

## **Financial Costs of Gambling Addictions**

The most obvious costs of problem gambling are the expenses associated with gambling activities, such as sports betting, online gambling, lotteries, horse tracks, and casinos. Other economic side effects of problem gambling can include:

**Increased Debt:** Compulsive gambling results in a destructive “snowball effect” on finances. The average person receiving treatment for compulsive gambling is over \$30,000 in debt from gambling activities alone.

Many individuals who gamble max-out their credit cards and open up new lines of credit in order to fund their gambling. This increased debt frequently results in ruined credit, because anytime a person opens up a new credit card or charges it to more than 30% of its limit, their credit drops as a result. If a person has multiple lines of credit that are maxed out, they probably will also have difficulty making minimum payments. People struggling with gambling addictions frequently use money set aside for bills and paying off debts on gambling.

**Higher Chance of Bankruptcy and Foreclosure:** Individuals struggling with gambling addictions have a much higher chance of filing for bankruptcy. In Ontario, an estimated 20% of people with gambling addictions file for bankruptcy, while the overall bankruptcy rate is just 0.4%. People who struggle with compulsive gambling are also more likely to default on their mortgages and foreclose on their homes.

**Recovery Costs:** People who struggle with gambling addictions and decide to seek treatment can face thousands of dollars in recovery costs, from outpatient treatment with a counselor to the higher costs of an inpatient treatment facility. Yet without treatment, people struggling with compulsive gambling are more likely to relapse. Gambling recovery costs are much less in the bigger picture than the costs of not receiving treatment.

If you think you have lost control over your gambling or have developed an addiction, you can contact local resources for gambling addiction or call Gamblers Anonymous at 1-888-GA-HELPS.<sup>105</sup> To find help and resources in your state for problem gambling recovery, visit: <https://www.ncpgambling.org/help-treatment/help-by-state/>

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<sup>105</sup> Original material from Peerlink National Technical Assistance Center.