



Calls to Problem Gambling Helpline

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SPOKESPERSON: *Available for comment*

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(Green Bay, WI) – During 2021, the Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling received 22,201 contacts to its 24 hour Helpline.

WCPG is a statewide organization with a mission is to provide resources, public awareness and education on gambling disorders while maintaining strict neutrality on the issue of legalized gambling.

Blozinski says, “While the total number of contacts is important, it really only tells part of the story. There are other significant numbers in our annual Helpline Report that show how devastating a gambling addiction can be.” The calls in 2021 included:

- A married man blew his paycheck and then got an advance on his next paycheck and loses approximately \$3000.00 per month.
- An Ashland County woman called and said she has been gambling for 10 years. She cannot control it anymore – spent all her stimulus money on gambling (approximately \$7000.00). Is asking for help.
- A 52-year-old man called the Helpline. He started gambling in stocks during the lockdown and is now addicted.
- A man from Milwaukee called the Helpline. He was in Las Vegas and took \$10,000 out of his savings and lost it. He then went back and withdrew another \$10,000 and lost that. He was asking for help and resources.
- A family called seeking help for their sister. She embezzled money from their parent’s estate, and attorneys are filing charges.
- A retired male called. He routinely gambles \$500-\$700 out of his \$1000 Social Security check every month. He is looking for help on how to stop gambling.

Because of confidentiality, the Helpline report statistics are based on callers who are willing to share such information. Monthly call April's to the Helpline in 2021 ranged from a low of 1391 in December to a high of 2,237 in May. Among the other numbers in the Helpline report:

- 5 callers reported thoughts of suicide or suicide attempts
- 4 callers reported having to file for bankruptcy as a result of their gambling problems

With the play off's and Super Bowl coming up, Blozinski says, "If you plan to bet, don't bet more than you can afford to lose. Looking ahead, we expect to see a continued increase in usage of our chat and text lines."

If you or someone you know has a gambling problem, call the Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling Helpline at 1-800-426-2535, Text at 1-850-888-4673 or Live Chat through the WCPG website at www.wi-problemgamblers.org.

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*The **Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling** is funded by a public awareness grant from the State of Wisconsin and additional funding from donors, including Wisconsin Native American Tribes. The Council operates a 24-hour Helpline at 1-800-426-2535, 1-850-888-4673 Textline, and Chat available on www.wi-problemgamblers.org, distributes informational brochures, organizes an annual statewide conference, makes presentations on problem gambling and conducts training sessions for treatment providers interested in the special requirements for working with compulsive gamblers and their families.*

For more information, visit the [Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling](http://www.wisconsin-council-on-problem-gambling.org) website, visit us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/WisconsinCouncilonProblemGambling or follow us on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/wcpgambling>