

Ohio For Responsible Gambling: Pause Before You Play

The Situation:

Problem gambling impacts everyone in Ohio, whether you know it or not.

- Nearly 1 in 10 adults in Ohio are at risk of developing a gambling problem. That's 900,000 Ohioans.
- We know those with a gambling disorder have a higher risk of alcohol abuse, drug issues, depression, and anxiety.
- Nearly a quarter of those who bet on sports in Ohio are at-risk/problem gamblers.
- Problem gambling is higher among sports bettors than any other betting segment.
- 14.7% of youth ages 12-17 have gambled money or personal items
- Children who gamble before the age of 12 are 4 times more likely to develop a gambling problem later in life.

That was before sports betting became legal in January 2023.

Ohio For Responsible Gambling (ORG) is a statewide group that launched a larger branding campaign, Pause Before You Play, to promote responsible sports wagering. The goal was to create publicity and connect people with available toolkits if they were someone or knew someone with a potential problem.

The Work:

Our goal was to help people understand the scope and scale of problem gambling in Ohio and where people can go to learn more and identify potential problems for themselves or people they know.

To do this, we compiled information on the scope and scale of problem gambling Ohio and how it's on the upswing.

- The number of calls to Ohio's Problem Gambling Helpline has gone up each of the last five years and nearly tripled in January 2023.
- The callers were getting younger.
- The amount of time they spent playing before they realized they had an issue went down, a sign the behavior was becoming more addictive.

Next, we compiled personal anecdotes from people who lived with this addiction or were impacted by people living with this issue. This allowed us to localize content. We then explained efforts to combat problem gambling, both things currently in place and evidence-based research that might be able to soon help. These statewide experts were accessible to anyone in Ohio.

The Results:

Our objective was to get at least one media hit on the report in each major Ohio media market (Columbus, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Dayton, Toledo, Youngstown.)

How to gamble responsibly, watch for warning signs and identify risky behaviors during Problem Gambling Awareness Month: 3 Things to Know podcast

Ohio Lottery's Karen Russo and Problem Gambling Network of Ohio's Mike Buzzelli join Stephanie Haney on the 3 Things to Know podcast



From January 1, 2023 through March 31, 2023, the campaign received 322 media placements. Every major Ohio market covered the client; there was also statewide coverage through the Ohio News Network and national interest from trade publications.

Lucas Co. has an estimated 3,700 problem gamblers

One in ten Ohioans will experience problems with gambling during their lifetime.





The advertising value exceeded \$5.4 million, and the campaign tallied nearly 600 million impressions. Toolkit use and website traffic also exceeded expectations.