

**A Listening Session on Responsible
Gambling in Massachusetts**

*Voluntary Self-Exclusion
- Statewide Approach*

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Potential Benefits of Self-Exclusion...

- A harm minimization strategy
- A barrier to gambling
- A tangible recognition of the problem
– can provide sense of taking control over gambling
- A safeguard against impulsivity
- A gateway to treatment and related services

What It Is...

- A forum for the problem gambler to accept personal responsibility for their problem.
- A method to provide the gambler with some isolation from the temptations of gambling.
- A deterrent to destructive behavior.
 - *A “wake up call” during a lapse in recovery.*
 - *A reminder of the importance of treatment.*

What It Is Not...

- A panacea
- A substitute for treatment
- A promise to keep the gambler out of the casino
- A program for someone who occasionally gambles irresponsibly but is not:
 - *a chronic problem gambler; or*
 - *a pathological gambler.*

Principles of Self-Exclusion

- A proportion of individuals have problems controlling their gambling.
- Industry and public officials should assist in limiting negative impact of gambling.
- Individuals should accept responsibility for excessive gambling and take action to limit.
- Self-exclusion is a barrier to access, not a form of treatment.
- Only one potential element of an overall recovery program.

Statewide Casino Self-Exclusion

- 1996 – Missouri program launched
- 2001 – Louisiana, Michigan, and New Jersey
- 2002 through 2004 – Many more states implemented SE programs
- Currently, a statewide (voluntary) self-exclusion program is available in 14 states
- At least one additional state is investigating the possibilities

SE Options in the U.S.

Self-Exclusion Options	States Offering the Self-Exclusion Option	
1-year (or Minimum of 1-year)	7	Arizona, Colorado, Delaware, Indiana, Mississippi, New Jersey, Pennsylvania
5-years (or Minimum of 5-years)	8	Arizona, Delaware, Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Jersey, Pennsylvania
10-year (or Minimum of 10-years)	2	Arizona, Mississippi
Lifetime - As 1 option (of multiple)	5	Delaware, Indiana, Mississippi, New Jersey, Pennsylvania
Lifetime - Only option available	3	Iowa, Michigan, Missouri

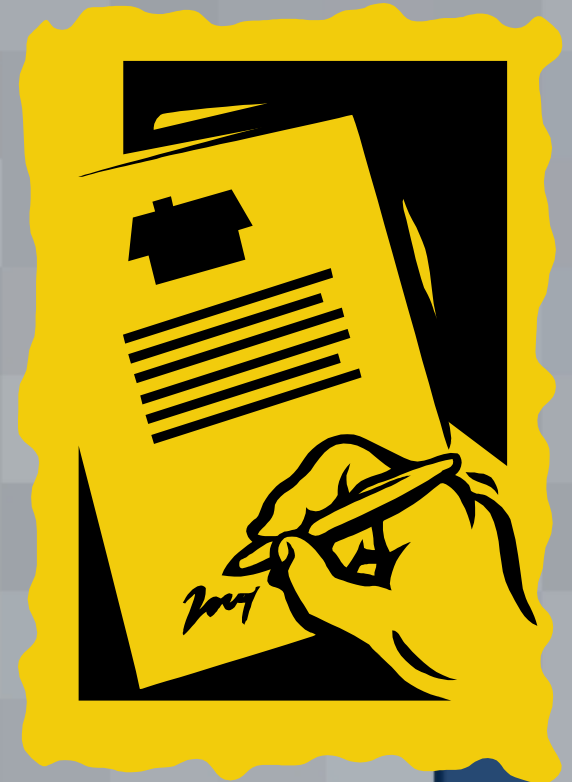
Data gathered February 2007

Missouri's SE Program

Self-Exclusion, Show-Me Style

Application Process

- Right to private interview
- Instructions, rule & promotion of free counseling & GA
- Interview & Questionnaire
 - *Sobriety, coherence, coercion*
- Application and demographics
- Waiver/Release
- Power of attorney
- Application verification
 - *Interpreter (if necessary)*
- Photograph & ID verification
- Provide treatment information and resource packet



Follow-up Issues



- **Letter assigning PIN**
 - *Handling third party interests*
- **Providing resources**
 - *Treatment*
 - *Support groups*
 - *Hotline & web sites.*
- **Trespass**
 - *Jackpots*
 - *Check cashing*
 - *Players club*
- **Database administration**

Disassociated Persons List

- Includes penalties for breaches (trespass, forfeiture of winnings)
- Waiver of liability (notification provision)
- Current enrollment $>14,400$

Information Sharing with Licensees

Secure database available on-line in real-time format

Approved applications available for verification and download immediately;

- ***Class A Licensees can view only Approved applications (active and Deceased)***
- ***Cashiers and other relevant personnel can execute a query against the database at any time to verify whether an individual is a DAP (i.e. cashing checks, issuing a players card)***

SE Program Considerations

**Establishing New, or Reevaluating
Existing, SE Programs**

Recommended Review:

- Blasczynski, A., Ladouceur, R., & Nower, L. (2007). Self-Exclusion: A Proposed Gateway to Treatment Model. *International Gambling Studies* 7(1), 59-71.
- Responsible Gambling Council (2008). From Enforcement to Assistance: Evolving Best Practices in Self-Exclusion. *A Discussion Paper by the Responsible Gambling Council (Ontario)*.
 - Available online at <http://www.responsiblegambling.org>

Framework Considerations

- Orientation
- Registration process
- Time frame / length of ban
- Reinstatement, if applicable
- Coercion concerns, including court orders
- Promotion of program
- Confidentiality provisions
- Oversight, penalties
- Property level self-exclusion and self-limiting options
- Take home materials for applicants, families
- Counseling and supports
- Detecting and addressing breaches

Staff Training and Roles

- Identify appropriate section that handles SE inquiries and applications
- Staff trained adequately regarding problem gambling issues and working with people in crisis
- Ensure all front line staff can provide accurate referrals to appropriate staff and to help lines, programs, etc.

Organizational Considerations...

- Controlled Access (100% ID requirement)
 - *Enhances enforcement of self-exclusions, and those black listed for criminal activity, etc.*
 - **Strong deterrent** to aid in prevention of underage gambling
- 'Winnings' in event of breach
- Penalties for noncompliance
- Other elements of responsible gaming efforts (i.e. self-limiting options)
- Be clear about SE and organizational roles
- Loyalty points, comps
- Non-gaming areas of venue
- Property-specific or corporate-wide

Enforcement Considerations

Although the terms “self-exclusion” and “enforcement” seem contradictory, certain mechanisms should be in place.

- Jurisdictions must analyze/seek statutory authority to allow forfeiture of jackpots
- Regulators should require gaming operators to check against SE list anytime it is practical, and when patrons required to provide positive ID
- Self-excluders should report violations of their exclusion

Enforcement Considerations, cont.

- Removal from all mailing lists and players clubs
- Committee supports arrest as an effective deterrent for many gamblers
 - ~ Jurisdictions should develop methods to direct repeat offenders into mandatory counseling
- Should be clear to the self-excluder that it is NOT the responsibility of the casino or the regulatory agency to prevent them from entering a gambling venue.
- Identify recommended penalties for licensee violations.

SE Program Recommendations

Feedback from Focus Groups

Self-Exclusion Time Length

- Optimal to have multiple options for the term of the self-exclusion
 - *At least an option of “a minimum of X years” and an option of lifetime.*
- Options should include an opportunity for lifetime/permanent self-exclusion
- Consider allowing to simply self-exclude at application and to later determine length of self-exclusion (i.e. after 1 year in recovery)
- Require affirmative action to be removed from self-exclusion (“SE”) status
 - *Such as filing a formal request to terminate SE.*

Self-Exclusion Breaches

- Establish procedures to transfer gaming credits, winnings, jackpots, etc. accumulated during breaches to a fund utilized to provide prevention, education, treatment and related services for problem gamblers and their families.
- Establish penalty for the self-excluder who breaches.
- Encourage casinos to provide a “bonus” to staff who identify a self-excluder who either has breached or is attempting to breach (as done in Illinois).

Self-Exclusion - Reinstatement

If options other than lifetime are offered:

- Non-lifetime self-exclusion terms should be provided as “a minimum of X years”;
 - *Do not allow self-exclusion to simply expire;*
 - *Do not require the individual to reapply at conclusion of term;*
- Require affirmative action by the DAP if the individual is to be removed from self-exclusion status
 - *Formal request to terminate self-exclusion;*
 - *Incorporate a “cooling off window” to offset requests initiated during a relapse – allows potential for individual to rescind request to terminate self-exclusion if reenters recovery during that window.*
- Require “successful” self-exclusion for the minimum term length immediately prior to the request (no breaches)

MISSOURI ALLIANCE TO CURB PROBLEM GAMBLING

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