



**Minnesota Alliance
on Problem Gambling**

2021-2022 Annual Report



Message from the Executive Director

To the MNAPG Community,

Fiscal year 2022 was another year of transitions. It marked our first year operating as Minnesota Alliance on Problem Gambling, a new identity we created to bring more clarity to our name and function. We also welcomed new staff who have already made a significant impact on our organization. And, as we have since early 2020, we continue to navigate the barriers presented by a not-so-post-COVID world.

Not surprisingly, Zoom continued to be the choice for most of our outreach, with a select few conferences dipping their toes back into the waters of in-person meetings, the preferred way for MNAGP to educate and advocate.

The Minnesota legislature — primarily the House — seriously considered legalizing sports betting. In the end, neither the House nor the Senate bill moved forward, but it did provide MNAPG opportunities to share our recommendations for improving this bill as expansion of any form of gambling was considered.

We continue to be committed to building the public's awareness of the multiple harms of gambling disorder. Minnesota needs to see this as the public health issue that it is. We will continue to advocate for that and work toward creating an improved system of care for gamblers and their families as we strive to reduce the number of Minnesotans harmed by this addiction.

As I reflect on our past year, we are making some progress in drawing attention to this addiction even as gambling access becomes easier amid advancing technology. Plenty of challenges remain and we're motivated to help the tens of thousands who suffer silently due to stigma.

I am grateful to our board of directors and our membership organizations, who support our efforts, and to our staff who strive each day to bring us closer to meeting our goals.

Respectfully,

Susan Sheridan Tucker





Mission Statement

The Minnesota Alliance on Problem Gambling (MNAPG) is dedicated to improving the lives of those affected by problem gambling through advocacy, education, training and research.

We do this by:

- Bringing together those with a professional or personal interest in problem gambling.
- Providing complete, accurate and unbiased information.
- Advocating for public policies that assist problem gamblers and their families and raising public awareness of problem gambling.
- Identifying those whose professions might bring them in contact with problem gamblers and their families and educating those professionals on appropriate interventions.
- Advocating for, conducting and disseminating research that furthers our understanding of problem gambling.
- Developing, delivering and supporting programs to prevent problem gambling.

Core Values

We work toward our mission, upholding these core values:

- **Neutrality:** As an affiliate of the National Council on Problem Gambling, we are neither for nor against legalized gambling.
- **Accuracy:** We strive to ensure that all information we provide is accurate and complete.
- **Compassion:** We recognize that problem gambling does not result from moral failings and that people with gambling problems are not inherently bad people.
- **Inclusion:** We believe that those affected by problem gambling are best served by inclusion of a wide range of interests. These interests include, but are not limited to, those in recovery, family members, treatment professionals, the gambling industry, those having professional contacts with problem gamblers, and those in other helping professions.

Outreach and Education

Brochures



Sonja Mertz,
community educator



Eboun Singhathip Wilbourn,
operations manager

Northern Light



Rebranding and updating all outreach materials

Realizing our original name (Northstar Problem Gambling Alliance) was causing confusion in the addiction services community, we changed it. Many mistakenly believed we were counselors, as multiple agencies have Northstar in their names. The name change provided the opportunity to think about our relationship with our stakeholders and to assert our Minnesota identity. As MNAPG's interaction with national and international entities expands, we sought a logo that would immediately reflect the people we serve. The logo incorporates green and blue colors in recognition of Minnesota's wealth of water and natural resources. The circles represent the interconnectivity we have with a variety of groups and professions, as well as our goal of being a "hub" for all things Minnesota problem gambling. The creative team of Evans Stark Designs produced our inspired logo.

Our marketing and outreach materials were completely reworked. We updated terminology and created pieces for various audiences (professionals, gamblers and their families, the addiction community) about the signs of gambling disorder and the available community resources.

Welcoming new staff

We welcomed two new staff members this year. Sonja Mertz, our community educator, started in August 2021. Sonja represents MNAPG at conferences, community health fairs, schools and treatment centers to provide education about excessive gambling. She also shares the role other addictions and mental health issues play in gambling disorder. Sonja has a background in prevention and appreciates the importance of reaching specific audiences with the appropriate messaging and tools.

Eboun Singhathip Wilbourn joined the organization in September 2021 as our new operations manager. She maintains our ever-growing database and keeps the office running smoothly. Eboun brings several years' experience working with nonprofit operations.

Northern Light

MNAPG continues to publish *Northern Light*, our eight-page quarterly newsletter that details current trends in gambling, provides information about the latest prevention efforts, and shares stories of hope from those who have succeeded in their recovery. We have a readership of almost 12,000.



2021 Conference; Finding Footing in a Shifting Landscape

MNAPG held a virtual conference in November 2021. Our theme explored the effects of COVID and the rapid expansion of sports betting and online gambling. We had an excellent lineup of speakers discussing recent research and what counselors might confront in the next few years due to the effects of COVID (including isolation, increased anxiety and depression). We invited Department of Human Services grant recipients to share their progress with their own public awareness campaigns to reflect their cultural and linguistic diversity. We engaged in a panel discussion with peer recovery specialists from Maryland and Connecticut to learn how their programs are helping to encourage individuals to seek gambling treatment. We also had a presentation on the rising interest in cryptocurrency and its relationship with gambling. The daylong event provided participants access to national and international speakers remotely, one of COVID's unseen benefits.

Community Presentations

With the addition of our community educator, MNAPG expanded our outreach to parents by presenting to a few high school classes and attending the PTA statewide conference and community health fairs. Reaching younger audiences is imperative if we hope to see a decrease in the number of people experiencing gambling addiction. Studies continually show that the younger a person is exposed to gambling, the greater likelihood they will develop an addiction. Gambling disorder is still not recognized in the public school prevention curriculum, yet we know that young people have increasing access to electronic devices and gambling or gambling-like activities. Many parents aren't aware of the potential problems that could occur if a child's play is not monitored.

To reduce your risk of experiencing harms from gambling, follow all three of these guidelines:

1

HOW MUCH

Gamble no more than **1%** of household income before tax per month

and

4

HOW OFTEN

Gamble no more than **4 days** per month

and

2

HOW MANY

Avoid regularly gambling at more than **2 types** of games

WHAT YOU PLAY MATTERS

- Fast-paced games that involve quick and repeated betting can more quickly and easily lead to problems.
- For example, with many forms of online gambling, slot machines, electronic gaming machines and poker, people can spend large amounts of money in a short time.

GAMBLING TYPES INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

Yearly household income	Maximum monthly amount
\$10,000	\$8
\$30,000	\$25
\$50,000	\$42
\$70,000	\$58
\$90,000	\$75
\$110,000	\$92
\$130,000	\$108
\$150,000	\$125

Lower Risk Gambling Guidelines

MNAPG rolled out the Lower Risk Gambling Guidelines (LRGG), the product of an international consortium of gambling researchers who sought to devise practical harm reduction standards for gambling. Similar to alcohol guidelines, the LRGG offer quick and easy guidance to minimize gambling harms.

Many organizations around the world are making them part of their consumer campaigns. MNAPG has provided LRGG brochures to most of the Minnesota's casinos and make it a prominent display when exhibiting. It has proven to be a good attention-getting device and been a good conversation starter with those who visit our table.

Gambling Comparative Survey

Individuals taking this survey receive a report and score based on the PGSI (Problem Gambling Severity Index). This lets them know where they fall on the problem gambling spectrum and provides tips and helpful resources.

Gamban

MNAPG continues to offer free annual subscriptions to anyone in Minnesota who wishes to block online gambling sites from their electronic devices. The tool blocks over 65,000 gambling sites worldwide and can be loaded on multiple devices in a single household. It's proven to be an effective tool.

Sports Betting Bills

The lure of legalizing sports betting in Minnesota was alive and well in the 2022 legislative session. The House bill proved to be the most active as it moved through the various committees, making mostly favorable changes along the way. MNAPG remains neutral on the topic of gambling but did offer amendments to the bill's author. The bill still could have benefited from more restrictive language pertaining to advertising and limiting exposure to younger audiences, but it did take the need to fund gambling disorder services seriously. This was not the tack taken by the Senate bill. Time essentially ran out, and while the House approved its bill, the Senate did not act. This leaves another opportunity to revisit the topic in the upcoming session. MNAPG continues to advocate on behalf of the 250,000 Minnesotans impacted by problematic gambling.

Suicide Prevention Task Force

Given that suicide is so prevalent among those with gambling addiction, MNAPG has become active in reviewing the state's suicide prevention plan, which previously made no mention of gambling addiction as a risk factor. We now have a seat at the table on the task force and offer our perspectives on this addiction.

Hennepin County Adult Mental Health Advisory Council

Recognizing the continued need to provide education on gambling disorder, MNAPG was accepted as a member of the Hennepin County Adult Mental Health Advisory Council. This group meets monthly and has a direct line with staff who seek input from citizens and professionals who deal with mental health issues. With the high co-occurrence of depression, anxiety and ADHD among gamblers, it's important to include gambling addiction in these conversations pertaining to gaps in county services. As Hennepin County is the state's most populous county, MNAPG is hopeful that our presence will help to contribute to the larger conversation around integrative care.



DHS Problem Gambling Advisory Council

MNAPG has long served on the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) Problem Gambling Advisory Council. The council provides an opportunity for DHS staff working in the problem gambling program to hear from those working in the field and to take recommendations from the council. Unfortunately, there's been continual turnover in the DHS program staff, making it difficult to initiate some necessary reforms. MNAPG advocates strongly for better integrative care between substance use disorder and mental health, as problem gambling continues to be siloed and much less visible as a peer addiction. We are hopeful that recent hires in the past couple of months will result in positive changes.

AD CAMPAIGNS



Email for concerned others



digital ad for gambler



Gift responsibly campaign



Print ad for The Phoenix Spirit

For the past couple of years, MNAPG has invested a greater percentage of advertising funds toward awareness and prevention messaging through numerous print and digital media platforms. It's important for us to continue reaching target audiences, particularly since there's been a significant decrease in live events. In addition to creating material for our own social media platforms, we purchased ad space throughout the year in the *Star Tribune* and other digital platforms. Specific messaging was designed to appeal to the gambler, their loved ones, public policymakers and healthcare professionals.

MNAPG participates in the larger national campaigns hosted by the National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG). One such campaign is Gift Responsibly – which advises adults not to buy lottery tickets for children. Another is Problem Gambling Awareness Month, which completed its 19th year of promoting responsible gambling. MNAPG amplifies its messaging to promote safer play, national problem gambling screening day and free treatment and other resources during the month of March, when the national college basketball tournament is under full swing. It's a month of heightened awareness made possible through the concerted efforts of NCPG and all of its affiliates. MNAPG uses some of the materials developed by NCPG as well as our own pieces. Messaging geared towards sports betting is a particular focus. We tap into a variety of methods to reach our targeted audiences, including focused emails, native articles (full-length, fact-based articles that we pay to publish) and targeted digital ads based on an individual's collected data that identifies them as frequent players.

We also tried a new technique this past year: geo-fencing the capitol complex. Anyone with an electronic device with traceable mobile device identifiers who ventured into the state capitol complex received digital ads from MNAPG informing legislators about gambling addiction facts in Minnesota. With limited access to legislators due to COVID measures, this was a new way to educate lawmakers.

We continued our relationship with *The Phoenix Spirit*, a newspaper for those in recovery. Their March/April issue is focused on problem gambling/gambling addiction and we have both print/digital ads as well as a full-length article for readers.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Each year, MNAPG receive funding from two statutory sources: the Minnesota Lottery, which provides \$225,000, and tax revenue generated by charitable gambling (1/2 of 1%), a variable amount each year. The Department of Human Services (DHS) is the fiscal agent and encumbers the funds we articulate in our annual budget.

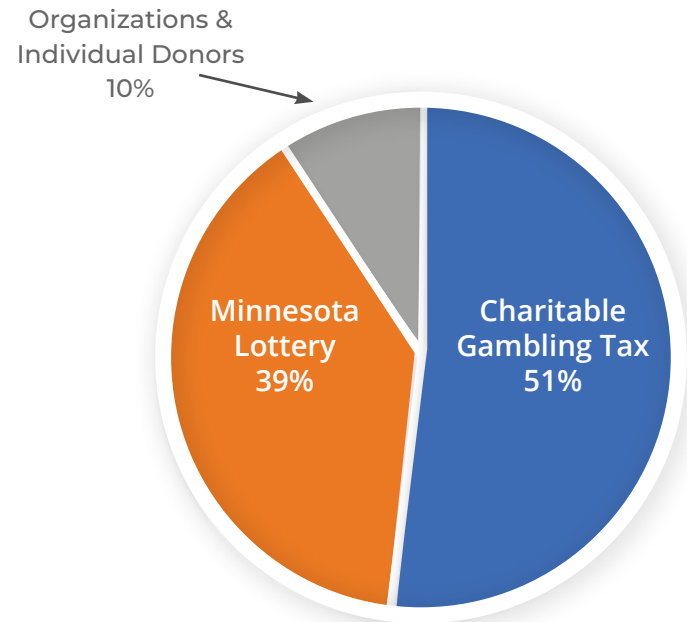
FY22 REVENUE — JULY 2021 – JUNE 2022

Charitable Gambling Tax Revenue (.05%)	\$299,121
Minnesota Lottery	\$225,000
Organizations & Individual Donors	\$60,454
Interest	\$163
Total	\$584,738

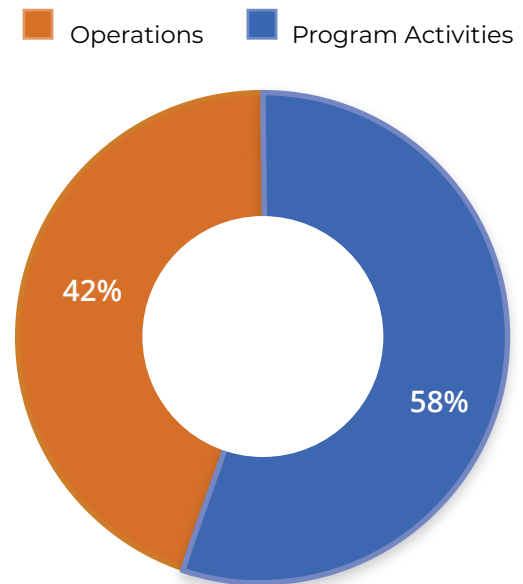
FY22 EXPENSES

Program Activities	\$311,320
Operations	\$223,426
Misc. Expenses	\$1,705
Total	\$536,451

FY22 REVENUE — JULY 21 - JUNE 22



FY21 EXPENSES



Funds distributed by Minnesota Department of Human Services

Minnesota Alliance on Problem Gambling
Statement of Financial Income and Expense
 July 2020 through June 2022

	Jul '20- Jun '21	Jul '21 - Jun '22	TOTAL
Ordinary Income/Expense Income			
Contributed Support			
4010 • Individual/Business Contribution	2,228.00	3,715.22	\$5,943.22
4530 • State Grants	720,488.33	524,121.00	\$1,244,609.33
Total 4 • Contributed Support	722,716.33	527,836.56	\$1,250,552.89
Earned Revenues			
5490 Miscellaneous revenue	7.35	6.88	\$14.23
5494 Membership Dues Individuals	710.00	220.00	\$93.00
5495 Membership dues - Organizations	17,500.00	55,970.00	\$73,470.00
Total 5 Earned revenues	18,217.35	56,196.88	\$74,414.23
5315 • Bremer Bank Interest	67.07	88.77	\$155.84
PayPal Sales	(-27.90)		(-27.90)
Sales		550.00	550.00
Unapplied Cash Payment Income	16,999.35	66.60	17,065.95
Total Revenue	\$757,972.20	\$584,738.81	\$1,342,711.01
Gross Profit	\$757,972.20	\$584,738.81	\$1,342,711.01
Expenditures	\$397,704.60	\$536,451.03	\$1,275,537.74
Net Operating Revenue	\$18,885.49	\$48,287.78	\$67,173.27
Net Revenue	\$18,885.49	\$48,287.78	\$67,173.27

Statement of Financial Income and Expense July 2020 - June 2022



Affiliate Membership

MNAPG is the Minnesota state affiliate for the National Council on Problem Gambling. This relationship is one of mutual benefit. NCPG provides MNAPG with direct access to national and international experts in the field. We share similar missions and core values that guide us in improving the lives of those impacted by problem gambling in Minnesota. It's a top-down, bottom-up synergy that fosters innovation, creativity and the sharing of information to raise awareness that problem gambling is a public health concern that is both treatable and preventable.

As an affiliate, we communicate regularly with the national office as well as with our counterparts in 35 other states.

We come together to advocate for federally led initiatives while NCPG relies on us to lead public policy efforts in Minnesota.

In July 2021, Susan Sheridan Tucker was elected as NCPG's treasurer. She also serves on its Executive Committee and chairs the Finance Committee and Affiliate Relationship Committee.

MNAPG Board of Directors

Sunny Chanthanouvong

Executive Director,
Lao Assistance Center of Minnesota

Don Feeney

Policy and Research Consultant to the
National Council on Problem Gambling,
co-founder of MNAPG

Marie Hinton

Communications, Minnesota Lottery

Michael Hochman

Sr. Director of Casino Operations,
Canterbury Park

Jeff Hudson

A compulsive gambler in recovery

Rachel Jenner

Executive Director, Allied Charities of
Minnesota

Craig Johnson, LADC

Gambling Counselor, Club Recovery, LLC

Marsha Kelly

Consultant, Minnesota Indian Gaming
Association

Mary Magnuson, J.D.

The Jacobson Law Group

Steve May

Executive Director,
Minnesota Racing Commission

Renee Most

Executive Director, StepUp Program

Marti Paulson

CEO and Executive Director,
Project Turnabout

Katie Richard, LADC

Gambling Counselor, Vinland National Center

John Rundquist, LADC

Treatment Director, Reed Behavioral Health

Randy Stinchfield, Ph.D.

Clinical Psychologist and Gambling
Researcher

Staff

Susan Sheridan Tucker, Executive Director

Sonja Mertz, Community Educator

Eboun Singhathip Wilbourn, Operations
Manager

Contractors

Evans Stark Designs,
Graphic Design/Social Media

Bill Stein, Communications

Fiscal Year 2022 NPGA Contributors

In gratitude for the individuals and organizations that supported our work throughout the year.

PLATINUM \$10,000+



Draft Kings



Canterbury Park



Minnesota Indian Gaming Association

GOLD \$5,000 - \$9,999



Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe



Minnesota State Lottery



Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community



Running Aces Racetrack and Casino

SILVER \$1000- \$4999



Competition Cheer Spirit Booster

CONTRIBUTORS/MEMBERS

Alan Aisenberg

Don Feeney and Diane Carter

Marie Hinton

Jeff Hudson

Craig Johnson

Lester Prairie Lions Club

Mary Magnuson

Metropolitan State University

Steve May

Jason Norby

Katie Richard

John Rundquist

Veterans of Foreign Wars Post #1403, Benson, MN



**Minnesota Alliance
on Problem Gambling**

1935 County Road B2 West, Suite 420
Roseville, MN 55113
Phone: 612-424-8595