



## **Region A - Local Community Mitigation Advisory Committee**

Pursuant to the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §§ 18-25, notice is hereby given of a meeting of the ***Local Community Mitigation Advisory Committee*** established pursuant to M.G.L. c. 23K § 68.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Given the unprecedented circumstances resulting from the global Coronavirus pandemic, Governor Charles Baker issued an order to provide limited relief from certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law to protect the health and safety of individuals interested in attending public meetings. In keeping with the guidance provided, the Commission will conduct a public meeting utilizing remote collaboration technology. If there is any technical problem with our remote connection, an alternative conference line will be noticed immediately on our website: [MassGaming.com](http://MassGaming.com).

***The meeting will take place: Monday, November 16, 2020 @ 1:30 p.m.***

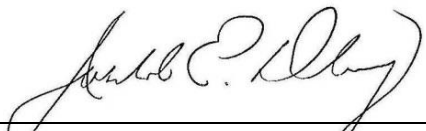
**VIA CONFERENCE CALL NUMBER: 1-646-741-5293  
PARTICIPANT CODE: 111 740 5195**

### **Public Meeting:**

1. Welcome/Opening Comments
2. Minutes from the October 14, 2020 meeting – **Vote**
3. Discussion of 2021 Community Mitigation Fund Guidelines
4. Discussion of the MGC Research Agenda and Responsible Gaming
5. Next steps
6. Other Business – reserved for matters not reasonably anticipated at the time of posting.

I certify that on this date, this Notice was posted as “Local Community Mitigation Advisory Committee” at [www.massgaming.com](http://www.massgaming.com) and emailed to: [regs@sec.state.ma.us](mailto:regs@sec.state.ma.us), and [melissa.andrade@state.ma.us](mailto:melissa.andrade@state.ma.us).

11/6/2020  
(date)

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Joseph E. Delaney, Chief of Community  
Affairs

Date Posted to Website: Friday, November 13, 2020



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## Section 68: Gaming Policy Advisory Committee Region A Meeting

**Date/Time:** October 14, 2020 at 1:30 p.m.  
**Place:** VIA CONFERENCE CALL NUMBER: 1 646 741 5292  
PARTICIPANT CODE: 111 260 6324

**Present:** David Bancroft  
Eric Bourassa  
Richard Caraviello, Chair  
John DePriest  
Ron Hogan  
Mayra Negron-Roche  
Paul Sheehan  
Keith Slattery

Joseph Delaney, MGC Community Affairs Division Chief  
Tania Perez, MGC Administrative/Project Assistant  
Bruce Stebbins, MGC Commissioner  
Mary Thurlow, MGC Program Manager

### Call to Order

[2:51](#) Mr. Delaney called the Local Community Mitigation Advisory Committee (“Committee”) meeting to order.

*Given the unprecedented circumstances resulting from the global Coronavirus pandemic, Governor Charles Baker issued an order to provide limited relief from certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law to protect the health and safety of individuals interested in attending public meetings. In keeping with the guidance provided, the Local Community Mitigation Advisory Committee will conduct a public meeting utilizing remote collaboration technology.*

### Election of Chair and Representative to the Subcommittee

[2:57](#) Chair Caraviello called for volunteers to serve as the next Chair and the representative to the Subcommittee on Community Mitigation (“ Subcommittee”). Mr. DePriest nominated Mr. Caraviello and Mr. Hogan, who expressed interest previously. Mr. Sheehan seconded the motion. All members voted to approve the motion and motion passed 8:0.

## Discussion of Policy Questions

[3:44](#)

Mr. Delaney began discussion about the 2021 policy questions, which had been discussed in detail at the previous Committee meeting. He focused on the question of whether the Community Mitigation Fund (“CMF”) should go to work readiness training programs for residents of communities hosting casinos. Mr. Slattery commented that in Everett, programs like these have been very helpful so he is supportive of continuing to fund them. Mr. DePriest and Mr. Bancroft agreed.

Next were the issues of increasing the transportation construction category fund allocation, and whether there should be a cap on the portion of construction costs funded by the CMF, as some of the applications last received in this category proposed no fund match. Mr. Delaney pointed out that some construction projects’ benefits reach beyond mitigating effects of the gaming establishment so having no local match isn’t necessarily a dealbreaker if the proposed project is good, citing last grant season’s Beacham St. project for Everett. Mr. Bourassa commented that he would increase the transportation construction category amount, and suggested that the CMF Committee just give preferential consideration to projects with fund matches instead of making a match a requirement. Mr. Bancroft pointed out that for some communities, securing a local match may be difficult, and a match requirement may disqualify otherwise good projects from communities that can demonstrate their need. Mr. Hogan agreed. Chair Caraviello opined that in the current difficult and uncertain times, securing a local match may prove more difficult than usual. Mr. Hogan stated that the less a project has to do with mitigating effects of a casino, the more it should be expected that they propose a local match, but that an application should not be disqualified if it does not. Mr. Delaney read the section of the CMF guidelines that states the Massachusetts Gaming Commission (“MGC”) expects the CMF to pay for only a portion of any project. Mr. Delaney proposed leaving the language as is. Ms. Thurlow asked Mr. Bourassa to suggest how much of an increase to the transportation construction target amount he considered appropriate, to which Mr. Bourassa replied that they should increase it from \$3M to \$5M. Mr. Delaney pointed out that they could possibly do that. Mr. Hogan asked if they had had difficulty with a percentage cap that was too low, or with applications that have very little to do with effects of a casino. Mr. Delaney answered that in Chelsea’s case, they waived the \$1M limit in order to give them more because it was a necessary and good project, but in other cases it seemed that communities just asked for the maximum amount of money. Mr. Bourassa pointed out that transportation projects are very expensive, so asking for \$1M is not out of the question. Mr. Hogan reminded the Committee that the CMF is meant to cover unanticipated effects of the casino that are not covered in their host/surrounding community agreement. Mr. Delaney remarked that MassDOT environmental impact reports used to write those agreements sometimes minimize traffic issues, thus forcing the community to seek assistance outside of the agreement.

The next issue was one of creating an emergency reserve for unexpected events that occur after the CMF application deadline. Mr. Hogan asked whether the application process would be the same. Mr. Delaney clarified that the emergency fund would not be used as a way of circumventing the CMF application process, but for an unexpected and immediate need. He added that he would need to verify whether a situation is truly an unanticipated emergency before giving a community funds. Mr. Hogan stated that it was a good idea. Mr. Bancroft asked if it could be used by communities that have already been awarded. Mr. Delaney explained that it could. Mr. Bancroft shared that at his job, if a project runs into an unexpected issue, they can simply give the project team more money without them having to apply for it, and that he agreed with having a CMF emergency fund. Commissioner Stebbins asked for members' similar experiences with having to fund an emergency effort. Mr. Bancroft described projects in his line of work where there may more contamination found than initially expected and more money is needed to complete a cleanup project, and the award guidelines allow for that without necessitating another competitive grant application round. Mr. Delaney offered an experience from his previous job in which an emergency reserve for water and sewer projects was used towards a sewer emergency. Ms. Negron-Roche opined that it was a good idea to have an emergency reserve, but wondered what an appropriate amount may be. Mr. Delaney explained that it would hold a small percentage of the CMF, and reminded everyone that the Commission can waive the money amount limit if it were truly necessary. Mr. Bancroft and Mr. Hogan agreed that it was a good idea.

Mr. Delaney brought up the question of requiring a match only for specific categories of grants. Mr. Caraviello, Mr. DePriest, and Mr. Slattery agreed that no change was necessary for that policy. The next item was what to do with communities with unused reserves from years their casinos opened. Mr. Delaney suggested giving these communities a year to commit the funds, and that some of them are not aware of their unused funds. Mr. Caraviello asked for a list of communities that have unused reserves. Mr. DePriest asked if communities could apply their reserves to anything they chose. Mr. Delaney explained that as long as it's a casino impact that needs to be mitigated, it is acceptable. Mr. Bancroft commented that it made sense to give communities a year limit, and agreed that they should talk to communities to make sure they're aware of their unused funds.

Next was the issue of continuing to help the Hampden County's sheriff's office with the lease for their alcohol correctional facility, or requiring them to apply every year. Mr. Hogan opined that requiring them to apply for funding every year was appropriate. Mr. Slattery agreed with Mr. Hogan. Mr. Delaney suggested phasing their lease assistance out over time. Mr. Bancroft asked if the sheriff's office would be told beforehand that their assistance was being phased out. Mr. Delaney answered that whatever decision the Commission makes regarding this issue, the sheriff's office will be informed about it. Ms. Thurlow showed the Committee her list of communities with unused or partially unused reserves. She

explained that if a community requests a CMF grant, part of its reserve would go towards that project.

### **Discussion of the 2021 Community Mitigation Fund Guidelines**

[41:04](#)

Mr. Delaney began presenting the 2021 CMF guidelines. He went over the target amounts available for each region, explaining that the pandemic affected these amounts and that 2018 was the first year there was revenue from the casino in region B. He then moved on to the items of joint applications, how many categories can be applied to for the same project, communities with unused reserves, workforce grants, tribal gaming technical assistance, and emergency funds. Mr. Delaney noted that he was still working on the wording of the emergency grant guideline and Commissioner Stebbins suggested that the language should be consistent with that of the specific impact category. Mr. Delaney agreed, since an emergency is a particular type of specific impact. He informed the Committee that there are communities with unused award money, and that they need to figure out how to rescind those grants. Mr. Delaney welcomed comments. Mr. Bancroft asked if CMF award contracts contain any time requirements for using them. Mr. Delaney clarified that the state contract does contain a requirement of expending awards within four years.

### **Next Steps**

[57:16](#)

Ms. Thurlow reminded the Committee that the next meeting is November 16 and that the guidelines will have been out for public comments. She asked the Committee if they had any questions about current Commission activities, such as the SEIGMA research project. She offered to ask the MGC director of research and responsible gaming to talk to them at the next meeting. Mr. Bancroft opined it sounded interesting. Mr. Delaney updated the Committee about how the gaming establishments are dealing with the pandemic. He shared that the casinos were not completely open yet and they had to open their gaming floors at reduced capacity. At Plainridge Park Casino, horse racing was operational, their restaurants were closed, but their food court was open. The MGM hotel was open for exclusive guests only, some of their restaurants were open during limited hours, and their Regal cinema was closed. The Encore hotel was open on weekends, most of their restaurants were open at reduced hours, their nightclub was closed, but they were holding small weddings outside. Mr. Delaney then shared current employment and revenue numbers compared to the same time last year, which have declined. Commissioner Stebbins announced that at the next Commission meeting, they would be addressing these CMF guidelines. Chair Caraviello asked to confirm the date of the next meeting.

Mr. Bancroft made a motion to adjourn. Mr. DePriest seconded.

*Roll Call Vote:*

*Mr. Slattery: Aye.*  
*Mr. Sheehan: Aye.*  
*Mr. DePriest: Aye.*  
*Mr. Hogan: Aye.*  
*Mr. Caraviello: Aye.*  
*Mr. Bourassa: Aye.*  
*Mr. Bancroft: Aye.*  
*Ms. Negron-Roche: Aye.*  
*The motion passed 8:0.*

[1:09:59](#)

With no further topics for discussion, the Chair adjourned the meeting.

### **List of Documents and Other Items Used**

1. 2021 Community Mitigation Fund Policy Questions
2. 2021 Community Mitigation Fund Guidelines
3. Minutes from 9/23/2020 LCMAC region A meeting
4. LCMAC region A 10/14/20 notice of meeting and agenda

/s/ Tania J. Perez  
Secretary



## 2021 COMMUNITY MITIGATION FUND GUIDELINES

BD-21-1068-1068C-1068L-\_\_\_\_\_

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# 21

# COMMUNITY MITIGATION FUND

## **2021 COMMUNITY MITIGATION FUND GUIDELINES** **BD-21-1068-1068C-1068L-\_\_\_\_\_**

### **1.0 Community Mitigation Fund Grant Program**

The Expanded Gaming Act created the Community Mitigation Fund (“CMF”) to help communities and other entities offset costs related to the construction and operation of a gaming establishment. For 2021, the following grant categories are available for communities:

- 2015/2016 Reserve Grant;
- Specific Impact Grant;
- Community Planning Grant;
- Transportation Planning Grant;
- Transportation Construction Grant;
- Workforce Development Grant;
- Tribal Gaming Technical Assistance Grant; and
- Emergency Mitigation Grant.

Each of these categories is further described in Section 2.0 of these Guidelines.

### **1.1 When Is the Application Deadline?**

**January 31, 2021**

### **1.2 Who Can Apply?**

M.G.L. c. 23K, § 61 and the Commission’s regulations identify a range of eligible entities including, but not limited to:

- communities in the vicinity of the gaming establishment including: host and surrounding communities; each community that entered into a nearby community agreement; any community that petitioned to be a surrounding community; and each community that is geographically adjacent to a host community;
- water and sewer districts in the vicinity of a gaming establishment;
- local and regional agencies involved in education, transportation, infrastructure, housing and environmental issues; and
- public safety agencies, including the office of the county district attorney, police, fire, and emergency services.



Massachusetts Gaming Commission



The Commission's regulations do not limit use of Community Mitigation Funds to only host or surrounding communities.

Applications involving a mitigation measure impacting only one community shall only be submitted by the authorized representatives of the community itself. Governmental entities within communities such as redevelopment authorities or non-regional school districts shall submit applications through such community rather than submitting applications independent of the community.

Private non-governmental parties may not apply for Community Mitigation Funds. Governmental entities may apply to the Commission for funds to mitigate impacts provided that the funding is used for a "public purpose" and not the direct benefit or maintenance of a private party or private parties. The Commission strongly encourages applicants to ensure that the impacts are directly related to the gaming facility and that the public purpose of such mitigation is readily apparent. The Commission will not fund any applications for assistance for non-governmental entities.

Please note that as stated by the Commonwealth's Comptroller's Office: "The Anti-Aid Amendment of the Massachusetts Constitution prohibits 'public money or property' from aiding non-public institutions.... Article 46 has been interpreted to allow the expenditure of public funds to non-public recipients solely for the provision of a 'public purposes' [sic] and not for the direct benefit or maintenance of the non-public entity."

Any governmental entity seeking funding for mitigation is required to ensure that any planned use of funding is in conformity with the provisions of the Massachusetts Constitution and with all applicable laws and regulations, including but not limited to, Municipal Finance Law and public procurement requirements.

### **1.3 What Cannot Be Funded?**

***2021 Community Mitigation Fund may not be used for the mitigation of:***

- impacts that are projected or predicted but that are not occurring or have not occurred by January 31, 2021;
- impacts that are the responsibility (e.g. contractual, statutory, regulatory) of parties involved in the construction and operation of gaming establishments;
- the cost of the preparation of a grant application;
- requests related to utility outages, such as the mitigation of business interruptions; and
- other impacts determined by the Commission.

Please note that the Commission may determine to expand the eligible uses of funds for the 2021 program or other future programs when impacts are more clearly identifiable. The

Commission will also consult with mitigation advisory committees established in M.G.L. c. 23K in determining such uses.

**1.4 How Much Funding Will Be Available?**

The Commission has determined a target spending amount of \$12.5 million for fiscal year 2021. If the 2021 target is met, the CMF would still have an estimated unallocated balance of over \$1.7 Million from funds generated by December 31, 2020.

**Allocation by Region**

The Commission intends to allocate 2021 CMF funding based on the proportion of funds paid into the CMF from the taxes and fines generated by the MGM Springfield and Encore Boston Harbor facilities.<sup>1</sup> These include revenues generated during calendar year 2020 as well as unspent monies from previous years.

For the 2021 year, the Commission plans to allocate \$12.5 million between the two regions and the Category 2 facility as follows:

- Region A        \$6 million
- Region B        \$6 million
- Category 2      \$0.5 million

Category 2 grants will be split equally between Region A and Region B. If the \$0.5 million is not necessary for Category 2 grants, more spending would be available for Region A and Region B.

The Commission determined in grant year 2020, that any unused funds allocated to each Category 1 Region will be set aside for that Region for a period of three years. After the three-year period, the funds shall be allocated back into a combined fund for all regions and for Category 2 impacts. It is the intention of the Commission to count any allocated regional balances first toward 2021 spending targets. The following is the status of the unused funds by calendar year:

CMF Funds Rolled Over from Previous Years

	Region A	Region B
2018		\$ 637,255
2019	\$ 1,285,494	\$ 4,126,667
Total	\$ 1,285,494	\$ 4,763,922

<sup>1</sup> These Guidelines do not describe revenue estimates from the potential Tribal facility in Taunton or the participation of a Region C facility, as no Region C license or Tribal facility has yet been fully authorized.

### 1.5 Joint Applications

The Commission continues to support regional approaches to mitigation needs and recognizes that some mitigation requires the commitment of more than one community. The 2021 Guidelines allow multiple communities to submit a joint application. If any of the applicant communities has not expended its 2015/2016 Reserve, the application must detail how the reserves will be allocated between the applicant communities to meet any reserve expenditure requirement. For example, transportation planning grants require that reserves be used prior to the receipt of new planning funds. In the event of a joint application for a \$200,000 planning grant, the joint application shall specify how the applicant communities will allocate/use a total of \$100,000 in reserves between the communities. The application must specify which community will be the fiscal agent for the grant funds. All communities will be held responsible for compliance with the terms contained in the grant.

To further regional cooperation, the applications for Transportation Planning Grants and Community Planning Grants that involve more than one community for the same planning projects may request grant assistance that exceeds the limits specified in these Guidelines. The additional funding may be requested only for the costs of a joint project being proposed by more than one community, not similar projects. Eligible communities may request additional funding for joint projects based on the below table.

	<b>Base Funding</b>	<b>Regional Planning Incentive Award</b>	<b>Total Allowable Request</b>
Community Planning Projects Involving Two (2) Communities	\$100,000 for each community	\$10,000	\$100,000 X <u>2 communities</u> <u>\$200,000 + \$10,000 =</u> <u>\$210,000</u>
Community Planning Project Involving Three (3) or More Communities	\$100,000 for each community	\$15,000*	\$100,000 X <u>3 communities</u> <u>\$300,000 + \$15,000 =</u> <u>\$315,000</u>
Transportation Planning Projects Two (2) Communities	\$200,000 for each community	\$25,000	\$200,000 X <u>2 communities</u> <u>\$400,000 + \$25,000 =</u> <u>\$425,000</u>
Transportation Planning Projects Three (3) or more Communities	\$200,000 for each community	\$50,000*	\$200,000 X <u>3 communities</u> <u>\$600,000 + \$50,000 =</u> <u>\$650,000</u>

\*The maximum Community Planning Regional Incentive is \$15,000 and the maximum Transportation Planning Regional Incentive is \$50,000 regardless of the number of communities participating.

Please note that communities can apply for a portion of the planning grants for single community applications while allocating a portion for joint projects. For example, a community could apply for one \$100,000 base Transportation Planning Grant leaving \$100,000 for a joint application involving another community. In this example the community could be eligible for \$100,000 for the single community project, \$100,000 for a joint project, and a \$25,000 Regional Planning Incentive Award amount shared with a second community.

Applications seeking a Regional Planning Incentive Award amount shall allocate at least fifty percent (50%) of the base funding level towards a joint project. For example, at least \$100,000 of a \$200,000 Transportation Planning Grant seeking an additional Regional Planning Incentive Award amount shall be for the joint project with another community. No community is eligible for more than one Transportation Regional Planning Incentive Award. No community is eligible for more than one Community Regional Planning Incentive Award.

### **1.6 Limitations/Specific Requirements on Reserve and Planning Applications**

The Commission will fund no application for any municipal employee for more than two years. The CMF will not pay the full cost of any municipal employee. The municipality would need to provide the remaining amount of any employee cost and certify that all such expenses are casino related. For non-personnel costs, each community applying for planning funds must also provide detail on what it will contribute to the planning project such as in-kind services or planning funds.

The Commission will evaluate requests for planning funds after taking into consideration input the applicant has received from the local Regional Planning Agency ("RPA") or any such interested parties. Although there is no prerequisite for using RPA's for planning projects, consultation with RPA's is required to enable the Commission to better understand how planning funds are being used efficiently across the region of the facility. Please provide details about the applicant's consultation with the RPA or any such interested parties. Applicants should provide detail regarding consultations with nearby communities to determine the potential for cooperative regional efforts regarding planning activities.

### **2.0 Grant Categories**

The following are the grant categories for the 2021 CMF. Applicants may apply for grants in more than one category; however, any individual project may only be included under one grant category.

#### **2.1 2015/2016 Reserve Grants**

In 2015 and 2016, a \$100,000 Reserve was established for communities near the gaming establishments.

Communities may continue to access whatever portion of the original \$100,000 that remains unexpended. This Reserve can be used to cover impacts that either have occurred or are

occurring in 2021. It may also be used for planning, either to determine how to achieve further benefits from a facility or to avoid or minimize any adverse impacts.

Funds will be distributed as the needs are identified; applications will be accepted on a rolling basis. Communities that utilize the Reserve are not prohibited from applying for funding for any specific mitigation request.

There are still several communities that have not fully expended their Reserves. Since these Grants are at least five years old, the Commission urges communities to consider whether there are any casino related impacts that need to be addressed. The Commission will give these communities until the end of Calendar Year 2021 to commit these funds. Any funding not committed to a project by that time will be rolled back into the CMF and allocated equally between the Regions.

There are some special requirements around the use of the Reserve as follows:

- If a community is applying for a Transportation Planning Grant, Reserve funds must be expended before accessing Transportation Planning Grant funds; and
- If a community is applying for a Specific Impact Grant and has Reserve funds available, the Reserve will be used as an offset against the amount requested for the specific impact. The Reserve amount will be reduced by fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) assuming the specific impact request is at least that amount.

### **2.2 Specific Impact Grants**

Specific impact Grants may be used only to mitigate impacts that either have occurred or are occurring as of the January 31, 2021 application deadline.

No application for a Specific Impact Grant shall exceed \$500,000 unless a waiver has been granted by the Commission as outlined in Section 3 of these Guidelines. No community is eligible for more than one Specific Impact Grant, however, communities may apply for multiple purposes in one application.

The Commission has determined that the funding of unanticipated impacts will be a priority. Thus, the Commission will review funding requests in the context of any host or surrounding community agreement to help determine funding eligibility. The CMF is not intended to fund the mitigation of impacts already being funded in a Host or Surrounding Community Agreement.

Allowable impacts for funding are as follows:

- **Operational Impacts of Gaming Facilities:** The Commission will make funding available to mitigate gaming facility operational impacts that are being experienced or were experienced by the January 31, 2021 application deadline.

Operational impacts include: public safety impacts on the community; increased demand on community and regional water and sewer systems; impacts on the community from storm

water run-off, associated pollutants, and changes in drainage patterns; stresses on the community's housing stock including any projected negative impacts on the appraised value of housing stock due to a gaming establishment; any negative impact on local, retail, entertainment, and service establishments in the community; increased social service needs including, but not limited to, those related to problem gambling; and demonstrated impact on public education in the community.

Although these definitions include the types of operational impacts that may be funded, it is not limited to those. The determination will be made by the Commission after its review.

- **Public Safety Operational Costs:** Grants for public safety operational costs shall not exceed \$200,000 per community, unless a waiver is granted by the Commission in accordance with the waiver requirements outlined in Section 3. All applications for public safety personnel or other public safety operational costs, including relevant training, must demonstrate that CMF funds will supplement and not supplant historical operations funding. Grant funds shall not be used to pay for Gaming Enforcement Unit personnel or operations costs specified or anticipated in the memoranda of understanding between the Massachusetts State Police and host communities' police departments.

Applicants must include detailed hourly estimates for the costs of any public safety personnel costs. Applicants should include the most relevant information describing historical service or staffing levels ("baseline information") in order to demonstrate that all funds will be used to supplement existing efforts. For example, if a community requests funding for additional staffing for a specific time period, the application should include information about the staffing levels that have been used for that same time period during the license term of the gaming facility. In describing any historical service levels, applicants should identify any time limited or "pilot" type operations which may have a bearing upon any determination of how the baseline service levels should be calculated. Applicants are requested to provide as much detailed baseline information as practicable to help the Commission in its review.

Please note that any 2021 public safety grants shall have a duration of only one year, unless otherwise determined by the Commission. Any grant awards issued in **2021 SHOULD NOT** be considered to provide any guarantee or indication of future funding.

### **2.3 Community Planning Grants**

Community Planning Grants are available for all communities that received Reserve Grants and have already allocated and received Commission approval of the use of its reserve. No application for a Community Planning Grant shall exceed \$100,000. Applications involving transportation planning or design are not eligible for the 2021 Community Planning Grant. Communities requesting transportation planning should instead apply for Transportation Planning Grant funds.

Eligible planning projects must have a defined area or issue that will be investigated as well as a clear plan for implementation of the results. The planning project must be clearly related to addressing issues or impacts directly related to the gaming facility. Applicants will be required to submit a detailed scope, budget, and timetable for the planning effort prior to funding being awarded. Each community will also need to provide detail on what it will contribute to the project such as in-kind services or planning funds. Planning projects may include programs created by communities to provide technical assistance and promotion for groups of area businesses.

Communities that utilize this 2021 Community Planning Grant are not prohibited from applying for funding for any specific mitigation request.

## **2.4 Transportation Planning Grants**

The Commission will make funding available for certain transportation planning activities for all communities eligible to receive funding from the CMF.

The total funding available for Transportation Planning Grants will likely not exceed \$1,000,000. No application for a Transportation Planning Grant shall exceed \$200,000.

Eligible transportation planning projects must have a defined area or issue that will be investigated as well as a clear plan for implementation of the results.

Eligible expenses to be covered by the Transportation Planning Grant include, but not necessarily limited to:

- Planning consultants/staff
- Data gathering/surveys
- Data analysis
- Design
- Engineering review/surveys
- Public meetings/hearings
- Final report preparation

The transportation planning projects must be clearly related to addressing transportation issues or impacts directly related to the gaming facility. Applicants will be required to submit a detailed scope, budget, and timetable for the transportation planning effort prior to funding being awarded.

Communities that received the 2015/2016 Reserve Grant must first expend those funds before accessing any Transportation Planning Grant funds. Transportation Planning Grant funds may be sought to expand a planning project begun with reserve funds or to fund an additional project once the reserves have been exhausted.

In addition to the specific impact grant factors further defined in section "[\*\*How Will the Commission Decide on Applications?\*\*](#)", the Commission will also consider whether the applicant demonstrates the potential for such transportation project to compete for state or federal transportation funds.

Applicants may, but are not required, to include a description of how the project meets the evaluation standards for the Fiscal Year 2022 TIP criteria for the Boston MPO Region or the



Pioneer Valley Planning Commission's transportation evaluation criteria, or other regional transportation project evaluation standard, whichever may be most applicable.

## **2.5 Transportation Construction Grants**

The Commission will make funding available for certain transportation construction costs in the 2021 CMF. Since most of these projects will have an ancillary benefit to the community that likely outweighs the mitigation of a casino impact, the Commission anticipates that any CMF assistance provided will only be for a maximum of 1/3 of the total project cost, and that significant other federal, state, local, private or other funding will be available to pay for the remaining costs of any such project. The Commission will consider waiving this requirement if the applicant can affirmatively demonstrate that the cost associated with mitigating the impact exceeds the limit.

Applicants are not prohibited from applying for transportation construction funds in future years for a project included in a 2021 application. However, any 2021 transportation construction project may not rely upon contributions from the CMF in future rounds. Applicants should demonstrate that the financing for the project does not depend upon any future year awards by the Commission. Given the likely complexity of any such transportation construction applications, applicants may consult with Commission staff before and during the CMF review on such projects.

The Commission anticipates authorizing no more than \$4,000,000 in grants for Transportation Construction Grants. The Commission does not anticipate authorizing more than \$1,000,000 for any one award. The Commission may adjust all target spending amounts, including the amounts in this section. Applicants may include a request to use funding from previously awarded CMF Reserves in any description of significant other federal, state, local, or private contributions. There is no minimum application amount.

Applicants must demonstrate that the project will begin construction no later than June 30, 2022. In addition to the criteria for determining grants stated later in these Guidelines, the Commission will evaluate a project's readiness to proceed, the significance of additional funds from other sources, and the potential transportation benefits associated with such projects.

Although the Commission will not authorize any multi-year grants for transportation projects in 2021, the Commission plans to issue request for Statements of Interest in 2021 for transportation construction projects that would require multi-year grants. Such Statement of Interest would help the Commission determine the needs for multi-year grants in preparation for the 2022 CMF funding round. The Statement of Interest would also be utilized to allow for a greater understanding of projects that may be the subject of a future application.

Applicants may, but are not required, to include a description of how the project meets the evaluation standards for the Fiscal Year 2022 TIP criteria for the Boston MPO Region or the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission's transportation evaluation criteria, or other regional transportation project evaluation standard, whichever may be most applicable.



Applicants are strongly encouraged to include a letter of support from the MassDOT with any application.

Transportation Construction Grants are not available for transportation operations costs.

## **2.6 Workforce Development Grants**

The advent of the Covid-19 pandemic in March of 2020 and its impact on the hospitality sector caused the Commission to re-think how workforce grants would be applied. As such, in 2020 the proposals for occupational training in hospitality and culinary were not funded. The Commission did fund portions of the proposals focused on adult basic education programs. Given the uncertainties entering 2021, we encourage applicants to be creative in their grant applications, keeping in mind that training programs must have a direct correlation to impacts from the casino. Applicants must be able to demonstrate that the education and skills training programs proposed are in response to an identified need at the casinos or as a means to provide a sufficient supply of workers to backfill jobs being lost to the casinos. In reviewing these applications, the Commission will need to consider the state of affairs at the time of the review including the condition of the labor market and the general state of the economy.

For fiscal year 2022, the Commission will make available funding for workforce development programs in Regions A and B for service to residents of communities of such Regions. CMF Workforce grant applicants should focus on areas highly impacted by casino operations, while taking into consideration the impacts of the pandemic.

### **Goals include:**

- To mitigate a strain in existing resources and a potential impact to the regional labor market.
- To identify and alleviate gaps and/or challenges regarding equitable access to casino or industry-related jobs.
- To deliver education and career training programs that can be completed in two years or less and prepare program participants for employment in high-wage, high-skill occupations related to the casino.
- To help low-skilled adults earn occupational credentials, obtain well-paying jobs, and sustain rewarding careers in sectors related to hospitality and casino careers.
- To get students with low basic skills into for-credit career and technical education courses to improve their educational and employment outcomes.
- To align and accelerate ABE, GED, and developmental programs and provide nontraditional students the supports they need to complete postsecondary credentials of value in the regional labor market.

The total funding available for workforce grants will likely not exceed \$800,000. The Commission anticipates a base award of no more than \$300,000 in each Region (not including

additional funding for regional cooperation significant regional needs). These additional award descriptions are as follows:

- In an effort to promote administrative efficiencies and greater regional cooperation, applicants that demonstrate regional cooperation between a significant number of workforce agencies may be eligible for \$50,000 in additional regional cooperation funding. One grant is anticipated to be considered for each Region.
- The Commission may authorize an award of up to \$100,000 for significant regional needs.

Each governmental entity applying for workforce development funds will also need to provide details on what it will contribute to the workforce development project such as in-kind services or workforce development funds.

**Eligible activities include:**

- a program in Region A or Region B that structures intentional connections among adult basic education, occupational training, and post-secondary education programs designed to meet the needs of both adult learners and employers;
- post-secondary vocational programs;
- registered apprenticeships;
- courses leading to college credits or industry-recognized certificates;
- Adult Basic Education (“ABE”) and vocationally based English for Speakers of Other Languages (“ESOL”) training programs; contextualized learning;
- Integrated Education & Training; and industry-recognized credentials.

Proposals may include programming elements such as gaming school scholarships, culinary, hospitality skills, banking, or general customer service training or vocational programs focused on English language/adult basic education, while taking into consideration the impacts of the pandemic.

**A consortium application is required.** Eligible workforce development proposals must include a regional consortium approach to improve the skills, knowledge, and credential attainment for Region A and Region B residents interested in a casino or casino-related career, focusing on increasing industry-recognized and academic credentials needed to work in the most in-demand occupations related to the expanded gaming industry or a focus on occupations needed by the regional business community impacted as a result of casino hiring. The proposal must also include regional labor market information and evidence of employer partnerships.

Governmental entities eligible to receive funds would include but not be limited to: host communities, communities which were each either a designated surrounding community, a community which entered into a nearby community agreement with a licensee, a community that is geographically adjacent to the host community of a gaming licensee, a community that petitioned to be a surrounding community to a gaming licensee state agencies, state agencies, and regional employment boards. The Commission shall evaluate the use of host community

agreement funds in evaluating funding requests for workforce development program grant funds. Applicants should consider leveraging other funding resources.

The Commission has determined that administrative costs (including but not limited to all indirect and other administrative funding) shall not exceed 7.5% of the total grant allocation. Administrative costs include activities related to management, oversight, reporting and record keeping, and monitoring of the grant program.

### **2.7 Tribal Gaming Technical Assistance Grants**

The Commission may make available no more than \$200,000 in technical assistance funding to assist in the determination of potential impacts that may be experienced by communities in geographic proximity to the potential Tribal Gaming facility in Taunton. Said technical assistance funding may be made through Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District (“SRPEDD”), or a comparable regional entity. Such funding will only be made available, after approval of any application by SRPEDD or a comparable regional entity, if it is determined by the Commission that construction of such gaming facility will likely commence prior to or during Fiscal Year 2021. Any such application must demonstrate that any studies of impacts will address the technical assistance needs of the region which may include but not be limited to the communities that are geographically adjacent to Taunton. Such funding shall not be used to study impacts on or provide technical assistance to Taunton, as funding has been provided in the Intergovernmental Agreement By and Between the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe and the City of Taunton. Any such program of technical assistance may be provided by SRPEDD itself or through a contract with SRPEDD.

### **2.8 Emergency Mitigation Grants**

The Commission may make available no more than \$200,000 in grant funds to mitigate unanticipated casino related impacts that arise after the January 31, 2021 application date. Any impact must be newly identified and be of an emergency nature that would cause significant harm to the community if it were not remedied in an expeditious fashion. The intent of this grant is to allow the Commission to be more responsive in addressing significant casino related issues that do not fall within the normal CMF timelines. This grant is not intended to circumvent the normal CMF processes. Any applicant for this grant should contact the Community Affairs Division to discuss the impact and the proper way to proceed.

## **3.0 Application Requirements**

### **3.1 What Should Be Included in the Applications?**

Applicants are required to complete the appropriate grant application:

- 2021 Specific Impact Grant Application;
- 2021 Community Planning Grant Application;
- 2021 Transportation Planning Grant Application;

- 2021 Workforce Development Grant Application;
- 2021 Transportation Construction Grant Application; or
- 2021 Reserve/Tribal Gaming Technical Assistance Grant Application.

Applicants may also submit additional supporting materials of a reasonable length.

Applicants will need to fully identify the impact being caused by the casino and describe how the project request will address any claimed impacts and provide justification of any funds requested.

Applicants will need to describe if and how such impacts were addressed or not addressed in any host or surrounding community agreements. Applicants may include a letter of support from the applicable gaming licensee. However, this is not necessary, as the Commission will request the licensee's opinion regarding each Application.

### **3.2 How Will the Commission Decide on Applications?**

The Commission will ask each licensee to review and comment on any requests for funding.

The Commission will evaluate the submittal by the community, any input received from the community and interested parties (such as regional planning agencies), the responses of the licensee, Commission consultant reviews, and any other sources determined by the Commission. Commission Staff may consider information from the report issued by the Lower Mystic Regional Workforce Group in its evaluation of transportation planning grants.

The Commission will evaluate any funding requests in the context of any host or surrounding community agreements. Factors used by the Commission to evaluate grant applications may include but not be limited to:

- A demonstration that the impact is being caused by the gaming facility;
- The significance of the impact to be remedied;
- The potential for the proposed mitigation measure to address the impact;
- The feasibility and reasonableness of the proposed mitigation measure;
- A demonstration that any program to assist non-governmental entities is for a demonstrated public purpose and not for the benefit or maintenance of a private party;
- The significance of any matching funds including but not limited to the ability to compete for state or federal workforce, transportation or other funds;
- Any demonstration of regional benefits from a grant award;
- A demonstration that other funds from host or surrounding community agreements are not available to fund the proposed mitigation measure;
- A demonstration that such mitigation measure is not already required to be completed by the licensee pursuant to any regulatory requirements or pursuant to any agreements between such licensee and applicant; and

- The inclusion of a detailed scope, budget, and timetable for each mitigation request.

### Supplemental Guidelines Used to Evaluate Workforce Development Applications

- Does the application develop a workforce development program that seeks to address any claimed impacts?
- Does the proposal include a program in Region A or Region B that structures intentional connections among adult basic education, occupational training, and post-secondary education programs?
- Does the proposal seek to assist low-skilled adults in obtaining education and career training to enable them to join the regional labor market?
- Does the proposal seek to address the anticipated goals of the program (see pages 12 and 13 of these Guidelines)?
- Will the participants receive industry-recognized or academic credentials needed to work in the most in-demand casino-related occupations within the region?
- A governmental entity applying for workforce development funds will also need to provide detail on what it will contribute to the workforce development project such as in-kind services or workforce development funds
- Is the Applicant collaborating with others to provide a regional approach?
- Does the Applicant address issues related to a gaming facility? The Commission may ask Applicants for supplementary materials, may request a meeting with Applicants, and reserves the ability to host a hearing or hearings on any application.

The Commission's deliberations on Community Mitigation Fund policies will also be aided through input from the Gaming Policy Advisory Committee, the Community Mitigation Subcommittee, and the Local Community Mitigation Advisory Committees.

The Commission reserves the ability to determine a funding limit above or below what is detailed in these Guidelines. The Commission notes that it plans to target its funding decisions based on the regional allocations described earlier. However, the Commission reserves the right to make determinations that do not strictly adhere or adhere to such targets. In the event the Commission awards are not in such adherence, the Commission may make appropriate adjustments in future guidelines to bring regional allocations into more congruity with such targets.

**The Commission reserves the ability to fund only portions of requested projects and to fund only a percentage of amounts requested. The Commission also reserves the ability to place conditions on any award.**

**There is limited funding available. The Commission therefore reserves the right to determine which requests to fund based on its assessment of a broad range of factors including the extent of public benefit each grant is likely to produce.**

### **3.3 When Will the Commission Make Decisions?**

The Commission anticipates making funding decisions on any requests for grant assistance before July 2021.

### **3.4 Authorization to Approve Requests for Changes to Components of Grant Awards**

The Commission authorized staff to approve requests for changes to components of grant awards provided that staff provides notice of such changes to all Commission members and provided further that such changes shall not exceed 10% of the grant award or \$10,000, whichever is smaller.

### **3.5 Waivers and Variances**

The Commission may in its discretion waive or grant a variance from any provision or requirement contained in these Guidelines, not specifically required by law, where the Commission finds that:

- a) Granting the waiver or variance is consistent with the purposes of M.G.L. c. 23K;
- b) Granting the waiver or variance will not interfere with the ability of the Commission to fulfill its duties;
- c) Granting the waiver or variance will not adversely affect the public interest; and
- d) Not granting the waiver or variance would cause a substantial hardship to the community, governmental entity, or person requesting the waiver or variance.

All requests for waivers or variances shall be in writing, shall set forth the specific provision of the Guidelines to which a waiver or variance is sought, and shall state the basis for the proposed waiver or variance.

The Commission may grant a waiver or variance, deny a waiver or variance, or grant a waiver or variance subject to such terms, conditions and limitations as the commission may determine.

### **3.6 Rescission of Grants**

If a Grantee does not expend the funds in a timely manner or does so in a manner that is inconsistent with the grant, the Commission may rescind all or a portion of the grant and make those funds available in the next grant round for the Region in which the grant originated. Before any grant is rescinded, Commission staff will notify the Grantee that the expenditures on the grant are not timely and establish a timeline for the Grantee to either expend the funds or have the grant rescinded.

### **3.7 Who Should be Contacted for Questions?**

CMF applicants are encouraged to contact the Commission's staff with any questions or concerns. The Commission's Chief of the Division of Community Affairs, Joseph Delaney, can be

reached at (617) 721-9198 or via e-mail at [joseph.delaney@massgaming.gov](mailto:joseph.delaney@massgaming.gov). The Commission's address is 101 Federal Street, 12<sup>th</sup> Floor, Boston, MA 02110.

### **3.8 Where Should the Application be Sent?**

Applications **must be sent to** [www.commbuys.com](http://www.commbuys.com). An application received by COMMBUYS by January 31, 2021 will meet the application deadline. Applicants that are not part of the COMMBUYS system should contact Mary Thurlow, Program Manager of the Community Mitigation Fund well in advance of the January 31, 2021 deadline to make arrangements for submission of the application by the deadline. Mary Thurlow can be contacted at (617) 979-8420 or at [mary.thurlow@massgaming.gov](mailto:mary.thurlow@massgaming.gov).

If you have any questions or concerns contact the COMMBUYS Help Desk at [COMMBUYS@state.ma.us](mailto:COMMBUYS@state.ma.us) or during normal business hours (8am - 5pm ET Monday - Friday) at 1-888-627-8283 or 617-720-3197.





# Understanding the Impact of Casinos on Massachusetts Communities

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## Community mitigation subcommittee



# Research goals and objectives

## Sect. 71 Expanded Gaming Act, 2011

- Understand the social and economic effects of expanded gambling and use the findings to inform evidence-based policy and regulation.
- Obtain scientific information relative to the neuroscience, psychology, sociology, epidemiology and etiology of gambling.
- Inform best practice strategies and methods for responsible gaming and problem gambling
- Evaluate all responsible gaming initiatives developed by the MGC.

## Responsible Gaming Framework

- Inform best practice in responsible gaming strategies and methods, problem gambling prevention and treatment, and responsible gaming messaging.
- Create and translate knowledge to support evidence-informed decision-making about gambling policy and regulation.





School of Public Health and Health Sciences

## Social and Economic Impacts of Gambling in Massachusetts (SEIGMA)

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UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND HEALTH SCIENCES



### What is SEIGMA?

The University of Massachusetts Amherst School of Public Health & Health Sciences (SPHHS) has been engaged by the Massachusetts Gaming Commission (MGC) to carry out a comprehensive, multi-year research project, believed to be the first of its kind, on the economic and social impacts of introducing casino gambling in Massachusetts. The project fulfills Section 71 of the 2011 Expanded Gaming Act, which requires the MGC to establish “an annual research agenda” to assist in understanding the social and economic effects of the introduction of casino gambling in MA, and in making annual scientifically-based recommendations to the Legislature.

The study focuses particularly on problem gambling, but also examines a wide array of social and economic effects of expanded gambling in Massachusetts. In addition to SPHHS, other key members of the research team include the UMass Donahue Institute, which will lead the economic and fiscal impact research, and NORC at the University of Chicago, which will lead primary data collection efforts for the SEIGMA study. [Read more here.](#)

### News and Events



SEIGMA Public Research Day Webinar – October 14, 2020

2020



No Increase In Problem Gambling Seen After MGM Springfield Casino Opens



No boost found in problem gambling from MGM Springfield

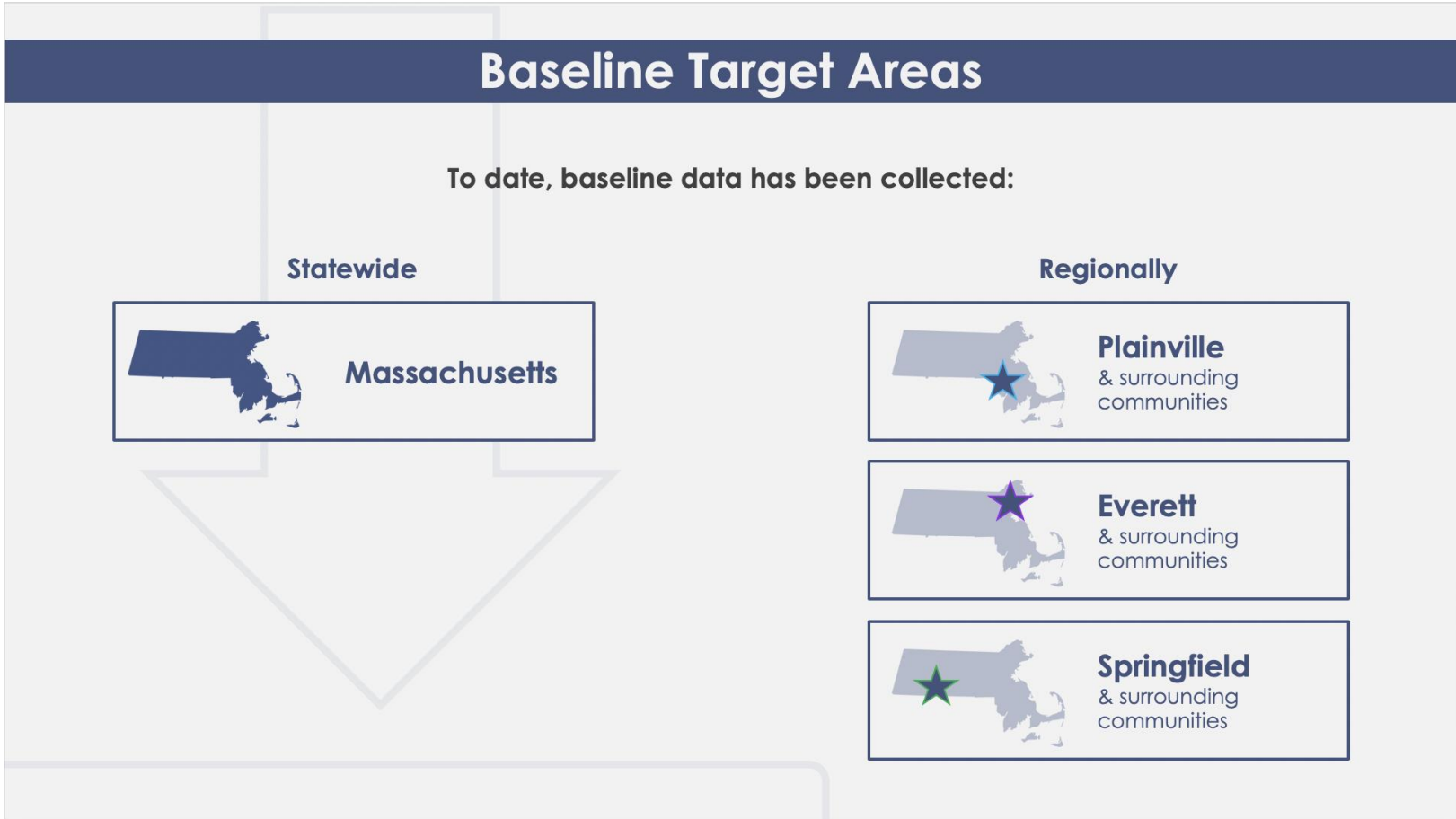


UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND HEALTH SCIENCES

# Methodological Principles

- Identify how much money is involved, where it is coming from, and where it is going
- Assess impacts for years before and for years after the introduction of new gambling venues
- Comprehensively assess all potential economic and social impacts and utilize multiple sources of info for triangulation

# Building a baseline



## Baseline Indicators

Indicators are being tracked across two pillars of population health



**Social & Health**

**5** dimensions

**14** total indicators



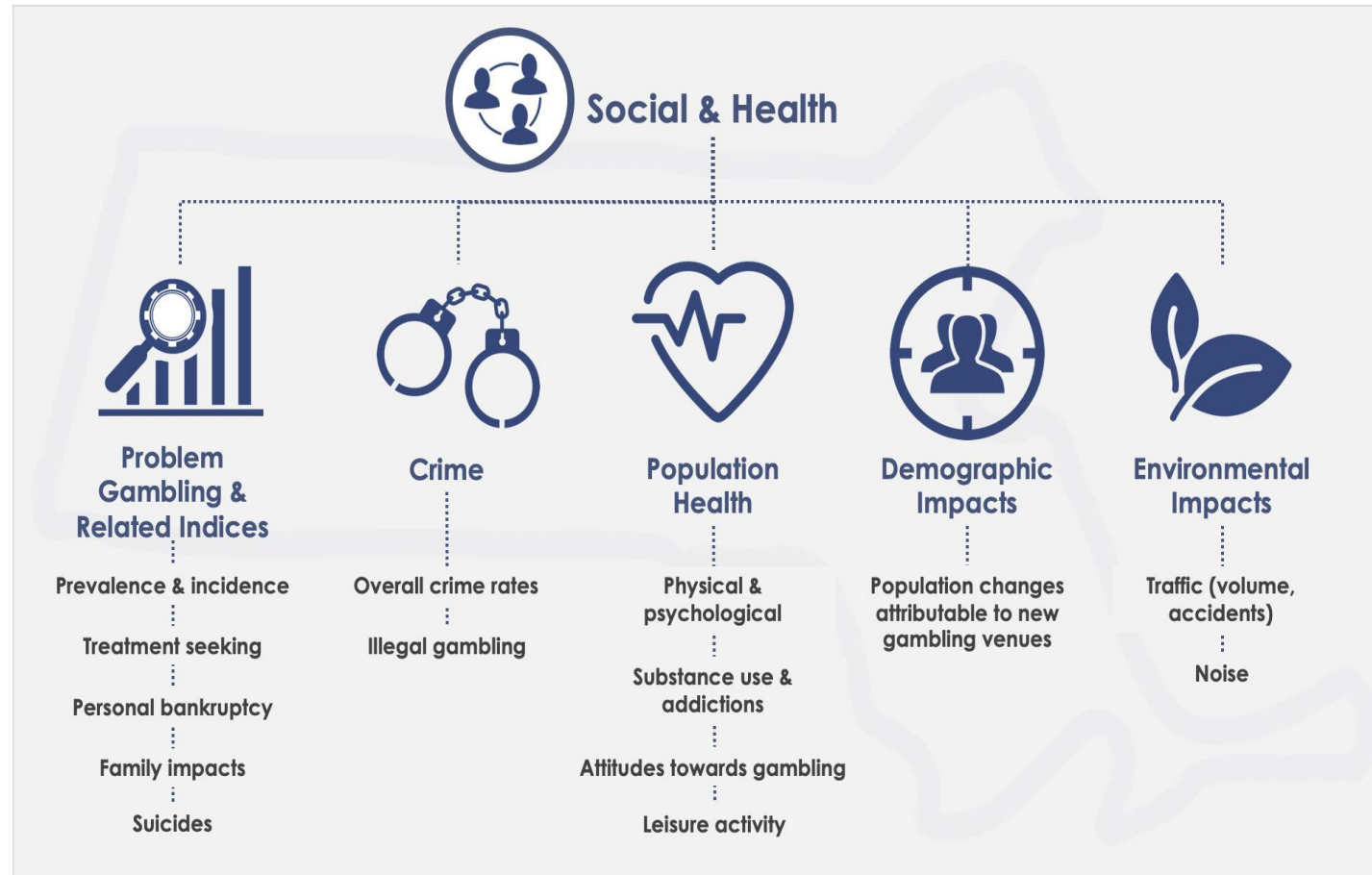
**Economic & Fiscal**

**6** dimensions

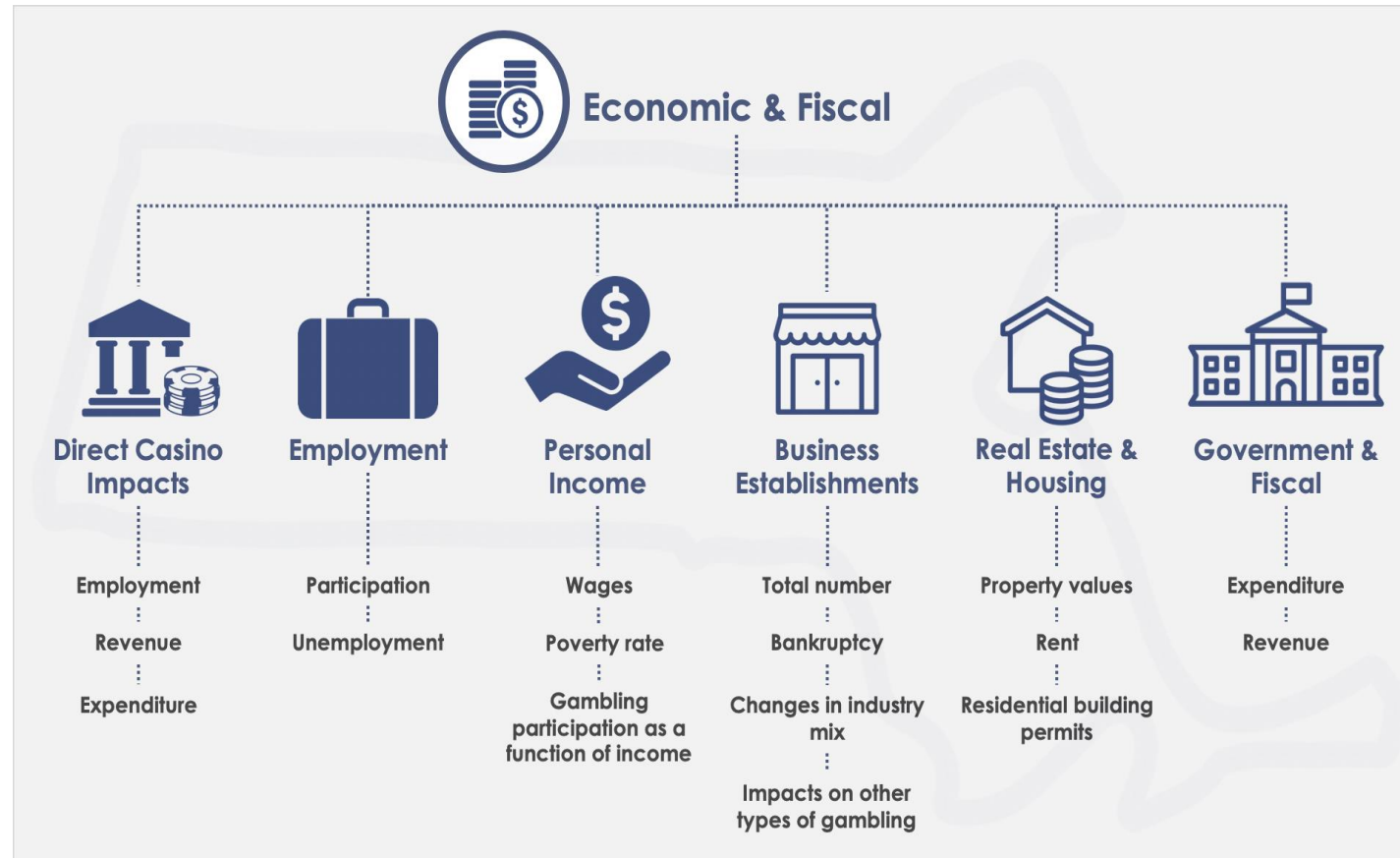
**15** total indicators



# Social and health indicators



# Economic and fiscal indicators



# SEIGMA Research Day, October 14, 2020

- **New Employees at MGM Springfield:** The data from this report highlight reasons for seeking employment at MGM, employment status prior to joining the MGM team, and the geographic residence of employees.
- **2019 MGM Springfield Patron Survey:** This data is important to ascertain the influx of new revenues to the venue and the Commonwealth, and to measure any monies diverted from other sectors of the economy.
- **MGM Springfield First Year of Operations:** The purpose of this report is to estimate the full economic impact of the casino on the Massachusetts economy during its first year of operation.
- **Impact of MGM Springfield on Gambling Attitudes, Participation & Problem Gambling:** Findings from this report examine key areas such as attitudes toward gambling, gambling participation, and problem gambling.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?reload=9&v=MKpkMjYcgEM&feature=youtu.be>

Slides: [https://www.umass.edu/seigma/sites/default/files/SEIGMA%20Public%20Research%20Day%20Webinar%202020\\_Final.pdf](https://www.umass.edu/seigma/sites/default/files/SEIGMA%20Public%20Research%20Day%20Webinar%202020_Final.pdf)





# Other Springfield related research

## **Real Estate Impacts of the MGM Springfield Casino** (released 9/2019)

- Document commercial and residential property trends following the licensing of MGM Springfield in 2014

## **Assessing the Impact of Gambling on Public Safety in Massachusetts; Analysis of MGM Springfield's First Year** (released 2/2020)

- Analysis of data about crime, calls for service and collisions from September 2018 to August in 2019 and compared to baseline.

## **The Construction of MGM Springfield: Spending, Employment and Economic Impacts** (released 10/2019)

- Estimate of the total economic impacts to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts resulting from the casino construction.

## **Host Community Economic Profile: Springfield** (released 10/2015)

- Covers trends and conditions within the city's industrial structure, business community, labor force and residential population prior to the construction of MGM Springfield.

## **Lottery Revenue and MGM Springfield: Statewide and local analysis** (released 2/2020)





## \*\*\* RESEARCH CATEGORIES \*\*\*

### Community-Engaged Research

This research is intended to advance knowledge regarding casino impacts on population subgroups not reached by the SEIGMA general population baseline. The focus of this work is on communities considered to be at a greater risk of experiencing gambling-related harms.

[EXPLORE RESEARCH »](#)

### Economic Impact

The Social and Economic Impacts of Gambling in Massachusetts (SEIGMA) study, conducted by a team from UMass Amherst, analyzes the fiscal, economic, social and health effects of expanded gaming across the Commonwealth. The study is intended to provide 1) neutral information of decision-making, 2) early warning signs of changes connected with the casino gambling, and 3) help in reducing gambling-related harm.

[EXPLORE RESEARCH »](#)

### Massachusetts Gambling Impact Cohort

The Massachusetts Gambling Impact Cohort (MAGIC), the first major longitudinal cohort study of gambling behavior in the United States, provides information on how gambling and problem gambling develop, progress and remit, and will identify demographic groups particularly at risk of experiencing gambling-related harm.

[EXPLORE RESEARCH »](#)

### Public Safety

This research examines Massachusetts casino impacts on public safety, including crime, calls-for-service and collision data. This element of the MGC research agenda has produced a baseline for each casino host and surrounding communities. Annual follow-up studies measure change in activity and highlight possible connections to the casino.

[EXPLORE RESEARCH »](#)

### Responsible Gaming Program Evaluations

The MGC is committed to offering effective, evidence-based responsible gaming programs and initiatives. Currently, these initiatives include statewide Voluntary Self Exclusion, PlayMyWay Play Management System and the GameSense program. On-going and independent evaluation informs the overall responsible gaming strategy and future direction of these programs.

[EXPLORE RESEARCH »](#)

### Social Impact

The Social and Economic Impacts of Gambling in Massachusetts (SEIGMA) study, conducted by a team from UMass Amherst, analyzes the fiscal, economic, social and health effects of expanded gaming across the Commonwealth. The study is intended to provide 1) neutral information of decision-making, 2) early warning signs of changes connected with the casino gambling, and 3) help in reducing gambling-related harm.

[EXPLORE RESEARCH »](#)



MODE invites researchers of all disciplines to use available gaming-related data to advance the empirical evidence and knowledge base about the social and economic effects of casinos on individuals and communities.

# MODE

MASSACHUSETTS OPEN  
DATA EXCHANGE



- Thank you!!
- Additional questions/comments:
  - Mark Vander Linden
    - Massachusetts Gaming Commission
    - Director of Research and Responsible Gaming
    - [Mark.vanderlinden@massgaming.gov](mailto:Mark.vanderlinden@massgaming.gov)
      - [www.gamesensema.com](http://www.gamesensema.com)
      - [www.massgaming.com](http://www.massgaming.com)



**GameSense**

**THE  
PROGRAM**

**& THE  
IMPACT**



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# LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

**The Massachusetts Legislature legalized casino gaming in 2011 to produce broad-based economic development, including jobs and revenue—but not at any cost.**

A key feature of the gaming law established a **first-of-its-kind research plan** to comprehensively assess the social and economic impacts of casino gambling in Massachusetts. A data-driven understanding of casino impacts provides the Massachusetts Gaming Commission (MGC) with the ability to design evidence-based programming, particularly in the area of responsible gaming and problem gambling.

A baseline study concluded that, in Massachusetts, approximately **2% (110,000) of the adult population meet the criteria for problem gambling**, and another **8.4% (440,000) experience harm to a lesser degree**. In response to these findings, the MGC launched GameSense, an innovative, player-focused responsible gaming program that encourages players to adopt positive play behaviors and attitudes that promote safe levels of play and reduce the risk of gambling-related harm.

It is also worth noting that Massachusetts is the only gaming jurisdiction in the country to require such responsible gaming resources (GameSense Info Centers and GameSense Advisors) at each casino property.

As the commonwealth's casino industry continues to grow and mature, the MGC, in partnership with our many stakeholders, looks forward to continued research-driven innovation to meet the needs of Massachusetts' diverse casino patrons.



*Cathy Judd-Stein*

**Cathy Judd-Stein**  
Massachusetts Gaming Chair



A photograph of two men in a conversation. The man on the left is older, with white hair, and is smiling. The man on the right is younger, with a beard and glasses, wearing a light pink shirt, and is looking towards the older man. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be an indoor setting with plants.

## WHAT IS GAMESENSE?

**GameSense is an innovative responsible gaming program** that encourages players to adopt and/or maintain positive behaviors and attitudes that reduce the risk of gambling-related harm.

In fulfillment of the legislation, which called for an on-site player protection program staffed by a third party, the MGC licensed GameSense from the British Columbia Lottery Corporation in 2015 and drew upon the experience and expertise of the Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling (MCCG) to staff and operate the program at each Massachusetts casino—Encore Boston Harbor (EBH), MGM Springfield (MGM), and Plainridge Park Casino (PPC).

**The GameSense program captures  
four essential pillars of engagement:**

**1**

**Relevant**

Tips and tools help players play smarter

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**2**

**Supportive**

Informative instead of judgmental

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**3**

**Approachable**

Messaging is welcoming and lighthearted

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**4**

**Relatable**

Adopts a fun and occasionally humorous style

# WHO DOES GAMESENSE SERVE?

## CASINO PATRONS

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**GameSense encourages casino patrons to engage in positive play promoting informed player choice.**

Most people who visit Massachusetts casinos engage in “positive play,” or gambling behavior that is nonproblematic. Research shows that players who engage in positive play focus on “playing for fun, being entertained, and/or winning a prize” (Wood & Griffiths, 2015).

GameSense Advisors engage patrons at the GameSense Info Center and on the casino floor through innovative games, quizzes, and other demonstrations, presenting information to:

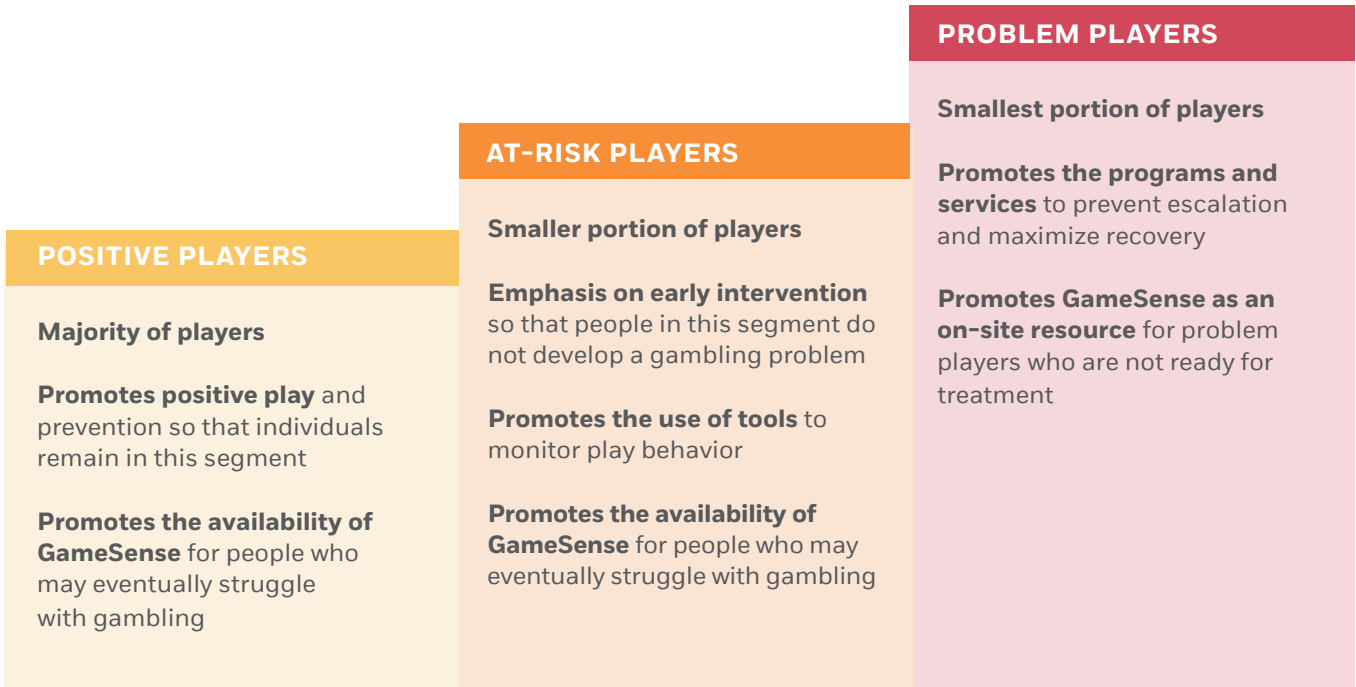
- › Debunk common gambling myths and misconceptions
- › Educate on how games work, and educate on odds and probabilities of slots and table games
- › Discuss informed decision-making options





**By using a stepped-care approach, GameSense provides casino patrons with information relevant to their specific needs.**

According to the baseline general population survey of Social and Economic Impacts of Gaming in Massachusetts, approximately one in every five patrons may be at risk for, or has, a gambling problem (Volberg, Williams, Stanek, et al., 2017). Recognizing that all players are not the same.







## CASINO EMPLOYEES

**GameSense builds the capacity of casino employees, including management, through education and interactions designed to promote responsible gaming and mitigate problem gambling.**

In partnership with the three casino licensees, GameSense has provided both new-hire orientations and advanced responsible gaming trainings to well over 5,000 Massachusetts casino employees. Evaluations show that 88% of casino employees have rated the training as “very good” or “excellent” (Gray, Shaffer, LaPlante, 2018).

**GameSense empowers and supports casino employees to take action to support patrons in need of assistance.**

In fiscal year 2019, GameSense Advisors engaged 2,994 casino employees with conversations about responsible and problem gambling. Additionally, on 266 occasions, casino employees, gaming agents, and state police officers have referred patrons or requested assistance from an on-site advisor.



# 88%

OF CASINO  
EMPLOYEES

**have rated the  
responsible gaming  
trainings as “very  
good” or “excellent”**





## THE COMMUNITY

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GameSense provides responsible gaming and **problem gambling education** to service providers and community groups in casino host and surrounding communities. They specifically target and engage community partners that serve persons who may have a gambling problem or are at risk of developing one.



# WHAT RESOURCES & TOOLS DOES GAMESENSE HAVE AVAILABLE?



Within the **GameSense toolkit** are programs, resources, and educational activities designed to engage patrons at Massachusetts casinos.





## GAMESENSE INFO CENTERS

**GameSense Info Centers are located on-site at all Massachusetts casinos** and operate 16 hours a day, 7 days a week. Strategically located in high-traffic areas, each GameSense Info Center has a welcoming, visitor-friendly space, as well as a private office for more sensitive conversations.

Visitors to the GameSense Info Center can learn about myths associated with gambling, find out the odds of the games, take a break, or seek support from a GameSense Advisor.



## GAMESENSE ADVISORS

**GameSense Advisors are the heart of the program.** Nearly all GameSense Advisors possess a gaming background, but also bring to the position a diverse range of educational and other work experiences. One thing that they have in common is a passion for the work they do in order to make a difference in the lives of casino patrons and staff.

In addition to extensive training on responsible gaming and problem gambling, GameSense Advisors receive training in Mental Health First Aid, behavioral health, counseling skills, and community resources.

The GameSense team is made up of advisors who represent diverse cultural and ethnic groups and ages, and who possess various linguistic backgrounds. Diversity is an integral part of the GameSense team, as it aids in reaching players from different backgrounds, including those who have historically suffered from health disparities.

## PlayMyWay

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# PlayMyWay

### **PlayMyWay (PMW) is a first-of-its-kind budgeting tool**

designed to allow players the ability to monitor the amount of money they spend on electronic gaming machines. PMW is now available at Plainridge Park Casino, and a 2021 launch is planned at MGM Springfield and Encore Boston Harbor. GameSense Advisors play a critical role in PMW, as they serve as the primary customer service representation when it comes to program-related questions.

- › Once enrolled, **a player receives automatic notifications** as he or she approach 50%, 75%, and 100% of their daily, weekly, or monthly budget.
- › A player can choose to **stop at any point or keep playing**.
- › Players can **enroll, adjust their budget, or un-enroll** in PlayMyWay at any time.

The program is completely voluntary and provides players with real-time data so that they stay in control of their gambling. Between the launch of PMW in June 2015 through December 2019, there were **24,587 players actively enrolled** in the program, with **an average un-enrollment rate of 14%**. An evaluation of the program found that typical PlayMyWay users wagered less money at PPC during the study period, made fewer visits to PPC, and tended to lose less money at PPC (Tom, Singh, Edson, et al., 2017).

## VOLUNTARY SELF-EXCLUSION

**The Voluntary Self-Exclusion (VSE) program allows participants to voluntarily prohibit themselves from accessing the gaming floor** at all Massachusetts casinos for a predetermined length of time of one year, three years, five years, or their lifetime.

**Over 85% of all enrollments are conducted by a GameSense Advisor** and most commonly take place at a GameSense Info Center.

The VSE program is designed to engage participants in order to support their decision and to offer to connect them with additional help. Between June 2015 and December 2019, **779 individuals** enrolled in the VSE program; **80% of enrollees** who completed a follow-up survey reported that they were gambling less at follow-up than prior to MA-VSEP enrollment (Nelson, Kleschinsky, LaPlante, et al., 2018).



**Between June 2015 and December 2019,**

# 779

**INDIVIDUALS**

**enrolled in the VSE program**

“Research has shown that the Massachusetts VSE program is an effective intervention to help persons struggling to control their gambling. Participants reported reduced gambling-related problems, including improved mental health and relationship quality. Participants who had previously enrolled in other VSE programs reported a significantly more positive enrollment experience with a GameSense Advisor.”

- **Mark Vander Linden**  
MGC Director of Research and Responsible Gambling





## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

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GameSense community engagement initiatives are designed to **bring responsible gaming and problem gambling information and resources out into the community**. Engagement efforts focus on groups and communities identified by research as being at higher risk for experiencing gambling-related harm, including blacks, Asian populations, immigrants, veterans, seniors, and those with an annual household income of less than \$15,000.



## GAMESENSEMA.COM

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**The mobile-friendly website GameSenseMA.com is accessible and user friendly.** The website is populated with entertaining videos, featuring a fictional GameSense Advisor, created to dispel popular gambling myths and offer “pearls of wisdom” or practical tips about responsible play.

The website also offers extensive recommendations for responsible gaming techniques, interactive tools, myth-busting games, and valuable information about how to access support resources and services such as the VSE program.





# GAMESENSE METRICS & EVALUATION

Data collected by **GameSense Advisors** between June 2019 and April 2020, when all three Massachusetts casinos were operational, shows:

## >275,000

### GENERAL INTERACTIONS

with casino patrons and employees



## >56,000

### CONVERSATIONS

pertaining to responsible gaming and problem gambling

WITH

## 77,081

CASINO PATRONS  
AND EMPLOYEES

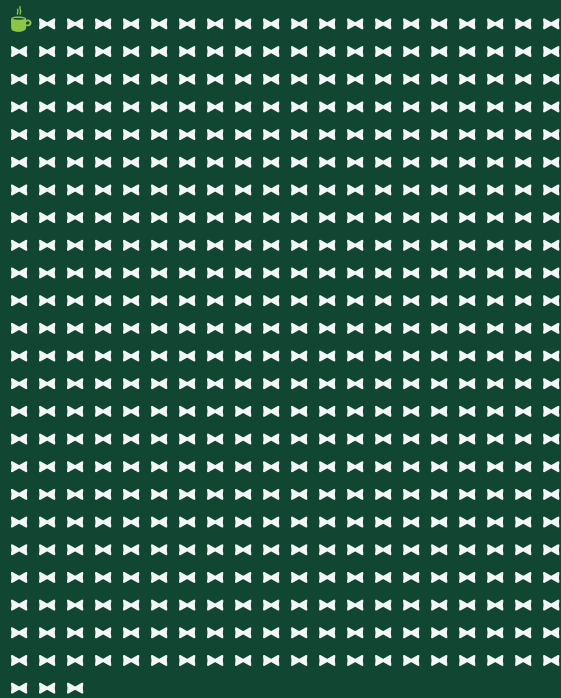


GameSense Advisors work to **create a casino culture that values responsible gaming** and is sensitive to problem gambling by providing tailored trainings based on job function to all newly hired casino staff.

These trainings are critical to furthering the mission of GameSense, as the number of casino staff at each Massachusetts casino far exceeds the number of GameSense Advisors at each property.

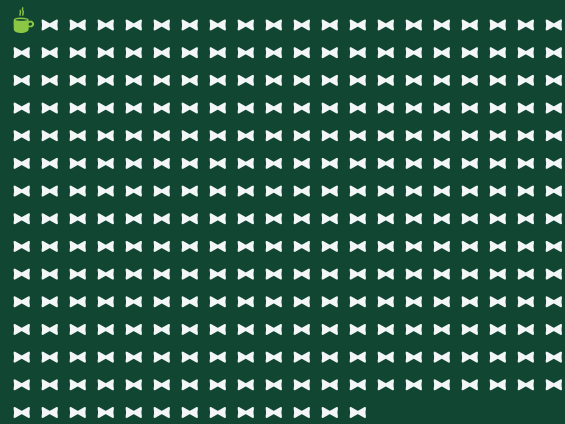
**1:483**

**EBH GameSense Advisor to EBH staff**



**1:293**

**MGM GameSense Advisor to MGM staff**



**1:76**

**PPC GameSense Advisor to PPC staff**



= GameSense Advisor     = Casino Staff



# WHAT ARE THE RESULTS?

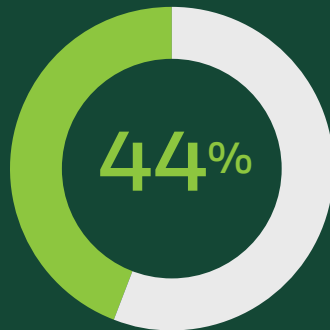
An early evaluation of the PPC GameSense program, which collected data between 2015 and 2017, offers an encouraging outlook on its impact and effectiveness. **Research findings indicate:**



of surveyed patrons had a **high degree of program awareness**



of patrons surveyed were **satisfied with the information** provided by GameSense Advisors



went on to say that the program **changed the way they think** about their gambling behavior

# SPREADING THE WORD

The MGC, in conjunction with the MCCG, has developed and mobilized **a comprehensive communications strategy** to educate casino patrons, staff, and the general public about the importance of safe play and the availability of the program, in an effort to:



## INCREASE

overall brand awareness



## DRIVE

traffic to GameSenseMA.com



## HIGHLIGHT

the resources and tools available



## EDUCATE

the public with helpful responsible gambling tips and support resources



## PROMOTE

informed player choice about their gambling



## MAXIMIZE

community engagement efforts



## REACH

special populations to educate about responsible gaming and resources that are available



## REINFORCE

the commonwealth's commitment to a robust responsible gaming strategy

# ADVERTISING & MARKETING



## **In-casino Signage**

On-site casino marketing strategies are deployed in cooperation with casino operators and include in-casino signage, multilingual collateral, staff newsletters, and other specialized campaigns.

## Paid Advertising

Paid advertising includes mobile, display, social (Facebook and Instagram), and search engine marketing. Online ads are distributed according to web-browsing behavior to maximize the campaign's impact and target people who are recreational, at-risk, and problem gamblers.

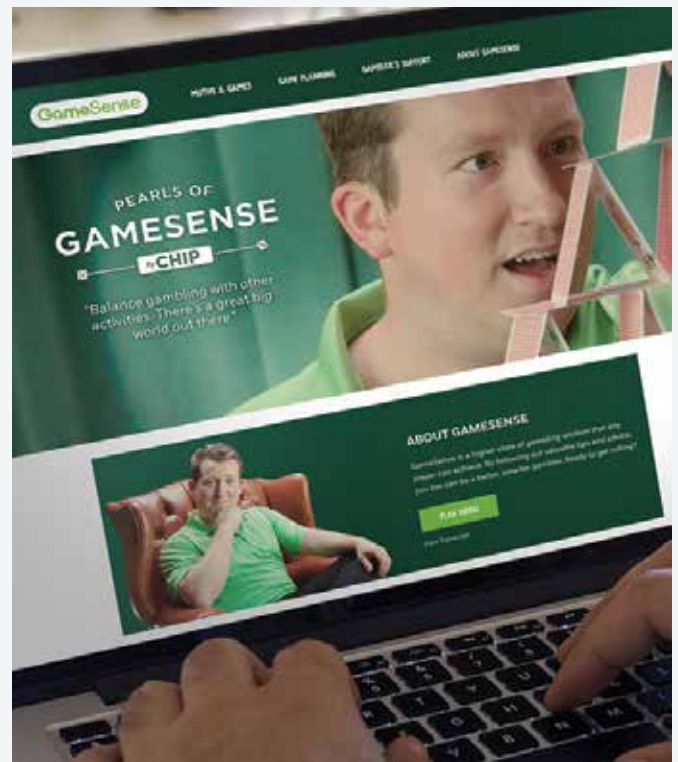


## Digital Strategy

Social media platforms are used to communicate relevant, organic content. Social media platforms are powerful communication vehicles, as they allow for timely and relevant content based on current events or industry trends as well as collaboration with casino operators and other responsible gaming stakeholders.

## Website

GameSenseMA.com offers practical responsible gaming tips, interactive tools, myth-busting games, and valuable information about how to access support resources and services such as the VSE program.





A close-up photograph of a man with short dark hair and a light beard, wearing a blue textured polo shirt. He is looking down and to the right with a slight smile, holding a newspaper. The background is blurred with warm, bokeh-style lights.

## GAMESENSE IN THE NEWS

GameSense has been highlighted by both local and national news sources spanning **radio, TV, digital, and newsprint.**

## MGM host referred ‘top-tier player’ for problem gaming help

State House News Service | March 28, 2019

As problem gambling awareness month draws to a close, a longtime responsible gaming advisor who works with the Gaming Commission said Massachusetts’s efforts to educate players are working and having an influence on the casino industry.

Amy Gabrila, a senior advisor with the commission’s GameSense program, told regulators Thursday that a recent interaction with an executive host from MGM Springfield—whose job is to cater to high rollers and to cultivate regular players—moved her to tears.

She said she recently led a “grueling” training session on responsible gaming and the resources GameSense makes available to all players with MGM Springfield officials, including this particular executive host. Shortly after the session, the executive host referred a client—a top-tier player—to Gabrila for assistance with potentially problematic gambling.

“Honestly, I cried,” Gabrila told the Gaming Commission. “Never in my 22 years in this business would I have ever believed that an executive host—a guy who lives off getting people to play, that’s his business—was willing to drop off one of his best accounts to me because he felt it was the right thing to do.”

“

**THE FACT IS THAT WE ARE NOW IN THIS SPACE WHERE WE’RE CHANGING THE NARRATIVE OF RESPONSIBLE GAMBLING IN THE INDUSTRY FROM THE INSIDE OUT.**

The commission adopted GameSense as its “comprehensive responsible gaming strategy,” and the program includes information centers in each of the state’s gaming facilities and advisors like Gabrila whose interventions range from casual conversations about things like betting odds to more in-depth assistance.

Gabrila said the state’s efforts to promote responsible gaming have rubbed off on staff at MGM Springfield, which opened in August. She said 10 of the last 15 people who have added themselves to the state’s voluntary gaming exclusion list did so after an MGM Springfield staff member referred them to GameSense.

“The fact is that we are now in this space where we’re changing the narrative of responsible gambling in the industry from the inside out,” Gabrila said. She added, “It blows my mind... It’s something I never thought would happen.”



**Amy Gabrila**  
Senior Advisor,  
GameSense

# WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

## Closing Message from Mark Vander Linden, MGC Director of Research and Responsible Gaming



The Massachusetts Legislature laid out **a vision for casino gaming** that would bring jobs and the greatest possible economic benefit to the commonwealth. They understood that in order to achieve this vision there must also be a plan to mitigate the negative consequences, because for every person who is harmed by gambling, the benefits begin to erode. As outlined in this report, GameSense has quickly become an effective frontline response, working both inside the casino and out in the community to meet this challenge and advance the MGC's objectives of providing accurate and balanced information to promote positive play; providing patrons experiencing gambling-related harm with timely and appropriate information; and creating a shared understanding of responsible gaming among individuals, communities, the gaming industry, and government.

I'm thrilled by the early success of this program, but we remain committed to finding new and innovative ways to meet the needs of the commonwealth. As gambling changes, **we will continue to adapt our strategies while remaining true to core objectives.**









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To learn more about our program,  
visit us at [GameSenseMA.com](http://GameSenseMA.com).