



2024 Youth Gambling Survey Results

Overview

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) Office of Problem Gambling (OPG) provides funding to the California Friday Night Live Partnership (CFNLP) to support the Betting On Our Future (BOOF) program. As a youth-led program, BOOF chapters across California increase awareness and shift social norms to prevent underage gambling and problematic gambling behaviors. Student leaders utilize a variety of strategies to educate and engage their local communities on the issue:

- **Multimedia Marketing Campaign:** Chapter members develop and create public service announcements and graphics that engage their peers, promoting education around the harms of underage gambling.
- **Merchant and Community Outreach:** BOOF chapters work with local lottery merchants and the broader community to reduce youth access to gambling activities and products.
- **Project Promotion:** Through regular social media and community engagement, BOOF chapter projects are highlighted throughout the program year. These include activities specific to Problem Gambling Awareness Month that tie into statewide and national efforts in March.
- **Youth Participatory Action Research:** Youth chapter members administer the Youth Gambling Survey among their peers to assess the prevalence of underage gambling among California youth, as well as access and attitudes. Findings from this survey support BOOF chapters' campaign, outreach, and promotion activities.

Throughout the program cycle, BOOF chapters share resources that provide help for individuals affected by problematic gambling behaviors; these include a hotline, text line, and website.

Survey Administration & Analysis Methodology

The BOOF Youth Gambling Survey consisted of basic demographic questions and items to assess gambling behaviors and attitudes. The survey was made available to youth between the ages of 10 and 25 years across California via an online survey link through SurveyMonkey. BOOF sites directed program participants to the survey link between October 19 – December 6, 2025, and instructed them to share the link with peers within their network and have those youth also further disseminate the survey to youth within their respective circles.

1,521 surveys
were collected from
42 California
counties

Descriptive analyses were used to summarize the data. Non-parametric tests (i.e., Mann-Whitney U) and chi-square examined associations between gambling attitudes and behaviors, and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) examined the association between age at first gambled and frequency of gambling.

¹ This report was prepared by Kathleen Tebb, Ph.D., on behalf of the CFNLP with funding from CDPH - OPG. 1/19/2025

Results: Participant Demographics

Survey Responses

A total of 1,521 surveys were collected from youth between the ages of 10 and 25 years of age.

Survey Responses by County

Of the 1,521 survey respondents, 1,324 (87.0%) reported the county that they came from. They represented 42 counties across California. **Table 1** shows the distribution of survey respondents by county. An additional 46 stated they did not know what county they were from.

Table 1. County (in alphabetical order)	N	Percent
Alameda	8	0.6%
Amador	86	6.5%
Butte	7	0.5%
Calaveras	4	0.3%
Colusa	7	0.5%
Contra Costa	3	0.2%
Del Norte	2	0.2%
El Dorado	1	0.1%
Fresno	330	24.9%
Glenn	65	4.9%
Humboldt	5	0.4%
Imperial	1	0.1%
Los Angeles	22	1.7%
Madera	4	0.3%
Mariposa	6	0.5%
Mendocino	1	0.1%
Modoc	86	6.5%
Monterey	3	0.2%
Napa	380	28.7%
Nevada	4	0.3%
Orange	28	2.1%
Plumas	1	0.1%
Riverside	16	1.2%
Sacramento	7	0.5%
San Bernardino	25	1.9%
San Diego	5	0.4%
San Francisco	19	1.4%
San Joaquin	4	0.3%
San Luis Obispo	11	0.8%
San Mateo	1	0.1%
Santa Clara	70	5.3%
Shasta	2	0.2%
Sierra	4	0.3%
Siskiyou	3	0.2%
Solano	67	5.1%
Sonoma	4	0.3%
Stanislaus	4	0.3%
Sutter	1	0.1%
Trinity	5	0.4%
Tulare	16	1.2%
Tuolumne	5	0.4%
Yuba	1	0.1%
Total	1,324	100%

Age, Ethnicity, Gender Identity, and Sex Assignment at Birth

Age: The mean age of the participants was 15.79 years (standard deviation =1.9 years).

Race/Ethnicity: Table 2 summarizes the race/ethnic distribution. They could select all that apply.

Table 2. Race/ethnicity (in alphabetical order)	N	Percent
Asian (including India and Pakistan)	381	22.2%
Black/African American	134	7.8%
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	55	3.2%
Hispanic or Latino (including Mexico, Central America, and South America)	653	38.0%
Middle Eastern or North African	23	1.3%
Native/Indigenous	110	6.4%
White/European	312	18.2%
Prefer not to say	46	2.7%
Other responses*	3	0.2%
Total	1,717	100%

* Other: Cajun (n=1), Mixed (n=1), and Don't know (n=1).

Current Gender Identity: Table 3 provides the distribution of participants' gender identity.

Table 3. Gender (in order by frequency)	N	Percent
Female	698	50.3%
Male	603	43.5%
Transgender	17	1.2%
Gender non-binary	11	0.8%
Gender fluid	10	0.7%
Two-Spirit	3	0.2%
Other*	3	0.2%
Preferred not to say	36	2.6%
Do not know	6	0.4%
Total	1,387	100%

* Other: Demi-girl (n=1), xi/xir (n=1), and xe/xer/xerself/its/it/itself/theirs/them/themself/baka/bakas (n=1)

Sex at Birth: Table 4 summarizes participants' sex assignment at birth.

Table 4. Sex at Birth	N	Percent
Female	741	54.3%
Male	623	45.7%
Total	1,364	100%

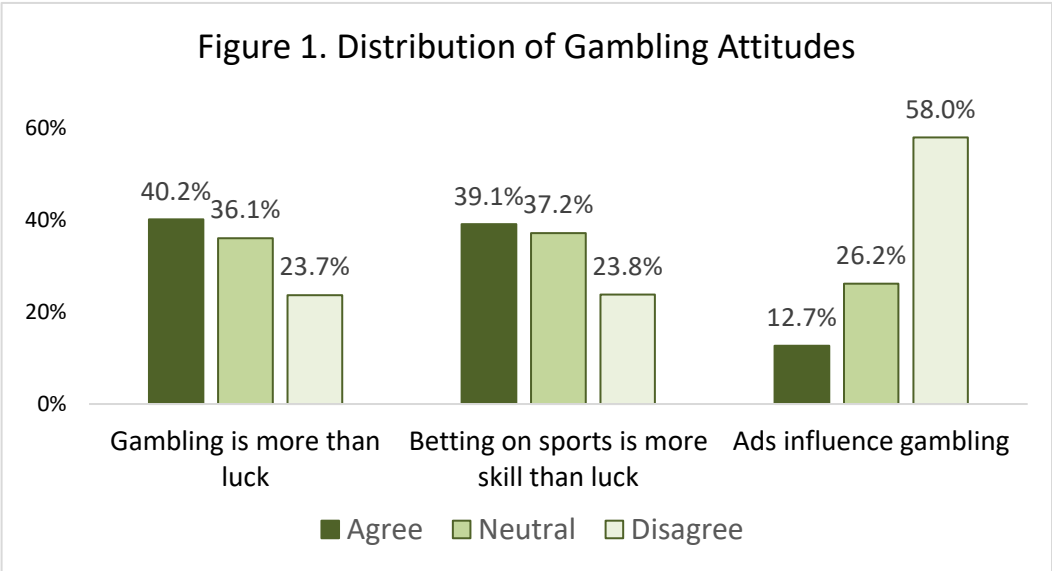
Results: Gambling Attitudes

Attitudes Toward Gambling

Participants were asked to rate three statements about gambling using a 5-pt Likert scale from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. **Table 5** shows the distribution of responses for each item.

Table 5. Attitude Statements:	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neither Agree nor Disagree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. Gambling is more than just luck.	106	7.7%	449	32.5%	499	36.1%	215	15.5%	114	8.2%
2. Betting on sports requires more skill than luck.	132	9.6%	407	29.5%	514	37.2%	291	15.8%	110	8.0%
3. Advertisements influence my gambling/betting behaviors.	57	4.1%	119	8.6%	362	26.2%	390	28.2%	453	29.8%

Figure 1 displays the distribution of dichotomized data where Strongly Agree/Agree and Strongly Disagree/Disagree are combined. A total of 40.2% agreed with the statement that gambling is more than luck and 39.1% agreed with the statement that betting on sports requires more skill than luck. A few participants (12.7%) reported that advertisements influence their gambling behaviors.



Results: Gambling Behaviors

Age when First Gambled

The mean age when participants first started gambling was 11.25 years (range 1-22 years, standard deviation 3.39 years). **Table 6** shows the distribution of ages when first gambled. Almost all started gambling as minors, under 18 years of age and over one-third started gambling at age 10 or younger.

Table 6: Distribution of Age when 1st Gambled

Age	N	Percent
< 5 years	25	2.6%
6-10 years	307	31.5%
11-12	211	21.6%
13-15	333	34.1%
16-17	81	8.3%
18-22	19	1.9%
Total	976	100%

34.1% were 10 yrs. or younger when 1st gambled

98.1% were <18 years of age when 1st gambled

Types of Gambling Activities

Participants were asked if they have ever participated in a series of activities. A total of 83.7% of survey respondents reported engaging in at least one activity, and of these, most (67.9%) reported engaging in two or more activities. The frequencies and percents are reported in **Table 7**. The most frequent gambling activity was playing cards for money or something else of value at 13.9%, this was followed by personal challenges at 12.5%, and bingo at 11.4%. Participants were then asked to report if they considered each of these activities as gambling or not. Almost all respondents (93.2%) considered at least one of the activities to be gambling and only 103 (6.8%) did not consider any of the activities to be gambling. There was considerable variation by type of activity. For instance, 11.7% considered cards to be a type of gambling activity (the activity with the highest percentage) and only 5.5% considered a dare or personal challenge to be a type of gambling activity, even though the item included the statement that the activity was done “for money or something else of value” (**Table 7**).

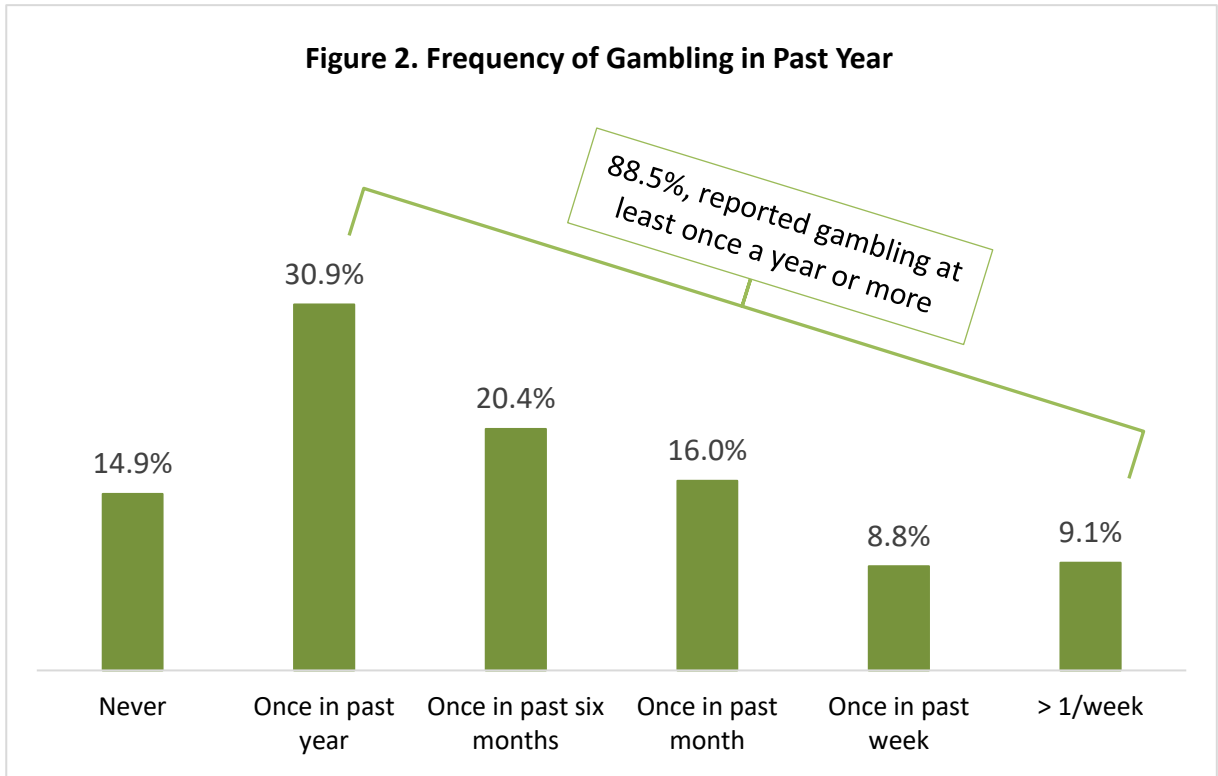
Table 7: Type of Activity	Engaged in activity		Considered activity gambling	
	N	%	N	%
Cards (when played for money or something else of value)	640	13.9%	988	11.7%
Personal challenges (like a dare for money or something else of value)	577	12.5%	466	5.5%
Bingo (when played for money or something else of value)	525	11.4%	628	7.4%
Cultural games that involve betting or gambling (e.g., Loteria, Mah Jong, Keno, Pai Gow, Pachinko)	493	10.7%	610	7.2%
Video games that involve gambling or betting	464	10.1%	718	8.5%
Scratchers	454	9.9%	813	9.6%
Sports betting (e.g., football, baseball, basketball, hockey, soccer, golf, bowling, pool, horse/animal racing, animal fighting)	450	9.8%	923	10.9%
Dice (when played for money or something else of value)	349	7.6%	900	10.7%
Lottery tickets	334	7.2%	900	10.7%
Fantasy sports (e.g., daily, season long, or pick 'em)	187	4.1%	563	6.7%
Social casino games (e.g., free-to-play gambling-like games on social networking sites)	121	2.6%	930	11.0%
Other types of gambling activities*	14	0.3%	n/a	n/a
Total	4,608	100%	8,439	100%

* Other activities include: Roblox (n=2), On-line gambling (n=2), Gacha games (n=2), Betting-not specified (n=1), Chess (n=1), Call of duty zombie mystery boxes (n=1), Blind boxes (n=1), Roulette in Minecraft (n=1), Marbles (n=1), Birthday (n=1), 8-Ball games (n=1)

Frequency of Gambling

When asked about gambling in the past year, most of the survey respondents, 88.5%, reported gambling at least once a year or more and 33.9% reported gambling in the past month. **Table 8** and **Figure 2** show the distribution of gambling frequency.

Table 8. Frequency of Gambling	N	Percent
More than once a week	129	9.1%
At least once in the past week	124	8.8%
At least once in the past month	226	16.0%
At least once in the past six months	288	20.4%
At least once in the past year	436	30.9%
Never in the past year	210	14.9%
Total	1,413	100%



Association between participation in gambling and gambling attitudes

Table 9 shows the comparisons of mean ratings on three attitudinal statements between those who gambled and those who did not on gambling attitudes. Compared to those who never participated in a gambling activity,

those who reported ever gambling (in at least 1 activity) were significantly more likely to agree with the statements that gambling is more than luck, that betting on sports requires more skill than luck, and that advertisements influence their gambling behaviors.

Table 9: Association between gambling attitudes and behaviors	Ever Gambled		
	Yes	No	p-value
Gambling is more than just luck	3.18	3.04	0.048
Betting on sports requires more skill than luck	3.20	3.03	0.023
Advertisements influence my gambling/betting behaviors	2.29	1.93	<0.001

Purchases of Loot Boxes and Video Games/ E-Sports

Loot boxes are a feature of many video/online games that contain a randomized collection of rewards such as in-game weapons, costumes, in-game currency, and more. This feature typically involves a sealed mystery box or treasure chest that can be earned through playing the game (e.g., leveling up) and/or paid for with real money (virtual dollars in the game, e.g., “V-bucks”). Of the 1,170 youth who answered this question, half (50.3%) reported purchasing a loot box. Participants were also asked if they played video games or e-sports and of the 1,510 who answered this question, 78.0% reported having done so.

Compared to those who did not purchase a loot box, those who did make a purchase were significantly more likely to agree with the statements that gambling is more than luck, that advertisements influence their gambling behavior (as indicated by higher mean ratings), and to state that

video games are a type of gambling (**Table 10**). There was no significant difference between groups on the statement that betting on sports requires

Table 10: Association between loot box purchase and gambling attitudes and behaviors	Purchased Loot Box		
	Yes	No	p-value
Gambling is more than just luck	3.26	3.12	0.005
Betting on sports requires more skill than luck	3.19	3.20	0.756
Advertisements influence my gambling/betting behaviors	2.42	2.15	<0.001
Video games are a type of gambling (n)	311	258	<0.001
Frequency of gambling	2.6	2.1	<0.001
Mean age (in years) when first gambled	11.5	10.9	0.014

more skill than luck. When the frequency of gambling was recoded using a 6-point scale (0=never

gambled in past year to 5=gambled more than once a week), those who purchased a loot box gambled more frequently (indicated by higher mean ratings). In addition, those who purchased a loot box started gambling at an earlier age.

Gambling Frequency by Sex Assignment at Birth

The frequency of gambling for males was significantly greater than for females as indicated by higher mean ratings (2.66 vs. 1.88 respectively, $p < 0.001$).

Gambling Frequency by Age when 1st Gambled

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to examine the association between age at first gambled and frequency of gambling. The results revealed a significant association, $F(5,1109) = 8.41$, $p < 0.001$. Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that those who gambled frequently were significantly younger when they first gambled compared to those who gambled less frequently ($p < 0.001$) and those who never gambled ($p < 0.001$).

Location of Gambling Activities

Of those who reported that they participated in gambling activities, they were then asked where those activities took place. Participants reported gambling in a variety of locations (Table 11). Most gambling activities occurred at home, at a friend's home, and at school.

Table 11: Gambling Activities	N	Percent
Home	1073	33.3%
Friend's home	540	16.7%
School	472	14.6%
Internet	443	13.7%
Neighborhood (street, park, etc.)	250	7.8%
Amusement park, carnival, or arcade	174	5.4%
Sporting Event	161	5.0%
Casino or card room	48	1.5%
Horse racing track	37	1.1%
Other*	26	0.8%
Total	3,224	100%

* Other locations: Powwow/tribal events (n=9), camping or hotel (n=8), grass games (n=2), hand games (n=1), the lake (n=1), wherever (n=1), prefer not to answer (n=3), and don't know (n=1)

Influencers of Gambling Behavior

Participants were asked to report who influenced their gambling behavior. Friends were the most frequently cited source of influence (26.3%). This was followed by various types of relatives. The distribution of responses is reported in **Table 12**.

Table 12: Influencers of Gambling Behavior	N	Percent
Friend/s	631	26.3%
Relative (other than parent or sibling, e.g., a cousin, aunt, uncle, grandparent)	553	14.3%
Sibling	388	16.2%
Parent/guardian	371	23.1%
Peer (e.g., someone your age in your community or school but not a friend)	342	15.5%
Other influencers*	110	4.6%
Total	2,395	100%

*Other influencers: nobody/own choice (n=83), on-line influencers (n=7), school/teacher (n=5), desire for money (n=5), tribe (n=2), advertisements (n=2), videos (n=2), culture (n=1), competitiveness/boredom (n=1), don't know (n=2).

Indicators of Problem Gambling

The survey included two items that are indicators of problem gambling. The first was, "Have you ever bet more than you planned to?" and the second was, "Have you ever lied about making a bet?" The distribution of the responses is presented in **Table 13**.

Table 13: Gambling Activities	Percent Yes	Percent No
Have you ever bet more than you planned to?	29.8%	70.2%
Have you ever lied about making a bet?	22.8%	77.2%

Those who stated that they bet more than they had planned had significantly higher rates of gambling in the past year compared to those who did not bet more than they had planned (mean frequency = 3.08 vs. 1.90 respectively, $p < 0.001$). Similarly, those who reported ever lying about making a bet had significantly higher rates of gambling behaviors than those who did not (mean frequency = 2.79 vs. 2.08 respectively, $p < 0.001$).

Conclusion

This convenience survey of 1,521 respondents represented 42 counties across California. The sample was diverse with most self-identifying as Hispanic/Latino (29%) and 14% as White/Caucasian. Just over half of the sample (54%) reported being female (sex assigned at birth).

Most of the survey respondents, 83.7%, reported ever participating in at least one type of gambling activity and of these, the majority (67.9%) engaged in two or more activities. The most frequent gambling activity was playing cards for money or something else of value which was followed by personal challenges and bingo (when played for money or something else of value). Social casino games were the least commonly reported type of gambling activity. There was a slight discrepancy in the survey data in that while 83.7% reported ever engaging in at least one type of gambling activity, 85% reported gambling at least once in the past year. These findings should be interpreted cautiously as this study was based on a convenience sample and as such was not designed to assess prevalence. Regardless, these percentages are higher than the 2021 national estimates² of adult gambling behavior which estimates that 71% of adults reported gambling in at least one activity in the past year.¹ Of those who reported gambling, most did so at their own home followed by a friend's home and at school. Participants also reported that friends and relatives most commonly influenced their gambling activities.

While most youth (78%) reported that they played video games or e-sports, only 30.5% reported playing video games that involve gambling or betting. There is a strong association between the purchase of loot boxes and problem gambling among youth.² This study found that about half of the respondents reported purchasing a loot box. When comparing youth who purchased a loot box and those who did not, there were small but statistically significant differences in gambling attitudes and behaviors. Those who purchased a loot box were significantly more likely to agree with the statement that gambling is more than luck, that advertisements influence their gambling behavior, and consider video games a type of gambling. They also gambled more frequently and started gambling at a younger age.

Frequency of gambling was associated with gender and age. Consistent with prior research, the frequency of gambling for males was significantly greater than for females.³ Further, in this survey, almost all survey participants started gambling as minors (under 18 years of age) and over one-third started gambling at age 10 or younger. This young age of gambling is particularly concerning as this study found that those who gambled more frequently were significantly younger when they first gambled compared to those who gambled less frequently ($p < 0.001$) and those who never gambled ($p < 0.001$). Prior research shows that compared to those who start gambling later in life, youth who gamble at a younger age are at a greater risk of poor

² This is the most recently available survey data; however, the National Survey of Gambling Attitudes and Gambling Experiences 3.0 report will be released on Tuesday, January 28, 2025, at 9:00am ET. Visit their website for more information at: <https://www.ncpgambling.org/ncpg/>.

mental health, substance use and family/social problems – though this association is poorly understood.⁴

This study identified a range of attitudes toward gambling. A total of 40.2% strongly agree/agree with the statement that gambling is more than luck and 39.1% agreed with the statement that betting on sports requires more skill than luck. Few participants (12.7%) reported that advertisements influence their gambling behaviors. There were small but statistically significant differences in attitudes between those who gambled and those who did not. Compared to those who never participated in a gambling activity, those who reported ever gambling (in at least 1 activity) were significantly more likely to agree with the statements that that betting on sports requires more skill than luck, and that advertisements influence their gambling behaviors; however, the association with the statement that gambling is more than luck approached but did not reach statistical significance.

This survey included two indicators of problem gambling. Almost 30% reported that they bet more than they had planned to and nearly 23% stated that they had lied about making a bet. Those who stated that they bet more than they had planned had statistically significant higher rates of gambling behaviors than those who did not. This association was also true for those who reported ever lying about making a bet.

There are some noteworthy limitations of this study. As noted previously, this study was not designed to assess prevalence of youth gambling attitudes or behaviors. Since participants came from a convenience sample, the findings are limited to those who participated in this study and are not generalizable to other youth. Further, to encourage youth participation in this survey, the survey was designed to be brief. As such, it does not completely assess underage gambling, problem gambling, or factors that influence youth gambling attitudes and behaviors.

Despite these limitations, this study provides valuable information to help inform prevention efforts. In particular, many youth in this study did not consider activities that involved placing a bet for money or something else of value as gambling. Further a substantial proportion of youth agreed with statements that gambling is more than luck (40%) and that betting on sports requires more skill than luck (39%). Further, this study found that friends, family members, peers and the internet, in varying degrees, influence their gambling behaviors and thus may provide opportunities for intervention efforts. Further, findings from this study also indicate that there are opportunities to improve knowledge and attitudes around gambling and reduce risk factors that can contribute to problematic gambling behaviors.

References

- ¹ National Council on Problem Gambling. National Survey on Gambling Attitudes and Gambling Experience 2.0. www.ncpgsurvey.org Accessed 12/28/2024.
- ² Kristiansen, S. & Severin, M.C. Loot Box Engagement and Problem Gambling Among Adolescent Gamers: Findings from a National Survey. *Addictive Behaviors*. 2020;103:106254
- ³ Wong G, Zane N, Saw A, Chan AK. Examining gender differences for gambling engagement and gambling problems among emerging adults. *J Gambl Stud*. 2013 Jun;29(2):171-89. doi: 10.1007/s10899-012-9305-1. PMID: 22585283; PMCID: PMC4736715.
- ⁴ Wilber MK, Potenza MN. Adolescent gambling: research and clinical implications. *Psychiatry (Edgmont)*. 2006 Oct;3(10):40-8. PMID: 20877546; PMCID: PMC2945873

To learn more about programs and efforts to reduce youth access to gambling activities, please visit the CFLNP website at:

www.bettingonourfuture.org

You can also visit the below social media platforms to review statewide updates and information about events and activities:



@CaliforniaFridayNightLivePartnership



@CFNLP



@BettingOnOurFuture



California Friday Night Live Partnership