



MARION COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

**Board Session Agenda Review Form**

Meeting date: Wednesday, March 11, 2026, 9:00am

Department: Health & Human Services

Title: March is National Problem Gambling Awareness Month

Management Update/Work Session Date: 3/3/2026 Audio/Visual aids

Time Required: 10 Contact: Samantha Andress Phone: 503-585-4903

Requested Action: Having the Board of Commissioners support and issue a Proclamation which aligns with national and state efforts and increases credibility of County programs. It also brings the issue of problem gambling to public focus, increases community awareness of risks, generates support for prevention and treatment efforts and connection to free effective local resources in our community.

Issue, Description & Background: The National Council on Problem Gambling and the State of Oregon have declared March 2026 as Problem Gambling Awareness Month. In Marion County, problem gambling is often overlooked and not widely recognized as a public health issue. However, in Oregon, 9% (approx. 310,410 adults) are at moderate risk (at-risk population), 6% (approx. 206,940 adults) are in the high-risk category, and of those at high risk, 3% (103,470 adults) meet the clinical criteria for Gambling Disorder. This issue significantly affects local residents of all ages and backgrounds, leading to serious personal, social, health, and financial consequences. In past years Marion County has supported and issued a proclamation for Problem Gambling Awareness Month, which aligns with national and state efforts and increased credibility of County.

Financial Impacts:

Impacts to Department & External Agencies:

List of attachments: PowerPoint Presentation; Proclamation

Presenter: Heidi Johnson, HE3 Problem Gambling Prevention Program

Department Head Signature: Ryan Matthews Digitally signed by Ryan Matthews Date: 2026.02.12 15:04:56 -08'00'

# Problem Gambling Prevention in Marion County

Heidi Johnson, Problem Gambling Health Educator  
Marion County Health Promotion & Prevention



*Marion County*

OREGON

Health & Human Services

# Importance of Awareness



## PROBLEM GAMBLING AWARENESS MONTH

→ **CARING COMMUNITIES,  
STRONGER FUTURES**

### **Problem Gambling:**

Continuation of gambling activities despite negative personal, social, or financial consequences.

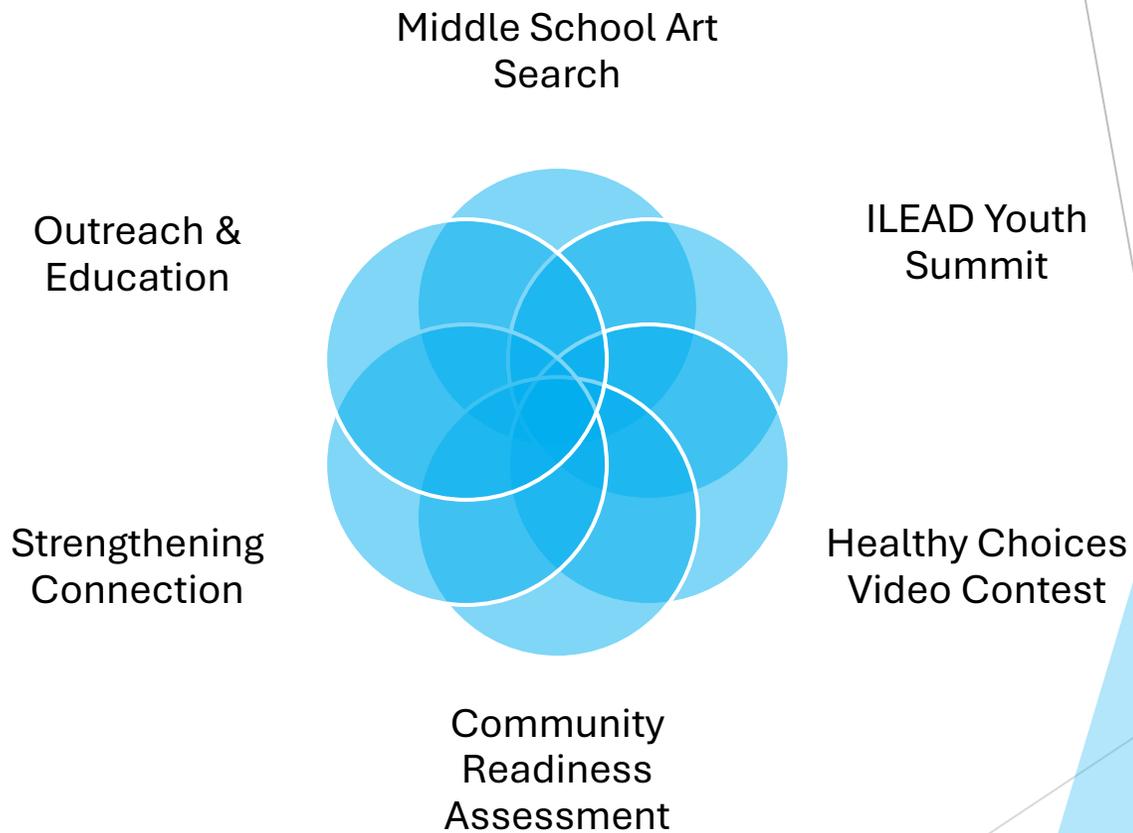
- ▶ Importance of Increasing Awareness:
  - Lower stigma and shame around seeking help
  - Promote responsible gambling
  - Decrease negative individual and social impacts, including:
    - Financial instability
    - Strain on families and relationships
    - Criminal justice involvement
    - Co-occurring mental health and substance use concerns

## 2026 Problem Gambling Awareness Month



“Caring Communities, Stronger Futures” emphasizes the importance of a community-driven approach to problem gambling awareness and support. When a community comes together, friends, families, educators, healthcare providers, local partners and policymakers, silence is replaced with support and isolation is replaced with connection.

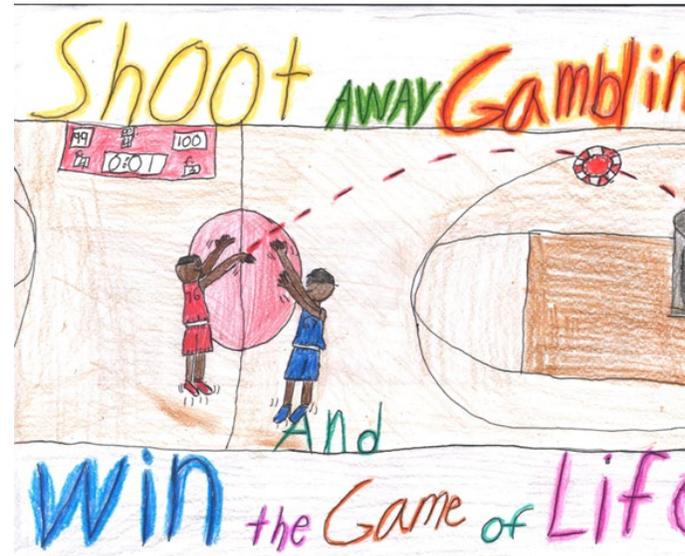
# Awareness Initiatives & Accomplishments



# Middle School Art Search

- ▶ Annual Marion County Middle School Art Search featuring over 150 entries from youth across the county
- ▶ Voting is conducted internally among all Marion County employees and serves as an awareness-building tool
- ▶ Top 12 student artists are recognized and surprised with awards at school assemblies or in their classrooms
- ▶ The winning artwork is showcased in an awareness calendar and distributed throughout the county to promote awareness

[Join Middle School Art Search](#)



# ILEAD Youth Summit



- ▶ Engages youth in leadership, personal growth and life readiness
- ▶ Integrates mental health, substance use, and problem gambling prevention into leadership development
- ▶ Promotes financial literacy and risk awareness
- ▶ Strengthens protective factors through skill-building

# Strengthening Youth Protective Factors

## ► Healthy Choices Video Contest

- Partnership with Polk County, Capital Community Media & Salem Health
- 12 video submissions
- More than 30 youth participants
- Community red carpet awards event for participants, families and educators



# Problem Gambling Community Readiness Assessment

- ▶ Purpose:
  - Gauge awareness and readiness to address problem gambling
  - Identify gaps in resources, education, and support
- ▶ How CRA is Conducted:
  - 8 interviews in different community sectors throughout Marion County
  - Score interviews to determine readiness level
- ▶ Why it Matters:
  - Provides a baseline and a measure of progress
  - Informs program initiatives to better meet community needs
  - Strengthens partnerships and community support



# Building Connection Builds Prevention

Strong relationships with family, peers, and community reduce the risk of problem gambling, mental health challenges, and substance misuse

Connection fosters resilience & healthy coping skills

Collaborative prevention efforts like PG and MH programs, strengthen community supports

Early engagement in supportive networks prevents escalation of risky behaviors



# Outreach and Education

- ▶ Education on stress coping tools and tabling events
- ▶ Collaborating with Mental Health Promotion to create power of social connection presentations
- ▶ Community and classroom education presentations
- ▶ Outreach events at colleges



# Program Objectives for 2026

- ▶ Strengthen community prevention efforts
- ▶ Increase awareness of problem gambling
- ▶ Promote protective factors among youth
- ▶ Encourage responsible gambling
- ▶ Reduce stigma and improve access to help

Youth: Build  
resilience among  
youth

Community:  
Increase  
awareness through  
BOC Proclamation

Universal:  
Continue  
connection  
planning

# Where to Find Help



▶ Anyone struggling with gambling can receive free help!

▶ Those who are impacted by someone else's gambling can also receive help

▶ Visit [OPGR.org](https://www.opgr.org) or 1-877-MY-LIMIT

▶ New resource: [Evive](https://www.eviveapp.com)

- Available to any Oregon resident to help build self-awareness and healthier gambling habits
- Offers personalized, evidence-based, 24/7 support, including tools to track behavior and set limits



# Thank You for Your Consideration for Problem Gambling Awareness Month!

**Heidi Johnson**

Problem Gambling Health Educator

Marion County Health Promotion & Prevention

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BEFORE THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

FOR MARION COUNTY, OREGON

In the matter of proclaiming the month of )  
March 2026 as Problem Gambling )  
Awareness Month in Marion County. )

**PROCLAMATION**

This matter came before the Marion County Board of Commissioners at its regularly scheduled public meeting on March 11, 2026

WHEREAS, the National Council on Problem Gambling and the State of Oregon have designated March 2026 as Problem Gambling Awareness Month; and

WHEREAS, the health of Marion County residents is of utmost importance to the well-being of Marion County as a whole; and

WHEREAS, problem gambling is a public health concern impacting Marion County residents of all ages and backgrounds in all communities, and has significant personal, social, health, and financial repercussions; and

WHEREAS, problem gambling is treatable, and treatment is effective in minimizing this harm to both individuals and society as a whole; and

WHEREAS, Marion County is dedicated to reducing the negative effects of gambling for all Marion County residents through balanced policies and effective systems of problem gambling services such as targeted prevention programs and treatment services; now, therefore

IT IS HEREBY PROCLAIMED that the month of March 2026 is Problem Gambling Awareness Month in Marion County.

DATED at Salem, Oregon, this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2026.

MARION COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson

\_\_\_\_\_  
Commissioner

\_\_\_\_\_  
Commissioner