KANSAS 2025 GAMBLING SURVEY

Prepared for
Kansas Department for Aging & Disability Services

Prepared by
Learning Tree Institute at Greenbush

Executive Summary

Contents

Introduction and Context

Over the past three decades, the gambling landscape in Kansas has seen a dramatic transformation. The Kansas Lottery was initiated in 1987, followed by the establishment of tribal casinos in the 1990s. The 2007 Kansas Expanded Lottery Act (KELA) allowed for the development of four state-owned casinos in designated gaming zones - the first of which opened in 2009 and the most recent in 2018. Since then, gambling has expanded to include sports betting (legalized in 2022), historical horse racing machines (2023), and multiple digital lottery offerings (2025).

This evolution coincided with growing concerns around gambling-related harm, prompting the establishment of the Problem Gambling and Other Addictions Fund (PGAF). PGAF supports a comprehensive statewide framework for problem gambling prevention, education, treatment, and research. The Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services (KDADS) coordinates these services through certified counselors, community task forces, and partnerships with organizations such as the Kansas Coalition on Problem Gambling (KCPG).

To monitor the impact of these changes, Kansas conducted statewide gambling surveys in 2012, 2017, and most recently, in 2025. The *2025 Kansas Gambling Survey* supplies a much-needed update to information about gambling in Kansas for the first time in eight years. It provides critical updates by comparing 2025 (n=1,645) to 2017 (n=1,755) data on gambling behaviors, risk levels, motivations, and related health concerns among adult Kansans. The margin of error for the 2025 sample is ± 2.4 percentage points with a 95% confidence interval.

Gambling Prevalence and Behavior

In 2025, 34.2% of survey respondents reported gambling in the past 30 days. This is a sharp increase compared to 19.1% who reported gambling in 2017.

- In 2025, 70.8% respondents engaged in at least one of the 14 gambling activities asked on the survey.
- The top five gambling activities were:
    - Lottery (46.0%)
    - In-game purchases (36.2%)
    - Casino gaming machines (31.1%)
    - Bingo (26.9%)
    - Table games at a casino (22.1%)
- Misclassification: Many who denied gambling still reported activities like lotteries (33.5%) or fantasy sports (27.2%), indicating a need for public education on what constitutes gambling.
- Gender: Males more frequently reported gambling (47.5%) than females (23.4%).
- Age: Highest gambling activity was among 26–39 (46.9%) and 40–54 (43.8%) year-olds.

Gambling Prevalence

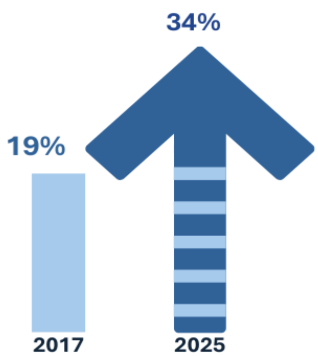
2025 Kansas Gambling Survey

In 2025

71%

of Kansas Adults Surveyed

Engaged in Gambling Activity



Increased by

15%

in the past eight years

Percentage of Adults Surveyed Who

Gambled in the past 30 days

Many who denied gambling still reported activities like lotteries (34%) or fantasy sports (27%)

Males more frequently reported gambling than females

48% Males

23% Females

TOP 5

Gambling Activities

Reported in 2025

46% Lottery

36% In-game Purchases

31% Casino Gaming Machines

27% Bingo

22% Table Games at a Casino

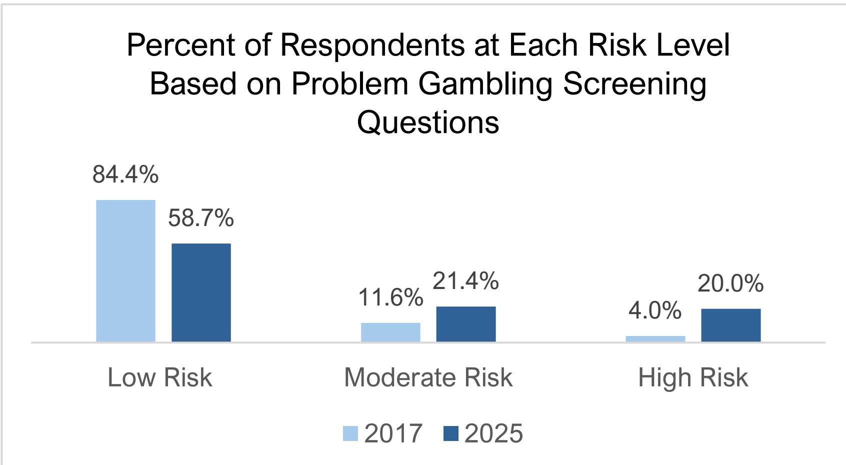
Highest levels of gambling activity by age

47% 26-39 Years of Age

44% 40-54 Years of Age

Problem Gambling Risk

From 2017 to 2025, there was a large shift in the percentage of Kansans at risk of problem gambling. Respondents were categorized into low, moderate, or high risk of problem gambling by the number of *yes* responses to nine screening questions. **The number of Kansans at moderate or high risk for problem gambling has more than tripled since 2017**. The increased prevalence of gambling from 2017 to 2025, the significant increase in the estimated Kansans at risk of problem gambling, and the known addictive nature of gambling emphasize the need for increased attention and support.



Risk Levels Defined

Risk categories are based on "yes" responses to nine problem gambling screening questions presented on the Kansas Gambling Survey.

Problem Gambling Risk Category	# of "YES" Responses
Low	Zero
Moderate	1-3
High	4 +

Health, Substance Use, and Mental Health

Almost all (94.4%) respondents in the high problem gambling risk category acknowledged they had a problem with gambling. This is an increase from 81.3% in 2017. The connection between respondents' gambling behavior and their reported physical and mental health became apparent in the survey results.

Impact of Gambling on Respondents at Highest Risk

- Health Concerns: 61.9% reported their gambling caused health problems such as stress or anxiety (up from 55.0% in 2017), and in 2025, 54.4% said in the past year they became restless, irritable, or anxious when trying to stop or cut down on gambling.
- Relationship Problems: 53.5% reported their gambling caused serious or repeated problems in their relationship with family members or friends (up from 36.1% in 2017).
- Reduced Productivity: Over half (51.2%) reported their gambling interfered with their productivity or performance while at work or school, such as missing time from work, lower grades, etc. (up from 19.7% in 2017).

Problem Gambling Risk

2025 Kansas Gambling Survey

Risk Levels Defined

Risk categories are based on "yes" responses to nine problem gambling screening questions presented on the Kansas Gambling Survey.

Problem Gambling Risk Category	# of "YES" Responses
Low	Zero
Moderate	1-3
High	4 +

In 2025

94%

of Adults Surveyed in the **HIGH RISK CATEGORY** acknowledged they have a gambling problem

The number of Kansans at moderate or high risk for problem gambling has

> TRIPLED

since 2017

In 2025

62%

of Adults Surveyed Reported their gambling caused health problems such as stress or anxiety

In 2025

51%

of Adults Surveyed Reported they had to get help from others with living expenses due to gambling

In 2025

56%

of Adults Surveyed Reported they lied to others about how much they gamble or how much money they lost gambling

Past 30-day Substance Use:

For 2025 respondents in the high risk category:

- Alcohol use was two (2) times more likely to be reported than respondents in the low risk category and one (1) time more likely than respondents in the moderate risk category.
- Cigarette use was three (3) times more likely than low risk and two (2) times more likely than moderate risk.
- Marijuana use was three (3) times more likely than low risk and two (2) times more likely than moderate risk.
- Vaping was four (4) times more likely than low risk and two (2) times more likely than moderate risk.
- Prescription drug misuse was six (6) times more likely than low risk and four (4) times more likely than moderate risk.
- Methamphetamine use was eight (8) times more likely than low risk and four (4) times more likely than moderate risk.

Mental Health:

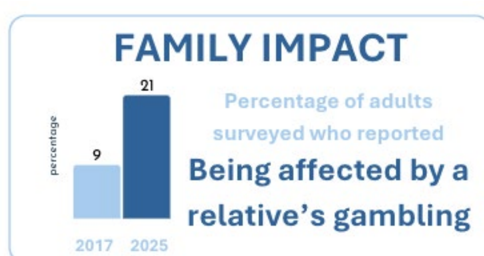
For 2025 respondents in the high risk category:

- Depression was four (4) times more likely to be reported than respondents in the low risk category and two (2) times more likely than respondents in the moderate risk category.
    - For high risk respondents who reported depression, 63.2% stated their feelings were related to gambling harms.
- Suicidal thoughts were five (5) times more likely than low risk and two (2) times more likely than moderate risk.
- Planning for suicide was nine (9) times more likely than low risk and three (3) times more likely than moderate risk.
- Suicide attempt was fifty (50) times more likely than low risk and ten (10) times more likely than moderate risk.

Affected Others

In addition to the health and financial impact on the person who gambles, family members, friends, and co-workers (affected others) are also impacted.

- Family Impact: 20.5% reported being affected by a relative's gambling (8.9% in 2017).
- Friend Impact: 17.5% reported being affected by a friend's gambling (7.5% in 2017).
- Co-worker Impact: 11.1% reported being affected by a co-worker's gambling (2.7% in 2017).



Impact of Gambling on Respondents at Highest Risk

2025 Kansas Gambling Survey

Substance Use

Alcohol 2x

Cigarettes 3x

Marijuana 3x

Vaping 4x

Prescription Drug Misuse 6x

Methamphetamines 8x

Adults in the **HIGH RISK Problem Gambling category**

ARE MORE LIKELY TO USE ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, OR OTHER DRUGS

than adults in the low risk category

Depression & Suicide

Depression 4x

Suicidal Thoughts 5x

Suicide Plans 9x

Suicide Attempts 50x

Adults in the HIGH RISK Problem Gambling category

ARE MORE LIKELY TO EXPERIENCE DEPRESSION AND SUICIDAL THOUGHTS AND BEHAVIORS

than adults in the low risk category

Among those at **HIGH** risk for problem gambling, **63%** indicated their depression was linked to gambling

Motivations for Gambling

Top motivations for gambling in 2025 remained consistent with 2017:

- Entertainment/Fun: 59.1%
- To Win Money: 49.1%
- Excitement/Challenge: 45.1%

However, increases in problematic motivations were observed:

- Paying Bills via Gambling: 38.2% (up from 18.2% in 2017)
- Escaping Everyday Problems: 34.5% (up from 16.0% in 2017)

Gambling Literacy and Misconceptions

Between 2017 and 2025, belief in gambling-related myths rose considerably, indicating a need for increased gambling literacy. The survey found increased acceptance of false beliefs such as:

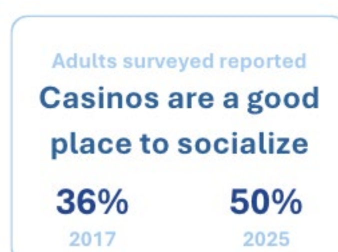
- Playing more than one slot machine improves odds of winning (36.2% agreed, an increase of 22.3% since 2017).
- Tracking patterns of wins and losses improves winning chances (32.4% agreed, an increase of 19.6% since 2017).
- Lucky techniques or rituals help people win (26.3% agreed, an increase of 20.1% since 2017).
- Near wins predict future success (21.6% agreed, an increase of 18.1% since 2017).
- More gambling improves odds (20.2% agreed, an increase of 16.5% in 2017).
- Persistent gambling changes luck and will recover losses (17.3% agreed, an increase of 15.3% since 2017).

Most respondents still rejected these myths, although the margin has narrowed since 2017, indicating a necessity for expanded education campaigns to counter gambling misinformation.

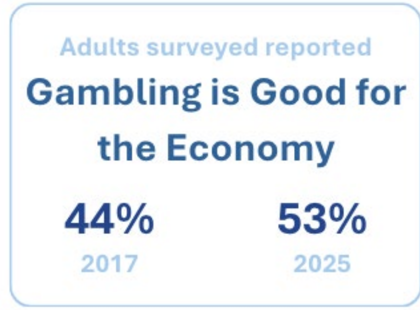
Public Perceptions of Gambling

Perceptions of gambling shifted toward greater social acceptability and perceived economic benefit from 2017 to 2025:

- “Casinos are a good place to socialize”: Agreement increased to 49.5% (up from 36.2% in 2017).



- "Gambling is good for the economy": Agreement increased to 52.6% (up from 44.0% in 2017).



Despite these shifts, skepticism remains. In 2025, 47.3% do not think that gambling benefits the economy, and as shown below, over half of the respondents still view gambling as harmful:

- "Gambling is a harmful form of entertainment": Agreement increased to 62.5% (up from 57.5% in 2017).
- "Gambling is dangerous for family life": Agreement remained high at 69.5% (similar to 69.9% in 2017).

These contrasting views—acknowledging harm while embracing social and economic acceptability may indicate public ambivalence and the complexity of gambling's image in Kansas.

Problem Gambling Treatment

While Kansas offers confidential, no-cost treatment for problem gamblers and affected others, public awareness and confidence in these services remain inconsistent.

Access and Affordability:

- Many believe treatment is not conveniently located in their community, with 41.2% expressing this concern compared to 44.9% in 2017.
- More than half of respondents (54.9%) think the average person cannot afford treatment, which showed little change from 2017 (53.7%).
- Just 30.6% know that the state covers treatment and counseling services for both gamblers and those affected by their gambling.

Perceived Effectiveness:

- The belief that treatment doesn't work rose from 21.2% (2017) to 29.6% (2025); however, in 2025, 70.4% of respondents believe treatment is effective.

Awareness & Stigma:

- A few respondents (31.0%) reported they knew about local treatment options; this has increased from 20.9% in 2017, an improvement.
- One quarter of respondents (24.9%) said they would be embarrassed if a family member needed treatment for a gambling problem, an increase from 14.3% in 2017. Overall, in 2025, most respondents (75.1%) would not be embarrassed.

- The belief that treatment is only for “serious cases” increased from 15.5% in 2017 to 28.5% in 2025.
- New awareness metrics in 2025 suggest progress in awareness, but persistent gaps in knowledge, perceived access, and stigma reduction remain major public health priorities.
    - The majority (81.3%) recognize problem gambling as an actual disorder.
    - Over half of respondents (54.8%) believe it would be easy to get help if needed.

Help-Seeking Behavior and Support Sources:

When asked who they would turn to first or where they would go if they had a gambling problem, similar to 2017 respondents in 2025, continue to favor informal support networks over professional services when facing gambling problems:

- Primary confidant: Spouse or partner, 37.8% (up from 31.5%)
- Other family members: 15.0% (up from 9.1%)
- Gambling Helpline usage: Dropped sharply from 22.2% to 8.2%
- Psychologist/Psychiatrist: Increased slightly from 2.1% to 4.5%
- Primary care physicians: Still underutilized (from 1.0 to 2.1%)
- Gamblers Anonymous (2.3%) and online communities (0.8%) emerged as new support options.
- Stigma appears to be decreasing, with fewer people reporting they would turn to “no one” 4.4% (down from 6.6%).

Gambling Promotion and Prevention Awareness

Exposure to gambling promotion remains high, while awareness of problem gambling resources appears to be falling behind.

- Promotion Exposure (2025): Respondents who recall:
    - Sports betting ads: 63.3% (new)
    - Casino ads: 60.2% (down from 76.6% in 2017)
    - Fantasy sports/gaming ads: 57.8% (up from 52.3% in 2017)
    - Online casino sweepstakes: 43.3% (new)
- Prevention & Resource Awareness (2025): Respondents who recall:
    - Help resources for gamblers/families: 43.4% (new)
    - National Helpline familiarity: 40.8% (down from 56.7%)
    - Ads about problem gambling prevention: 39.8% (down from 46.6%)
    - Mobile/digital prevention ads: 32.6% (new)

Sports Betting Insights

Following its legalization in 2022, sports betting has gained visibility but moderate acceptance and implementation:

- In 2025, over one-third of respondents (36.8%) reported placing a sports bet.
- Only 2.4% of respondents reported that they bet daily or almost daily.
- Most (77.7%) did not hold an online sportsbook account.

Respondent Sentiment:

- A large majority (75.1%) oppose linking sportsbooks to credit cards.
- Similarly, 71.2% support regulation aimed at protecting individuals from harm.
- Less than half of respondents (41.7%) view sports betting as a great entertainment that allows fans to gamble responsibly on sports.
- Less than one third (31.9%) enjoy pregame in-game tips on betting during events.

Age-Based Opinions:

- Younger adults (18–25) are more tolerant of sportsbook advertisements during events.
- Older adults (65+) express the strongest concerns:
  - 83.8% oppose credit card linkage
  - 80.7% support regulation

These generational differences suggest tailored outreach and policies are needed to address unique attitudes and risks.

Regional Insights

Kansas has six lottery regions. The following data focuses on problem gambling risk and awareness of treatment by region.

Problem Gambling Risk by Region:

- All six Kansas Lottery Regions demonstrated substantial increases in moderate and high risk problem gambling from 2017 to 2025.

- The regions with the most respondents in the high risk problem gambling category were Southwest (41.1%) and Southeast (25.1%). These regions also experienced the largest increases in respondents at high risk (Southwest increased by 39.3% and Southeast by 20.7%).

Treatment Awareness by Region:

In response to the statement, “I know about gambling treatment options in my community.”

- The highest awareness was reported in the Southwest Region (39.8%).
- The lowest awareness was reported in the North Central area (25.0%).

Responding to the statement, “There is no convenient place to treat problem gambling in my community.”

- The highest perceived lack of access was reported in the Southwest (53.0%).
- The lowest perceived lack of access was reported in the Northeast (36.9%).

In response to the statement, “I would be embarrassed if a family member needed treatment for a gambling problem.”

- The highest embarrassment was reported in the Southwest (38.9%).
- The lowest embarrassment was reported in the Southeast (22.0%).

Gambling Promotion Awareness:

- Awareness of the Gambling Helpline (1-800-GAMBLER) is highest in the Northeast (44.8%) and Southeast (43.3%) regions and lowest in the North Central (28.8%) and Northwest (30.1%) regions.

- Recall of mobile or digital advertisements around problem gambling was highest in the Northeast (33.9%) and South Central (33.5%) regions and lowest in the North Central (27.0%) and Northwest (27.8%) regions.

- Seeing or hearing information regarding assistance for problem gamblers or their families was highest in the Northeast (46.2%), South Central (42.9%), and Southeast (42.6%) regions and lowest in the Southwest (32.1%) and North Central (36.9%) regions.

Conclusion

The 2025 Kansas Gambling Survey reveals a changing landscape marked by:

- Significant increases in gambling activity
- Increasing percentage of respondents at moderate and high risk of problem gambling
- Increasing acceptance of gambling myths or a lack of gambling literacy.
- Greater social and economic tolerance for gambling.
- A widening gap between gambling promotion and public health messaging.
- Declining confidence in identifying problem gambling.
- Moderate overall awareness, but a lack of specific knowledge regarding the no-cost counseling and treatment services offered to gamblers and affected others.
- Limited public use of structured help options.

As access and exposure to gambling grow, targeted education and prevention, regulatory oversight, culturally competent outreach, and stigma-free treatment promotion will be essential to mitigate the risks of gambling harm across all regions and populations.

Recommendations

1. Support and Enhance Problem Gambling Prevention Messaging

- Increase the visibility of prevention messaging to match or exceed the presence of gambling promotions.
- Prioritize mobile and digital outreach, especially for younger and online audiences, where ad recall is currently low.
- Reinvest in high-impact platforms that once had stronger engagement, such as the Gambling Helpline, which saw a decline in awareness.

2. Improve State-Funded Treatment

- Launch targeted educational efforts to inform Kansans that treatment is confidential, free, and includes help for family and concerned others.
- Emphasize that problem gambling is surpassing available resources and that a growing disparity in treatment access makes sustainable funding essential to meet increasing demand.
- Clarify that treatment is not only for severe cases, addressing the rising perception that it is exclusive to those with serious problems.
- Promote success stories and treatment outcomes to combat rising doubts about effectiveness.

3. Promote Early Identification and Screening

- Equip primary care providers, mental health professionals, and Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) with brief screening tools and referral pathways.
- Embed gambling screening questions into standard intake forms in medical, behavioral health, and military settings, where high risk gambling is more common.

4. Monitor and Regulate Gambling Advertising

- Reevaluate policies surrounding sportsbook advertising, especially during televised sporting events.
- Continue to encourage casinos and operators to balance marketing with responsible gambling messaging and resources for help.

5. Continue Data Monitoring and Regional Analysis

- Conduct follow-up surveys every 3–5 years to monitor changes in public perception, behavior, and risk.
- Ensure regional data is accessible to local coalitions and treatment providers to support targeted responses and informed decision making.