

Youth Gambling in Oregon

Findings from the 2022 & 2024 Student Health Surveys


Overview

Youth gambling in Oregon is rising, with **23%** of surveyed students reporting gambling in the past three months in 2024, up from **20% in 2022**—a **14% increase**.


Gambling is most common among **8th graders**, but the largest increase was seen among **11th graders**. Boys are more than **twice as likely** as girls to gamble, and online gambling saw the fastest growth (**up 58%**).

Key Findings


Youth who gamble are significantly **more likely to engage in other risky behaviors**, including sexual activity, substance use, and experience bullying.



In 2024, youth who gambled were....





5X
More likely
to misuse
prescription
drugs




3X
More likely
to use illicit
drugs

Gender diverse youth showed the largest increase in gambling-related harm.






Students who gamble are more likely to plan for vocational pathways (trade school, military, full-time work) and **less likely to pursue a four-year college**.



2x
the rate of
suicide
attempts



increased
feelings of
sadness or
hopelessness

Gambling is associated with **higher rates of emotional distress**, including nearly twice the rate of suicide attempts and increased feelings of sadness or hopelessness.

From 2022 to 2024, the rate of 11th graders at **risk for problem gambling rose by 20%**, with **3.6%** of 11th graders who reported gambling in the past 3-months scoring in the problem gambling range on a validated screening tool.

11th graders who scored at risk for problem gambling showed **significantly higher rates of risky behaviors**, including prescription drug misuse, illicit drug use, being bullied, and suicide attempts.

Implications

The findings highlight that youth gambling is becoming more normalized and accessible, especially online. Gambling is closely linked to a broader pattern of risk-taking and emotional vulnerability, suggesting the need for integrated prevention strategies that address gambling alongside substance use, mental health, and other risky behaviors. Early intervention is crucial, as greater gambling involvement is associated with more serious harm.

This research brief was based on the below cited companion report. Use the following link to find the full report and take a deeper dive into the content found within this brief: <https://www.oregon.gov/oha/HSD/Problem-Gambling/Pages/Data.aspx>

Yamagata, G., Marotta, J. & Vazquez, P. (2025). Understanding Youth Gambling in Oregon: Patterns, Risks, and Prevention Opportunities: A Supplemental Report of the 2022 and 2024 Oregon Student Health Surveys. Oregon Health Authority, Problem Gambling Services. Salem, OR.