

# Youth Gambling in Oregon

## Findings from the 2022 & 2024 Student Health Surveys

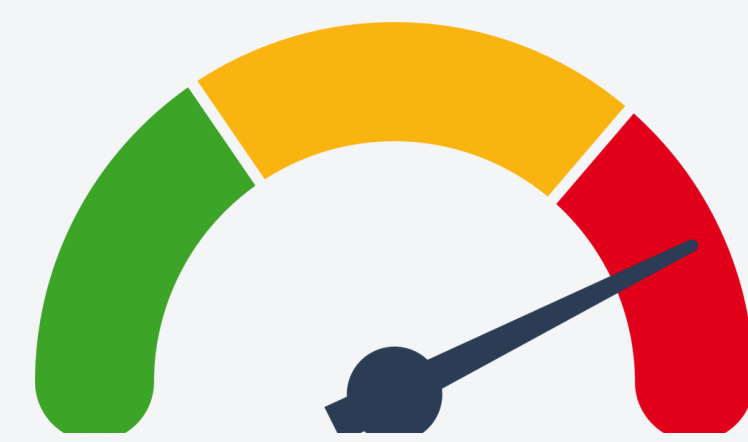
### Overview

While most Oregon youth are not gambling, **23%** reported doing so in the past three months—up from 20% in 2022 — a **14% increase**.

**8th graders** report gambling most often, while **11th graders** show the largest increase, highlighting an opportunity to strengthen supports as students grow older. Boys are more than **twice as likely** as girls to gamble, and online gambling saw the fastest growth, signaling a need for digital resilience strategies.

### Key Findings

Youth who engage in gambling are more likely to face overlapping challenges such as sexual activity, substance use, and bullying, underscoring the need to provide strength- focused supports that build resilience and promote healthy choices.



In 2024, youth who gambled were...



**5X**  
More likely  
to misuse  
prescription  
drugs



**3X**  
More likely  
to use illicit  
drugs

Gender diverse youth saw the greatest increase in gambling-related harm, highlighting the need for affirming, strength-focused supports.



**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** identified as at risk for problem gambling often **face multiple, interconnected challenges**—such as prescription drug misuse, illicit drug use, bullying, and suicide attempts. These patterns highlight an opportunity for comprehensive, strength-focused interventions.



Students who gambled demonstrated a clear career direction and are more likely to plan for vocational pathways such as trade school, military service, or full-time work over obtaining a four-year college education.

### Implications

Findings suggest that youth gambling is becoming more common and accessible, particularly online. Because gambling often occurs alongside other challenges—such as substance use, mental health concerns, and risky behaviors—integrated prevention strategies that build resilience and promote healthy coping are essential. Early, strength-focused intervention can help reduce harm and support positive development.

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.