

Who is Experiencing Gambling Harm before Massachusetts Casinos?

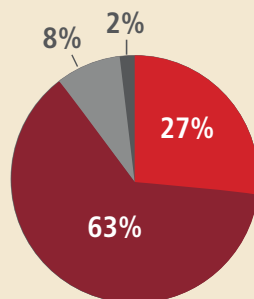
The Expanded Gaming Act permits the introduction of casinos and slot parlors in Massachusetts for the first time. A primary concern surrounding expanded gambling is its impact on problem gambling. The SEIGMA team took a “snapshot” of what problem gambling looked like in Massachusetts prior to casinos. A primary aim of the baseline study is to understand the demographic characteristics (race, income, gender, age, etc.) which make some people more or less at risk of experiencing harm from gambling. Based on responses from approximately 10,000 Massachusetts adults, we summarize findings from SEIGMA’s *Gambling and Problem Gambling in Massachusetts: Results of a Baseline Population Survey*.

People were classified as:

- Non-gamblers (have not gambled in the past year)
- Recreational gamblers (gamble because they enjoy these activities)
- At-risk gamblers (betting more than planned, spending more time than intended, etc.)
- Problem gamblers (experience significant impaired control over gambling and negative consequences)

Gambling Behavior in Massachusetts Before Casinos

- Non-gambler
- Recreational gambler
- At-risk gambler
- Problem gambler



- Based on the percentages in the pie chart, we estimate that approximately 110,000 adult residents are experiencing problems with gambling and approximately 440,000 adult residents are at risk of experiencing problems with gambling
- The amount of problem gambling in Massachusetts is very similar to the amount identified in other U.S. states

Who is more vulnerable to experience harm from problems with gambling?

- Men are 3 times more likely than women
- Persons who identify as Black are 4 times more likely than persons who identify as White
- Individuals with only a high school diploma are 3 times more likely than individuals with a college degree

When at-risk gamblers and problem gamblers are compared to recreational gamblers, survey results showed that those at risk of experiencing harm from a gambling problem and those experiencing harm from a gambling problem are more likely to report:

- Serious problems with depression, anxiety, and other mental health problems
- Using tobacco
- Consuming large amounts of alcohol at one time

SEIGMA PROJECT OVERVIEW

SEIGMA is a project that uses experts from several disciplines to carry out the different parts of the Massachusetts Gaming Commission's research effort. The project team is dedicated to working closely with many other groups throughout the Commonwealth. The study uses a state-of-the-art design, rigorous data collection and research methods, and a careful analytic approach to establish the effects of casino gambling at state, regional, and local levels. The SEIGMA team collects its own data as well as using data gathered by other organizations. The SEIGMA study is funded by the Massachusetts Gaming Commission.