



Culture Matters:

Problem Gambling Prevention and the Latino Community

Date: October 1, 2026 | 10:30 am – 12 pm ET



Presenter:
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Objectives



- 1** Know your community: Latinx/e demographics
- 2** Define gambling, different forms, trends, and the impact in Latinx/e communities
- 3** Define Structural Determinants of Health and social factors that may influence gambling in Latinx/e communities.
- 4** Discuss cultural elements, characteristics and values of Latinx/e individuals and families & best practices for those experiencing gambling related harm.
- 5** Identify 3-4 culturally relevant strategies to incorporate into programming and delivery
- 6** Discuss available resources for training and workforce development opportunities.

Chat Questions

- What motivated you to sign up for this training?
- On a scale of 1-5 how would you rate your knowledge on culturally responsive practices with Latinx/e clients?
- What have you found most challenging when supporting Latinx/e clients?

Latinx/e Demographics

U.S., Massachusetts and Hampden County Data

US Hispanic/Latino Population

Largest states: CA, TX, FL (nearly half of all U.S. Hispanics)

Growth spreading fastest to **Southeast & Midwest States**

Growth driven by **U.S. born youth + recent immigration**

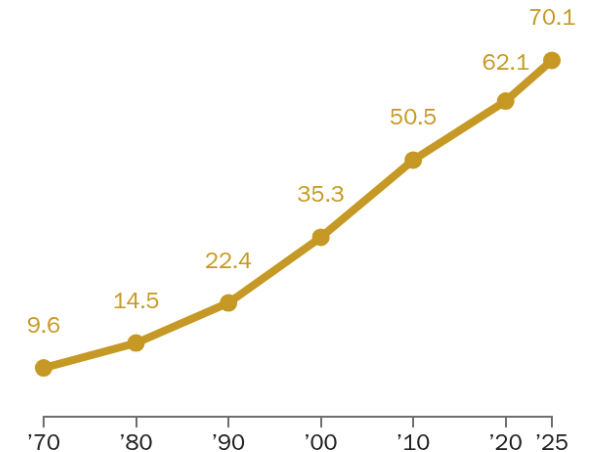
In 2024, 79% of all U.S. Latinos were **U.S. citizens**

Source: Pew Research Center; Census Bureau; U.S. Census Bureau, Vintage 2025 Population Estimates

70 Million in 2025
21% of the population

U.S. Hispanic population reached 70 million in 2025

Population of Hispanics in the United States, 1970-2025, in millions



Note: Population totals as of April 1 for 1970-2020 and July 1 for 2025. Hispanics are of any race.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 1970-1980 estimates based on decennial censuses (see 2008 report "U.S. Population Projections: 2005-2050"), 1990-2020 P.L. 94-171 census data, and Vintage 2025 Census Bureau population estimates.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Time For A Poll

Hispanic/Latino population in MA

Of the Hispanic/Latino population in MA, what ethnic group represents the greatest % of the population? (Select one)

- Cuban
- Dominican
- Puerto Rican
- Central American

Taking A Closer Look



- **57.3%** of those of Hispanic or Latino origin in the **Us** were of **Mexican** origin
 - **9%** were *Puerto Rican (fluctuates due to the diaspora)*
 - **4.3 % Cuban**
 - **4.1 % Salvadoran**
 - **3.7 % Dominican**
 - **3.2 % Guatemalan**
 - **2.6 % Colombian**

The remainder consisted of some other *Central American, South American* or other *Hispanic/Latino* origin **15.8%**.

Northeastern Metros Are The Most Diverse

Latino population by origin in selected U.S. metropolitan areas, 2022

Region	Leading Share	Pattern	Selected Metros
Northeast	≤42% largest named group	No single origin dominates	New York: 24% Dominican Philadelphia: 42% Puerto Rican • Boston: 28% Dominican
Midwest	61–77% Mexican origin	One group leads	Chicago 77% • Minneapolis 61% Kansas City 69%
South	39–77% leading group	Two distinct patterns	Miami: 39% Cuban • Houston: 67% Mexican Dallas: 77% Mexican
West	75–85% Mexican origin	Most concentrated	Los Angeles 75% • Riverside 85% Phoenix 84%

The Northeast is the exception: its Latino population is distributed across several origin groups.

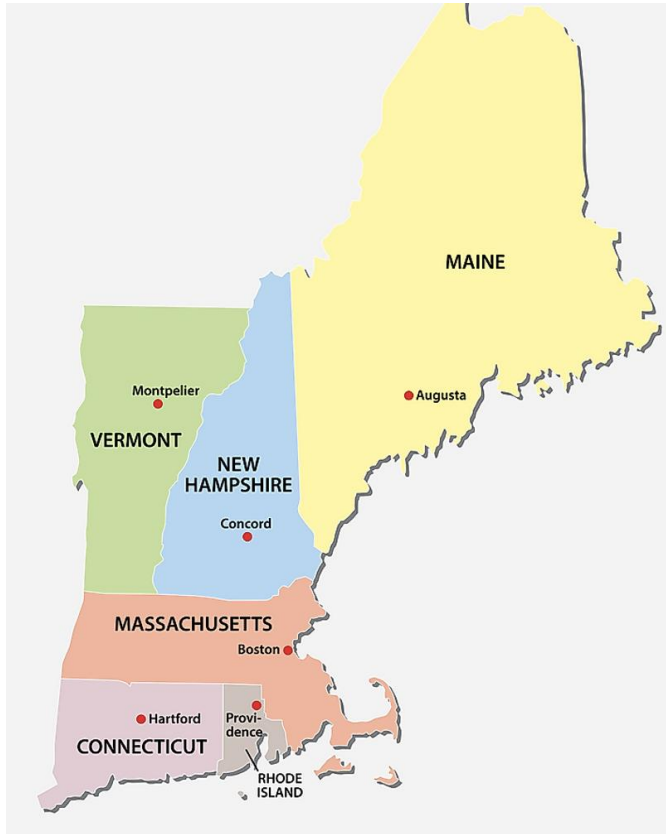
Time For A Poll

New England Hispanic/Latino population

Of the New England Hispanic/Latino population, which state has the greatest % of the population? (Select one)

- Connecticut
- Massachusetts
- New Hampshire
- Rhode Island

New England Hispanic or Latino Population



Massachusetts
14.5%

Connecticut
19.9%

Rhode Island
19.7%

Maine
2.8%

Vermont
2.8%

**New
Hampshire**
5.3%

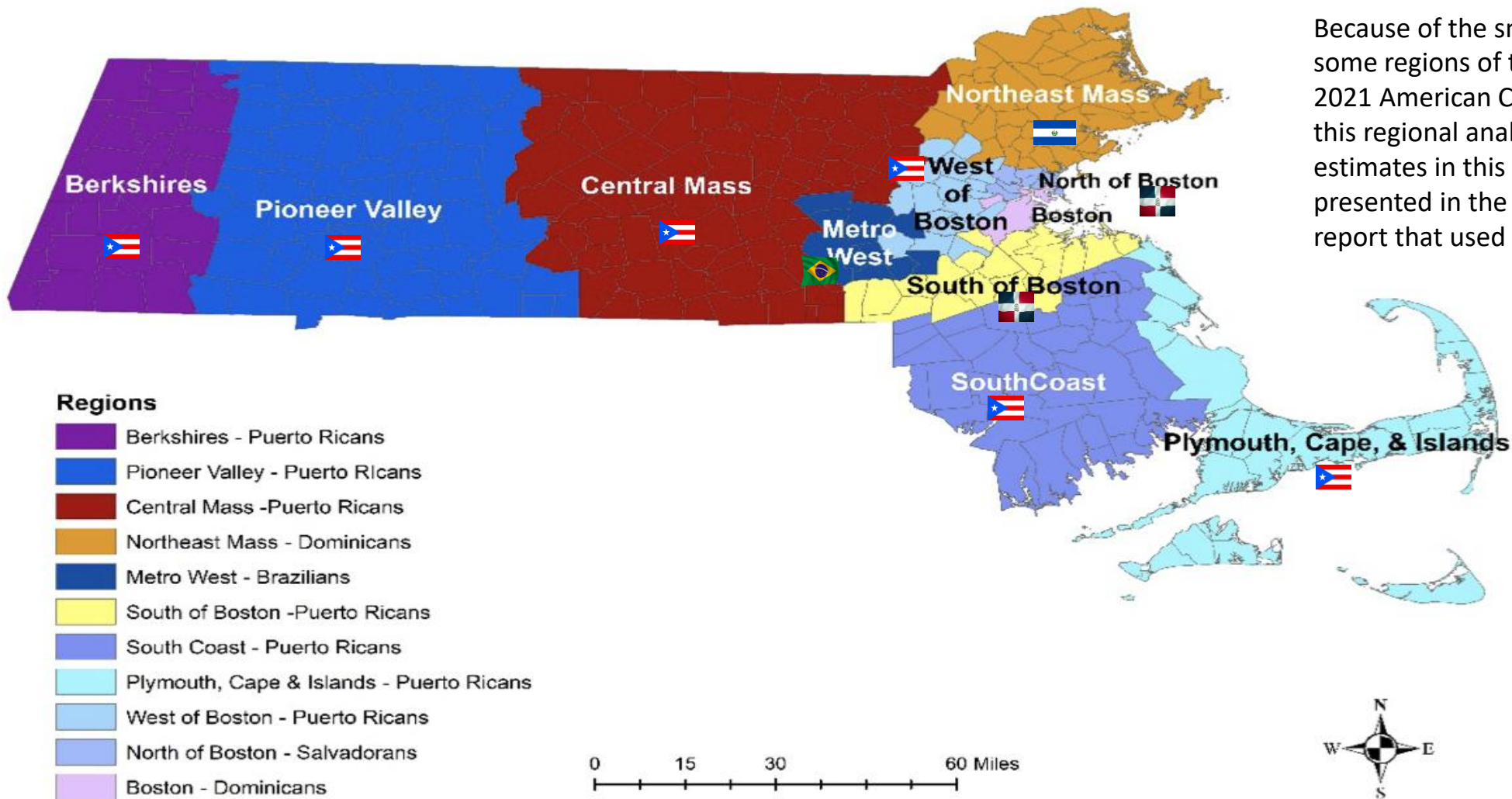
Census.gov (Population Estimates 2025 Data)

Top Ten Latino Subpopulations In Massachusetts By Origin

Puerto Ricans 32.5%	Dominicans 19.6%	Brazilians 11.2 %	Salvadoran 7.5%
Mexicans 5.1%	Guatemalans 5.0%	Colombians 3.4%	Ecuadorians 2.0%
Hondurans 1.9%	Peruvian 1.3%	Cubans 0.3%	Venezuelans 0.1%

Gaston Institute Publications: The Growing Latino Population of Massachusetts: A Demographic and Economic Portrait (2023)
Massachusetts has the fifth largest Puerto Rican population in the United States (after Florida, New York, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey)

Figure 14: Largest Latino Population by Regions in Massachusetts



Because of the smaller Latino population in some regions of the state, we use 2017-2021 American Community Survey data for this regional analysis. As a result, statewide estimates in this section differ from those presented in the previous section of this report that used only 2021 ACS data.

Regional



- ❑ The largest population in the Pioneer Valley region is **Puerto Ricans** who comprise **84.7%** of the Latino population.
- ❑ **Springfield** is the largest city in Hampden County.
- ❑ **Holyoke** has the largest concentration of Puerto Ricans of any city outside of Puerto Rico.

Gaston Institute Publication No. 307

Art by Frankie Borrero

Figure 16: Latino Population Distribution – Pioneer Valley and Statewide Share in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts

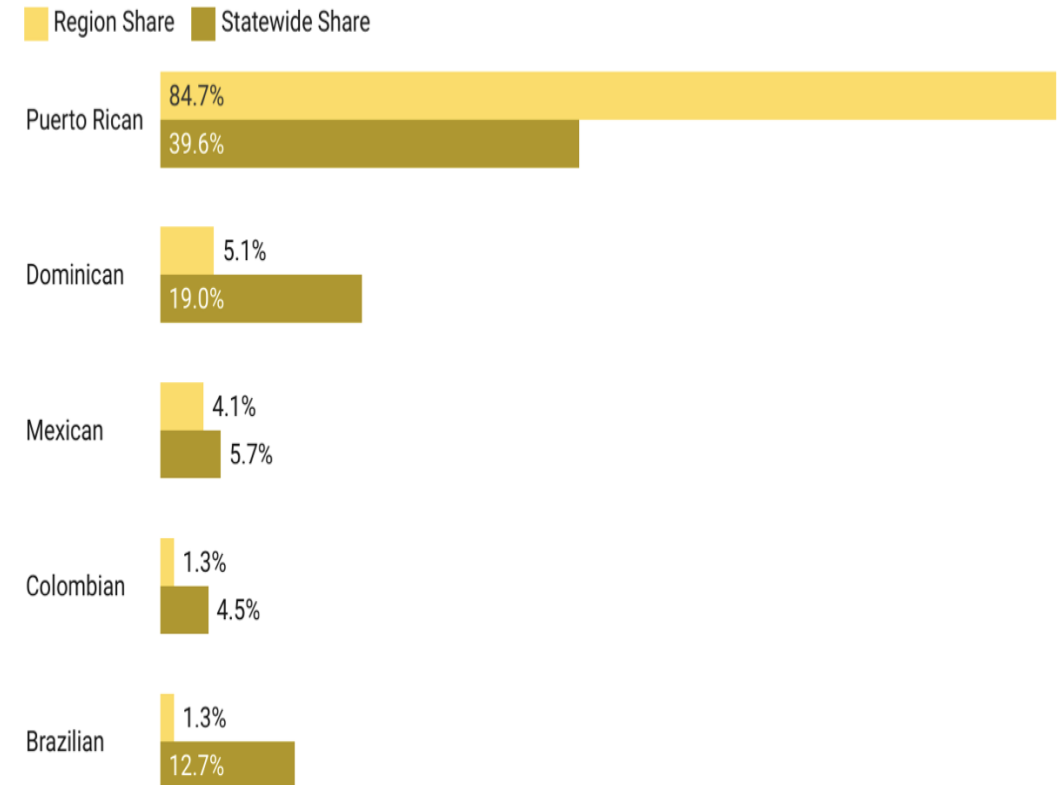
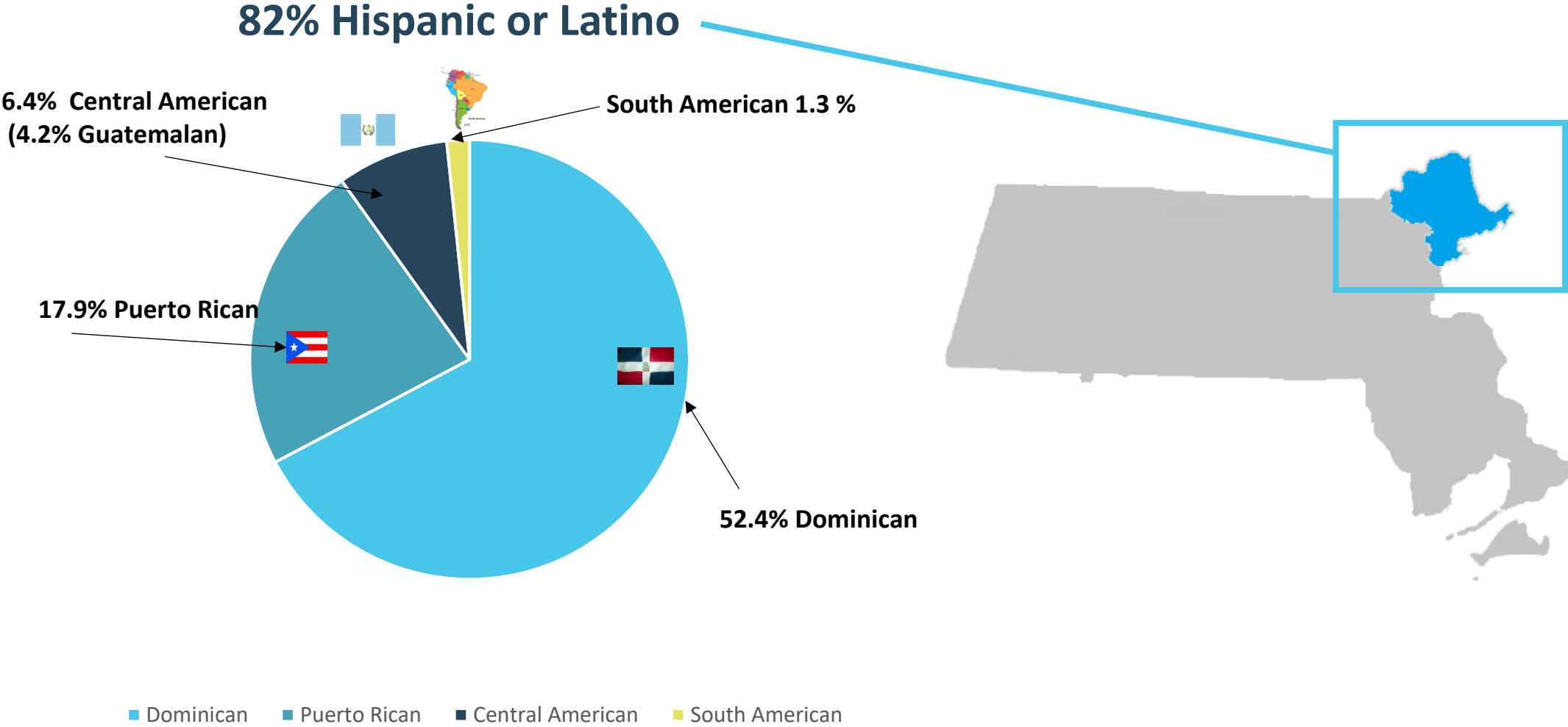


Chart: Gastón Institute · Source: 2021 American Community Survey · Created with Datawrapper

Essex County, Lawrence MA





Why It Matters

“Massachusetts Latino population is young, working, and increasingly influential—economically, socially, and politically.”

- ❑ About 29% of Latinos are under 18, while 22% of Whites are 65 or older. Growth is expected to continue for decades.
- ❑ A younger, growing Latino population is increasingly shaping voting trends, civic engagement, and long-term political influence. Latino political representation increased by 15% statewide since 2021, signaling expanding leadership and influence.
- ❑ Growing Latino diversity is reshaping schools, neighborhoods, workplaces, and public institutions, creating lasting social and cultural change.

Gaston Institute

Transition to Gambling - Check-in Question

01

Knowledge

How would you rate your knowledge of problem gambling and the resources available to help someone in need?

Very Knowledgeable • Somewhat • Not Very • Not At All

02

Referral

If a friend, family member, or client needed help, would you know where to refer them?

Yes • Somewhat • No

03

Support

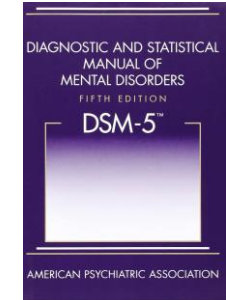
What would increase your confidence in helping someone who may be experiencing gambling-related harm?

Open-ended discussion question.

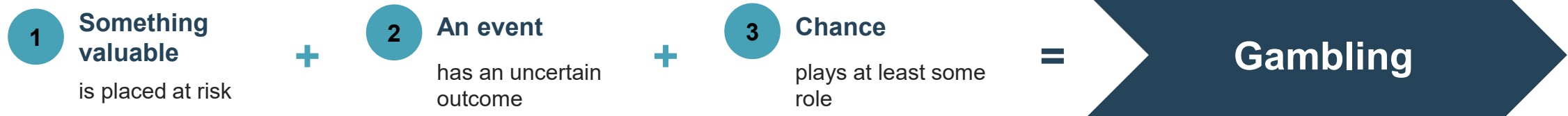
Time For a Poll - Gambling or Not?

1. **Playing bingo at a fundraiser**
2. **Betting \$5 on a football game**
3. **Buying raffles at a fundraiser**
4. **Playing cards**

What is Gambling?



Gambling Happens When Three Conditions Align



Dictionary Definition

Betting means risking money or other stakes in a game or bet.

Clinical Term

Gambling Disorder is the Apa diagnostic label for clinical levels of excessive gambling in the DSM.

Gambling Exists On A Continuum



The continuum ranges from no gambling through recreational, at-risk, and problem gambling to Gambling Disorder.

MA office of problem gambling services; webster's dictionary

According to Gamblers Anonymous, gambling includes any form of betting or wagering—whether for money or not, and no matter how small—when the outcome is uncertain or depends on chance or perceived skill.

Gamblersanonymous.org



Three facts make the risk easier to see

85% / 60%

Prevalence

Gambling is widespread

85% have gambled in their lifetime; 60% did so within the past year.

48 + DC

Access

Legal access is nearly universal

Legalized gambling is available in 48 states and D.C.; Hawaii and Utah are the exceptions.

**2.5M
5–8M**

Harm

Millions experience gambling-related harm

About 1% meet criteria for a severe problem; another 2–3% experience mild or moderate problems.

Awareness Point

Most adults gamble without harm—but risk is not evenly distributed.

Communities of color face greater vulnerability to problem gambling.

Source: National Council on Problem Gambling

Gambling takes many forms in Latinx/e communities.

Problem Gambling Awareness

Which forms of gambling were common in your family, community, or culture while you were growing up?



Different settings. The same core wager.

Something Of Value + Uncertain Outcome = **Gambling**



Everyday Retail

Lottery • scratch tickets



Social Play

Cards • dice • dominoes



Community

Bingo • raffles •
fundraisers



Venues

Casinos • race betting



Always-On Digital

Cell phone • sports
betting

Why Exposure Can Feel Normal

Familiarity

**Routine settings can make
wagering feel harmless.**

Access

**Low cost and mobile reach can
normalize frequent play.**

Oversight

**Protections differ across regulated
and informal play.**

Source: Synthesized from presentation slides 25–31.

Familiar does not mean risk-free.

Low Risk to Gambling



Recreational
Not for **Win**

Understanding
with time **All**
Lose

Engage
Socially
family/friends,
never alone

Time Limited

Predetermined
\$Amount to
play/lose

Understanding
information does
not **make you**
Better

High Risk Factors for Problem Gambling

Child with a parent who gambles or a **Parent** with SUD or MH history

Belief that **Strategy** is the key to winning

Experiencing a **Big Win** at an early age

Belief you need to keep playing to **Regain** what was lost

High Stakes betting/**Borrowing** to play or bet

Co-morbidity:
Presence of other SUD's (Drugs/Alcohol); mental health & conditions

Warning Signs Related to Problem Gambling

Financial

Unexplained borrowing, missing money, unpaid bills, secret accounts, selling belongings, or repeated “emergencies.”

Behavioral

Increasing time on betting apps, secrecy about phone use, chasing losses, lying about whereabouts.

Emotional

Irritability, restlessness, anxiety, mood swings tied to wins and losses, withdrawal from family.

Relational

Missed family or work obligations, conflict about money, isolating from friends.

Health

Sleep problems, appetite changes, increased drinking or substance use, hopelessness or talk of suicide.

In Youth

Preoccupation with odds and betting talk, unexplained money, gaming purchases and loot boxes.

Structural and Social Determinants of Health

Prevention Strategies and Engagement Opportunities

Upstream systems shape daily conditions—and health equity.

Two perspectives describe different levels of the same causal pathway.

01 | Upstream – Root Causes

Structural Determinants

Systems that create social position and determine access to power, money, and resources.

Governance + public policy
Economic + labor systems **Racism, discrimination + social norms**

Shape



who gets
resources +
opportunity

02 | Daily Conditions

Social Determinants

The conditions in which people are born, live, learn, work, play, and age.

Economic stability
Education access + quality
Health care access + quality
Neighborhood + built environment
Social + community context

Influence



exposure,
protection +
options

03 | Population Impact

Health + Equity

Unequal exposure to risk, unequal access to protection, and unequal health outcomes

The social gradient in health reflects how resources and opportunity are distributed.

Practical Implication

Improve daily conditions—and change the upstream rules and power that produce them.

Source: Who, A Conceptual Framework for Action on the Social Determinants of Health (2010);
Source: Who, Operational Framework for Monitoring Social Determinants of Health Equity (2024); Healthy People 2030.

Health Is Shaped By Where People Live, Learn, Work, And Play.

Five conditions influence health across daily life.



Source: Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion

Taking A Closer Look: Latinx/e SDOH In MA

Median Wage:

32, 648 compared to 58,705 for Non- Latino Whites

Homeownership:

31.1% compared to 71.3 Non-Latino Whites

Uninsurance Rate:

5.6% for Latinos compared to 1.6 for Non-Latino Whites

Poverty

1 in 4 Latinx households in MA live below the poverty line

Education:

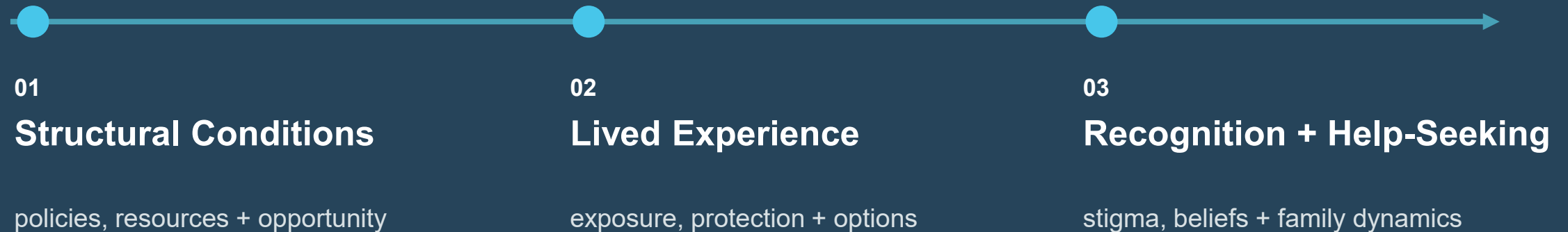
Highest % with less than HSD

Food Insecurity:

1 in 4 are food insecure

Conditions Shape Risk. Culture Shapes Response.

Social and economic conditions influence exposure to harm; beliefs, stigma, and family dynamics influence whether that harm is recognized—and whether help is sought.



Stigma, Silence, and Community Beliefs

✓	“No es un vicio de verdad” — gambling is often seen as far less serious than alcohol or drug use.
✓	Vergüenza and the desire not to bring shame on the family keep problems hidden.
✓	Financial matters are private ; admitting losses can feel like failing as a provider.
✓	Machismo and provider identity make it hard for men to seek help or admit loss of control.
✓	Fear of <u>judgment</u> from faith communities, or a belief the issue should be handled through prayer alone.
✓	Lack of language : many families have no familiar word or framework for “gambling disorder.”

Valid distrust of systems and fear around immigration status limit help-seeking.

Cultural Values May Shape How People Experience Support

01

Relationships + Family

Colectivo • Familismo • Personalismo

- Connection and family responsibility may guide decisions
- Trust often grows through warm, personal relationships

02

Respect + Harmony

Respeto • Simpatía

- Courtesy and dignity can shape communication
- A desire for harmony may make disagreement less visible

03

Roles, Faith, + Resilience

Machismo/Marianismo • Faith • Resiliencia

- Roles and spirituality may influence help-seeking
- Faith and resilience can be important sources of support

These values vary by individual, family, generation, and country of origin.

Translate Cultural Values Into Engagement Choices

Value/Theme	How it May Appear	Engagement Response
Relationships + family	Family or trusted others may influence decisions	Ask who should be included; invite support with permission
Personalismo	A warm relationship may be needed before sensitive discussion	Begin with genuine connection, then explain purpose and choices
Respect + harmony	Concern may be expressed indirectly; disagreement may stay unspoken	Use open questions, check understanding, and make dissent safe
Gender-role expectations	Help-seeking, emotional expression, or family decisions may be affected	Avoid assumptions; ask how decisions are made in this family

Reflection: How could these values change the way you begin a conversation about gambling?

Four Practices For Culturally Responsive Engagement

01

Understand Context

- Assess local social determinants of health
- Practice cultural humility
- Welcome cultural diversity

02

Build Trust

- Create a safe, welcoming environment
- Use an adaptable, person-centered approach
- Build a representative workforce

03

Share Power

- Engage families
- Co-design programs and outreach with community leaders
- Counter stigma; connect people to hope and resources

04

Strengthen Practice

- Use trauma-informed care
- Apply National Clas Standards
- Expand access to training

Source: C4innovates.com; Think cultural health

The Rivera Family

Héctor, 60/Puerto Rican, moved to the mainland in 2018, after Hurricane María. He and Carmen have two children in middle and high school; she works as a PCA, he in maintenance. He sends money to his mother on the island.

He's played lotto daily since his teens, part of family life (keeping one number for stretches, or one tied to a birthday or a dream, often shared by another family member).

Over the past two years he began betting on baseball and boxing through a Spanish-language app with a welcome bonus; back home, betting on a team or boxer was expected and part of the pride of supporting your person.

About eight months ago betting shifted from weekends to daily. He borrowed from his brother, fell behind on rent, and told Carmen his hours were cut.

Carmen sees him sleepless, moody, hiding his phone. She tells no one, fearing the family will be judged. Their 16-year-old son has started betting with friends.

At a church small group she names her fear that gambling is becoming a problem; the leader refers the family to your practice for culturally centered counseling and addiction care as the leaders were recently trained on Gambling Risk and community resources.

Discussion

01 What Do You Notice?

02 How Would You Engage?

03 What Would You Assess Or Do Next?

The Rivera Family's Story Shows How Normalized Play Can Escalate

01

Family Context

Héctor and Carmen are raising two school-age children after relocating from Puerto Rico. They work, support family, and manage ongoing financial pressure.

02

Normalize Play

Daily lotto is tied to birthdays, dreams, and family tradition. Sports betting feels connected to baseball, boxing, and community pride.

03

Escalation + Harm

Betting becomes daily. Héctor borrows money, falls behind on rent, loses sleep, hides his phone—and their 16-year-old begins betting.

04

Referral + Opening

Carmen shares her concern through a trusted church relationship. A trained leader connects the family to culturally centered care.

Notice both the harm and the strengths that create an opening for support.

Effective Response Begins With Three Coordinated Moves

01

Identify

Screen early

- Use brief routine screening in behavioral health, primary care, and social services.
- Offer tools in Spanish and assess co-occurring mental health, trauma, and substance-use needs.

02

Respond

Meet people where they are

- Use motivational interviewing without confrontation.
- Match CBT and behavior-change strategies to readiness; coordinate integrated care.

03

Support

Address the conditions that sustain harm

- Pair clinical care with debt navigation and financial counseling.
- Use limits, self-exclusion, app blockers, family support, peer groups, promotoras, and bilingual helplines.

Clinical skill matters. Trust determines whether support is accepted.

Sources: Gebauer et al., 2010; SAMHSA, 2014

Trust Opens The Path to Culturally Responsive Support

01

Build Trust

Begin with warmth, respect, and a person-centered conversation.

02

Respond Culturally

Honor language, identity, family roles, faith, and lived context.

03

Engage Support

Invite family, peers, promotoras, and trusted community partners.

04

Connect Early

Act before crisis and make prevention and referral routes easy to use.

Once risk is recognized, make the next step clear and easy to take.

Important Resources

Immediate Help

1-800-327-5050

Massachusetts Problem Gambling Helpline

Free • confidential • 24/7
maproblemgamblinghelpline.org

Safety Concern? Need Crisis Support?

Call or text 988
Press 2 for Spanish

Treatment + Peer Support

- **OPGS:** prevention, treatment, and recovery resources.
 - Gamblers Anonymous, Gam-Anon, and Spanish-language meetings
 - Peer Recovery Centers and Gambling Ambassadors
 - **MACHW:** Trained CHW's
-

Financial + Practical Support

- Debt or housing counseling and legal aid
- Self-exclusion, betting limits, Gamban, and BetBlocker

Discussion: What local resource would you add for your community?

Sustainable impact requires three system-level priorities

01

Routine Screening

- Build gambling screening into everyday behavioral health and primary care.
- Make early identification a normal part of care—not a special initiative.

02

Bilingual, Bicultural Capacity

- Train the workforce specifically in gambling harms.
- Invest in community-led prevention and peer models, not one-time campaigns.

03

Community Systems

- Reach youth and young men where sports betting is normalized.
- Improve Latino/Hispanic data visibility and align mental health, substance use, financial, and faith partners.

Individual referrals help today. Stronger systems reduce harm tomorrow.

Let's Discuss

Questions?

Share your questions in the chat or unmute to ask.



Training and Resources for Professional Development

- Massachusetts Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling Prevention
- MA Technical Assistance Center for Problem Gambling Treatment: m-tac.org
- Massachusetts-Ambassador-Project
- New England ATTC
- Office of Problem Gambling Services | Mass.gov
- Train Massachusetts | Careers in Local Public Health

MCOE PGP

Upcoming Trainings

[Register at mcoepgp.org/training](https://mcoepgp.org/training)

Oct
05

Intersections of Problem Gambling Prevention and Substance Misuse

In-Person

Springfield Technical Community College

Oct
15

What's Equity Got to Do with It? Centering Equity in Problem Gambling Prevention

Oct
27

Sports Betting Prevention That Scores Wins

Thank You

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