering products while providing gaming regulation and oversight that upholds the highest standards of integrity and public trust.

### V I S I O N

To contribute to a better District of Columbia by being a best-in-class lottery that delivers great entertainment experiences while practicing sound governance.

### C O R E   V A L U E S

**Integrity** - We do the right thing. We are each personally accountable for the highest standard of behavior. We are honest, trustworthy, respectful, fair, and ethical in our actions and words. We are committed to ensuring the integrity of the District's gaming industry, by complying and enforcing all federal and District laws, regulations, and organizational policies.

**Equity and Inclusion** - We are committed to including and valuing diverse voices and fostering a culture that ensures all staff, customers and stakeholders feel a sense of belonging and are encouraged to be their true self.

**Customer Centric** - The needs of our customers are at the heart of what we do, doing what is best for both them and the business. We listen and respond to our customers and stakeholders promptly. We are passionate about stellar customer service.

**Innovative** - We continuously look for ways to improve our games, deliver our products, serve our customers, and continuously enhance our regulatory framework. We foster creativity, innovation, responsible risk taking and move quickly to seize opportunities and deliver excellence for our customers and all our stakeholders.

**One Team** - We share a sense of commitment to our mission. We treat one another with respect and understand the importance of communication. We value a willingness to pitch in. We understand our continued success requires us to effectively collaborate with each other, our customers, and partners.

**Quality** - What we do every day we do well. Each of us is responsible for the quality of whatever we do. We are committed to providing premium products and outstanding services. We aspire for excellence everyday and do not take shortcuts on execution. We are flexible and learn from our mistakes. We work hard to exceed expectations.

**Responsible Growth** - We are committed to growing gaming in the District in a responsible manner. We will minimize harm from gambling to individuals, families, and communities while supporting our core mission. We will promote responsible gaming practices and programs in everything we do.

## Introduction

While generating revenue for the District is an important goal, the Office will never put profits ahead of the health of its players. Moreover, the Office's commitment to responsible gambling is driven not only by its mission and values, it is mandated by statute and regulation. Consequently, by law, the Office and its licensees are mandated to develop and maintain a responsible gambling program. The Office understands that maintaining an effective, responsible gambling program, creates an environment that promotes revenue generation in a safe and healthy manner. For this reason, the Office does not view responsible gambling as a burden but as an integral part of its business operations and oversight responsibilities.

The Office's Responsible Gambling Program (Program) is intended to provide the comprehensive framework to minimize the potential harmful impact gambling may have on individuals, families, and communities. The Program provides an approach through which the Office's lottery and sports wagering products are offered in a manner that minimizes harm. The Program also ensures that sports wagering licensees maintain responsible gambling programs that comply with applicable law and regulation and are consistent with the Office's overall goals.

## What is Responsible Gambling?

Responsible Gambling is the exercise of control and informed choice to ensure gambling activity is kept within affordable limits of money and time. Further, the gambling activity is enjoyable and in balance with other activities and responsibilities. The overarching goal of responsible gambling is to avoid gambling-related harm.

## What is Problem Gambling?

Problem Gambling is the difficulty in limiting money and/or time spent on gambling, which leads to adverse consequences for the gambler, their family/friends, or community.

## The Office Approach to Responsible Gambling

The Office's approach to responsible gambling is driven by its mission and core values on responsible growth. To this end, the Office aims to create an effective, sustainable, socially

responsible, and accountable approach to gambling. The Program has adopted a multifaceted approach that integrates preventative measures and processes that promote responsible gambling. The objectives of the Program cover three areas as follows:

### *Education*

- Provide accurate and balanced information to enable informed choices;
- Provide players adversely affected by gambling with timely access and appropriate information on problem gambling; and
- Provide annual responsible gambling training.

### *Regulatory*

- Ensure the Office and its licensees comply with the laws and regulations covering responsible gambling.

### *Research*

- Continually explore best practices to enhance responsible gambling strategies, policies and methods.
- Participate in established studies designed to better understand the DC Lottery brand and its players' attitudes towards luck and entertainment.
- Continue to engage in studies that track gameplay, spending habits, and other social dynamics of DC Lottery players.

To achieve sustainability and socially responsible goals, the Program will also address self-exclusion and the prevention of gambling by underage and impaired individuals.

## Responsible Gambling Education

### *Player Education*

Education is a key objective of the Program. Gambling is a form of entertainment intended to be enjoyable. Still, players also need to be provided with information and resources that cover winnings, losses, and assistance if they are experiencing signs of problem gambling. To ensure players have access to responsible gambling information and resources, the following are incorporated into lottery and sports wagering products:

- Information on betting odds; chances of winning, and related information is posted on the Office's website; [www.dclottery.com/games](http://www.dclottery.com/games)

- Lottery & GambetDC retailers have handouts that provide information for those experiencing signs of problem gambling, including the 24-hour National Problem Gambling Helpline (1-800-GAMBLER) administered by the National Council on Problem Gambling (“NCPG”); Gambet DC self-service betting terminals (“Kiosks”) have the National Problem Gambling’s helpline number prominently displayed;
- Retailer establishments are required to have signage conspicuously posted, stating (or similar wording) “It is unlawful for any individual who is under 18 years of age or is noticeably intoxicated to engage in gambling or lottery activities”;
- Retailer establishments have available information on self-exclusion;
- Online lottery and sports wagering products have the same requirements described above and offer the following:
  - *Deposit limits*: Limits the amount of money a person may deposit into an account over a certain period, most likely over a calendar year.
  - *Wager limits*: Limits the amount of money a person may wager in one day, month, or year.
  - *Session time limits*: Limits the amount of time a person may be logged into a gambling site in a single day.
  - *Account cool-off*: This option allows a person to block access to their account for a specified amount of time.
  - *Loss limits*: Similar to wager limits, this option allows a person to set a cap on potential losses over a fixed period of time.
  - *Self-Exclusion*: Information about self-exclusion to support players that wish to refrain from gambling.

The educational goals are to ensure players have information to make informed choices when they gamble and have the tools to limit their gambling or exclude themselves entirely from gambling. The Office’s overarching goal is to provide enjoyable entertainment that contains appropriate safeguards to minimize harm to players.

### *Training- Office Employees and Retailers*

All Office employees and Lottery/GambetDC Retailers shall receive annual training in responsible gambling as part of the educational component. The training content covers topics described in the Education section above and others, such as the causes, effects, and consequences of problem gambling. The Office’s Responsible Gambling Specialist (RGS) coordinates and/or ensures the delivery of training.

- *Employees*: There are over 60 Office employees whose duties are sales, marketing, finance, licensing, regulatory oversight, administrative, and other related areas. Regardless of role and responsibilities, all employees are mandated to attend responsible gambling training annually. The training is provided in-person, virtually, or a combination thereof. The training also includes a test to ensure comprehension.

- *Lottery/GambetDC Retailers:* As part of the onboarding process to become an Office retailer, owners and employees directly involved in the sale of lottery or sports wagering products are required to attend responsible gambling training and, thereafter, receive annual refresher training. This training is critical as Retailers tend to have frequent and reoccurring contact with players. Currently, there are over 350 lottery retailers and over 10 GambetDC retailers.

The training material covers problem gambling associated with both lottery and sports wagering. In this context, it provides information on behaviors individuals may exhibit that are associated with problem gambling.

## Responsible Gambling Regulation Oversight

The Office exercises regulatory oversight of private sports wagering operators. As part of this oversight, the Office reviews the responsible gambling programs of all sports wagering operators and management service providers. The review includes assessing the written responsible gambling policy, procedures, and onsite inspection of the sports wagering facilities to determine whether they meet the statutory and regulatory requirements. Unless their responsible gambling programs receive a favorable determination, no sports wagering operator or management service provider will be approved for licensure. In addition to licensing, the Office continuously monitors compliance through onsite inspections, audits, and reviews of responsible gambling programs of licensees. Violations may result in civil money penalties and/or injunctive actions.

As an operator, the Office also performs inspections of lottery and sports wagering retailers to ensure ongoing compliance with regulations. Violations may have contractual consequences, including removal of retailer's license to sell lottery and/or sports wagering products.

## Research

The Office continuously conducts research to better understand players' spending habits and attitudes toward gambling. The most recent study in 2019 established a benchmark as it considered not only lottery, but sports wagering as well. The study found that 39% of frequent DC lottery players are highly likely to participate in sports wagering. In addition, sports wagering players tend to be younger, with an average age of 35 compared to 46 for the DC lottery.

Using the benchmark study's findings, the Office expanded its responsible gambling program to cover sports wagering even before officially launching. This included the development of rules covering both privately and District operated sports wagering. The Office's website was also modified to expand responsible gambling messaging to sports wagering. Further, retailer training now includes both lottery and sports wagering.

Sports wagering, both privately and District operated, have been in available since 2020. During this time, additional data has been gathered to indicate trends and patterns, allowing the information to institute current changes to the responsible gambling program, along with a pending update to the benchmark study. An example is the self-exclusion program changes to make enrollment more readily available to players by eliminating barriers in the sign-up process.

## Advertisement and Marketing

Lottery and sports wagering advertisements and promotions play an important role in the Office's responsible gambling practices. This covers advertising and marketing on print advertisements, direct mail, billboards, the internet, mobile apps, social media, radio, and television. The District also has regulations governing responsible advertising practices. These regulations ensure that advertising, marketing, and public relations activities do not, among other requirements:

- Contain false or misleading information;
- Consist of indecent or offensive graphics or audio or both;
- Target individuals under the age of 18;
- Target individuals that have been excluded from play;
- Target people that are considered moderate and high-risk for gambling addiction;
- Encourage players to "chase" their losses or re-invest their winnings; or
- Suggest that betting is a means of solving financial problems.

Moreover, consistent with the American Gaming Association's Code of Conduct for Responsible Gaming, the District regulations also require that advertisements, marketing, and public relations activities shall:

- Give a balanced message regarding winning and losing; and
- Provide information on compulsive gambling treatment or counseling, procedures for self-exclusion, and promotion of a problem gambling hotline.

As an operator and regulator, the Office encourages the promotion of messages that display or highlight positive play and enjoyment of engaging in lottery and sports wagering activities. However, these messages must be balanced in a manner that allows a player to understand the risk and consequences so that they can make informed choices.

## Self-Exclusion Process

Self-Exclusion is one of the most widely used responsible gaming strategies. This process allows a person to voluntarily exclude themselves from legalized gaming activities to deal with

problematic gaming behavior.

The Office's Self-Exclusion Program allows a person to voluntarily request to be excluded from legalized gaming activities within the District of Columbia for a pre-determined length of time and to be prohibited from collecting any winnings, recovering any losses, or accepting complimentary gifts or services or any other thing of value from an Office-licensed facility, retail location or mobile wagering platform.

Each person seeking to enroll in the program shall complete an application requesting placement on the Office's Self-Exclusion List. In doing so, acknowledges that it is their responsibility to refrain from engaging in sports wagering and other gambling activities under the jurisdiction of the Office. Applications for self-exclusion may be completed at any Class A or B licensed operator or directly to the Office. Detailed instructions are available on the self-exclusion application and accompanying instructions. Click on the following [link](#).

As part of the request for self-exclusion enrollment, the individual must select the duration for which they wish to be excluded. The individual may choose any of the following periods time:

- One (1) year;
- Eighteen (18) months;
- Three (3) years;
- Five (5) years; or
- Lifetime (an individual may only select the lifetime duration if their name has previously appeared on the Self-Exclusion List for at least six (6) months).

An exclusion is irrevocable, and the selected term of exclusion cannot be altered or rescinded for any reason during the exclusion period elected. Upon expiration of the selected duration of exclusion, individuals may request to be removed from the Self-Exclusion program or petition for exclusion for a new duration. Individuals will remain on the Self-Exclusion list after the expiration of the selected period of exclusion until they submit a petition for removal, and it is approved by the Office Responsible Gambling Specialist or its designee.

### ***Removal from the Self-Exclusion Program List***

For individuals who are self-excluded from legalized gaming activities within the District of Columbia for 1 year, 18 months, 3 or 5 years, upon the conclusion of the pre-determined period, the individual may request removal from the self-exclusion list by contacting the Office Responsible Gambling Specialist to obtain a Request for Removal from Voluntary Self-Exclusion form at [OLGResponsibleGaming@dc.gov](mailto:OLGResponsibleGaming@dc.gov).

The individual requesting removal shall complete and submit the Request for Removal from Voluntary Self-Exclusion form. However, please be advised, in order to be removed from the OLG Self-Exclusion List, the self-excluded person must provide an affidavit from a licensed mental health professional who is a certified gambling addiction counselor.

## NASPL Responsible Gambling Verification (Implementation Level)

In 2016, the North American State and Provincial Lotteries (NASPL) and the National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG) launched a responsible gambling verification program. Its purpose was to assist lotteries in planning and implementing an effective, responsible gambling program in all aspects of their operations. An additional goal of the verification program is to educate lottery executives, employees, and the public they serve about responsible gambling measures that are possible and available resources within lottery operations.

The verification program recognizes three levels of achievement as follows:

- **Planning Level:** This is the initial level for lotteries that wish to establish a responsible gambling program.
- **Implementation Level:** As the next step, this is for lotteries with existing responsible gambling programs. This level focuses on the implementation of the responsible gambling plan outlined in the Planning Level submission.
- **Sustaining Level:** For lotteries that have completed the implementation level and wish to make their programs even stronger by taking them to the highest leadership level.

The verification process involves the lottery's submission at one of the three levels and a review by a group of independent assessors. The assessors review the documentation to assess whether the responsible gambling program meets the standards of the level applied for by the lottery. The overall results of the assessment are made public by the NCPG.

While the Office has a long history of maintaining an effective, responsible gambling program, it decided to participate in the verification program by achieving each step, starting with Planning. Consequently, in March 2019, the Office submitted their organizational responsible gambling strategic plan (Plan) for verification assessment. The Plan covered the following elements:

- An overall responsible gambling plan
- Employee training
- Retailer training
- Public education and awareness
- Product oversight
- Research
- Advertising
- Resources

The Office's plan submission was approved by the NASPL/NCPG in June 2019 and published on

the NCPG's website. Since June 2019, the Office has experienced significant changes associated with the legalization of sports wagering in the District. Specifically, the Office's responsible gambling program was expanded to cover sports wagering, both as an operator and regulator. Accordingly, the Office's Implementation level submission in November 2021 focuses not only on the implementation of the March 2019 planning submission but covers responsible gambling components implemented to address problem gambling associated with sports wagering.

## Responsible Gambling Annual Campaigns and Activities

### *Gift Responsibly Campaign*

The National Council on Problem Gambling invited the Office to participate in their annual Gift Responsibly campaign that encourages adults not to give children lottery tickets as gifts during the holidays.

The Office will be participating in a Level 2 submission. It will consist of:

- Radio Ads promoting "Gift Responsibly."
- 5-10 Social Media messages posted on-line to promote responsible gambling. These messages will also include the appropriate age for lottery play, youth gambling statistics, and parental awareness tips
- Online retailer training aimed geared towards youth gambling
- Digital Banner advising adults that lottery tickets are not for children

### *Problem Gambling Awareness Month-March 2024*

Recognizing the potential hazards of problem gambling and its impact on the lives of individuals and families, the Office will again partner with the National Council on Problem Gambling to participate in National Problem Gambling Awareness Month.

National Problem Gambling Awareness Month directs subject matter experts, gaming entities, and others to enhance efforts around this important issue. The campaign also highlights prevention, treatment, and recovery services available to address problem gambling. Healthcare providers are also encouraged to employ strategies to identify the concern, including screening clients for problem gambling.

The Office will continue to promote responsible gambling and problem gambling awareness through social media, gaming websites, employee training, and advertisements.