

## **Youth Gambling in Nova Scotia**

### **Background and Rationale**

Youth health data in Nova Scotia is not comprehensively captured, and existing data collection systems may not reflect the realities of how youth experience the world today, particularly in digital environments. Data on youth gambling were last collected through the Nova Scotia Student Drug Use Survey, which ended in 2011. While substance use data continue to be collected through national surveys, comparable data on youth gambling are not available. Over the past 14 years, the gambling landscape has changed significantly due to increased online access, the expansion of high-risk gambling opportunities, and growing exposure to gambling advertising and marketing. Despite legislation restricting youth gambling, online gaming platforms, mobile applications, social casino games, and unregulated gambling sites have increased youth exposure and potential access.

### **Project Purpose**

This project aims to generate current evidence on gambling among Nova Scotia youth (aged 12–18 years), including gambling influences, behaviours, harms, and access to supports and services. The evidence will inform provincial policy, prevention, education, and treatment planning.

**Total Budget:** \$450,576

**Timeline:** 2- year project 2026-2028

### **Scope of Work**

Informed by engagement with an advisory group of subject matter and context experts, the successful vendor will:

1. Conduct an environmental scan and synthesize relevant literature, data, policies, programs, services, and best practices from provincial, national, and international sources to:

- Assess the current state of evidence on youth gambling.
- Identify trends, emerging issues, and effective approaches to prevention and treatment.
- Identify key data and knowledge gaps related to youth gambling.

2. Collect and analyze quantitative and qualitative data related to:

- The prevalence, frequency, and types of gambling among Nova Scotia youth aged 12–18.
- Gambling attitudes, motivations, behaviours, and participation patterns.
- Social, environmental, digital, and commercial influences on youth gambling.
- Risk factors and gambling-related harms, including impacts on mental health, well-being, relationships, academic outcomes, and financial health.
- Awareness of, access to, and use of gambling-related supports and services among youth.

3. Prepare a final report that:

- Presents findings on youth gambling influences, behaviours, harms, and support needs in Nova Scotia.

- Identifies data and knowledge gaps and priorities for future research and surveillance.
- Provides evidence-informed recommendations to support policy, prevention, education, treatment, and service planning.

### **Expected Outcomes**

- A synthesis of current evidence, trends, best and promising practices, and data gaps related to youth gambling prevention, policy, programs, and services.
- Baseline data on youth gambling landscape including exposures, influences, behaviours, harms, risks and access to supports and services in Nova Scotia.
- Recommendations to inform future surveillance, research, policy, programs, and services aimed at reducing gambling-related harms among youth.

Please note: this funding cannot be used to support data collection from youth during in-class learning time. Prospective applicants will need to establish a creative data collection strategy that falls outside of this period.

### **Impact**

Findings will improve understanding of youth gambling in Nova Scotia, including the factors that influence participation, associated harms, available supports, and existing data gaps. This information will support evidence-informed policies, programs, services, and future monitoring efforts to help prevent and reduce gambling-related harms among youth.