

Executive Summary: Online Gambling Report 2022



**Prepared by
The Pennsylvania State University**

Authors

Glenn E. Sterner III | Gillian E. H. Russell | Miranda P. Kaye | Mikael B. Ahlgren

Pennsylvania Act 42 of 2017 greatly expanded the provision of gambling within the state. Through this act, interactive gaming – also referred to as online gambling – was made legal. As part of this legislation an annual assessment is to be conducted to best understand the impact of this expansion on the Pennsylvania population.

During the 2021/2022 fiscal period the 19 iGaming operators and 14 online sports betting locations in Pennsylvania brought in over **\$1.2 billion in revenue from iGaming** (including slots, table games and poker), over **\$267 million in revenue from online sports betting**, and over **\$27 million from fantasy sports** (note that fantasy sports revenue is not separated between offline and online).

Calls to **1-800-GAMBLER** regarding online gambling peaked at **20% July 2020-June 2021** and then stabilized at **20% July 2021-June 2022**.

The 1-800-GAMBLER helpline is a resource available for gamblers, as well as family members or friends of those that may be experiencing problems with their gambling. The number of intake calls to the hotline that specifically mentioned online gambling as the most problematic gambling format for the individual **began to increase in the July 2019 to June 2020** reporting period. These calls peaked at **20% of total calls between July 2020 and June 2021** and remained **stable at 20% between July 2021 and June 2022**. In addition, there was a **120% increase in iGaming specific self-exclusions** during the 2021/2022 state fiscal year, increasing from **1,041 to 2,295¹**.

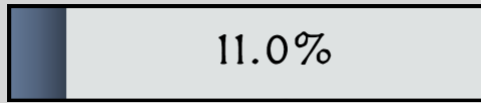
The first year of the study found that approximately 11.1% of Pennsylvania residents had engaged in online gambling of some form in the previous 12 months. Following the first year, modifications were made to the assessment procedure and survey. This report outlines the results of the second year of the assessment and implications of its findings.

KEY FINDINGS

ONLINE GAMBLING

In 2022, **11.0%** of Pennsylvania adults engaged in online gambling. Online gambling participation was **highest in South Western PA (15.2%)**, and **lowest in North Western PA (5.5%)**.

¹ Note that self-exclusions refer to individuals that have elected to be banned from a specific gambling type, in this case these are individuals that voluntarily elected to be banned from engaging in iGaming.



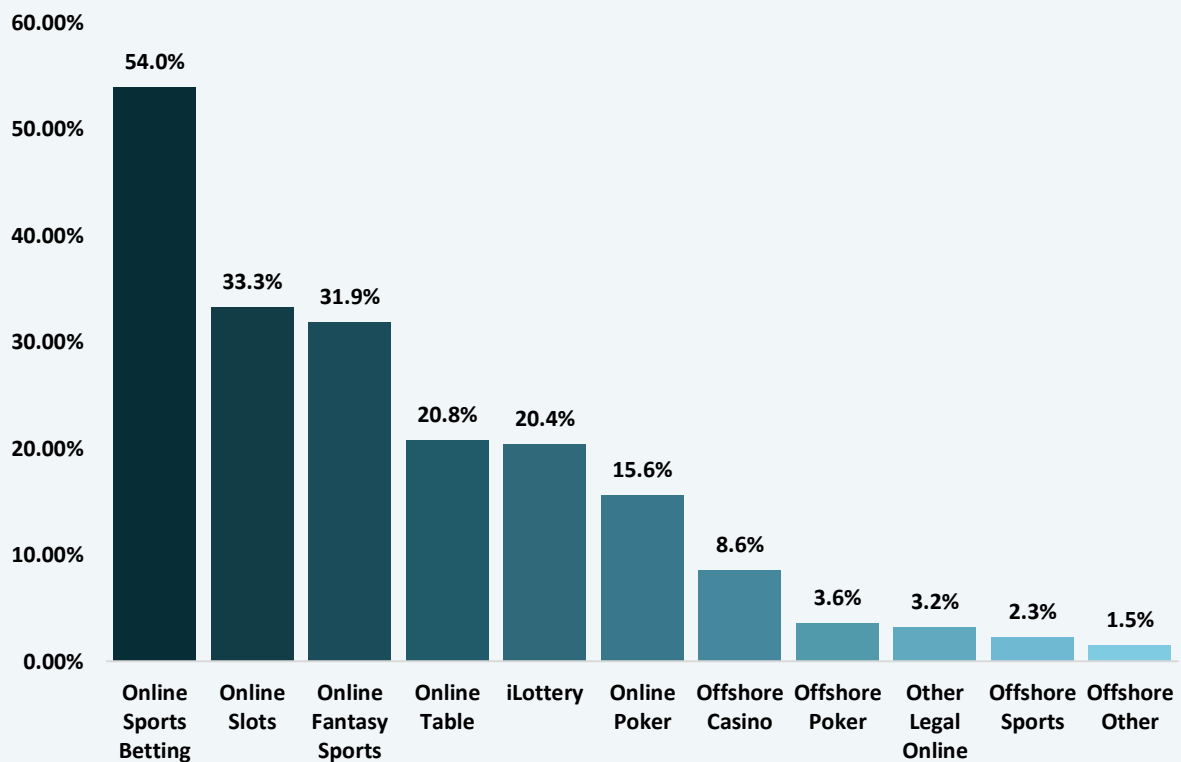
More than **1 in 10** Pennsylvania adults report that they have engaged in online gambling in the past 12 months.

The **average age of online gamblers was in the late 30's** and the **majority were men (66.1%)**. The majority of online gamblers were **currently employed (62.6%)** and nearly half had a **bachelor's degree or higher (46.7%)**. More than half (52.3%) had an annual **household income \$50,000 or above**.

The most popular online gambling format was **online sports betting (54%)**; see Figure 1).

The **majority** of online gamblers played **more than one format**. Most people report that they engage in online gambling **for enjoyment, because of the convenience, and because of the availability**. Nearly **1.5% of Pennsylvania adults engage in some form of offshore or illegal online gambling**; this is approximately **13.3% of online gamblers**.

Figure 1. The percentage of online gamblers that engage in each online gambling format.



ONLINE GAMBLING AND PROBLEMS WITH GAMBLING

Over one-third (36.7%) of online gamblers report at least one **gambling problem**. Engaging in **increased numbers of online gambling formats** was associated with **increased amounts of gambling problems**.

Approximately, **1.7%** of Pennsylvanian adults report having **contacted 1-800-GAMBLER or other gambling resources** for themselves or others

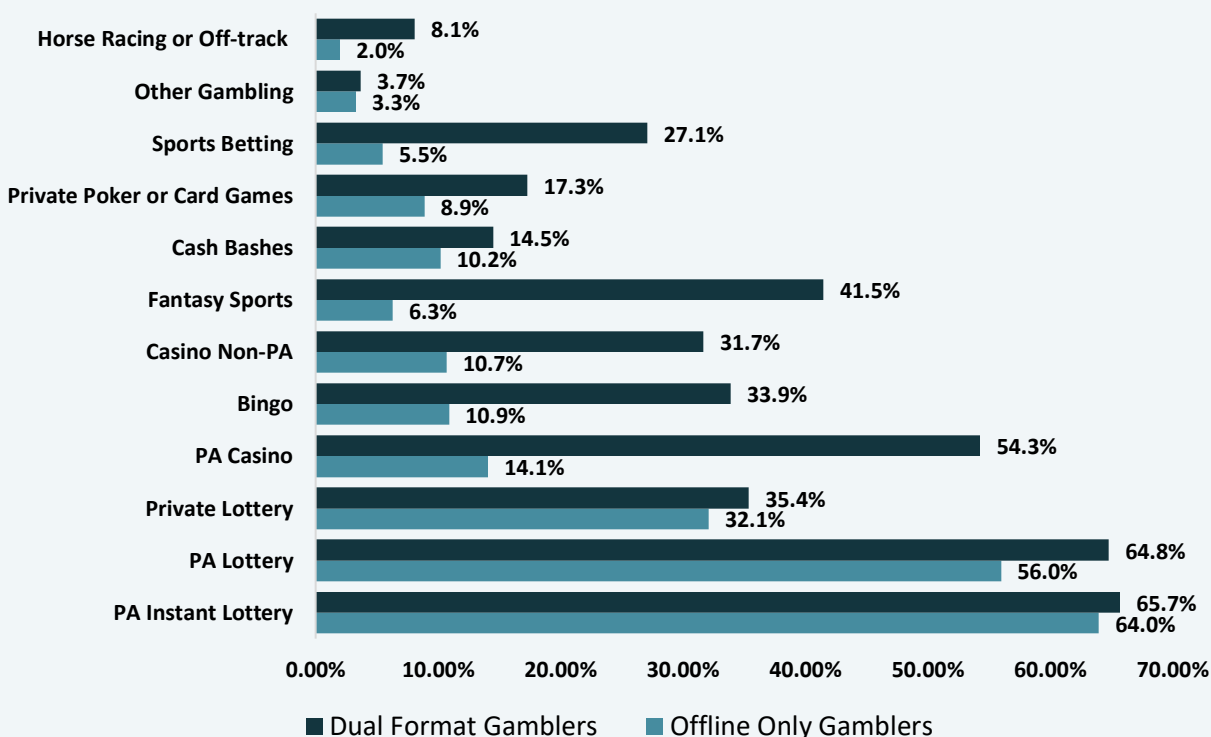


OFFLINE GAMBLING

In the past year, **67.5%** of Pennsylvania adults engaged in offline (in-person) gambling; **90.2% of online gamblers also participated in offline gambling**. The prevalence of offline gambling was highest in South Western PA (**73.1%**), and lowest in North Central PA (**59.3%**).

Similar to those who engage in online gambling, most offline gamblers **engaged in two or more formats**; those that gambled **both online and offline** gambled on **three or more offline gambling formats** (see Figure 2). The most popular offline gambling formats were **lotteries – including PA instant lottery, PA lottery, and private lotteries**.

Figure 2. A comparison of gambling participation by those that gamble offline only and those that gamble online and offline (dual format).



IMPLICATIONS

This report revealed that the **prevalence rate of online gambling in Pennsylvania remained stable** between 2021 and 2022 – with the rate being **11.1% in 2021 and 11.0% in 2022**. Results from this survey tell us that **online gamblers are much more engaged in gambling activity than the average Pennsylvania resident**.

Online gamblers exhibit problem gambling behaviors that should continue to be monitored. Additionally, we confirmed that **engaging in increased numbers of online gambling formats is associated with increased rates of gambling problems**. Prevention, treatment, and assessment should consider evaluating the number of formats individuals engage in as this may be an indicator of those most at risk of developing a problem or those who have already developed a gambling problem.

Prevention and treatment messaging should be available through mediums where online gamblers are most likely to encounter it - such as gambling websites and forums or websites that feature sports content.

METHODOLOGY

The data used in this report were collected through a **Dual Frame Random Digit Dial phone survey**. With this type of survey, calls are made to a sample of both landline and cell phone numbers to produce a representative sample of all Pennsylvania households; with this survey **50% of the numbers included were landlines and 50% cellphones (a total of 39,179 phone numbers were called)**. The survey had a **response rate of 10.90%**, with a final sample of **1,953 participants**. Individuals that agreed to participate, were aged 18+ and a current resident of Pennsylvania. They completed a brief survey assessing their **gambling behaviors, problem gambling indicators, gambling motivations, beliefs about gambling harms and benefits, and demographics**. The authors weighted the data so that the data would approximately resemble the Pennsylvania population (accounting for gender, county, race, age, and ethnicity).

