

2025 – 2026 Annual Report



Connecting States. Advancing Solutions. Changing Lives.

NAADGS.org

Dennis Houston, IOM
CEO



From the CEO -

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the 2025–2026 Annual Report of the National Association of Administrators for Disordered Gambling Services (NAADGS). As I reflect on the past year, I am filled with gratitude for the remarkable dedication, collaboration, and leadership demonstrated by our members, Board of Directors, community partners, and advocates across the United States.

NAADGS exists to strengthen and support publicly funded problem gambling services by bringing together state leaders to share ideas, advance research, influence public policy, and improve access to prevention, treatment, and recovery services and build nationwide partnerships. Together, we are working toward a future where every individual and family affected by gambling disorder has access to high-quality, evidence-based care, regardless of where they live.

Over the past year, our organization has continued to grow as the national voice for state administrators responsible for problem gambling services. Through regular member meetings, collaborative workgroups, professional development opportunities, and strengthened partnerships, we have created new opportunities for states to learn from one another and address emerging challenges together.

One of the highlights of the year was our 2026 Annual Meeting in Nashville, Tennessee, where members from across the country gathered in-person and virtually to exchange innovative ideas, celebrate progress, and shape the future of our organization. We were especially proud to release the 2025 Survey of Problem Gambling Services, the nation's most comprehensive analysis of publicly funded problem gambling programs. This landmark report continues NAADGS' longstanding commitment to providing policymakers, researchers, and public health leaders with reliable data to guide informed decision-making and strengthen services nationwide.

Perhaps the greatest takeaway from our Annual Meeting was the unmistakable sense of optimism and renewed momentum shared by our members. Throughout our discussions, there was a genuine spirit of collaboration, innovation, and commitment to strengthening problem gambling services across the nation. New relationships were formed, ideas were exchanged, and a shared vision for the future emerged. That positive energy does not end in Nashville—it becomes the foundation for the year ahead. We are committed to building on this momentum by expanding member engagement, strengthening partnerships, advancing strategic initiatives, and creating new opportunities for states to learn from one another as we continue working together to improve the lives of individuals and families affected by gambling disorders.

Our advocacy efforts also gained momentum as we continued educating federal policymakers about the need for sustained investment in problem gambling prevention, treatment, research, and recovery supports. NAADGS remains a strong advocate for legislation such as the POINTS Act (Providing Opportunities for Individuals In Need of Treatment & Support) and other initiatives that recognize gambling disorder as an important public health issue deserving national attention.

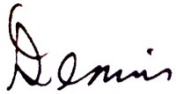
As the gambling landscape continues to evolve—with expanded sports wagering, online gaming, and new forms of gambling participation—our work has never been more important. The need for collaboration, research, education, and public awareness continues to grow, and NAADGS is uniquely positioned to help states respond with innovation, leadership, and evidence-based solutions.

While this report highlights many accomplishments, it also reflects something even more meaningful: the extraordinary people behind this work. Every day, dedicated professionals across our states work tirelessly to improve lives, support

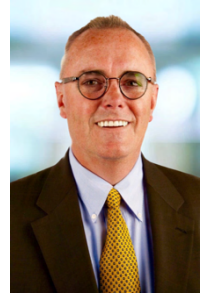
families, and build healthier communities. Your passion, expertise, and commitment inspire me, and it is truly an honor to serve alongside you.

As we look ahead, I am excited about the opportunities before us. Together, we will continue strengthening our national network, expanding educational opportunities, advancing research, fostering meaningful partnerships, and advocating for increased recognition and resources for problem gambling services throughout the United States.

The momentum we created this year gives me tremendous confidence in the future of NAADGS. Together, we are building a stronger national network, advancing meaningful change, and ensuring that individuals and families affected by gambling disorder receive the support they deserve. Thank you for being part of this important work. I look forward to what we will accomplish together in the year ahead.



Dennis Houston
CEO



Our Goal

The Organization

Our goal is to have our membership include representation from all states providing publicly funded problem gambling services in America. In doing so, we develop, enhance, and support partnerships with stakeholders in the problem gambling field. In addition, we address the issues and concerns in this field from a public administration perspective. It is in this area that NAADGS offers its membership an opportunity that cannot be found elsewhere – the collaboration and support of other administrators in this life changing field in the public sector.

Mission Statement

NAADGS will enhance state and federal efforts to raise awareness, educate, and mitigate the potential impact or related harm of gambling.

Our Vision

Every person in the United States, its territories, and freely associated states has access to problem gambling services.

Our Values

NAADGS will facilitate a unified voice through:

- The development of nationwide partnerships
- The orchestration of research in the problem gambling field
- The ongoing professional development of members on evidence-based practices
- The advocacy for those affected by gambling
- The all-inclusive provision of problem gambling services
- The collaboration with other organizations

2026 – 2027 Fiscal Year National Board of Directors

President	Jennifer Davis-Walton	VA
Vice President	Maricel Bernardo	WV
Past President	Long Banh	MA
Board Member	Rebecca Cooper	NY
Board Member	Roxanne Waldron	WA
Board Member	Elise Mikkelsen	AZ
Board Member	Heather Esheleman	MD
CEO	Dennis Houston	CO



Welcome Roxanne, Elise and Heather as new board members!

Outgoing Board Members

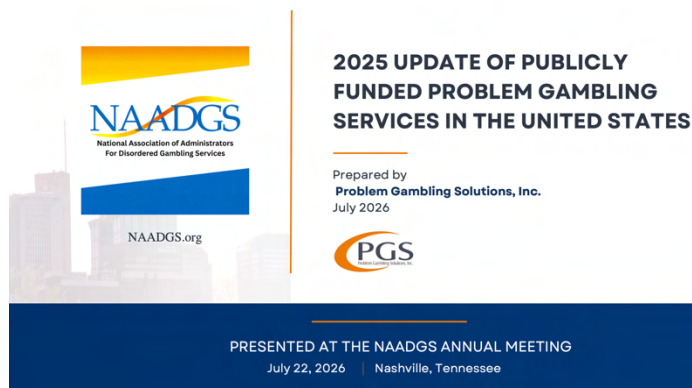
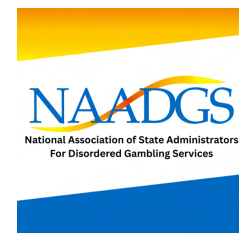
Thank you to our outgoing board members who have dedicated their time and talent to lead our organization over the past few years! We truly appreciate your contributions to the organization. You made a difference.



Liz Lanza	PA
Anne Rogers	VA
Mary Drexler	MD
Farhana Tasmin	MN

NAADGS Research

We have a long-standing national reputation for providing industry - leading problem gambling services research.



2025 Budget Update of Publicly Funded Problem Gambling Services

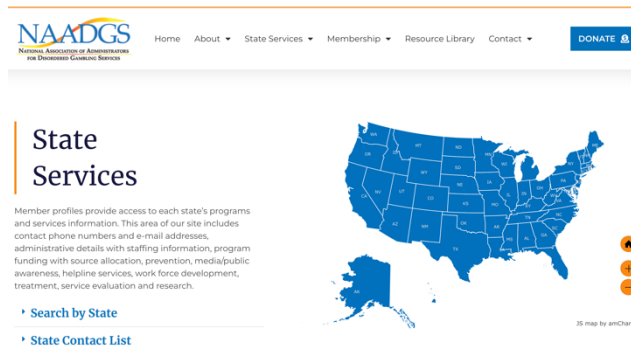
The 2025 budget updates of the Survey of Problem Gambling Services in the United States is a project of the National Association of Administrators for Disordered Gambling Services (NAADGS) and is a Supplement Report to "2021 Survey of Publicly Funded Problem Gambling Services in the United States."

We are grateful to all the state agency administrators who completed a survey or helped in the gathering of survey information. The report was prepared by Jeff Moratta and the team at Problem Gambling Solutions.

NAADGS is grateful for our funding partners who appreciate the need for such work and have generously funded this project.

NAADGS Website

Our national research projects are archived on the NAADGS website. The Resource Library section of the website has an intuitive directory for articles that are a great tool for members and the public sector. State resources and legislative updates are also key elements.



Advocacy

Our advocacy efforts are robust, particularly in support of the POINTS Act, Providing Opportunities for Individuals In Need of Treatment & Support Act, which aims to secure federal funding for problem gambling initiatives.

Advocacy is a huge priority for NAADGS over the last several years and will continue to be in the years ahead. Our board leadership, CEO and members have actively advocated on Capitol Hill for federal funding dollars to help with gambling addiction. We continue our efforts throughout the year from all the states we represent.



NAADGS on Capitol Hill



"One of our top priorities for NAADGS is fighting for successful passage of the POINTS Act. Our federal government must provide funding for the growing national gambling addiction crisis."

Dennis Houston, CEO
NAADGS

The POINTS Act - A Federal Response to Gambling Addiction **PointsAct.org**

Nearly 20 million American adults (8%) report experiencing at least one indicator of problematic gambling behavior "many times" in the past year. Gambling disorder is recognized as an addictive disorder in the DSM-5. Yet unlike alcohol or drug addiction, there is no dedicated federal funding for gambling addiction treatment or research, despite estimated annual social costs of \$14 billion.

The POINTS Act would reallocate one-third of the existing federal excise tax on sports wagers (0.25% of handle) to support prevention, treatment, and research. The bill would generate an estimated \$100 million annually without raising or creating new taxes. Federal sports wagering excise tax revenue exceeded \$150 million in FY2024 and is estimated to reach \$300 million in FY2025.

What the POINTS Act Does

Recognizes Gambling Addiction in Federal Law

Amends the Public Health Service Act to include gambling addiction alongside other substance use and mental health disorders, consistent with the DSM-5 classification of gambling disorder.

Establishes a Federal Grant Program

Creates a competitive grant program administered by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) for states, Indian Tribes, and Tribal Organizations.

Prioritizes High-Risk Populations

Directs funding toward populations at elevated risk of gambling harm, including youth, men, veterans, and Native American communities.

Supports Prevention Programs

Funds statewide and community-based initiatives that increase public awareness and educate individuals about the risks of gambling.

Expands Early Intervention

Supports training for healthcare providers and community leaders to implement Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) for gambling-related harm.

Strengthens Treatment and Recovery Services

Provides funding for outpatient treatment, telehealth services, peer recovery support such as Gamblers Anonymous, and the operation of 24/7 problem gambling helplines.

NAADGS Meetings & Networking



NAADGS Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting was held in Nashville, Tennessee in July 2026. NAADGS members from 30 states came together in Nashville and virtually throughout the country to network and learn with fellow industry professionals. The positive high energy level was amazing! Everyone is excited for the next chapter of NAADGS.



Quarterly Member National Meetings

The NAADGS family comes together quarterly via Zoom to discuss the gambling addiction, treatment and research profession among several state leaders. State Update Reports that include legislative and program updates are a key element of these sessions. State leaders share best practices of successful programs.



Legislative & Program Updates



Roundtable Discussions are a huge benefit for our members when we come together – in person or virtually. It's an incredible opportunity to learn from each other how other professionals have dealt with challenges and opportunities in their states that you may also be facing back home.

NAADGS Board of Directors

Board of Directors meets six times per year, one of which is in person in conjunction with our annual meeting.

The Executive Committee meets five times annually during months that the entire board does not meet.



Board of directors



Work Groups

NAADGS has active workgroups that have established work objectives. The NAADGS work groups include the following:



Advocacy	Funding
Learning Community	Education and Resource Library
Data and Emerging Trends	Prevention
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion	State Survey Steering

Each of these workgroups represents functions and tasks that are important to the association and contribute to the advancement and health of the profession.

Marketing and Communications

NAADGS distributes a quarterly newsletter to its members to keep them informed about events, trainings, work processes, and other news of interest.

NAADGS is hosted an informational exhibit at the NCPG conference in Nashville, Tennessee in July 2026. The exhibit gave NAADGS members the opportunity to meet many of the 800-plus conference attendees from throughout the country.



The NAADGS Nationwide Team



Dennis Houston	CEO	Colorado
Kate Scaley	Business Manager	Massachusetts
Cynthia Salzman	Website Manager	New York
Jenn Blees	Administrative Assistant	Minnesota

The NAADGS team manages the organization from four different states in three time zones.



Dennis Houston
CEO

402.802.6381
dennis@naadgs.org

The Future

The future of NAADGS has never been brighter.

As legalized gambling continues to expand across the United States, so does the need for strong public health leadership, collaboration, research, and access to effective prevention, treatment, and recovery services. NAADGS is uniquely positioned to help states meet these evolving challenges by serving as the national network for publicly funded problem gambling administrators.

In the coming year, we look forward to welcoming additional states into our membership while also deepening engagement within existing member states. We believe our greatest strength lies not only in the number of member states we serve, but in the growing network of professionals who actively share ideas, collaborate on solutions, and learn from one another. Through expanded participation in NAADGS workgroups, learning communities, and professional development opportunities, members will continue to shape the future of gambling health across the country.

We will continue investing in the resources that matter most to our members. This includes expanding our national resource library, strengthening our research initiatives, publishing timely data and best practices, and providing educational opportunities that help states build and sustain high-quality, evidence-based programs. Our commitment to innovation and continuous learning remains at the heart of everything we do.

Looking ahead, NAADGS will also continue strengthening its organizational capacity through strategic partnerships, diversified funding, and expanded collaboration with government agencies, researchers, healthcare leaders, nonprofit organizations, and other mission-aligned partners. These relationships will help us accelerate our impact while ensuring the long-term sustainability of the association.

Most importantly, we believe the future will be built through relationships. The momentum created at our 2026 Annual Meeting in Nashville demonstrated the power of bringing passionate professionals together around a common purpose. That energy continues to inspire us as we build a stronger national community committed to improving the lives of individuals, families, and communities affected by gambling disorder.

Together, we are not simply responding to the changing gambling landscape—we are helping shape the future of gambling health in America. We look forward to the journey ahead and invite you to join us as we continue advancing our shared mission, one state, one partnership, and one life at a time.

